



# NEWS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ORTHODOX AND ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS HOLD ANNUAL MEETING**

WASHINGTON--The Joint Committee of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Bishops held its annual meeting under the joint chairmanship of Metropolitan Silas of New Jersey and Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland of Milwaukee. Metropolitan Silas hosted the bishops' meeting in the Diocesan See of Tenafly and at the Cathedral of St. John the Theologian on Wednesday evening, September 30, for the Divine Liturgy.

Each day the bishops began their deliberations with morning prayer. During their working sessions on Wednesday and Thursday, October 1, they discussed the current status of Eastern Catholics in the Roman Catholic Church and in relation to the Orthodox Church and current situations of confrontation between Catholics and Orthodox in eastern and central Europe. On Thursday evening, the faculty and students of Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University welcomed the bishop for events planned by the university, the seminary, and the Commission for Christian Unity of the Archdiocese of Newark. Retired Archbishop Peter Gerety of Newark presided at a Eucharistic Liturgy for peace at which Archbishop Weakland preached on Matthew 5:38-48. After dinner with the seminary faculty and students and visiting ecumenical personnel, Archbishop William H. Keeler of Baltimore delivered an address entitled "Are We Making Progress in the Orthodox/Roman Catholic Dialogue?" Bishop Maximos of the Greek Orthodox Diocese

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of Pittsburgh gave a formal response.

In addition to Metropolitan Silas and Bishop Maximos, the following Orthodox hierarchs attended this year's meeting: Metropolitan Christopher (Serbian Orthodox Church), Archbishop Peter (Orthodox Church in America), Bishop Vsevolod (Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America), and Bishop Isaiah of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Denver.

With Archbishop Weakland and Archbishop Keeler, the following Catholic bishops participated in the meeting: Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb of Mobile, Bishop Michael Dudick of Passaic (Byzantine Diocese), Bishop Dale Melczek of Gary, Bishop Robert Mulvee of Wilmington, Bishop Arthur O'Neill of Rockford, and Bishop Edward Kmiec, Auxiliary Bishop of Trenton.

On Friday, October 2, the bishops agreed to the following communique:

"The members of the Joint Committee of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Bishops gathered for their eleventh meeting, September 30 - October 2, 1992, in Tenafly, New Jersey. They re-affirmed their commitment to these annual dialogues and their conviction that through dialogue, mutual understanding, good will and trust, they are following the teachings of the Lord. The theological dialogue at all levels is under severe strain because of recent events in eastern Europe. The Roman Catholic bishops listened with concern as the Orthodox bishops expressed their deepest reservations with the recent letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion." In their view, the letter is a sign that the Roman Catholic Church is changing its mind in regard to basic presuppositions upon which the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church meet as equal churches, manifesting the fullness of catholicity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

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"As the bishop members of this dialogue committee study the history of the relationship between the two churches since the schism, they recognize that iniquities have been perpetrated by both churches (for example, the problems associated with Brest and Lviv). In this context it is important to study the recent developments in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Having recognized that transgressions and deceptions have been committed, leaders and faithful of both churches must repent and express mutual forgiveness. In this spirit, the example of Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI, whose vision continues to inspire Catholics and Orthodox alike, must not be surrendered.

"With the arrival of His Holiness Patriarch Pavle of Serbia in the United States, the bishops turned their thoughts to the tragic events occurring in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. They condemn the past and present manipulation of religion for advancing geo-political and ethnic interests, which have rekindled so many deep prejudices and enmities. The bishops appealed to all in the United States to pray for the reconciliation of the peoples of that troubled region. As winter approaches, thousands of lives are endangered. The bishops expressed their support for urgent humanitarian effort in meeting the needs of all who suffer there. They applauded the actions of Orthodox and Catholic leaders, and other religious leaders, toward terminating the terrible carnage taking place in these areas."

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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