

# Bureau of Information

NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

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## NEWS RELEASE

### JOINT NEWS RELEASE

For Release:  
1st O/RC meeting held  
Sunday, September 5th, 1965

(NOTE TO EDITORS: The Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops Ecumenical Commission and the Roman Catholic Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs will hold a joint press conference at the conclusion of their one-day meeting on September 9, 1965. The press conference will be held at Saint Spyridon's Greek Orthodox Church, 102 Russell Street, Worcester, Mass., at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. The telephone number of Saint Spyridon's Church is 617-753-2958.)

(NOTE TO EDITORS: This is an advance release prepared and issued jointly by the NCWC Bureau of Information and the General Secretariat of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops. Please note the release date of Sunday, September 5.)

The Ecumenical Commission of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops of the Americas and the Roman Catholic Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs will meet in a day of exploratory discussions on September 9 in Worcester, Mass. This will be the first such meeting between the two bodies on a national level in this country. There are some five million members of the world-wide Orthodox Church in North America.

The Roman Catholic Commission has held similar discussions with Lutherans, Episcopalians and the United Presbyterians in the U.S.A., and the Orthodox Commission is engaged in a continuing theological dialogue with the Episcopalians.

Heading the Orthodox Commission at this meeting will be its chairman, Archbishop Iakovos of New York, chairman of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops. The Roman Catholic Commission for Ecumenical Affairs is headed by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore, who, with members of the Commission, designated Bishop Bernard Flanagan of the Diocese of Worcester, Mass., as head of the subcommission for relations with the Orthodox.

A meeting such as this one between Orthodox and Roman Catholics in this country is in the spirit of the renewed friendship between the groups on the international level. Perhaps the most significant of the recent meetings between Orthodox and Roman Catholics occurred when Pope Paul VI voyaged to Jerusalem in January, 1964. At that time he and the Orthodox Patriarch, Athenagoras of Constantinople, met in what was the first encounter between the heads of the two communions in five centuries.

Among other gestures of friendship Pope Paul has returned some precious relics to the Orthodox Church in Greece and recently received two envoys from Patriarch Athenagoras who came to inform him of the Rhodes Conferences.

At the most recent Rhodes Conference, a consultative assembly of Orthodox bishops from all over the world under the presidency of Patriarch Athenagoras, it was decided to encourage the national branches of the Orthodox Church to arrange theological discussions with local Roman Catholic leaders, and the Worcester meeting is one result of that Conference. The initiative for the American meetings was taken by the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops.

The Roman Catholic Ecumenical Council, Vatican II, about to enter its fourth session, has promulgated several documents which bear upon its relations with the Orthodox. One of these is the Decree on Ecumenism which, while taking account of the differences which do exist, notes the many points of common heritage between Orthodox and Roman Catholics. The Council's Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite is another of these documents.

Theologians on the Orthodox Commission participating in the September 9 meeting are, in addition to the chairman, Archbishop Iakovos, Father Paul Schneirla, General Secretary of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops; Frs. George Bacopulos, Panteleimon Rhodostulos, John Romanides and John Tsoumas of the Greek Archdiocese; Frs. John Meyendorff and Alexander Schmemmann and Professor Serge Verkhovskoi of the Russian Metropolia, Professor Veselin Kesich of the Serbian diocese; Father Seraphim Surrency of the Russian Exarchate; and Father Florian Galdau of the Romanian Episcopate.

Roman Catholic representatives who will participate in the meeting are, in addition to Bishop Flanagan, Rev. Charles K. Von Euw, St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass.; Rev. Paul Mailleux, S.J., John XXIII Center, Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y.; Very Rev. Msgr. Myles M. Bourke, St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y.; Rt. Rev. Francis Dvornik, Byzantine Research Institute of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.; Rev. Maurice B. Schepers, O.P., Washington, D.C.; Rev. George A. Maloney, S.J., John XXIII Center, Fordham University, Bronx, N.Y.; Very Rev. John Jadaa, B.S., St. Basil's Seminary, Methuen, Mass.; Rev. John T. Feeney, Auburndale, Mass.; Rev. Edward F. Malone, M.M., Maryknoll Seminary, Maryknoll, N.Y.; and Mr. Thomas E. Bird, Princeton, N.J.

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