

Press Release

U.S. ORTHODOX/ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION

The U.S. Orthodox/Roman Catholic Theological Consultation held its 44th meeting, October 29-31, 1992, at Immaculate Conception Center, Douglaston, NY. Presiding were Bishop Maximos, Greek Orthodox Bishop of Pittsburgh, and Bishop Michael Dudick, Eparch of the Byzantine Eparchy of Passaic, who was substituting for Bishop Arthur O'Neill of Rockford, Illinois, the Catholic Co-Chairman of the Dialogue. The members of the Consultation are appointed by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

This meeting was the third consecutive session which the dialogue group has devoted to questions and issues relating to Eastern Catholic Churches in the light of current situations in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Papers were prepared and discussed on the topics of proselytism and relations between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The members of the dialogue also took note of current conversations between Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholics regarding the division of their churches.

The Consultation recognized that resolution of the difficulties that have arisen around the reemergence of Eastern Catholic Churches in Eastern and Central Europe requires more profound theological investigation of ecclesiological questions. Among these are the meaning of "full communion" between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, the use of the term "Sister Church," the understanding of primacy and its relationship to the principle of conciliarity.

The members of the Consultation held a candid discussion on the value and history of this dialogue and its contributions to the work of unity. This discussion was facilitated by a presentation by Father Michael Fahey, SJ, the Catholic Secretary of the Consultation, on the ecclesiological significance of full communion. Bishop Maximos also reported on reception of the Consultation's work in Orthodox and ecumenical settings. The members agreed to reconvene June 1-3, 1993 for the next session to prepare papers on the concept of "Sister Church" and written responses to "Towards Koinonia [Communion] in Faith, Life, and Witness," the working draft for the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, and to the letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on some aspects of the Church as communion.

The nine Catholic scholar-members of the Consultation who were present for this meeting agreed to a statement of their own to Catholics on the vision of unity and the current situation in Eastern Europe.

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