

## The Church of God: Our Shared Vision

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### Підсумок

У статті п.з. «Церква Божа: наша спільна візія», єпископ Царгородської Патріархії владика Каллістос (Вейр) розвиває підставові поняття православної еkleзіології. Спочатку стверджує автор, що загальне піднесення, яке слідувало за рішеннями Другого Ватиканського Собору сьогодні замінене непевністю дальшого ходу міжнароднього православно-католицького діалогу. Та Оксфордська Консультація Студійної Групи Київської Церкви – це вияв переконання як православних так греко-католицьких учасників, що східні католицькі Церкви можуть причинитися до примирення між Сходом і Заходом. Заки приступити до самої еkleзіології, треба рішуче заявити, що свобода совісті не є справою дискусійною. Не можна змушувати когонебудь до приналежності до певної Церкви. Треба відкинути всяке втручання держави в життя Церкви. Владика Каллістос зворушений жестом Блаженнішого Мирослава Івана (Любачівського), який запропонував Московській Патріархії взаємне прощення ще в 1987 р., на що не одержав відповіді. Тому автор сам, як православний єпископ, звертається до греко-католиків зі словами: «Простіть».

Повертаючись до еkleзіологічних питань, автор стверджує, що Церква на те існує, щоб служити таїнство Євхаристії. Тим Церква різниться від усіх інших згрупвань. Образ Церкви як євхаристійної спільноти дуже важливий, хоч не єдиний якого можна знайти в Священному Переданні. Тісно зв'язаним з Євхаристією є

поняття ієрархічного устрою Церкви, бо єпископи саме над Євхаристією мають найважливіший нагляд (єпископію). Це не віддає єпископа від вірних, а радше єднає його з ними. Може бути ще вища форма нагляду—примату Церковного, але й цей вищий примат треба інтерпретувати з точки зору євхаристійної. Євхаристія здійснюється в місцевих (помісних) церквах. Примат декотрих єпископів (папи, патріярха) є тісно зв'язаний з місцевою церквою якої Євхаристією вони очолюють. У кожному місцевому служінні Євхаристії є присутнім цілий Христос, а не тільки якась частина Його. Тому, по суті справи, з точки зору Євхаристії, всі єпископи є рівні. Папу римського тому вишановується як першого серед рівних, *primus inter pares*.

Треба застатися над питанням Петрового Служіння папи римського. Православні занепокоєні двома особливими моментами: вченням про непомильність папи, та про папський примат, який дозволяв би папі безпосередньо володіти над християнським Сходом. Є докази на те, що св. Петро серед апостолів, а папа римський серед єпископів, займав передове становище в проголошенні правди. Але рівнож є докази, що інші таку функцію виконували. У першому тисячолітті є багато випадків, де східні єпископи звертаються в апеляційному змислі до Римської Церкви. Та ці апеляційні заходи не треба конечно розуміти як пряме визнання юрисдикції папи.

Автор воліє зосереджуватися над поняттям Римської Церкви як тої «яка предсїдає в любові», цитуючи св. Ігнатія Антіохійського. Вселепську опіку папи римського краще висловлювати в категоріях любови радше ніж закону. Владиці Каллістосові з усіх папських титулів найбільше подобається «слуга слуг Божих». Папа тому перший, що він слуга всіх інших (Мт. 20:27), який в рішучих моментах історії має діяти для єдності всіх Церков Божих, не через примус але через любов.

Владика Калістос запрошує до дальшого спільного відшукування розуміння суті Церкви, в душі любови, а не противенства.

### *A Disappointed Hope?*

As if it was only yesterday, I can vividly recall my sense of excitement nearly thirty years ago as I read a slim volume with the title *Council Speeches of Vatican II*, edited by Yves Congar, Hans Küng and Daniel O'Hanlon.<sup>1</sup> "The Second Vatican Council—a great symbol of hope for the Catholic Church, for Christianity and for the world:" so the editors began their preface. That was exactly what I also felt as I read the texts that followed. It seemed indeed to be the dawn of a new era.

In particular, I was struck by the contributions of the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, Maximos IV, and of other Eastern-rite bishops such as Elias Zoghby and Joseph Tawil. When they bore witness as Greco-Catholics to their specific vision of the Church on earth, they emphasized exactly the points that I as an Orthodox held precious. Surely the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras was not exaggerating when he said to Patriarch Maximos IV: "You spoke for Orthodoxy at Vatican II—you were the voice of our common hope!"<sup>2</sup> At the Second Vatican Council, the Greco-Catholic hierarchs undoubtedly acted as a bridge between Rome and Orthodoxy.

Today, thirty years later, what has happened to that "common hope"? Have not the optimistic expectations of the early 1960's suffered a cruel disappointment? At first sight, it certainly seems to be so. The Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, inaugurated at Patmos and Rhodes in 1980, after a promising start appears now to have come to a standstill. The meeting of the Joint International Commission, which should have been held on 17-26 June 1992, was postponed "for reasons of practical timeliness," to use the words of the *communiqué* issued by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on 2 June 1992. Both the Vatican and the Phanar were anxious to

<sup>1</sup> London-New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> Emilius Inglessis, *Maximos IV: l'Orient conteste l'Occident* (Paris: Cerf, 1969) 72ff.

insist that it was a postponement, not an outright cancellation; the Commission, they said, would be reconvened "at the latest in June 1993." Yet even so the delay remains disquieting.

Although the *communiqué* from the Ecumenical Patriarchate did not specify the precise character of the "reasons of practical timeliness" causing the postponement, we are all well aware what they are. Chief among them is the tension between Orthodox and Greco-Catholics in Romania and Czechoslovakia, and above all in the former Soviet Union. Eight Orthodox Churches, including those of Jerusalem, Cyprus, Greece, Poland and Czechoslovakia, requested an adjournment of the meeting scheduled for June 1992, because of what they saw as the increasing Catholic hostility and aggression against Orthodoxy (yet, significantly, the Churches of Russia and Romania were willing that the June meeting should proceed as planned).<sup>3</sup> Tragically, then, it seems that the Greco-Catholics, who in the early 1960's acted at Vatican II as a bridge between Orthodoxy and Rome, were now in the early 1990's regarded by the Orthodox as a barrier.

Yet have our hopes of thirty years ago in fact been so completely disappointed? Let us not be too quick to jump to a negative conclusion. That great Orthodox pioneer in the work for Christian unity, the Archpriest Georges Florovsky, was right to say, "The highest and most promising 'ecumenical virtue' is patience." His words apply not least to the contemporary problems in Ukraine. Today we are meeting in Oxford round the same table precisely because of our joint conviction as Orthodox and Greco-Catholics that Eastern-rite Catholicism, so far from constituting a rock of offense, can act as a dynamic reconciling force. We share a common inheritance from the past; let us have the courage to reaffirm its continuing value and viability in the present.

### *Mutual Forgiveness*

On the theological level, the main subject that we need to consider together as Catholics and Orthodox is indubitably our perception of the structures of the Church on earth. Certainly in

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<sup>3</sup> *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Paris) No. 170 (July-August, 1992) 12.

any reunion discussions we have also to take into account the doctrine of the Trinity (the Double Procession of the Holy Spirit), the state of the departed (Purgatory), the place of the Mother of God in salvation history (the Roman teaching on the Immaculate Conception), and our pastoral practice over the Sacrament of Matrimony (the Orthodox theology of divorce and remarriage). But the heart of the matter is ecclesiology. How do we on either side understand the Roman Primacy?

Before looking at our doctrine of the Church, however, it will be helpful if we can agree about three matters of basic principle. First of all, when faced with any religious conflict, whether in Ukraine or elsewhere, our guiding criterion has to be freedom of conscience. As the Arricia statement (June 1991) rightly insists, we should at all costs safeguard "the inviolable freedom of persons and their obligation to follow the requirements of their conscience" (§ 9). God is free, and every human being created in the divine image is therefore likewise free; each is a created expression of God's uncreated freedom. In a religious conflict, then, any infringement by either side of the freedom of conscience on the other side is a blasphemy against the divine image. The Holy Trinity respects our liberty; in the words of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, "God persuades, He does not compel; for violence is foreign to Him."<sup>4</sup> If that is how God treats us, dare we behave differently in our dealings with one another?

We Orthodox do well to remember the spiritual value that several of our more creative thinkers in this present century have attached to freedom. One of the most influential theological works published in Greece in the last twenty years is characteristically entitled *The Freedom of Morality*.<sup>5</sup> As Nicholas Berdyaev affirmed, "God is truly present and operative only in freedom. Freedom alone should be recognized as possessing a sacred quality, while all the other things to which a sacred character has been assigned by humans since history began ought to be made

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<sup>4</sup> *The Epistle to Diognetus* vii, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, English translation by Elizabeth Briere (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984).

null and void."<sup>6</sup> Whenever we Orthodox forget this truth—as we often do—we are in effect betraying our own Orthodoxy.

The implications of this in the present context are obvious. If Eastern Christians, exercising their divinely-given freedom of conscience, choose to enter into communion with the See of Rome, while still retaining their Eastern Liturgy and their Eastern Church customs, then we Orthodox are bound to respect their decision, even though we may consider it to be mistaken. Any form of physical or moral coercion, all threats, bribes and deceit, are to be repudiated as an offense against the Christian doctrine of the human person. Entire liberty of choice, in this as in all matters of religious conscience, must be at all costs fiercely defended.

Closely linked with this first matter of principle is a second. Freedom of conscience presupposes *freedom of the Church from state control*. How very much easier Orthodox-Catholic relations would have been in the past, if only both sides had continued faithful to Christ's clear commandment; "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Matt 22:21). But alas! both of us, whether Catholics or Orthodox, have been only too ready to rely on the secular arm when we thought it to our advantage, and thereby we have added immeasurably to the bitterness of our mutual conflicts.

Our shared past provides us with numerous examples. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Eastern Christians re-established communion with Rome in Ukraine, Belarus', Transcarpathia and Romania, no doubt many of them were freely following the dictates of their own conscience. But we cannot ignore the severe pressures that were at the same time exercised by the civil authorities, whether Polish or Hungarian. By the same token, when—following the partition of Poland—Eastern Catholics returned to Orthodoxy in 1796, 1839 and 1875, no doubt a number of them were likewise freely obeying their conscience; but we cannot overlook the active involvement of the Tsarist government. Religion and politics were intertwined.

Even more obviously, the reintegration of the Eastern Catholics into the Orthodox Church during 1946-50 in Ukraine,

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<sup>6</sup> *Dream and Reality* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1950) 46.

Romania and Czechoslovakia was for the most part the result of direct Communist pressure. It would be naive, indeed disingenuous, to represent this "return to Orthodoxy" as a step taken by voluntary choice for reasons of religious conscience, except perhaps in a small minority of cases. In thus profiting from the persecution of their fellow Christians by the atheist powers, the Orthodox Church leadership within the Moscow Patriarchate and elsewhere has been placed in a painfully equivocal situation. Surely it is *never* right for any Christian body to acquiesce in the persecution of other Christians by the civil authorities.

In this connection, it is instructive to ask ourselves why relations between Orthodox and Greco-Catholics are today—and have generally been in the past—so much better in Syria and Lebanon than in Ukraine, Romania and Czechoslovakia. Is this not because, when the Orthodox and Catholic parties within the Patriarchate of Antioch split from each other in 1724, the Ottoman government did not attempt to suppress either group by force, but on the whole left the Christians free to sort out their own affairs? How great has been the harm that state intervention has caused to the mutual love of Christians! The attempts by the state to settle questions of religious conscience through prison camps, the sword, the gun and the whip—through the use of the police and the military—have always been a disaster. When will we Christians choose instead to follow the example of Christ crucified, the path of *kenôsis* and humble love?

I have been speaking about unhappy events in our distant and in our recent past. What of the future? Here we are brought face-to-face with a third matter of basic principle. There can be only one way forward; mutual forgiveness. A solution will come only if there is "the will to pardon, based on the Gospel," to use the words of the Ariccia document (§12). In the spirit of the expressive Vespers of Forgiveness that we celebrate at the beginning of Lent, let us simply say to each other: "forgive me." Seven weeks later, at Paschal Midnight, we again recall the need for forgiveness: "Let us say to those who hate us 'Brothers and sisters,' and in the Resurrection let us forgive everything." Mutual forgiveness of this kind, and it alone, can release us from the imprisoning bitterness inherited from the past.

Recently I was much surprised, and also greatly moved, to be told by my friend Archimandrite Serge (Keleher) that in 1987 the Major Archbishop of the Catholic Ukrainians, Myroslav Cardinal Lubachivsky, publicly called for precisely such an act of mutual forgiveness between the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church and the Moscow Patriarchate.<sup>7</sup> But I was saddened to learn that from the side of the Moscow Patriarchate there was no response—only silence. It is not difficult to appreciate how hurtful that must have been to the Greco-Catholics.

It is of course relatively easy for me, sitting here in the security of North Oxford, to speak about forgiveness; doubtless I would have found it much more difficult to forgive had I been living in Ukraine in 1946. I have no desire whatever to advocate cheap forgiveness. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was entirely right to warn us against the dangers of cheap forgiveness and cheap grace: "Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like cheapjack's wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices."<sup>8</sup> Yet, while recognizing my own unworthiness to speak of forgiveness, none the less with a full heart and in all sincerity I say to you, in my capacity as a bishop of the Orthodox Church: *forgive me.*

### *One Cup, One Altar, One Bishop*

Turning now to the central doctrinal issue that confronts us as Orthodox and as Greco-Catholics, let us ask the basic question: What is the Church here for? What is the distinctive and unique function of the Church, that which the Church does and which nobody else can do? What function does the Church accomplish that cannot be carried out with equal effectiveness by a youth group, a musical society, an old people's club, or an ethnic association? What role does the priest fulfill that is not performed

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<sup>7</sup> Serge Keleher, *Passion and Resurrection: The Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine - 1939-1989* (Lv'iv: Stavropegion, 1993) 113.

<sup>8</sup> *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press, 1959) 35.



with greater professionalism by the psychotherapist, the social worker or the marriage guidance counselor?

When thinking about the Church, in other words, what should be our primary mental image, our dominant icon? For an answer let us look to St. Ignatius of Antioch. His dominant icon is Eucharistic: a table; on the table, a plate with bread and a cup with wine; and, gathered round the table, the bishop-president, the presbyters and deacons, along with the whole people of God, all of them together celebrating the Holy Mysteries. In a typical passage, St. Ignatius writes: "Take care to participate in one Eucharist; for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup for union with his Blood, one altar, just as there is one bishop, together with the presbyters and the deacons my fellow-servants."<sup>9</sup> Here in concentrated form, Ignatius epitomizes his entire vision of the Church: "one Eucharist ... one flesh ... one cup ... one altar ... one bishop." It is in the one Eucharist, celebrated locally by the one bishop, that the Church finds its true unity, the fullness of visible expression. The ecclesial programme of Ignatius is summed up in the title of the book by John Zizioulas, Metropolitan of Pergamos, *The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *To the Philadelphians* iv. On Ignatius' doctrine of the Church, see the seminal article of John S. Romanides, "The Ecclesiology of St. Ignatius of Antioch." *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 7 (1961-62) 53-77.

<sup>10</sup> Published in Greek at Athens in 1965, unfortunately this has never appeared in English translation. It provides a valuable corrective to the over-simplified contrast drawn between "eucharistic" and "universal" ecclesiology in the well-known essay of Nicolas Afanassieff, "The Church Which Presides in Love," in John Meyendorff, ed., *The Primacy of Peter* (New edition, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992) 91-143. English readers can find a selection of Zizioulas' articles in *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985).

For a full treatment of Afanassieff, see Aidan Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev (1893-1966)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Detailed studies of Zizioulas have been written by Gaëtan Baillargeon, *Perspectives orthodoxes sur l'Eglise- communion. L'oeuvre de Jean Zizioulas* (Montreal: Editions Paulines, 1989), and by Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church. Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (to be published shortly by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh).

Here, then is a preliminary answer to our question, "What is the Church here *for*?" The Church is here to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. The Church, that is to say, is a Eucharistic organism that fulfills itself visibly within time through the constant celebration of the Holy Mysteries, thereby proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes again (1 Cor 11:26). The Church creates the Eucharist, and the Eucharist creates the Church. When the Church performs the Divine Liturgy, then and only then does it become truly itself. Ecclesial unity, therefore, is not imposed from the outside by power of jurisdiction, but is created from within through the act of Holy Communion from the one Eucharistic loaf and the one chalice.

The Eucharist is thus the basis and the life-creating source of everything else that the Church undertakes: of all our doctrinal formulations, of all our intellectual and missionary work, and equally of all our efforts to transform our personal lives and the fabric of society around us. In the words of Nicolas Zernov, the Eucharist is "the source which inspires all the social activities of the Christians, all their endeavours to fight against poverty, injustice, disease and death, and it confirms their hope in the ultimate victory of good over evil."<sup>11</sup> In the Biblical text cited more frequently than any other by the *Philokalia*, Christ says, "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5)—which means, from an ecclesial viewpoint: Apart from the Eucharist you can do nothing.

The correlation between Church and Eucharist is evident in the double sense borne by two familiar phrases, *communio sanctorum* and "Body of Christ." The word *sanctorum*, in the expression *communio sanctorum*, can be either masculine or neuter; and so the phrase means equally "communion of holy persons" (communion of saints) and "communion in the holy things (Eucharistic communion)." "Body of Christ," in the same way, signifies both the ecclesial Body of the Church and the Sacramental Body of Christ received in Holy Communion. Certainly the double sense of both these phrases is not a fortuitous ambiguity, but indicates an essential interconnection. In each

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<sup>11</sup> *St. Sergius - Builder of Russia* (London: SPCK, n.d.[1939?]) 105.

instance there is no need for us to make a choice between the two meanings, but it is possible—and, indeed, necessary—for us to assert *both* meanings simultaneously. We become a part of the communion of saints by communicating in the Holy Gifts; we become members of Christ's Body the Church through the common sharing in His Body at the Eucharist.

The Church-Eucharist correlation is affirmed equally by two key texts in Scripture and Apostolic Tradition. First, St. Paul states in 1 Cor 10:16-17 (surely the most important ecclesiological statement in the whole of the New Testament): "The bread that we break, is it not a communion in the Body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." Here Paul brings together two factors: the one "bread" or loaf from which the many believers eat, and the one Body of Christ to which the many believers belong. Between communion in the one Eucharistic loaf and membership in the one ecclesial Body, the Apostle asserts not simply an analogy but a causal connection: *because* we eat from the one loaf, *therefore* we form one Body of Christ.

The same interconnection is affirmed, secondly, in what is probably the Church's earliest surviving Eucharistic prayer, contained in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (late first or early second century). Recalling the wheat growing on the slopes of the Syrian hills, the celebrant says at the Fraction: "As this broken bread was scattered over the mountains, and was then brought together and became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom."<sup>12</sup> In this petition, exactly as in 1 Cor 10:16-17, a direct link is established between the oneness of the Eucharistic loaf and the oneness of the Church. Ecclesial unity and sacramental communion are treated as inseparable. Church and Eucharist constitute a single, undivided Mystery; each creates the other.

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<sup>12</sup> *Didache* ix, 4. This has sometimes been understood as a prayer at the *agape*, not at the Eucharist itself; but a directly Eucharistic interpretation seems more probable.

Such is my ecclesiology as an Orthodox Christian: an ecclesiology of *koinonia*, of Eucharistic communion. Is this not also your ecclesiology as Greco-Catholics? Do we not share the same vision of the Church?

### *Eucharistic Primacy*

Care needs to be taken not to overemphasize the correlation of Church and Eucharist in a one-sided fashion. The Eucharistic model of the Church, illuminating though it undoubtedly is, enjoys no exclusive monopoly in Christian ecclesiology. Scripture and Tradition provide a number of other models—of the Church as the People of God, for example, or as the icon of the Holy Trinity which must also be taken into account. In particular, we should never forget that the Eucharist does not exist in isolation but in a particular context. It presupposes a definite hierarchical structure. St. Ignatius of Antioch insists on this with great emphasis. The fullness of the Catholic Church, in his view, is not to be found in any and every Eucharistic assembly, whatever its character, but only in that Eucharistic assembly which meets under the blessing of the local bishop. "Let no one," he writes, "do any of the things that concern the Church without the bishop. Let that Eucharist be considered valid which is held under the bishop or under someone whom he appoints. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church."<sup>13</sup>

Ignatius' vision of the Church is thus not only Eucharistic but also hierarchical; indeed, it is hierarchical precisely because it is Eucharistic. Between the Eucharist and the local bishop he affirms a fundamental connection. The Eucharistic offering is an episcopal act, and the bishop is a Eucharistic person. He is to be seen, that is to say, not in secular terms, as a ruler wielding supreme power, nor yet in legal categories, as a juridical superior, but primarily in a sacramental and Eucharistic perspective, as celebrant and liturgist. The bishop (*episkopos*) is the one who "watches over." And if we ask "over what?" the answer is obvious: he watches over the Eucharist, and so his episcopal office cannot

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<sup>13</sup> *To the Smyrneans* viii, 1-2.

be properly understood except in eucharistic terms. In presiding at the Eucharist, however, he never acts in isolation but always in union with his flock.

Moreover, just as a Eucharistic understanding of the Church does not marginalize the episcopal office but assigns a central position to it, in the same way this Eucharistic understanding does not in any way exclude the possibility that, beyond the ministry of the local bishop, there may exist various levels of primacy, even though Ignatius himself says nothing about that. The essential point, however, to be kept always in view, is that every level of primacy—whether it be the more limited primacy of metropolitans and patriarchs, or the more universal primacy of the Roman Pontiff and the Ecumenical Patriarch—is to be seen *first and foremost in Eucharistic terms*. Here as elsewhere the criterion of St. Irenaeus of Lyons is decisive; "Our opinion agrees with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our opinion."<sup>14</sup> The Eucharist comes first; levels of primacy are secondary to this.<sup>15</sup>

Once the question of primacy is set in this manner within a Eucharistic context, one consequence follows immediately. The Eucharist is *something that can only happen locally*, at a concrete gathering of the faithful assembled in the same place. Supreme and normative significance, then, is to be attached in our ecclesiology to the local Church. Although there is but one Eucharist in all the world, this unique reality of the Eucharist can only be actualized in time and space through specific celebrations at particular moments and in particular rooms. It is the local

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<sup>14</sup> *Against Heresies* IV, xviii, 4.

<sup>15</sup> For an Orthodox view concerning levels of primacy, see Alexander Schmemmann, "The Idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology," in John Meyendorff, ed., *The Primacy of Peter*, 145-71; also Kallistos Ware, "The Exercise of Authority in the Orthodox Church," in *Church and Theology: An Ecclesiastical and Theological Review of the Archbishopric of Thyateira and Great Britain* 3 (1982) 941-69, esp. 960-68. On Papal primacy and the Christian East, see Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* (New edition, New York: Fordham University Press, 1979).

Eucharistic assembly that constitutes the basic ecclesial structure, the primary "cell" of the Church organism.

Furthermore, at each local celebration of the Eucharist it is always the *whole* Christ who is present, not just a part of Him. This means that each local Church, as it celebrates the Eucharist, is not to be seen merely as a small part within a much larger whole, as a tiny unit subsumed under more embracing categories on the model of a pyramid. On the contrary, each local Church gathered for the Divine Liturgy is nothing less than the *whole Catholic Church in its fullness*. When St. Ignatius says, in the passage already quoted, "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church,"<sup>16</sup> there is good reason to believe that he has in view not the worldwide but the local Church.<sup>17</sup> The Church is not "Catholic" primarily because it is extended geographically throughout the world; for it was already Catholic on the day of Pentecost, when it existed only at Jerusalem. On the contrary, it is Catholic because, wherever and whenever it celebrates the Eucharist, it possesses the fullness of life in Christ.

Local Churches are therefore related to each other, not as parts subordinated to a greater whole, but on the principle of identity. One and the same Christ is present at every local Eucharistic celebration; and so each local Church, celebrating the unique event of the Eucharist, is in its inward essence one and the same with every other local Church. In the words of Karl Rahner, "A local Church is not brought about by an atomizing division of the world-territory of the universal Church, but by the concentration of the Church into her own nature as 'event'."<sup>18</sup> Our notion of the Church's catholicity is not so much extensive as intensive: the universal Church is a communion of local Churches, each inwardly identical with all the others.

This emphasis upon the local Church has decisive implications for our understanding of primacy:

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<sup>16</sup> *To the Smyrnaeans* viii, 2.

<sup>17</sup> John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 143-69, esp. 148-49.

<sup>18</sup> Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger, *The Episcopacy and the Primacy* (London: Burns & Oates, 1962) 27.

1. The Eucharist can only happen locally. Every primate, therefore, is first of all the bishop of a local Church, the president of a particular Eucharistic assembly. The Pope is first and foremost the bishop of the city of Rome; and the Ecumenical Patriarch is first and foremost the bishop of the city of Constantinople. Neither the Pope nor the Ecumenical Patriarch could possess universal primacy without in the first instance being bishop of a local See. Any wider primacy needs to have a local Eucharistic foundation; it needs to be "earthed" in a specific local soil.

2. At each local celebration of the Eucharist it is the whole Christ that is present, not just a part of Him. In his ministry as president at the Eucharist, therefore, each local bishop is neither greater nor less than any other local bishop. From the standpoint of the Church's Eucharistic essence, all bishops are fundamentally equal in grace. Christ is not more present at the Eucharist of any one local Church than He is in that of any other; He is not more present at the Papal Mass offered in St. Peter's at Rome, or in the Pontifical Liturgy celebrated in the Phanar or in the Cathedral of St. Sophia at Kiev, than He is in the Eucharist of the humblest rural See. Whatever the privileges assigned to the primates of the great Christian centres, these are strictly secondary to the basic Eucharistic equality of all bishops. From this it follows that, when the Pope is honoured as the first bishop in Christendom, he is always honoured as *primus inter pares*, the first among equals.

This fundamental Eucharistic equality of the Pope with all the other bishops of the Church is confirmed by the fact that, when assuming office as Supreme Pontiff, he receives no sacramental blessing in addition to his previous consecration as a bishop—unlike the Patriarch of Moscow, who until 1667 was reordained at his elevation to the patriarchal throne.<sup>19</sup> Now, since the Church as Eucharistic "event" is essentially sacramental in its character, all the basic distinctions within the Christian ministry are conferred through sacramental rites. The Pope, however, has been

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<sup>19</sup> William Palmer, *The Patriarch and the Tsar* (London: Trübner & Co., 1871-76) vol. I, 12-16; vol. III, 161, etc.; A.N. Mouravieff, *A History of the Church of Russia* (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1842) 129.

ordained and consecrated in exactly the same way as every other bishop, and so he is fundamentally on an equal footing with all his brothers in the episcopate. The same is true of the Ecumenical Patriarch and of all other hierarchs endowed with varying levels of primatial authority. As Eucharistic celebrants, presiding over a local Church—and that constitutes the essence of their episcopal office—each is equal to all the others.

### *The Ministry of Peter: Two Leading Questions*

Keeping in view this Eucharistic perspective, let us try together to clarify our interpretation of the Petrine office. How far, I wonder, have we Orthodox rightly understood the Catholic teaching concerning the Papacy? Our main grounds of disquiet regarding the Roman claims can be crystallized into two questions:

1. *Infallibility.* Does the Pope, when proclaiming the Christian faith, possess a gift of grace superior to, and different from, the gift of grace that is given to every bishop? St. Irenaeus speaks of every bishop as receiving "the assured charism of the truth" (*certum charisma veritatis*).<sup>20</sup> Is it the intention of Vatican I and Vatican II to assign to the Pope a charism that is in some way more "assured" and more "certain" than that ascribed to the other bishops?

2. *Primacy.* During the first thousand years in the life of the Church, on what occasions and in what ways did the Pope with the full consent of the Eastern bishops exercise direct power of jurisdiction in the Christian East?

1. As regards the first question, in the New Testament there are indeed decisive moments when St. Peter acts as the first among the Twelve, the voice of the Apostles, the spokesman who takes the initiative in outwardly proclaiming the faith that is common to them all; this he does most notably on the road to Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:16) and at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36). Furthermore, we Orthodox would, I think, find no great difficulty in accepting that, within the subsequent life of the Church, this

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<sup>20</sup> *Against Heresies* IV xxvi, 2.



Petrine ministry of taking the initiative at crucial moments has often been exercised by the Pope.

Yet neither St. Peter nor the Pope enjoys any exclusive monopoly in the discernment of the truth. At the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, for example, although St. Peter's testimony was of central importance, it was St. James who eventually gave voice to the common mind of the assembled Church (Acts 15:13-21). During the Monothelite controversy in the seventh century, it was not Pope Honorius but Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem, supported by the lay-monk St. Maximus the Confessor, who was instrumental in expressing the true faith concerning Christ's Person. The Holy Spirit, who "blows where He wishes" (John 3:8), may on occasion speak through any bishop, and for that matter through any lay man or woman. In what sense, then, are we to ascribe to the Pope a specific "infallibility" such as is given to no one else? And what, in any case, do we mean by "infallibility" in this context? Is not infallibility a quality that belongs to God alone?

2. Turning now to the second question, we can readily agree that during the first millennium of Christianity there were many occasions when appeals were made to the See of Rome by Eastern bishops. One of the earliest such occasions, and also one of the clearest, was the appeal made by St. Athanasius of Alexandria to Pope Julius in 339-40. Significantly, St. Julius claims that Athanasius "did not come on his own initiative, but after being summoned and receiving letters from us."<sup>21</sup> As Athanasius himself quotes the Pope's words, presumably he did not disagree with Julius' interpretation of the course of events. Here, then, the Pope does indeed appear to be exercising within the Christian East something that closely resembles direct power of jurisdiction.<sup>22</sup> But in other instances it seems to be the

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<sup>21</sup> Athanasius, *Defence against the Arians* 29, in E. Giles, *Documents Illustrating Papal Authority A.D. 96-454* (London: SPCK, 1952) 97.

<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the instructions issued by Pope Celestine I to St. Cyril of Alexandria in 430 can also be interpreted as an exercise of direct power of jurisdiction within the Christian East. See Giles, *Documents*, 240-41.

Easterners who take the initiative in appealing to Rome, as was done by St. John Chrysostom in 404,<sup>23</sup> by St. Flavian of Constantinople in 449,<sup>24</sup> and by the Emperor Leo VI in 906.<sup>25</sup> The case of St. Ignatius and St. Photius of Constantinople in 861 is more complex.<sup>26</sup> When the canons of the Council of Sardica (342-43) speak of appeals to Rome by a deposed bishop, it is the bishop in question and not the Pope who is to take the initiative.<sup>27</sup> Apart, then, from the case of Athanasius and Pope Julius, the evidence points towards an exercise on the Pope's part of appellate rather than direct jurisdiction within Eastern Christendom.

These appeals, moreover, do not necessarily indicate a straightforward recognition of a power of jurisdiction vested exclusively in the Papacy. In 404, for example, Chrysostom appealed not only to Pope Innocent I but also to Bishop Venerius of Milan and to Bishop Chromatius of Aquileia. No doubt the appeal to Rome was primary, but it is significant that Chrysostom asked for the help, not just of the Roman Pontiff, but of any other prominent Western bishops who might be able to intervene effectively on his behalf; his appeal does not have to be interpreted in strictly juridical terms. In 906, Leo VI appealed to the other Eastern Patriarchs (apart from Constantinople) as well as to the Pope; and when the Pope ruled in the Emperor's favour, this decision was not in fact accepted without question by the Byzantine Church.

Similar ambiguities surround the evidence provided by St. Theodore the Studite (759-826). His advice to the Emperor Leo V is well known: "If there is anything in the Patriarch's reply about

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<sup>23</sup> Giles, *Documents*, 162.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>25</sup> George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968) 259-60; George Every, *Misunderstandings Between East and West* (London: Lutterworth, 1965) 51-53.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1948) 70-90; Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford; Clarendon, 1955) 24.

<sup>27</sup> Giles, *Documents*, 100-101. On the discrepancies between the Greek and Latin texts of the Sardican canons, see Hamilton Hess, *The Canons of the Council of Sardica A.D. 343* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958) 41-60.

which Your Holiness feels doubt or disbelief. .. you may ask the Elder Rome for clarification, as has been the practice from the beginning according to inherited tradition." Citing Matthew 16:18, he goes on to describe the See of Rome as "the very highest among the Churches of God."<sup>28</sup> But elsewhere he invokes the authority, not of Rome alone, but of the Pentarchy. Quoting on this occasion Matthew 18:18, he terms all five Patriarchs collectively "the successors" of the apostles, stating that they constitute together "the five-headed power of the Church," which is "the criterion of the divine dogmas."<sup>29</sup> On another occasion he even calls the Bishop of Jerusalem "the first among the Patriarchs."<sup>30</sup> Whatever the prerogatives that Theodore assigns to the Pope, it is clear that he does not wish to isolate the authority of Rome from that of the other four patriarchates.

George Every offers a fair summing-up of Constantinople's attitude to the papacy prior to the schism: "Rome was a convenient court of reference, an umpire at a distance from the capital, but in no serious sense a juridical superior of the Patriarchate."<sup>31</sup>

Looking beyond these specific historical examples to the basic attitude which underlies them, there is one final point which we Orthodox wish to emphasize. For us Rome is, in the oft-quoted words of St. Ignatius of Antioch, "the Church which presides in love."<sup>32</sup> We do not want to see this ministry of love interpreted as a coercive power of jurisdiction. As an Orthodox I find no difficulty in ascribing to the Roman Pontiff, within a reunited Christendom, a universal "care of all the Churches," to use the phrase of Pope Innocent I.<sup>33</sup> But I would wish to see this all-embracing care expressed in pastoral rather than juridical categories—in terms of love rather than law.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ep.* ii, 86 (PG 99:1332A).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 129 (PG 99:1417C).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 (PG 99:1161A).

<sup>31</sup> *The Byzantine Patriarchate 451-1204* (2nd ed., London: SPCK, 1962) 168.

<sup>32</sup> *To the Romans*, prologue.

<sup>33</sup> Giles, *Documents*, 202.

Of all the titles given to the Pope, the one that we Orthodox find most congenial is *servus servorum Dei*. "Whoever wishes to be the first among you, let him be your servant" (Matt 20:27): the Pope is first precisely because he is the supreme servant. It is indeed his vocation to act as an instrument for the unity of all the Churches of God. Whenever crises arise or schisms threaten, it is his task to take the initiative in bringing about healing and reconciliation; and already, at the end of the first century, Pope Clement I is doing exactly that in the letter that he wrote to the Church of Corinth.<sup>34</sup> But in taking this initiative the Pope acts as the servant and not as the master. He seeks not to compel but to persuade; he does not forcibly impose a solution upon others but invites their willing co-operation. When he fulfills Christ's command, "Strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:32), he does this above all through his humble love.

Such, then, is the way in which as an Orthodox I would set about answering my two questions concerning infallibility and primacy. But I offer my answers, not in any spirit of polemics and confrontation, but simply in an exploratory way. The theology of the Church is something that we all need to explore further. Ecclesiology is as yet an uncompleted task, a theme for continuing inquiry and reflection; in the works of Fr. Georges Florovsky, it is "still *im Wenden*, in the process of formation."<sup>35</sup> In the Kievan Church Study Group, let us pursue this work of ongoing exploration not in mutual opposition but with mutual love.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-3.

<sup>35</sup> *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View: Collected Works*, vol. 1 (Belmont: Nordland, 1972) 58.

## Ancient Witness

The Creator of all, the Ruler of all,  
He has sent and established the Word  
from the heavens—Himself—  
in the hearts of us all, in a way that reflects  
Who He is—how He works:  
not in sovereignty-fear,  
but in gentleness, meekness and love.

For the King sent His Son  
as a King and as God:  
He was saving, persuading,  
a Man among men-  
not pursuing but calling;  
not judging, compelling  
or forcing, but loving;  
for compulsion is totally  
foreign to God.

Paraphrase of *Epistle to Diognetus* VII  
by Isabel Ann Massey