

Patriarch and Pope: Different Levels of Roman Authority¹

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Резюме

Кир Василь (Лостен) вважає, що для досягнення спільного, католицького і православного розуміння примату папи, необхідно відрізнити між функціями західнього патріярха та функціями вселенського примаса. В історичному розвитку, ця ключова різниця затерлася. Таким чином, західня Церква вважала впродовж століть, що „західні патріярхати,” встановлені внаслідок хрестоносних походів, були автентичними взірцями, а східні патріярхати на загал керувалися взірцем папів.

На думку автора, повна розв'язка цього питання не полягає в юридичних формулах, оскільки Церква є живою, рухомою дійсністю, яка ворується на Пресвятій Тройці. Тому різні функції та служби Церкви розуміються спільно, цебто в співдії однієї з другою. У пошуках об'єднуючих моментів, Кир Василь наводить думки Митрополита Івана (Зізіуласа) і Єпископа Каллістоса (Вейр) з православної сторони, та Кардинала Рацінгера з католицької.



¹ Paper presented at the Stamford Consultation of the Kievan Church Study Group in December, 1993.

An Orthodox View

In the spring of 1993, the new edition of Bishop Kallistos's book *The Orthodox Church* was published. On the issue of the Roman primacy, Bishop Kallistos writes:

The crucial issue between Orthodoxy and Rome is certainly the understanding of the Papal ministry within the Church. We Orthodox cannot accept the definitions of the First Vatican Council, promulgated in 1870, concerning the infallibility and the supreme universal jurisdiction of the Pope. These definitions were emphatically reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council, but at the same time Vatican II placed the Papal claims within a new context by insisting also upon the collegiality of the bishops. Orthodoxy recognizes that, in the early centuries of the Church, Rome was pre-eminent in its steadfast witness to the true faith; but we do not believe that, in his teaching ministry, the Pope possesses a special charisma or gift of grace that is not granted to his fellow bishops. We recognize him as first – but only as first among equals. He is the elder brother, but not the supreme ruler. We do not consider that, in the first ten centuries of the Church, the Pope possessed direct and immediate power of jurisdiction in the Christian east, and so we find it impossible to grant such power to him today.²

That paragraph does not sound encouraging. However, Bishop Kallistos continues with two more paragraphs on the same matter:

² Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia), *The Orthodox Church*, (New York-London: Penguin Books, 1993), 316. We give the text of this paragraph *in extenso* to make it clear that we do not wish to misquote or misconstrue Bishop Kallistos's more favourable comments which follow.

To Roman Catholic ears all this may sound negative and unhelpful. So, instead of saying what Orthodox will *not* accept, let us ask in positive terms what the nature of Papal primacy is from an Orthodox viewpoint. Surely we Orthodox should be willing to assign to the Pope, in a re-united Christendom, not just an honorary seniority but an all-embracing apostolic care. We should be willing to assign to him the right, not only to accept appeals from the whole Christian world but even to take the initiative in seeking ways of healing when crisis and conflict arise anywhere among Christians. We envisage that on such occasions the Pope would act, not in isolation, but always in close co-operation with his brother bishops. We would wish to see his ministry spelt out in pastoral rather than juridical terms. He would encourage rather than compel, consult rather than coerce.³

The State of the Question

In this paragraph Bishop Kallistos has brought us to the goal of the discussion, by defining the "crucial issue between Orthodoxy and Rome" in terms which both sides can accept. The fundamental meaning of the Roman primacy as expressed by Vatican I and Vatican II⁴ is precisely an all-embracing apostolic care, with the concurrent right not only to accept appeals but to take the initiative.⁵ We would strongly agree that it is better (and more success

³ *Ibid.* I shall quote the third paragraph when we come to the distinction between universal and patriarchal authority.

⁴ As I remarked at Oxford, these two General Councils must be read *together*. Cf. my paper "The Roman Primacy and the Church of Kiev," *Logos* 34:1-2 (1993), 85.

⁵ In his own paper at Oxford Bishop Kallistos affirmed that "...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 Petrine ministry

ful) for the initiative to come *towards* the Pope from the parties concerned. In recent times, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople is capable of taking the initiative, but prefers to wait to be asked before becoming involved in a troubled situation. Best of all, of course, is a prior agreement from all parties that they will accept the primate's arbitration. Primatial authority is *moral authority*; if a decision is going to succeed, it must have the voluntary, internal assent of those involved.⁶

In this vein, I appreciate Bishop Kallistos' reference to the famous intervention of Pope Saint Clement I in some problems at Corinth. Bishop Kallistos says:

... 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.⁷ 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.⁸

In August 1993 Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, an Orthodox theologian of outstanding erudition, had this to say:

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." *Logos* 34 (1993), 25–26.

I must insist, however, that no Catholic would attribute "any exclusive monopoly in the discernment of the truth" to St. Peter, or to the Pope!

⁶ I intend this comment as a statement of fact, not a dogmatic definition.

⁷ I Clement, *To the Romans* 1–3.

⁸ Bishop Kallistos, "The Church of God," *Logos* 34:1–2 (1993), 29.