

re 41st meeting
Oct 18-20, 1990

NEWS RELEASE

ORTHODOX/ROMAN CATHOLIC CONSULTATION

ISSUES JOINT COMMUNIQUE ON CRITICAL NEED TO CONTINUE DIALOGUE

Stressing the vital importance of overcoming past hostility in a spirit of Christian love and forgiveness and of continuing the work together for Christian unity, members of the Orthodox/Roman Catholic Consultation in the U.S. have issued a joint communique. The communique, approved unanimously on Saturday, October 20, at the conclusion of a meeting in Boston, will be forwarded to the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

The U.S. Consultation, which first met in 1965, is now co-chaired by Bishop Arthur J. O'Neill of Rockford and Bishop Maximos, Greek Orthodox Bishop of Pittsburgh. The remaining members of the consultation are theologians, canonists, historians, and other scholars with the Catholic members serving as consultants for the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Orthodox members appointed by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America. At the recent meeting in Boston, Orthodox members represented the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, the Orthodox Church in America, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, and the American Carpho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese in the U.S.A. There was also an observer from the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America and Canada.

Noting that it is difficult for them in North America "to appreciate the complexity of the religious, cultural, political and social situation" in Eastern Europe, the members of the Consultation wished to convey that their experience leads them "to believe that genuine, theological dialogue, in a spirit of mutual respect and love, is in fact possible, and that such dialogue can help our churches respond effectively to the many painful practical issues that still divide us." At the October meeting in Boston, political and religious developments in Eastern Europe which have manifold and immediate implications for relations between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches were shared as points of interest and concern. These would include developments within Ukraine, Rumania, and elsewhere.

On the agenda for the October meeting were two major topics for discussion: the increasingly important role of the laity in the Church and the primacy of honor accorded to the See of Constantinople among Orthodox churches. Four papers had been prepared, two by Orthodox members and two by Catholic members, and these discussed. The preparation of a joint communique was a spontaneous suggestion. It arose from the perceived need by several participants that the witness of this dialogue should be brought forward to their churches. The communique states: "At the same time, rapid political and social changes have been accompanied by serious tensions which, many fear, may threaten our churches' continued progress to unity."

The October 1990 meeting was the 41st such dialogue of the Orthodox/Roman Catholic Consultation in the U.S. Over its twenty-five year history, the Consultation has produced 16 agreed statements and other documents. Attending the meeting on the Orthodox side were: Bishop Maximos, Fathers Alkiviadis Calivas, Emmanuel Clapsis, James Dutko, Jason DeVito, Thomas FitzGerald, Emmanuel Gratsias, Paul Schneirla,

Robert Stephanopoulos, Nicholas Apostola, Professors John Erickson, Robert Haddad, and Lewis Patsavos. On the Catholic side were: Bishop O'Neill, Msgr. Frederick McManus, Fathers Robert Barringer, George Berthold, Brian Daley, Michael Fahey, Sidney Griffith, David Petras, Professors Thomas Bird and Robin Darling Young, and Dr. John Borelli.

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