

Chapter 12 — Ecumenism The Requirements for Union

On May 10, 1961, while on a visit to Beirut, the patriarch went to see the apostolic nuncio, Archbishop Egano Righi Lambertini. Among other things, the nuncio asked him what the Orthodox thought of the council. The patriarch answered his question. The nuncio then asked him to transmit his views in writing to the Central Commission. The patriarch did so in a long letter addressed to Archbishop Felici, dated May 19, 1961.

1. It can be affirmed with certainty that the Orthodox people of our regions of the Near East, with few exceptions, have been filled with enthusiasm at the thought of the union that was to be realized by this council. The people as a whole see no other reason for this council than the realization of this union. It must be said that in view of their delicate position in the midst of a Muslim majority, the Christian people of the Arab Near East, perhaps more than those anywhere else, aspire to Christian unity. For them this unity is not only the fulfillment of Our Lord's desire, but also a question of life or death. During a meeting of rank and file people held last year in Alexandria, which included many Orthodox Christians, who were as enthusiastic as the Catholics in proclaiming the idea of union, we were able to speak these words, "If the union of Christians depended only on the people, it would have been accomplished long ago."

When His Holiness the Pope announced the convocation of this council, our people, whether Orthodox or Catholic, immediately thought spontaneously and irresistibly that the bells were about to ring for the hour of union. The general populace are even surprised that it is taking so long, as they do not understand what interest the ecclesiastical leaders can have in deferring the union that is so eagerly desired. The day that the people realized that the proposed council was not a "council of union," their disappointment was great. Nonetheless, in spite of all the news that they receive setting aside the idea of an immediate union, the people continue to hope that Christian leaders, at this council or later on, will be able to effect official union to which the people will be faithful. Few are the Orthodox Christians who do not fervently wish for union or who see insurmountable obstacles to its realization. The most urgent reform that they hope to see realized by the council is the unification of the date of Easter. In the presence of Muslims, our Christians feel deeply humiliated every time that their paschal computations do not coincide. Our patriarchal synod of August 1959 addressed a more detailed memorandum to the Ante-preparatory Commission on this subject. It is our earnest hope that this point will be studied and resolved as soon as possible. It would be a great step toward union.

2. As for the Orthodox clergy, generally speaking they show much less enthusiasm than do the people. In public they declare that they are not opposed to it in principle, but in their view it seems very difficult to accomplish. They raise the question of divorce. They usually accuse the Roman Church of being an obstacle to union, either because of its doctrinal innovations or because of what they call its human ambitions and its love of domination. The grievances that they have against the Roman Church are almost always the same. However, even in the ranks of the Orthodox clergy one can note a beginning of rapprochement, a little more understanding, as well as a more or less eager desire to be united, which is supported by the growth of the ecumenical movement and by the feelings of the people. In general, it can be said that compared with the clergy of other Orthodox Churches, the Orthodox clergy of our Arab Near East, who are less scholarly,

offer a less systematic opposition, but they cannot dissociate themselves from the Russians, the Greeks, and the other Orthodox Christians. The reason for this must be sought above all in the fact that all Christians in our Arab lands are in the minority, and also perhaps in the role of neutrality or of mediation that Melkite patriarchs have traditionally played in the disputes between Byzantium and Rome.

3. What everyone is seeking from the forthcoming council is that it reveal the true face of the Catholic Church, and not only the face of the Latin Church, with which some still want to identify it in practice. Even though the Church is catholic legally and in fact, there can be no doubt that we must all make serious efforts so that this catholicity may be ever more completely realized in our attitudes and in our actions.

Specifically, the support that the latinization of the East still has in certain ecclesiastical circles is a denial of the generous declarations and promises of the popes, who have always affirmed that the restoration of catholic unity did not in any sense signify either in theory or in practice that Eastern Christians should adopt Latinism. Now, to give only one example, the restoration and preservation of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem constitute a practical negation of the very idea of unity, which is not and must not be the absorption of the East by the West, but the union of the East and the West in mutual respect for their diversity.

The Catholic Church must be able to prove that there is room within it for every diversity that does not affect faith, charity, and ecclesiastical communion. It must be able to give concrete proof not only that it accepts Catholics who are not Latin, but also that it condemns those who cannot conceive of a Catholicism that is not Latin. Now, as long as the latinization of the East continues, in its hierarchy and in its discipline, the Orthodox will never believe in the sincerity of declarations of the popes calling for unity. They will always believe that this unity must culminate sooner or later in the absorption of their Churches by the Latin Church.

4. Until now the repeated and stirring calls to union that the popes addressed to our separated brethren simply hardened them more, for these calls always implied more or less the following idea: return to the sheepfold that you have abandoned, acknowledge your faults and your errors, submit, ask forgiveness, and we are ready to welcome you warmly, to hold our arms out to you, to embrace you, etc. Our Orthodox brethren are all the more astonished at this language inasmuch as they are sincerely convinced of having innovated nothing, of having remained faithful to the tradition of the days before the ruptures, and inasmuch as they believe that it is rather the Catholic Church that has strayed from apostolic tradition.

With His Holiness Pope John XXIII, we entered upon a new course. Was it not he who declared on January 29, 1959, four days after the announcement of the council, speaking to the pastors of Rome: "We shall not institute a historical inquiry; we shall not seek to find out who was right and who was wrong. The responsibility is shared by all parties. We shall simply say: 'Let us come together, let us put an end to dissension.'"

These words of His Holiness will be a landmark in the Church. They open up the true path that leads to union. We think that with an attitude such as this on the part of Catholics, reconciliation with the Orthodox Churches becomes possible.

5. All Catholic ecumenists agree in asking the Western Church to be more open. It is in no sense a question of dogmatic compromises. What is needed is a greater openness of mind, to understand and admit that there can be within the bosom of the *catholica* something more than is commonly seen, some other representation and some other codification of the same dogma, some other organization of the hierarchy, some other discipline, some other spirituality, other forms of monasticism and of the apostolate, etc.

On all these points, the Latin Church should not insist so much on reducing to its own uniformity the variety of charisms, experiences, needs, and activities that exist in other Churches. In particular, the Eastern Catholics who have not been latinized do not understand why there is still so much insistence on latinizing their discipline, constantly constricting it more. It would have been much more “catholic” to respect their institutions and to let them develop harmoniously, not in the direction of increasingly excessive centralization, but in the direction of a sincere and respectful collaboration between the local hierarchy and the organizations of the Holy See of Rome.

The Orthodox see in Latin Catholicism of the present day what the free peoples see in the regimes behind the Iron Curtain: a great deal of order and organization, but also enslavement of consciences and a human desire for domination.

In answer to a Catholic priest who was speaking to him about union, the late Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch replied, “You wish me to unite with Rome, so that tomorrow, if I wish to remove a priest, he can go and complain to Rome, which will be too happy to demolish me before him!”

6. Christians have had different mentalities in the past, and they still do. In spite of these divergences—we would even say with these divergences—Christ calls them all to unity. One portion of the Church must not prevent the fulfillment of the divine Master’s wish by seeking to impose its own mentality and discipline on others at all costs.

Thus it is our sincere belief that the present successor of Peter, who is so evangelical, so modest, and so simple, and the increasingly significant actions that he is taking, are a call to a greater openness of heart and mind, so that all Christians may feel equally loved and thereby rediscover more easily the path to reunion. As far as union is concerned, we believe that the present pope is the greatest gift God has given to His Church.

The Importance of the Secretariat for Christian Unity

In 1962 the Secretariat for Christian Unity had prepared a schema of very modest aspect on "the necessity of prayer for Christian unity, especially in our time." In a memorandum addressed to the Central Commission, dated from Damascus on June 5, 1962, the patriarch expressed his great admiration for the spirit that prevailed in the secretariat. Going beyond the subject, he suggested:

- a. that all schemas of the council be submitted to the secretariat in order to be revised from the ecumenical point of view;
- b. that the secretariat be maintained after the council and be transformed into a permanent organ of the Roman Curia.)

We simply wish to bring to this schema of the Secretariat for Christian Unity the tribute of our admiration. Its spirit and its tone are worthy of the nascent Catholic ecumenism. It contains no term that could offend any of our separated brethren. The perspective of Christian divisions that it presents is as historically objective as it is pastorally psychological. The tone of this schema, far different from the tone to which official circles have accustomed us until now, should serve as a model whenever the council wishes to speak about Christian unity.

We take this opportunity to make two suggestions: the first is that all schemas of the council be submitted to the Secretariat for Christian Unity, so that it may review their wording and that the council, whose goal is to bring Christians together, may avoid inadvertently widening the gap between them. There is an ecumenical and profoundly catholic way of speaking on all matters when we wish to enter into dialogue with our separated brothers. This manner of speaking, and also perceiving things in depth, has not been adequately mastered by all Catholic theologians, even the most learned. Since this Secretariat for Christian Unity has been instituted by His Holiness, it is good, we believe, for it to establish the tone for the preparatory labors of the council. In particular, we think that the Theological Commission should, more than any other, avail itself of the services that this secretariat is ready to furnish very advantageously.

My second suggestion is an urgent request to His Holiness that the secretariat not disappear after the conclusion of the council, but that it be transformed into a permanent dicastery of the Roman Curia. It would be, as it were, the permanent ecumenical conscience of the Roman See and of the entire Catholic Church.

Union and the Christians of the East

The Eastern Commission, considering the principal mission of the Eastern Catholics to be the fostering of reconciliation between Eastern Orthodoxy and the Holy See of Rome, had prepared a schema entitled: "On the unity of the Church: that all may be one." In a memorandum to the Central Commission, dated from Damascus on June 5, 1962, the patriarch made a few remarks on this schema.

First of all, we wish to praise this schema "*De Ecclesiae unitate*," which unquestionably constitutes progress over the earlier documents of the Holy See, especially in its mode of expression. So that it may more closely approach perfection, we take the liberty of making the following remarks:

1. In this schema there is still too frequent reference to the "return" of the sheep to the fold of Peter, to "dissident" brothers, etc. The entire text should be carefully reviewed so as to eliminate any offensive allusions. In this way the text will avoid producing on the Orthodox an effect contrary to the one intended. The schema speaks of the psychological means of preparing the way to unity. This is the first means. If one speaks of stray sheep in a sermon or in a small committee, it might be overlooked. But to speak about that in an official conciliar document whose purpose is precisely to bring hearts together, is at the very least proof of a lack of psychology.
2. In speaking about the rights, privileges, dignities, honors, etc., to be safeguarded for the Eastern Church, the text uses general terms, and repeats certain declarations of Pope Leo XIII. However, experience has taught us that this kind of declaration accomplishes nothing. It serves rather to show that administrative practice is contrary to the theoretical affirmations of popes. Instead, the text of the conciliar decree should affirm the rights that patriarchs of the Eastern Churches have been demanding for several years: the rank of the patriarchs in the hierarchy of the Church, their freedom in internal government, a reduction in appeals to the Roman Curia, the preservation of the rite of those who wish to accede to union, etc. That does not seem very clear in the schema that is being proposed to us.
3. We prefer that this schema be prepared, or at least reviewed, by the Secretariat for Christian Unity. That secretariat has specific competence to study these questions, and has available personnel qualified to deal with these kinds of subjects.
4. The word "dissidents" should be avoided everywhere, and all the more the words "heretics" or "schismatics." Instead the terms "separated brethren" or simply "the Orthodox" should be used. Charity requires of us to call everyone by the name that he wishes. This does not mean that we therefore share his inward conviction and the personal meaning he attaches to his name.
5. In No. 7, it is said of the separated brethren that they are deprived "of many means of salvation that are found in the true Church, especially the institutions and directions of the *magisterium*, without which Christian faith and morals are not perfectly preserved." The wording is exaggerated and even somewhat false. The *magisterium* of the Church is not only that of the Pope of Rome, and it must not be thought that they are so completely

deprived of the means of eternal salvation that their faith and morals are somewhat corrupted. This whole sentence needs to be revised so as to be more conciliatory.

6. No. 24 affirms once more that Eastern Christians who return to Catholic unity will never be forced to become Latin Christians. This is true in theory. In practice, however, everything has been done and continues to be done in certain regions, such as in Palestine and the entire Near East, so that Eastern Christians may in fact become Latin Christians. And this has been going on with the knowledge of the supreme authority, which does not seem to have reacted until now except by renewing theoretical declarations on the preservation of the Eastern rites. The entire process of “latinization” needs to be taken up here.

The council should take concrete and energetic action to condemn forever the “latinization” of the East.

7. No. 45 expresses the wish that the beatification and canonization processes of the “martyrs of the union” be introduced. While we recognize the legitimacy of this desire, we think it is useful to make it known that our patriarchate, in its concern for peaceful relations, avoids pushing the causes of these “martyrs of union” if the Orthodox have played a less than flattering role in them. Let us not forget that Orthodoxy likewise has its martyrs of Catholicism.

8. In agreement with No. 46 of the schema, we urgently ask that the Secretariat for Christian Unity be transformed after the council into a permanent dicastery of the Roman Curia. Eastern Catholic Ecumenists should not be systematically excluded from this dicastery, for while their efforts are discredited at the present time, they will be increasingly efficacious in bringing hearts together.

9. We also desire, with No. 47, the internationalization of the Roman Curia, so as to give the central administration a genuinely catholic, i. e., universal, international point of view. Too often our separated brethren see in the Roman Curia a national occupation of a specific people, like a family patrimony, in which a given nation has all the interests and presses for centralization less out of concern for the Church than for its own interests. This perspective must be refuted.

10. Finally, Nos. 48 through 52 deal with the conditions for the worldwide union of Orthodox Christians of the East with the Holy Catholic Church. In envisioning this hypothesis the schema invites them to occupy the place that belongs to them in the Catholic Church. We do not know when and how a worldwide reunion of this kind will be possible. And yet we know for certain that there are already in the Catholic Church Eastern rite communities with hierarchies. These communities must be given the place that is reserved and promised to the entire East. Orthodoxy watches carefully the behavior of the Holy See of Rome toward these Eastern groups that are in union. Orthodoxy concludes from the way that these Eastern groups are treated in the Catholic Church as to the treatment it will receive if reunion is realized. That is why, when we entreat for the preservation of the rights, privileges, and dignity of the Catholic East, and the rank of its hierarchical leaders within the whole Catholic hierarchy, we are not demanding personal advantages for ourselves. We are pursuing the inherent interests of

Christian unity. If this is understood some day, many difficulties will disappear. In No. 50, the schema affirms once more that the Catholic Church intends to respect the discipline peculiar to Eastern Christians, but repeats the unfortunate proviso “omitting only those things which, if they perchance are present, are contrary to correct faith and sound morals.” This proviso is offensive. There is absolutely nothing in authentic Eastern discipline contrary to faith and sound morals.

No. 51 promises the Orthodox clerics who return to Catholic unity their continuance in the sacred orders already received, “unless it should be otherwise provided by the Apostolic See in a particular case, for truly serious reasons.” This reservation is justified. On the other hand, the current practice of reserving to the Holy Office the admission of every Orthodox cleric indiscriminately seems to us subject to amendment. We think that it is better to leave that to the prudent judgment of the local ordinaries, without denying the right of the Holy See of Rome to intervene, as the schema says, “for truly serious reasons.”

The schema “De Ecclesiae unitate” came before the Council on November 27, 1962, during the 28th General Session. That day five Melkite Greek Fathers spoke. It was the patriarch who set the tone. His intervention, read in French, was translated into Latin and read by Archbishop George Hakim. The patriarch reserved the right to make some general remarks on the schema, leaving it to the other prelates of his community to take turns developing detailed comments.

This schema “*De Ecclesiae unitate*,” which directly concerns Eastern Orthodoxy, concerns us collaterally.

In order to remain within the time allotted to each one, I shall limit myself to some general remarks, leaving it to my brother Melkite Greek prelates the task of making more detailed critiques.

This schema, providing that there is a radical reworking of certain paragraphs of Part One and amendments to others, could constitute a basis for a worthwhile discussion.

First remark: This concerns the spirit of the wording, especially Nos. 5 to 12. The definite theological truths are often presented in such a way that they can only antagonize those who are not in our communion. The friendly tone beginning with No. 12 changes nothing of the unfavorable impression already caused. In fact, the contrast it presents with the peremptory and exclusive assertions of Roman authority, without mentioning the painful events of the past, leaves an impression of certain unpleasant biases in the sharing of historical responsibilities.

It must not be forgotten, in fact, that here we are addressing the Eastern Church, a Church that is fully apostolic in its intrinsic elements and clearly distinct from the Latin one. It is a first-born Church of Christ and of the Apostles. Its historical development and organization are the exclusive work of the Fathers, our Greek and Eastern Fathers. It owes what it is to the college of the Apostles, still living in the episcopate in collegiality, with Peter at its center, with its distinctive responsibilities and rights.

Historically, this Church owes to Rome neither its origin, its rites, its organization, nor anything of what constitutes it concretely. In short, no one has begotten it in the faith, except the Apostles; no one, except the Fathers, has established it in its entire patrimony of prayer, organization, and activity. Can it be said that Saints Basil, Gregory, Cyril, Chrysostom, and others are second-class Catholics because they were not Roman in all that they received and in all that they bequeathed?

If we wish to speak effectively to the Orthodox East, we must speak to it first of all about the Catholic doctrine relating to the collegiality of the pastorate of the Church. After that, we shall speak to it about the papacy, which will then appear as the central foundation of this collegiality. This is an absolutely important point. It would be fatal to forget it.

Second remark: The lack of collaboration among the Preparatory Commissions for the council has resulted in bringing us three distinct schemas on the same subject matter: the schema that we are now discussing, prepared by the Commission on the Eastern Churches, the schema "*De Oecumenismo*," prepared by the Secretariat for Christian Unity, and a chapter with the same title, prepared by the Theological Commission. An Arabic proverb says, "When many hands take part in the cooking, the food is burned." Obviously, these three texts sometimes deal with different aspects of the same question, but it is evident that they are dealing with the same subject matter. It is therefore desirable that a single text be presented to us under the title "On the Union of Christians" or some other title, and that it be worked out by a mixed sub-commission composed of members of the three above-mentioned groups. In that way, the subject matter will be more coherent and the council will save time.

Third remark: The schema that is proposed to us today bears the general title "*De Ecclesiae unitate*." Yet actually, after a few general considerations, the text speaks only of the means of fostering union with our Orthodox brethren of the East. From this perspective our schema could constitute a special chapter in the general schema "On Ecumenism" that we intend to prepare. It is our view that in this single schema on ecumenism we must set aside a special place for our Orthodox brethren of the East. In fact, while the general principles of ecumenism are identical for everyone, the practical means of opening the dialogue with our Orthodox brethren cannot be the same as those for our Protestant brethren. We are closer to our Orthodox brethren in the faith; we even accept the same methods of transmission of divine revelation. With the exception of papal primacy, we have the same hierarchical organization, the same sacraments, the same liturgy and so many other riches in common, to the point that what unites us is infinitely greater and deeper than what separates us. As for our Protestant brethren, we must seek union with them from other perspectives.

Venerable Fathers, the union of the Churches is for all of us a serious and vital problem. For us in particular, the Eastern Catholics of the Byzantine rite, the schism of the Churches is a constantly bleeding wound that we feel in the very depths of our souls. The union of Churches is our greatest concern, our first task, and the most ardent wish of our hearts. It is the goal toward which we are striving with all our strength and for which we desire to be the redemptive sacrifice when it is accomplished. Working for the union of Churches is as it were our reason for being and the fundamental mission that Providence has entrusted to us individually and collectively. The Orthodox and we, their Byzantine

Catholic brothers, constitute, in peoples of diverse nationalities, one single family in its religious mentality, its liturgy, its spiritual history, and in many of its attitudes. We need to be united with them as much as they need to be united with us. The time has come when all Christians must forget the quarrels of the past, in which human interests, on both sides, have often played a more decisive role than dogmatic differences. The time has come to accomplish Christ's wish "That all may be one."

The same day, November 27, 1962, it was the turn of Kyr Philip Naba, Metropolitan of Beirut and undersecretary of the council. He proposed the omission of the introduction to the schema, which was of a rather doctrinal nature. He extolled the importance of charity in ecumenical contacts, criticized the concept of a "return" applied exclusively to our Orthodox brethren, and stressed the need of safeguarding the distinctive discipline of the East.

The schema on the decree on the Unity of the Church "*Ut unum sit*" in the form presented for the discussion of the Fathers, pleases me in a fashion. In fact, it contains a great deal of material and deals with many dogmatic, liturgical, and pastoral questions. However, its arguments are not always thoroughly developed, and there is still room for shortening and necessary amendments. Since this is a subject of major importance that concerns the entire Second Vatican Council and whose solution is awaited by all Christians, it is necessary that this decree, which declares the wishes of the council on union, be presented to the Christian world in a more effective way. In order to help the council in its labors, we have thought that it would be useful to present the following observations:

First observation: The dogmatic portion of the decree should be curtailed and inserted in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church... Thus the decree "*Ut unum sit*" will be seen to be the solemn declaration of the Second Vatican Council on union and the firm foundation for general and fruitful collaboration for the realization of this great divine work.

However, this decree on unity does not speak of all the separated Churches, but only of the union of the Eastern Orthodox Churches with the Catholic Church. This method is useful because the Eastern Orthodox Church has much in common with the Catholic Church, in the profession of faith, in the doctrine of the sacraments, in the apostolic succession, etc. Its union with the Catholic Church therefore requires its own specific research and conditions.

Second observation: In order to foster union, the decree proposes various means and divides them into supernatural, theological, liturgical, canonical or disciplinary, psychological, and practical means. These suggestions are well-taken. They can even be considered as a prelude and as a firm stance from which to open dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

However, when the schema speaks of practical means, it cites a few ordinary and certainly good means, for example, the ecumenical movement, Eastern studies, the special day for awareness of the East (instituted by Pope Pius XI), etc. But it is silent on the most effective means, that is to say, the means that prepare a surer and more suitable

way toward a genuine and perfect union. Concerning these more powerful means the schema merely says in paragraph 38, “This Holy and Ecumenical Synod strongly recommends that everyone use the most efficacious means so that the desire for union may produce the desired fruit.”

Thus may I, a humble Eastern Catholic bishop, who has been and still is continually in contact with many Orthodox brethren, be permitted to give a few explanations of the practical and effective method of assisting and restoring union. There can be no doubt that this method must be based on truth and charity, or rather on charity for the truth—“*in caritate ad veritatem*.” For there are some very serious difficulties along the paths that lead to union. Only charity will manifest the truth and sing out the victory hymn of union. In many regions of the East, an immediate union is even impossible. It is therefore fitting first to prepare hearts for union, to breathe a new spirit into our relations with our Orthodox brethren, and to expand the scope of charity.

According to this more suitable way, charity counsels and ordains many things for union in the social and religious life. Here are some examples: collaboration with non-Catholics when there is a question of carrying out charitable works, of defending the dignity of the human person, of promoting justice, and of sustaining morality.

Here is another example: the celebration on the same day of the great Christian feasts, and most especially Christmas and Easter. This common celebration is a great sign of charity and union.

In addition, there are certain laws on the *communicatio in sacris* that are contrary to union or make it very difficult. In my humble opinion, and providing the danger of perversion of the faith is avoided, we must mitigate and even abolish these laws.

With respect to mixed marriages, I dare to propose, for the Eastern Church, the abrogation of the law that forbids these 16 marriages under pain of invalidity, and to return to the law that was in force before the promulgation of the new Eastern Code. As a matter of fact, the law that imposes the Catholic form on mixed marriages, under pain of nullity, is very onerous, morally impossible, and prevents all hope of union. Third observation: In the schema, as in the entire literature pertaining to union, the path to union is called the “return” of the separated brethren to the house that they have forsaken. However, the idea of this return is very debatable. For in this “return” to us, we must consider the state of soul of our separated brethren, the human frailty that has led to the division, and especially historical truth. It will then appear opportune, in order to foster reconciliation, to assume the part we bear in the culpability and divisions of the eleventh and sixteenth centuries. The abuses within the Church at that time have certainly provided the Orthodox and the Protestants with an occasion for separation, without thereby justifying them. If we set aside, then, the question of faith and of morals, it is the Catholics themselves who need to “return” to their Orthodox brethren and to speak to them with a sounder judgment and a kinder feeling. This Catholic return will overcome many difficulties, and a broader fraternal reaction, more favorable to union, will be created. And the merits of our brethren will be recognized.

Fourth observation: In Nos. 25, 26, and 27 of the schema, the solemn declaration of Pope Paul V is evoked and taken up again by other pontiffs, affirming that all the sacred rites and ceremonies of the Eastern Church will be completely safeguarded. What is said of the sacred rites also applies to legitimate discipline, to the rights and privileges of the Eastern Christians, as Pope Leo XIII declared in his motu proprio "*Auspicia rerum.*"

These authentic papal declarations are serious and solemn decisions. They are even, one might say, a commitment on the part of the Roman See to the Eastern Apostolic Church. These decisions must therefore be applied in order to give certain proof of the truth, of the promise, and of the commitment.

They must be applied in order to realize union with dignity. They must be applied in concrete acts: in the recognition of the rights and privileges of the patriarchs, in the restoration of the ancient and venerable discipline of the Eastern Church, in the declaration and strengthening of the true power of bishops and synods. Finally, they must be applied in this great council so that all our Orthodox brethren, seeing truth in action, come back or return to their home and take their places, of which they are most worthy. And that is how all Christian brothers will be "one" in the one and only Church of Christ.

That same day, November 27, 1962, Archbishop Elias Zoghby, Patriarchal Vicar in Egypt and the Sudan, set forth the Eastern and Orthodox point of view on Christian unity.

I shall speak of Christian unity from the Eastern and Orthodox point of view.

The problem of Christian unity is different for the Orthodox and for the Protestants, because their relations with the Latin Church are essentially different. The Protestant Churches separated from the Latin Church, their mother, within which they had been born and of which they were an integral part. The Eastern Church, for its part, while it always recognized a primacy of the Bishop of Rome, even if somewhat vaguely, has never been part of the Latin Church. It does not emanate from it; it does not owe its existence to it, or its subsistence, or its dogmatic and disciplinary development.

The Eastern and consequently the Orthodox Church is a "source" Church, historically speaking, just like the Latin Church in the West. Founded by the Apostles and their immediate disciples, it was born without the consent of any other Church, since it was born before the others. It worked out its discipline and its liturgy without the approval of the West, since its discipline and its liturgies are clearly different from those of the West. Its inherent doctrine, substantially identical to that of the West, is developed and lived out in a different way. As proof of this, we have those Fathers of the Greek Church whose works are represented in our libraries by the side of those of the Latin Fathers, without ever being confused with them. There are two aptitudes, two different Christian inspirations, both going back to the living source of Christ, but whose waters, passing through lands differing in nature, through civilizations and talents that are obviously different, possess characteristics that are different and often incompatible.

It is important not to forget this fact, so as not to reduce the separation merely to an impulsive act, to use the expression of His Beatitude my Patriarch Maximos IV, and in order to measure the possibilities and procedures for a reunion.

To illustrate what I have just said, it will suffice for me to show you briefly how the same Christian mysteries and the same feasts are viewed, understood, and lived differently by the Latin Church on the one hand, and by the Orthodox Church and ourselves, the Eastern Catholics, on the other.

Let us consider the dogma of the most Holy Trinity, for example. Our Eastern theology has remained faithful to the doctrinal presentation of the Fathers, worked out at the time of the councils (the First Council of Nicea and the First Council of Constantinople), concerning the circumincession of the divine Persons. It has not allowed itself to be influenced by the Western theses of Augustinian theology that were propagated in the West during the Middle Ages and are still current in the Latin Church. Likewise, the East still holds fast not only to the doctrine of the Christological councils but also to the theological aspect given it by the Fathers who were the contemporaries of those councils. This is notably true on the subject of the incarnation of the Word, conceived above all as a divinization of human nature by Christ, a view that is more difficult to derive from the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction that is prevalent in the Latin Church.

These different ways of understanding and assimilating the same dogmas have had their influence on our liturgy and our feasts, which are the same as those of the Orthodox. For us, the feast of the Nativity of Christ, as well as the feast of the Epiphany, celebrates this divinization of human nature. This is not the case in the Latin Church. I also mention in passing the feast of the Annunciation, which, among us as well as among the Orthodox, commemorates the most solemn event in history, i.e., the incarnation of the Word of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary, whereas the same feast in the Latin Church tends more to celebrate the glories of the Virgin Mary, chosen by God to be the Mother of His Son.

And so, Venerable Fathers, you see by these examples cited at random that since its origins there have been in Christianity two principal currents that channel the riches of the redemption in two parallel directions that can complement each other, mutually enrich one another, without being intermingled. As long as East is East, and West is West, there will always be, as there have always been, two Churches in One. With God's help, they can be united but never commingled; they can coexist in unity but never in uniformity. Each of the two Churches will necessarily retain its own individual character, its physiognomy, its personality. Our Lord told His followers, "Be one as my Father and I are One." Now, while the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are united in the same nature, each of them retains His own distinct personality. There is one God in three Persons. It is in this way that Christ wants to see Christian unity realized: Churches that remain distinct but consubstantially united as one in the Church that is truly and supernaturally one in its hierarchical society.

The Orthodox Churches, insisting on the collegial power of the Apostles, are evolving toward an ever-greater autonomy. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, over the last few centuries has evolved in the opposite direction, toward centralization. Catholics and

Orthodox Christians will be able to unite only by maintaining their equilibrium in mutual harmony.

I have set up the comparison between the Orthodox Church and the Latin Church when the question is really one of unity between the Orthodox and the Catholics. Why? Because the Catholic Church is, even today, overwhelmingly Latin, just as the Church of the East or the Churches of the East are, in their very great majority, Orthodox.

This fact is very evident in our Second Vatican Council, in which the Eastern bishops, numbering 130, are lost in an assembly of more than 2,000 Fathers, while the Eastern patriarchs, those of the great apostolic sees that, in the great ecumenical councils of the faith, played the principal role around the legates of the Pope of Rome, are today, in the persons of the Catholic patriarchs of the East, submerged in this imposing assembly and disappear behind the sacred purple of the 100 cardinals who are the honor of the Catholic Church today, but who did not then exist.

There are those who will say that the Church has evolved. That's indeed true! But it has evolved one-sidedly without taking into account those who, through the very will of Christ, are called to be part of it. For our brothers the Orthodox hierarchs, to acquiesce at the outset to the present state of our evolution is to renounce once and for all what they are and to dissolve their being and their Churches into Latinism, whereas the purpose of union is to enrich and not to impoverish.

The Catholic Church of today, assembled at this council blessed by God, appears so universal and so ecumenical with respect to territorial representation, geographically speaking. It looks to the day when Orthodoxy with its 200 million faithful will be represented within it in proportion to the patrimony that the Fathers of its Church, its great doctors and its holy monks, have bequeathed to Christianity, and with which they continue to enrich and nourish the Churches of the East and the West.

There are those who have sought to say that this council is not a council of union. So be it! And yet as long as Christians are divided, no council animated by the Spirit of Jesus Christ can dissociate itself from union. The Second Vatican Council seems to wish to serve the cause of union in a significant way. Indeed, when the new Christian communities everywhere and the ancient Christian communities of the West that received the baptism of the Roman Church, their teacher and mother, will soon have recovered the use of their mother tongue in their worship, and perhaps their national rites, when they have recaptured in their regional and national synods the climate favorable to their development, then the Catholic Church, decentralized, generous to its own children and trusting in those who have received baptism from Roman hands, will have passed through the first stage toward union with those who received from Eastern and Greek apostolic hands the same baptism as their own.

Archbishop Neophytos Edelby also spoke on that day, November 27, 1962, to criticize the doctrinal preamble of this schema.

The schema that is proposed to us for discussion under the title “On the Unity of the Church,” when considered in its entirety, presents a practical and pastoral approach rather than a theoretical one. In fact, it deals with the means that seem most appropriate first of all for bringing the hearts of Christians closer together, and more specifically to encourage union with the Eastern Christians separated from the Catholic communion. Various means have been proposed in the schema: supernatural, theological, liturgical, canonical or disciplinary, psychological, or practical.

Before enumerating and explaining these means, the drafters of the schema thought that they should present a general introduction of a rather doctrinal nature on the nature of ecclesiastical unity. This introduction covers the first eleven paragraphs, about which I should like to say a few words.

To speak very simply and at the same time very charitably, I must admit that, while the body of the schema, with a few exceptions, generally deserves praise, the same cannot be said of this doctrinal introduction that is altogether incomplete and indeed not very accurate.

1. First of all (paragraphs 1-5), a few texts are proposed from Holy Scripture on the work of the redemption, on the earthly and heavenly Church, on the hierarchical Church. All this is excellent, but finds its normal place in a treatise “On the Church” rather than in a specific and practical decree on the means of bringing about union. Besides, the texts cited are not used to the best advantage to make possible the deduction of some principles of ecclesiology that provide the basis of the Catholic doctrine of Christian unity.

2. This doctrine seems to be presented in the following paragraphs (6-11), which deal with the visible unity of the Church “under Peter,” the indivisible unity of the Church, unity in diversity, etc. I regret to say that these paragraphs, in my humble opinion, are not very satisfactory and must be completely revised, so that the spirit that animates them may be rendered more friendly, the historical perspective more objective, and the theological doctrine more profound. Here are a few explanations:

a. The spirit that animates this part of the schema is far removed from the ecumenical spirit, which is a spirit of truth in charity. The text of these paragraphs reflects here and there a certain animosity against the Eastern Christians that is not consonant with what is said subsequently. Thus, for example, it is unnecessarily and unjustly asserted that all non-Catholic Eastern Christians recognize “the undue right of the temporal regime of a civil government to interfere in the government of the Church.” Other examples could be cited.

b. The historical perspective of this part of the schema is neither correct nor just. Thus, for example, the history of the schism is again represented in a very simplistic way, as if certain parts of the Church, namely the Eastern Churches, decided purely and simply out of spitefulness, without any responsibility whatever on the part of others, “to withdraw from the authority of the Vicar of Christ” (p. 253, lines 20-22). The historical reality is

far more complex, and the responsibilities are widely shared. In addition, the Catholic Church is presented as if it had never ceased doing everything it could everywhere and unremittingly to foster Christian unity (p. 254, lines 12-25, and p. 255, lines 3-4). Everyone knows that that is not altogether true, since Catholics no less than non-Catholics have often acted contrary to the best interests of union, and, like the non-Catholics, are in need of God's mercy. All of us Christians, Catholics and non-Catholics, must confess that we have sinned grievously against union.

c. As for the theological teaching that is expressed in this part of the schema, it is neither firm nor deep. Very serious questions are considered, but no solution is presented.

Thus, for example, in paragraph 6, the visible unity of the Church is based solely on the primacy of the Roman pontiff. Not a word is said about unity with the hierarchy, about the collegiality of the bishops, or their collective and universal responsibility. Again, in paragraph 7, lines 13-14, the unity of the visible Church is based solely on the submission of the faithful to the authority of the bishops and of the Roman pontiff. This teaching is not false, but it is very incomplete. The bonds of unity among the faithful go beyond the relations of authority between superiors and subjects.

In the same paragraph 7, lines 24-26, the ecclesial character of non-Catholic Christians is not recognized, even though the Roman pontiffs themselves have often proclaimed clearly and distinctly that these Christians constitute true Churches.

In paragraph 9 nothing is said of the relationship of other Christians to the Mystical Body of Christ. It is asserted without distinctions that they are deprived "of several means of salvation," "especially of the institutions and directives of the *magisterium*, without which Christian faith and morals are not perfectly preserved." The schema seems at times to doubt their eternal salvation. All this is obviously greatly exaggerated and in any case hardly consistent with the ecumenical spirit. It is not even consistent with the schema's mode of expression in its other parts.

From all this it appears that this introduction contained in the first 11 paragraphs is neither necessary, useful, nor well drafted. I therefore humbly propose that the schema begin only with paragraph 12 and form a special chapter in the more general schema "On Ecumenism," which should be prepared in collaboration with the doctrinal commission and the Secretariat for Christian Unity.

Archimandrite Athanasius Hage, Superior General of the Chouerite Basilian Order, was the last of the Melkite Greek speakers for that day, November 27, 1962, making detailed comments on the schema as a whole.

Chapter III of the schema wisely devotes a special section to Eastern Christians and clarifies their particular situation. It is good also that in speaking respectfully of the spirit, history, liturgy, tradition, and discipline that are peculiarly theirs, it recommends that Catholics recognize and jealously preserve this magnificent patrimony.

However, this chapter in particular and the schema in general pass over in silence a very important point for the pursuit of reconciliation and union with the separated brethren. In

fact, among the most effective means to this end that the situation of the Eastern Christians requires, absolutely the first in importance and the most urgent is the mitigation of the discipline of *communicatio in sacris*. It is surprising that this mitigation, which was insistently requested by several Eastern prelates and missionaries, and was voted for in the Preparatory Eastern Commission, has not found its place in the schema “On Ecumenism,” and particularly in Chapter III. It is useful, indeed even necessary, to add to the first section of Chapter III a paragraph in which the general principle is set forth that the ecclesiastical discipline in this matter must be alleviated. To illustrate, may I be permitted to offer a few considerations.

1. The Historical Consideration

Formerly, as the documents and acts of the Holy See at the beginning of the 18th century attest, wide latitude was left to the Catholic faithful and to the priests themselves to relate on sacred matters with Eastern non-Catholics. Thus missionaries and the Eastern clergy, with the consent of the Orthodox bishops themselves, celebrated, preached, and conferred the sacraments in Orthodox churches, with the result that the people were spontaneously renewed spiritually. Without any proselytizing on their part, the Catholics drew the Orthodox toward union, and thus the Eastern communities in union were formed and grew over the years.

However, beginning in 1729 and after some violent reactions, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith forbade any relations *in sacris* with the Orthodox. But the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office somewhat mitigated this rigid law, especially in 1864 and 1898, and even more in 1959, on behalf of the non-Catholic students who attended Catholic schools. This mitigation shows that certain disciplinary norms concerning *communicatio in sacris* are of ecclesiastical law and that these norms can and must be changed according to the conditions of place and time.

2. The Ecclesial Consideration

a. Orthodox faithful, with very few exceptions, are separated from Catholic unity only in a material way, that is to say, not because they would have chosen this separation or that they firmly wish it now, but because they were born into it, and that is why they desire union, just as we do, with all their hearts.

b. Besides, Orthodox in general do not formally and without distinction reject primacy, infallibility, the Immaculate Conception, etc. They are like a number of Catholics who are absolutely, invincibly, and inculpably ignorant of the nature of infallibility, primacy, or the Immaculate Conception, and who in a certain sense admit these dogmas implicitly.

c. On the other hand, there is nothing contrary to the Catholic faith in the rites and prayers of the Orthodox. Therefore, there is nothing to fear for the Catholics who in certain circumstances are called to participate in Orthodox rites.

3. The Theological Consideration

Normally, participation in sacred worship with non-Catholics is not permitted. The reason for this prohibition is taken as much from natural law as from ecclesiastical law (Can. 1258).

By divine natural law, active or formal participation, insofar as it includes adherence to a false doctrine, is intrinsically illicit. Passive or material participation that has no heterodox intention is forbidden by ecclesiastical law in order to avoid the dangers of perversion or scandal or of indifferentism. If these dangers are unquestionably imminent, this participation is forbidden by natural law itself. However, since these effects do not appear to be so imminent at times, the Church can permit this participation for the pursuit of a great good, applying the theological principle of the double effect, namely: “It is permissible, if the end in view is honorable, to postulate a good or indifferent case that will produce a double effect, one good and the other bad, provided that the good effect does not result from the bad one, and provided that there is a proportionate serious reason.” In fact, participation in sacred matters would in certain cases be a lesser evil than its negation.

Besides, the above-mentioned evils can often be easily avoided, especially in material and passive participation. In fact:

- a. No danger to the faith can be feared, since the Orthodox faithful do not profess any error, explicitly and formally.
- b. There is no danger of scandal, since Catholics have been living for a long time mingling with non-Catholics, and non-Catholics habitually frequent Catholic churches and often request the sacraments from Catholic priests without causing any surprise at this way of acting. On the contrary, rigorism in this matter causes indignation among Catholics and is harmful both to the salvation of souls and to Christian unity.
- c. There is no danger whatsoever of indifferentism; this danger would be imminent if the participation in sacred worship were total and unconditional. But if it is partial and limited, that is to say, in certain cases and done with the necessary precautions, the danger of indifferentism can easily be avoided.

Finally, the notion of the danger of scandal or indifferentism or of perversion, which is often imaginary in our cases—since the paramount positive reason is lacking—must yield to the salvation of the souls of Christians and to the best interests of the Church whenever this is required either for the very salvation of souls, for a great spiritual benefit, or for Christian unity.

4. The Pastoral Consideration

The Church was founded by Christ for the purpose of achieving salvation of all men. Thus, conscious of its supreme mission, the Church has the obligation to provide the means of salvation not only to Catholics but also to non-Catholics, especially those who, being closely linked to it by the sacrament of baptism and the other sacraments, remain its sons, even if they live actually and not formally outside its bosom, as Saint Basil remarks quite clearly in his Canonical Letter I to Amphilochius (P.G. 32, 668, A), when

establishing a distinction between those who openly revolt and those who are simply separated and whom he declares to be “still living outside the Church.”

Venerable Fathers, in certain regions of the East we have a tragic sociologic-religious situation: in view of the fact that Orthodox clergy are sometimes lacking, the Orthodox faithful are in danger of being de-Christianized. They may flock either to Protestantism or to other sects, or embrace Islam, as is the case in Egypt where numbers of separated Christians accept the Muslim religion every year.

We ask whether it is fitting in these cases that our discipline regarding participation in sacred worship yield, so that Catholic priests, with the consent of the Orthodox hierarchs and with the approbation of their respective Catholic hierarchs, can help the Orthodox clergy or replace them in preaching and in administration of the sacraments, so that the spiritual life in these regions may be revived, strengthened, and preserved until the day when, with God's grace, the perfect union of all Christians in the Catholic Church becomes a reality.

And so it is fitting that the Church have a spirit of charity toward our Orthodox brothers who have as good faith as we (both faithful and hierarchs), offering them very lovingly all those means of salvation that they might need, such as the Sacrifice of the Mass, and especially the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, preaching, etc.

Conclusion

It is our wish, therefore, that in Section I of this chapter that deals with the Eastern Christians, a paragraph be added in which the Council would establish a general principle prescribing that the ecclesiastical law concerning *communicatio in sacris* with the Eastern Christians be alleviated, especially in certain cases approved by the hierarchs of the areas, such as, for example, the admission of the Orthodox to the sacraments, the authorization for Catholics in certain cases to attend Orthodox ceremonies, and the validity of mixed marriages entered into before Orthodox priests.

The next day, November 28, 1962, the reaction erupted. Some blamed Byzantium and Byzantinism, which were accused of all the ills that the East has suffered. It was stressed that the East is not Byzantium. Even the Patriarchate of Constantinople was attacked, “that little diocese in Turkey,” for which the Melkites would like the council to make compromises in the faith and forget the other Catholic Churches of the East. It was repeated that Chalcedonian Orthodoxy is not the entire East, and the Melkites are not the Eastern Church... The Melkite Greek hierarchs, nevertheless, peacefully continued their observations on the schema. Archbishop Michael Assaf of Transjordan, spoke of the “liturgical means suitable for fostering the desired union.”

The schema “*De Ecclesiae unitate*” is one of the most important schemas presented for the study and approbation of this holy council. Besides, it is the primary thinking of our Holy Father Pope John XXIII, who is already deservedly called the “Pope of Unity.” And in agreement with our revered Patriarch, His Beatitude Maximos IV, and the entire Melkite Greek Catholic episcopate, we approve it as a whole.

However, may I be permitted to suggest a few amendments to the text of the schema in question and more specifically to the four paragraphs 23-26, relating to the liturgical means suitable for fostering the desired union.

1. Twice, in paragraph 23 and in paragraph 26, the Holy Catholic Church's desire to respect the Eastern rites is emphasized. And yet each time I see an added reservation that seems to me offensive and unwarranted. There it is said, "Provided these rites contain nothing that is contrary to Catholic dogma and to communion with the Holy See." Those who know the Eastern rites are well aware that they contain absolutely nothing that is not completely Catholic and very ecumenical. The disputes among the Churches did not affect the liturgical rites.

I therefore propose that this reservation be eliminated from the final text, even if it literally cites words from Pope Paul V, written under circumstances that are no longer applicable today.

2. In paragraph 24, it is solemnly asserted in lines 34-35 that Eastern Christians will never be forced to abandon their own rite.

Without speaking of the very painful past, when countless Eastern Christians were forced to pass over to the Latin rite, I should like to point out that there are several ways of exerting pressure, and that moral pressure is often more effective than physical pressure. The Roman Church is sincerely anxious to safeguard the Eastern Churches with their entire spiritual patrimony, but it is not enough to reprove every procedure whose purpose is to latinize Easterners. It would be necessary to forbid latinization itself under whatever form it is practiced, reserving to the Apostolic Roman See alone the right to authorize, in exceptional cases, transfer to the Latin rite.

Once again, we are all certain that the Apostolic Roman See does not wish to latinize the East, and yet things are happening as if it could not prevent them. Energetic action is required, therefore, to put into practice the good intentions of the Holy See against biased and self-interested interpretations.

3. Paragraph 25 insinuates that reforms or innovations could be usefully introduced into the Eastern rites. To this end the schema cites the words of Pope Leo XIII in his masterly encyclical "*Orientalium Dignitas*." Yet it is evident from the context that these words refer to modifications made necessary in the discipline of the Eastern Churches. As far as the liturgical rites themselves are concerned, I must say that our Melkite Greek Catholic Church does not intend to innovate anything in the rite unless in concurrence with our Orthodox brethren, so as to safeguard the unity of the Byzantine rite, and also so that the variations in the rite may not create new and unnecessary differences between our Orthodox brethren and ourselves.

4. Paragraph 25 seeks to pacify the Easterners by assuring them that they will find in the Catholic Church not the house of a stranger but their own home. This declaration is beautiful and also very clear. The reality is less obvious. Too often the Catholic Church still appears, especially in our Eastern lands, as if it consisted of the Latin Church alone. How many examples of this I could cite here. I deliberately refrain from doing so for

reasons that your august assembly readily understands. My only wish is that these declarations of good intentions be followed by effective results. We confidently count on the collaboration of everyone, with God's grace.

That same day, November 28, 1962, Kyr Joseph Tawil, Titular Archbishop of Myra and Patriarchal Vicar for Damascus, offered new criticism of the text and proposed amendments that affected the very spirit of the schema.

The first condition for attaining this desired unity is that the paths that lead to this unity be cleared of all unnecessary and harmful human obstacles. It seems that the schema “On the Unity of the Church” has been prepared with this in view. Nevertheless, in order that this work may become truly suitable for taking up ecumenical dialogue, I would set forth these remarks, to be added to the propositions already made by the Fathers.

1. On page 253, paragraph 7, line 20, we read: “*Ita ut partes quaedam Ecclesiae se ab auctoritate Vicarii Christi substraxerint et in coetus independentes se constituerunt*” (So that certain parts of the Church have withdrawn themselves from the authority of the Vicar of Christ and have set themselves up as independent groups). In this context the word “group” is incorrect, because the Eastern Churches, even those that are separated, are called Churches, and not groups, as is proved in the new schema “On Ecumenism,” pages 87 and 88.

It would be preferable that these Eastern separated brethren were simply called Orthodox, as is the common usage and as the word is accepted in the liturgical readings and dictionaries, and as they in fact call themselves. Besides, in the text cited the nature and conditions of this withdrawal are not clearly demonstrated. For, at no time in its history has the Eastern Church been considered to be part of the Western patriarchate. Almost from apostolic times, it has always enjoyed an administrative and disciplinary autonomy that was never disputed.

2. On the same page and in the same paragraph, line 23, we read: “*Error multo perniciosior habetur, quando regimini temporali cuiusdam civilis gubernii agnoscitur indebitum jus sese ingerendi in gubernium Ecclesiae...*” (An error that is considered much more pernicious when the right of intruding into the administration of the Church is acknowledged to the temporal rule of any civil government...). Inasmuch as the polemical tone of this text does not harmonize at all well with ecumenical dialogue, I think this paragraph should be eliminated.

3. On page 259, paragraph 27, line 35, we read: “*Exceptis illis quae periculum generant...*” (excepting those things which produce danger...), and in the same vein, page 266, line 35, we read: “*Iis tantummodo quae, si forsitan adsint, rectae fidei aut bonis moribus adversantur expunctis*” (omitting only those things that, if they are perchance present, are contrary to correct faith and sound morals). I frankly acknowledge that I have looked in vain in all Eastern liturgies now in use among us for anything whatever that is contrary to sound morals. I know only that these liturgies have come down to us through the solicitude of the holy Fathers, who are the norms of faith as well as of morals in the universal Church.

4. On page 267, paragraph 52, we read: “*Ut tandem omne dubium...*” (so that finally all doubt...) This entire paragraph is absolutely deficient with respect to ecumenism, insinuating that the Eastern Churches united to the Holy See do not possess a duly definitive state, while awaiting the union of all the Eastern Churches. We believe, on the

contrary, that our Eastern churches never attain their fullest development in the Catholic Church unless they are first truly considered not only for what they are but for what they represent, namely the Orthodox Churches not yet in union.

The provisional state in which the Eastern Churches find themselves, as an ecclesiastical third world that is neither Eastern nor Latin, has a false ring and tends in practice to construct a house on sand. These Churches are, in fact, for the Orthodox, a mirror in which they can sense and see how things will be for them once union has been attained. When His Beatitude Christophorus, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, learned the hierarchical order recognized for Catholic patriarchs in the new Eastern Code, namely, after cardinals, as well as after apostolic delegates, and far more significantly, after the Latin bishop in his own diocese, did he not exclaim in a pained voice, “Pity! Lord have mercy!”?

All of these things require that the schema “On Unity” be worked on once more and in greater depth in collaboration with the Secretariat for Christian Unity. But it is necessary that once amended it be submitted to the council, since the question “On Unity” is definitely current and urgent because of the present circumstances. It would perhaps be useful for the joint commission to work on the unity of the Church rather than on “Sources of Revelation.”

On November 30, 1962, it was the turn of the dean of the Melkite Greek hierarchs, Kyr Eftimios Youakim, Archbishop of Zahle in Lebanon, to speak. He stressed that not all of the East is “separated” and that the West must not equate itself with the Catholic Church.

The schema “On the Unity of the Church” is quite broad in scope and very important. Union is indeed the greatest desire of all of us and also of the Orthodox, who, when they saw us leave for the council, cried out unanimously, “When you return, announce that union has been achieved!” This must therefore arouse the attention of this illustrious assembly, whose members are imbued with the zeal of Christ. Truly, all of us are carrying forward the mission of Christ, the divine Founder of the Kingdom of God on earth. All of us are happy to repeat with great devotion and very frequently Christ’s own prayer: that they may be one.

Certainly, the compilers of this schema deserve great praise because of their wide experience and their fervent zeal. That is why I do not hesitate to declare my complete acceptance. I greatly rejoice in particular that, among the useful means for the promotion of union, the supernatural means have not been neglected. Far more, these means must undoubtedly take precedence over all the human means, whatever their power and efficacy. To this end, it seems to me that it is fitting to recall here the doctrine of operating grace and of cooperating grace.

I should like to begin my contribution with these two observations relating to paragraphs 14 and 15:

1. Paragraph 14 begins “lamentably” by saying, “In order to eliminate this lamentable separation, which for centuries has become entrenched between the Eastern Churches, and that continues in our day...,” when it would have been better to begin in this way, “In order to nurture and multiply the partial unions already accomplished and that still endure...” Here are the reasons:

a. There are communities in the East whose leaders have turned away from union, but whose faithful, who are also the Church, have retained the spirit of unity.

b. In absolute terms, this expression, “the separation still continues in our day,” is one that I do not like. On the contrary, what endures is the dualism and the parallelism, thanks to which there are also on the part of the “separated brothers,” “those who have preserved the union” and those who, in this union, have preserved the liturgical rites that constitute as it were a bridge destined to restore this deeply desired union.

c. It seems to me that this same expression traces its origin, at least in part, to a certain Latin-Western group that pretends to consider all Eastern Churches as being separated from it. It is only reasonable that this manner of speaking is ill-suited to a text emanating from a council that speaks in the name of the whole Church, both Latin and Eastern Catholic. That is why I think that the form that I have cited above is more felicitous, namely: “To nurture and multiply the unions already accomplished and that still endure...”

2) Paragraph 15, page 256, in which the novena of prayers and supplications decreed by Leo XIII is recommended, induces me to digress in order to express my joy in having known this great pontiff personally and, above all, in having experienced the very noble spirit of this illustrious common Father of all the faithful in his immortal encyclical "*Orientalium dignitas*," which was proclaimed after Vatican Council I. Today God is giving us another Leo, his successor John XXIII, to whom we direct our best wishes from the depths of our hearts and for whom we ask a long life so that he may consummate Vatican II with another encyclical like "*Orientalium dignitas*."

The prayers I cited earlier take the place in my opinion of operating grace. It is "cooperating grace" that is expected of us and which we find in the above-mentioned prayers, providing they are said well and with the true ecumenical spirit, as we wish them to be, that is to say, not only with our lips, without faith or charity of heart, or under the aspect of the return and conversion of the prodigal son, but in the manner of Christ's own prayer, which is unalloyed with human elements but sincerely and truly fraternal.

Our prayers will be heard only if we welcome the praying Christ within us and among us.

That same day Archimandrite Athanasius Hage, Superior General of the Chouerite Basilians, made detailed remarks on the text of the schema, in order to improve it. For lack of time, Kyr John Bassoul, Archbishop of Homs, transmitted this intervention in writing to the secretariat of the council.

We rejoice greatly over the fact that the schema “On the Unity of the Church” speaks in detail of the psychological means that promote unity between the Roman Church and the Eastern Church. The psychological means that always hold in high regard the sincerity of persons and the authentic faith of the Orthodox, foster this mutual understanding that is an indispensable condition for attaining ecclesiastical union.

For this reason, may I be permitted to make these three observations:

1. Expressions like “separated brethren” or “dissident brethren,” so often used in this schema to designate the brethren of the Eastern Church, seem ill-adapted to attracting these brethren.

Why not call them by the name they give themselves, namely, “Orthodox brethren”? Indeed, since they have preserved the true and authentic faith against the heterodox, they have reserved for themselves the glorious name of “Orthodox.”

2. Article 34 uses the term “*Oves extra ovile vagantes*” (Sheep wandering outside the fold) to designate our Orthodox brethren. This expression has a sour ring. In fact, these brethren hear the voice of the Good Shepherd, even though not as carefully as we do, they are sympathetic to the voice of the pope, the vicar of the Good Shepherd, and they follow the Good Shepherd by reason of the fact that they have received from the Shepherd of our souls and still faithfully keep the true faith, the true sacraments, and the true hierarchy, according to the words of the Patriarch Athenagoras in an article published in *La Croix*, “We have the same Gospel, the same faith, the same traditions, the same sacraments, the same saints...”

3. Article 43 reads: “*reditus fratrum separatorum*” (return of the separated brethren). I should like this expression to be changed, because it insinuates that the rupture is due to one party only, whereas historically it appears that both parties bear responsibility for this rupture, and that it was born of political and cultural differences rather than of differences of doctrine and worship.

Besides, why not speak of a union to be restored, of a reunion among brethren, all of whom are responsible for the rupture that came about over the centuries? Do we not also have the obligation to follow the road to union? Have we not also the duty to return to our brethren? Then this reunion will not be the return of one party only, but the re-assembling of two parties in the bosom of a single ecclesiastical unity. In this peaceful gathering, there will be neither victor nor vanquished, or rather the victor will be the one who is the first to recognize and embrace his brother.

It is certain that when the Orthodox themselves are convinced that this unity has been restored and established on a solid foundation, all Orthodox Christians can consider that

the fundamental psychological condition has been realized in the efforts toward the reunion that is so fervently and eagerly desired by men of good will.

The Ecumenical Movement

At the 1963 Session, the schema “De Unitate Ecclesiae,” prepared by the Eastern Commission, had been replaced by a schema “De Oecumenismo” prepared by the Secretariat for Christian Unity. In its “Observations on the Schemas of the Council (1963),” the Holy Synod made some detailed criticisms of this text.

We can only rejoice over the text of this schema and address our warmest praise to the Secretariat for Christian Unity that drafted it.

The reason we take the liberty of making a few observations is in order to contribute to making the text still better, especially from the point of view of the feelings of our Orthodox brethren.

1. The expression “*fratres separati*” should be corrected everywhere to read “*fratres a nobis separati*” (brethren separated from us). They are separated from us, as we are separated from them. That does not prejudice the dogmatic question: who was right in separating? We recognize the fact that we are separated from one another. That is if we do not wish to use more simply, as far as Eastern Christians are concerned, the expression “*fratres Orthodoxi*,” which would be simpler, more historical, and more pleasing to the interested parties. In fact, we would be calling them by the name by which they wish to be called, without seeing it as a dogmatic assertion. In the same way, when we say, “the Evangelical Churches,” we are not asserting that we are not in that category. We are content to use a designation accepted by the interested parties.

2. Replace “*vestigia enim Christi*” (indeed the signs of Christ) with “*praesentia enim Christi*” (indeed the presence of Christ). These brethren who are separated from us have more than signs of Christ, they have His presence.

3. Instead of saying “*remota quavis communicatione in cultu officiali*” (having avoided any participation in official worship), we prefer to say “*remota quavis officiali communicatione in cultu*” (having avoided any official participation in worship). In fact, prayer for the union of the Churches can sometimes take on, as it does with us, the aspect of an official liturgical prayer. What remains forbidden is official participation in worship, not participation in official worship.

Likewise, instead of “*celebrare*” we prefer “*concelebrare*.” What is forbidden is the concelebration of the *sacred* mysteries, not necessarily attendance at these mysteries.

4. Say “*arbitra etiam Sede Romana...*”(and also with the Roman See as arbitrator...). In fact, historically, recourse to the arbitration of the Roman See was only one of the means that enabled the Churches to settle their differences. The other means were the councils, imperial authority, etc.

If all the schemas of the council were composed in the same spirit as this schema “*De Oecumenismo*,” it would be a great step forward on the road to Christian unity.

The new schema came under discussion at the Council on November 18, 1963, during the 69th General Session. On that day, His Beatitude the Patriarch, while making a few criticisms, strongly supported it in a memorable intervention.

Considering the schema “*De Oecumenismo*” as a whole, we wish first of all to express our keen satisfaction with it. We believe that it is the first schema submitted to the examination of the council Fathers that joins in a balanced way doctrinal depth with a pastoral meaning. Even allowing for adjusting certain details, we believe it can be accepted by everyone as an excellent basis for discussion.

Among the qualities that commend it to our approval, certain ones deserve to be pointed out briefly:

1. This schema is the sign that we Catholics have finally emerged from the period of sterile polemics with regard to both our Orthodox brethren of the East and the communities born of the 16th century crisis, polemics that have excessively influenced a unilateral development of theology, discipline, and even of spirituality.
2. Following the same line of thought, this schema is the sign that we have decided to leave behind the impasses of an incorrect proselytism that has as its goal the weakening of one’s brother and to enter the path of evangelical emulation and sincere witness to the faith in charity, leaving untouched the freedom of a sincere conscience.
3. This schema also reflects what our late lamented Pope John XXIII and His Holiness Pope Paul VI recommended by their example and their words, namely, to acknowledge our faults, for this opens hearts to dialogue and ecumenism.
4. But above all we are eager to express publicly our joy and, we are sure, that of our Orthodox brethren at the sight at last in this schema of the beginning, still a bit timid but sincere and official, of a true theology of the Church, which has never ceased to be the theology of the entire Eastern tradition: the communion of the Father and of the Son in the Holy Spirit, which, springing from the resurrection of Christ, is unceasingly poured out by the life-giving Spirit through the Divine Liturgy in all the members of the new People of God.

However, these merits must not conceal certain deficiencies that are common to the schema as a whole. May I be permitted to point them out:

1. This schema seems to be a bit too descriptive. We should like the presentation to be also more critical, proceeding from the real causes to the appropriate remedies.
2. The schema is still too much concerned with the causes of the divisions, especially the theological causes that arose in former times. Besides, both in the East and with respect to our Anglican and Protestant brethren, the difficulties of former times have often disappeared, while other new difficulties have arisen since the separation. There is need to pay greater attention to the latter, with a sound, critical perspective.

3. With a view to union, we should perhaps also not be solely concerned with the divisions that affect the structure of the Church, but also point out that within all the Christian communities there are daily clashes that work against unity, that is to say, the sin that kills charity. In the eyes of God and of Christ who will judge us on love, these often invisible ruptures are certainly more serious than the sociological condition in which each of us finds himself when he is born into one or another Christian group.

4. We also point out a fault in form, which can be improved. In certain passages, one cannot know whether it is meant to be the description of the characters of our brethren, or a message addressed to them, or else an exhortation meant only for Catholics. Unity of form could easily be assured if we always placed ourselves in the perspective not of a council of union, but of a council for the renewal of the Catholic Church, which is the first step, that should be repeated constantly, toward a meeting with our brethren.

5. Finally, we must say very clearly—and this is very important—that Chapter IV of this schema that has recently been distributed to us is absolutely irrelevant. Ecumenism is an effort for the reunion of the whole Christian family, that is to say, the gathering of all who are baptized in Christ. It is, therefore, a strictly intimate family matter. Non-Christians have no place in it. And we do not see what role Jews have in Christian ecumenism, and why they have been brought into it.

In addition, it is a serious offense to our brethren who are separated from us when we seem to treat them on that an equal footing with the Jews.

It is therefore urgent that this Chapter IV be removed from the schema “*De Oecumenismo*.”

However, if, for some reason unknown to us, the decision is made to keep this chapter, then the following must be done: a) it must be inserted into another schema in which it would fit more appropriately, for example, in the schema “*De Ecclesia*” in connection with the history of salvation, or in the schema being prepared on “The Presence of the Church in the Modern World,” as the Church’s witness against racism of every sort; b) then, if there is a discussion of Jews, other non-Christian religions must also be discussed, especially the religion of the Muslims who number 400 million and in whose midst we live as a minority.

So let us be fair and logical. If we wish to disavow anti-Semitism—and we all disavow it—a short note condemning both anti-Semitism and racial segregation would have sufficed. It is useless to create an injurious agitation in the world.

In conclusion, and repeating our substantial agreement with this schema, we shall emphasize two points.

1. The absolutely unique nature of our relations with our Orthodox brethren, which justifies the special place devoted to them in Chapter III in its paragraph 1. We should rediscover the authentic meaning of the Church held by our Fathers, both Orthodox and Catholic. In former times no one would have dared to speak of a Catholic Church and an Orthodox Church. Only one undivided Church was recognized, even if some of its

members were temporarily divided with “shared responsibilities,” to use the words of John XXIII. At Lyons and at Florence—regardless of what we think of these councils of union—our brethren the Orthodox bishops participated in the councils as members, and their empty places here should cause us painful anguish and be a still more pressing call to rediscover complete communion in charity.

2. That is why we embrace the wish, expressed unanimously at the last Pan-Orthodox Conference of Rhodes, for the establishment as rapidly as possible of a permanent dialogue on an equal-to-equal basis between Orthodox and Catholic brethren. It is our wish that the Secretariat for Christian Unity effectively initiate this new permanent and direct contact. Let all human passions be silent to hear only the voice of the Lord. Christian people are impatient, with the impatience of the Spirit. We must open ourselves wide to this divine breath, which, as the Prophet Ezekiel has said (37:11), will transform a valley of dry bones into a living, holy people, united in faith to glorify the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

On November 25, 1963, Archbishop Joseph Tawil, Patriarchal Vicar in Damascus, criticized the title of the first chapter, which should speak of the “Catholic principles of ecumenism,” and not of the “principles of Catholic ecumenism,” since there is only one ecumenism. Then he gave an outline of a “theology of division,” and explained in passing why the Eastern Fathers at the council did not always agree among themselves.

I should like to make three comments on the subject of this Chapter I of “*De Oecumenismo*.”

1. In the title “On the principles of Catholic Ecumenism,” it seems that there is a typographical error. We were expecting to read “On the Catholic principles of Ecumenism.” If, indeed, ecumenism is a movement of all Christians toward greater unity, it cannot be said to be strictly Catholic, Orthodox, or Anglican, or something else. However, we can speak about Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, or other principles of this same ecumenism.

2. Paragraph 2 deals with the divisions in a purely descriptive way, but is completely silent on the theology of the division as such. This is something about which we can find light in the Holy Scripture.

The people of God possess unity when, seeking salvation in faith, they receive the promise. On the contrary, they are divided when, trusting in the flesh, they lose the promise. That is the constant theology of the books of the Law and the Prophets. It is confirmed later in the New Testament in the separation of the larger part of Israel that placed its trust more in faith than in the Law. Then the Church, the new people of God, exposed itself to the temptation to “Judaize,” the temptation to “Hellenize” (5th century), to “Latinize” (11th century), and finally to “Romanize” (16th century and subsequently). In the end, the Church found that it was relying on the justification of the flesh and not on the justification of faith (cf. Philippians 3:7-9).

And yet God’s gifts are irrevocable (cf. Romans 11:29). He never abandons His people, so that if unity is given through grace, the divisions themselves are directed to a greater grace, so that all of us may obtain mercy. God’s wonderful deeds, beginning in the Old Testament and continuing until now, are of such a nature that the divisions that are born of the disavowal of the free gift of salvation are directed to a greater gift. The biblical vision of unity and division of the God’s people places everything in the history of the Church in the light of mercy and grace. “For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that He may have mercy upon all” (Romans 11:32).

3. We are in total agreement with what is said in paragraph 3:

“In necessariis unitatem custodiendo, fideles in variis formis vitae spiritualis et disciplinae...” (by maintaining unity in those things that are necessary, while the faithful are in various forms of spiritual life and discipline), and *“Hac de causa, synodus omnes catholicos hortatur ut abstineant a verbis, judiciis et operibus quae fratrum separatorum conditioni...”* (For this reason, the synod strongly urges all Catholics to refrain from words, judgements, and works that... compare to the condition of our separated brethren...). May I be permitted to develop this idea.

The conciliar Fathers, the great majority of whom are of the Latin rite, have no doubt been surprised that the Eastern Fathers do not always agree among themselves. Let us say first of all that this division is not any more extraordinary than those among the Latin Fathers. It stems from several reasons:

1. From the positive, distinct traditions inherited in common with the Orthodox, such as the Byzantine, Syrian, or Coptic traditions, substantially alike among themselves, but nevertheless noticeably different;
2. From collective psychological residues, due to the establishment of distinct communities long before the conversion of the peoples of Central and Western Europe, that is to say, of the Slavs, the Germans, and the English. Whence their distinct life for the past 1,500 years, or 1,300 years, for example, for the Maronites;
3. Eastern Catholics are also diverse with respect to varying degrees of latinization. We have all been latinized ecclesially. The proof of this is that I must speak to you in Latin in this assembly. What constitutes the Eastern Christian is neither race nor nationality, but the direct, living apostolic tradition, which does not contradict the Latin tradition but is distinct from it. Anyone who has ever taken a course in theology remembers that the arguments from Tradition are given by citing the Greek Fathers on the one hand and the Latin Fathers on the other, as corroborating one another through their distinct origins. Now that this has been said, it can be understood that communities that are strongly latinized by their history are less easily receptive to ecumenical necessities, and that consequently one or another Father, reflecting this mentality, has demanded within Catholicism a single code for the two Churches of the East and the West, and a single jurisdiction, something that is unthinkable for anyone who has preserved the positive meaning of Tradition and of the Orthodox outlook.

Conclusion: All the Catholic Churches of the East taken together represent scarcely two per cent of the total of Orthodoxy, estimated at over 200 million, of whom 180 million belong to the Byzantine rite, 15 million to the Coptic and Ethiopian rite, and 5 million to the Syrian rite. Now, these Churches are of interest, ecumenically speaking, only in relation to Orthodoxy, whose tradition they are supposed to represent. In fact, each of them awaits its fullness, and does not have the right to consider itself as being in a final definitive form, but only as a stage on the road to unity. Now, to ask for the unification of a single code for the Churches of the East and the West, or unification of jurisdiction, is to close all paths which lead to ecumenism, and is to be imprisoned in a deadly isolation, becoming for the universal Church a definite obstacle.

On November 27, 1963, His Beatitude the Patriarch intervened again on the schema "De Oecumenismo" to defend the variety of disciplines in the Church and the preservation of the hierarchy of each particular Church.

Speaking of the discipline that is peculiar to Eastern Christians, No. 16 of our schema "solemnly affirms the principle of diversity in unity." And it adds that, "the perfect observance of this traditional principle, which has not always been carefully respected, is among the absolutely indispensable conditions for any restoration of unity."

We agree fully with this solemn declaration through which the Catholic Church affirms its determination to respect, in the unity of faith, the legitimate diversity of discipline in the Eastern Churches.

On the basis of this principle the Holy Roman See has made considerable efforts to endow the Eastern Catholic Churches with a code of ecclesiastical law distinct from that of the Latin Church. The result is doubtless not perfect, yet the principle at least is safeguarded, namely, the distinction of two codes, the Eastern Code and the Latin Code.

We regret that certain Fathers have thought they had to ask for the unification of the Eastern Code with the Latin Code. This unification, we believe, would inevitably result, whether we wish it or not, either in substituting Latin discipline for Eastern discipline, or in giving Latin discipline such preponderance that it would be impossible to see in this unified code the discipline peculiar to the East. In the ecumenical dialogue it will be most unfortunate if we show our Orthodox brethren that the discipline which awaits them, in case of union with the Roman Church, is not their own but the discipline of the Latin Church or something very similar to it. It is doubtless not realized what harm is done to the cause of ecumenism by the demand for the unification of the Eastern Code with the Latin Code.

This cause of ecumenism also demands, as a second indispensable condition, the preservation of the hierarchy of each particular Church. On several occasions there has been a question in this assembly of plans for the unification of jurisdictions in countries where there are different rites. This idea of unification of jurisdictions is tempting, but if it is pushed to its extreme limits without the appropriate distinctions, it can have serious consequences.

To clarify this question, we believe that three cases must be distinguished.

1. The first case is that of mission countries: China, India, Japan, etc. At the present time, the Latin Church has its hierarchy constituted throughout the world. However, it is only just that Eastern Christians be associated in the work of the missions. Certain territories should be entrusted to them, especially in countries where they have long been permanently established and in those that have such strong ethnic, linguistic, and cultural affinities with theirs that evangelization through them is, as it were, providentially provided. In these countries, unification of jurisdictions can be successfully realized through agreement with the bishops of the localities, with the intervention, if that is necessary, of the Holy Roman See. Is it necessary to ask that in the very interests of the Church, all things being equal, the indigenous Church, the local rite that harmonizes best with the genius and aspirations of the people, should be given preference?

2. The second case is that where Christian communities are already established and where the majority are of the Latin rite, such as, for example, in Europe and in America. There, whenever Eastern Catholics are sufficiently numerous, there must be no hesitation in giving them not only parishes of their own rite, independent of Latin parishes, but also their own hierarchy, as, indeed, is wisely provided for in the schema "*De Episcopis et dioecesium regimine*" (No. 31).

3. The third case—which concerns us more particularly—is that of the classical East, where for centuries Christianity has existed in a form of community, and where at the head of each Church there is already a distinct, organized hierarchy.

In these countries, where there is already a time-honored organization that has proved its worth, where numerous ecclesiastical authorities live side by side in the same territory in a spirit of understanding and peace, in spite of a few inevitable clashes due to the weakness of human nature, the situation cannot be changed without causing serious disturbances. Even if it is decided to change this state of things, the new situation will not be able to endure, because it is contrary to nature, because the people will not be able to accept it, and because it will create very serious disturbances that will imperil the very life of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that our present stage of union is not a definitive formula. We are some sort of transitional organization. When worldwide union is accomplished between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, all hierarchical structures will merge of themselves to form a single hierarchy. By what right, then, would have such a jurisdiction have been previously eliminated or another similar one merged into a non-ritual organization where our Orthodox brethren would not recognize themselves?

Any unification of jurisdiction that would result in the absorption of one hierarchy by another must also be rejected. Any fusion or absorption of one hierarchy by another marks the disappearance of a Church. Besides, the Catholic Church desires to safeguard all the Churches that compose it, in particular the Eastern Churches that have the very important mission of restoring Christian unity with the Orthodox branches that correspond to their respective rites. To deprive one or the other of its own hierarchy is to prepare for their disappearance at a more or less early date.

We have transmitted to the secretariat a long study on this entire question. Lack of time does not allow us to do more here than give a very succinct summary of this study.

Rather than debate theoretical solutions, which we know very well to be impossible and dangerous for the tranquility of the Christian people, we should like to make a fraternal appeal that, on the one hand, the established order, with the distinction of communities and hierarchies, be respected, and that, on the other hand, the disadvantages of a multiplicity of jurisdictions be avoided through a still closer cooperation among ecclesiastical leaders in all areas of the apostolate, thanks to an augmentation of inter-ritual synods.

The preservation of a distinct code of canon law for the East and the preservation of a distinct hierarchy for each Church, with maximum collaboration: these are the two indispensable conditions for ecumenical efforts. That is also the guarantee of the presence of the spirit of Christ, who is the spirit of harmony, charity, and peace.

On November 29, 1963, Archbishop Elias Zoghby, Patriarchal Vicar in Egypt and the Sudan, developed in his intervention the causes of the rupture between the East and the West.

If, after ten centuries of schism and separated development, the Latin and the Eastern Churches continue to declare that they are substantially similar, is it possible to suppose that they had major reasons for separating a thousand years ago? Certainly not! The schism would not have taken place if the Churches of the West and of the East had not been morally involved in the conflict that set the two empires against one another.

Indeed, there are times unfavorable to dialogue and times that are favorable. The Schism of the East, which can be called more ecumenically the Great Christian Schism because the responsibility for it is shared, occurred at a time when the Christian East and the Christian West could not enter into a dialogue on a footing of equality and in an effective way.

The minor clashes between the Latin and the Eastern Churches, which had previously been considered mild incidents between brethren of the same family, were increasingly taking on the disturbing proportions of the great conflict between the two empires. The Latin Church was beginning to see in it a resistance to the primatial authority of Peter, and Orthodoxy saw in it an attempt at domination that was not justified by a primacy of service.

The primacy of the Bishop of Rome, which a thousand-year tradition had endorsed as being the bond of unity, was beginning to be understood in the East as the extension of a local Church as the universal Church. That was the beginning of the crisis that culminated in the separation.

Modern Catholic historians of great merit interpret the Great Schism as a failure of efforts to apply Roman centralization to the Churches of the East, accustomed as they were, during ten centuries of union with Rome, to combine a legitimate diversity with unity.

Actually, the Churches of the East were radically opposed to centralization from the start. Why? There are those who say: out of solidarity with the civil power. That is possible. Others say: out of pride. That has not been proven. Eastern Christians have a different view: Eastern Churches had practiced a synodal collegial system of ecclesiastical government during the ten centuries of union with the Holy See of Rome, without the latter having found anything abnormal about that. Besides, Eastern hierarchs did not find in authentic tradition a religious justification for the change that had occurred. Furthermore, the Eastern Churches, which were founded by the Apostles or their immediate successors, and which owed to the Church of the West neither their beginning nor their development, possessed a religious, theological, liturgical, monastic, and disciplinary patrimony that was different from that of the West, without, however, being opposed to it. Now, it is evident that a Church governed by organizations extraneous to its tradition quickly sees this tradition greatly impaired.

And so Roman centralization appeared to the Easterners, and rightly so, as a measure of uniformity that could call into question the legitimacy of their own religious patrimony, which they had received from their Fathers by virtue of an incontestable apostolic succession.

Dialogue was called for at that time in order to clarify, as we are doing today at the Council, the nature of the Mystery of the Church, the relationship between primacy and collegiality, between the local diocese of Rome and the primatial power of the Bishop of Rome. However, this dialogue could not take place either in the 11th century or in Florence because it could not be carried on in a favorable social and political context.

It might have been asked why God did not intervene to prevent this lamentable rupture the way He intervenes to prevent every error of doctrine in the Church. The answer is not hard to find. First of all, Christian unity ought not to be solely the work of God, but also the work of men. Besides, since the primacy of Peter is intended to protect the integrity of the Christian patrimony, God could not wish this primacy to be exercised to the detriment of this integrity. Indeed, the two authentic and apostolic traditions, complementary but different, i.e., Latin and Eastern, are the two halves of the Christian patrimony and together constitute the whole of Christianity, all of which benefits from the promise of divine protection until the end of the ages. Any unity which might be forged to the detriment of one or the other Apostolic tradition would impoverish the Church instead of enriching it.

Catholic unity to which ecumenism is striving will be vaster and more fruitful than that of the present day. Actually, current Catholic unity appears to be partial and rather Latin. It groups the Latin Churches of the West and the Latin Churches founded by them in mission countries, and the modest portions of the Eastern Churches that are in union and that are substantially latinized as a whole, although they have preserved their external liturgical rites. Today only Orthodoxy possesses the authentic Eastern tradition, even if sometimes in a diminished way; only a union with equality between "Latinity" and Orthodoxy can gather together the apostolic tradition and perfect Catholic unity.

I speak of a union with equality because the day union is realized, Orthodoxy will have at least as much to give as to receive. It will thus participate in the government of the reunited Church as an equal with the Latin Church, under the primacy of Peter, you may be sure of it. The dialogue between equals decided on by the Rhodes Conference must be entered into by the Catholic Church with the conviction that it will benefit from it as much as will Orthodoxy.

In fact, the Schism has equally disfigured both of them. The Church of the West lost, together with the communion of the apostolic sees of the East, the most collegial portion of the episcopal college. Centralization was pursued at an exceptional gait without anyone being able to hold it back. The Church of the West has been governed respectively by the consistory, the fragments of the consistory that are the Roman congregations, and finally in practice by the congresso or weekly meeting of Curia officials.

As for the Churches of the East, they lost, because of the Great Schism, communion with the center of unity of the whole Church, namely, the Bishop of Rome. Excessive decentralization has weakened them considerably, making difficult the regular exercise of episcopal collegiality, which however remained their dominant form of government.

And yet, God, who brings good out of evil, has willed that this tragic rupture shelter the Orthodox Churches from the centralization of latinization, to the great benefit of ecumenical dialogue and of the reunited Church.

This dialogue among equals between Latinity and Orthodoxy, which was in practice impossible at the time of the Great Schism, has now become possible, not to say obligatory, in the bosom of a humanity tending more and more to seek unity through the means of international organizations where all peoples are represented on a basis of equality. His Eminence Cardinal Cicognani said this well in his Relation on the subject of the schema "De Oecumenismo."

This dialogue must be accompanied by an effort toward decentralization on the part of the Catholic Church, an effort already undertaken by this holy Council, and, on the part of the Orthodox Churches, by an effort toward relative centralization around the successor of Peter and within the framework of traditional collegiality.

In this dialogue that concerns first of all the Latin and Orthodox Churches, Eastern Churches that are in union will have a secondary but necessary role to play as witnesses. They must, by de-latinizing themselves, at last live more completely as traditional Eastern institutions within Catholicism, in order to familiarize Latin Catholics with these institutions and make dialogue easier and more fruitful. At the present time, this is their only means of being of some use to the Church of Jesus Christ.

“Communicatio in Sacris”

On this important and delicate question, the patriarch, commenting on the draft of a schema prepared by the Oriental Commission, composed in Rome on January 19, 1962, the following note, which he read before the members of the Central Commission.

On this important and serious question of *communicatio in sacris* with our Orthodox brethren of the East, I am happy to bestow unreserved praise on the schema that is presented to us by the Commission on the Eastern Churches. Such a schema indicates what a good start ecumenism has made in our Catholic circles. If this schema, as I hope, is accepted by your venerable assembly, I believe that a great step will have been taken in the preparation of Christian unity.

The first advantage of this schema is that it gives our Orthodox brethren of the East a special canonical status on this point of *communicatio in sacris*. Indeed, I hope that a similar approach is likewise made for the discipline of *communicatio in sacris* with our brethren of the Reformed Churches. Yet it will always be right that for our Orthodox brethren of the East the discipline on this point be eased still more. For we are dealing with Christians who share our faith, who have our sacraments, a hierarchy of divine institution, and the same wellspring of faith as we, namely, Holy Scripture and the Tradition of the Church. In our relations with them, there is question more of reconciliation than of conversion in the strict sense. Now, in order to reconcile a brother in a family where moral responsibilities are divided, does not a multiplying of contacts remain the best approach?

In the second place, the schema, while it justifiably makes the distinction between the formal dissident and the dissident in practice, does not presume, as was too often done until now, that every dissident is a heretic or a formal schismatic until proof is given to the contrary. An objective and psychological knowledge of the souls of our separated brethren makes us presume on the contrary to their absolute good faith and makes us presuppose bad faith only as a very rare exception. Indeed, the schema bases its main portion not on the presumption that they are formal non-Catholics in the absence of proof to the contrary, but that they are non-Catholics in practice, in good faith, in the absence of proof to the contrary. This change in perspective naturally involves a change in canonical attitudes.

In the third place, it must be noted that when heresy or schism arises in the Church, the responsible authorities take very severe measures to try to stifle the evil in its inception and to protect souls whose faith is weak. Then, little by little, a continuing situation is established. Christians are born into a shattered Christian community through no fault of their own. The Church does not adopt the same attitude in both situations. While it is very severe at the moment heresy or schism is born, it is more indulgent once the rupture is entrenched, lest too much severity drive the lost sheep farther away, as the Fathers of the Church tell us.

This explains why on this point of *communicatio in sacris* with non-Catholics of good faith, the attitude of the Church has not always been absolutely invariable. Moreover, this variation in the discipline of the Church proves to us that the prohibition of ecclesial

communion with non-Catholics of good faith is not a matter of divine law but of ecclesiastical law, and hence subject to evolution according to the wisdom of the Church's pastors and to changing circumstances of time and place.

Now, it seems that today's circumstances demand that we redouble our charity toward our Orthodox brethren of the East in particular. It is detrimental to the work of union to treat them in the same way as others who do not share our faith, i.e., unbelievers or heretics.

This is neither weakness nor compromise on the part of the Catholic Church. Nor is it a diminution of its prestige. On the contrary, it seems to us that, in this effort at reconciliation that draws Christian Churches toward one another, those who have received the more grace, more light, more charity from God, and who feel stronger in the faith must make the first step.

Let us not constantly and without distinction conjure up the specter of religious indifferentism, of corruption of faith, and of scandal. Doubtless this danger exists, but first of all we must not exaggerate it; then, the shepherds of the Church are there to measure out the concrete amount of modification that it is suitable to grant, and to distinguish between those persons who can or cannot without danger enter into religious contact with our separated brethren. Finally, one must not forget that the scandal that is feared is most often created in the reverse direction; by this I mean that Catholics, quite as much as Orthodox Christians, are rather scandalized not by intercommunion but by its prohibition. We say this on the basis of our long experience.

When the Council was announced, Christians, whether Catholics or not, began to hope that union could again be achieved there, or that, at least, measures would be taken for greater mutual understanding and greater charity among the different Christian confessions. Let us not disappoint the hopes of all those who are expecting from the Council a new direction in relations among Christians, as they are excellently codified in the schema that the Commission on the Eastern Churches proposes to us. It is a truly ecumenical schema for which I am happy to offer the commission my congratulations.

*The Very Reverend Hilarion Capucci, then Superior General of the Aleppine Basilian Order, in his intervention before the Council on November 28, 1963, also demonstrated the opportunity for easing the discipline of *communicatio in sacris*.*

In relation to what is said in Chapter 2, No. 7 of the schema “De Oecumenismo,” and considering the particular circumstances in which Catholic communities in the East are living and their relations with their Orthodox brethren, may I be permitted to make the following general remarks on the subject of *communicatio in sacris* with our brethren who are separated from us. The discipline now in force and the text of this same paragraph 7 seem totally inadequate. The ecumenical, social, and apostolic situation in which we live in the East demands a broadening of this discipline and a corresponding text in the schema.

The ecumenical aspect – A broadening of *communicatio in sacris* truly facilitates the outcome of the ecumenical movement. We are daily witnesses of the reactions of our Orthodox brethren in the face of the current prohibitions: reactions of repugnance, revolt, and antipathy. On the contrary, nothing thaws hearts and brings them closer like united invocation of the same Lord.

The social aspect. Social and familial bonds unite us to our Orthodox brethren. Within the same family do we not often encounter both Orthodox elements and Catholic elements? Now, in the East, the social and the religious are intimately linked, and we often face extremely painful situations for the consciences of Catholics, both clergy and faithful, and for peace and union within the same family. These situations are offensive and repugnant for our separated brethren and scandalous for non-Christians. Our Christians cannot understand how, while we exhort them to be united in matters relating to trade union, social, political, and educational action, and to love and esteem one another, we forbid them in conscience to participate in those religious realities that are the meaning and strength of human life and activity. Thus, there is a scandal that is contrary to the one envisioned by the discipline that strictly forbids *communicatio in sacris*, which is under discussion. It is not so much *communicatio in sacris* that causes scandal, but rather its refusal imposed on them in conscience that scandalizes them.

For centuries we have been living side by side with our Orthodox brethren. Far more, even before the official constitution of our hierarchical structure, numerous Catholic elements united to Rome have never ceased existing within the very bosom of general Orthodoxy. Our pastoral experience shows us that it is rather our brethren who come to us, and the very rare cases of Catholics turning to Orthodoxy do not in any way stem from *communicatio in sacris*. It is thanks to the preaching and the general apostolate of Latin missionaries in Orthodox churches, and to the jurisdiction received by them from Orthodox bishops that the Catholic movement developed.

The apostolic aspect – Our Christian divisions, solidified before the non-Christian public by these rigid barriers in the matter of *communicatio in sacris*, are a great scandal to non-Christians, our shame and our weakness in their eyes, and one of the major obstacles to their conversion. On the other hand, it is a requirement for the salvation of souls: for Orthodox Christians sometimes left without sacraments; for Catholics in this same situation; for Orthodox students in our schools, accustomed to us, trusting us and

depending on us to teach them to live in grace... How can we remain pastorally insensitive in the face of situations such as these?

However:

1. We do not lose sight of the possibility of a danger of indifferentism or scandal, correctly stated, in individual cases.
2. We also understand that the Fathers of the Western Church can have a different attitude from ours, either because the regional circumstances are different or because attitudes toward our separated brethren cannot be uniform, or because in one country or another the problem does not arise or is less severe.
3. We understand that certain Eastern Catholic communities with no Orthodox branch, or that are less closely linked to that branch, are less sensitized in regard to this problem than we are.

Therefore, realizing that the demands of divine law must be strictly observed, and that, on the other hand, the presumption of a common peril of indifference or scandal, correctly stated, which is the basis of this ecclesiastical discipline, is not sufficiently established in practice in our regions and in our relations with our Orthodox brethren, but on the contrary is harmful;

We propose:

1. that *communicatio in sacris* prohibited by divine law be strictly forbidden, that is to say: a) when this *communicatio in sacris* means, for the Catholic conscience, formal adherence to schism or to heresy; b) in case there is danger of scandal or indifferentism; or c) when, in the Christian sense, it is the expression of a unity already realized, as would be in concelebration of the Sacred Mysteries;
2. that while purely ecclesiastical legislation in the matter of *communicatio in sacris* remains intact as a general rule, the power of the Ordinary be recognized in individual cases, and also the power of a patriarchal holy synod or of an episcopal conference for a specific region to dispense from it, motivated by pastoral wisdom and with regard to the multiple circumstances of fact that can legitimize such a dispensation;
3. that legislative measures be taken with the view of removing the clause of invalidity affecting mixed marriages celebrated before a non-Catholic minister.