

FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

CEMES PUBLICATIONS

FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The book FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST, edited by P. Vassiliadis, N. Dimitriadis and K. Drosia, consists of the CEMES open public lectures of its Master Program in “Orthodox Ecumenical Theology”, dedicated this academic year to the Unity of the One Church of Christ.

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CENTER OF ECUMENICAL, MISSIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
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38

PETROS VASSILIADIS-NIKOLAOS DIMITRIADIS-KATERINA DROSIA (eds.)

FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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[3]

ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΩΝ, ΙΕΡΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝΤΙΚΩΝ ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ
«ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ ΠΑΝΤΕΛΕΗΜΩΝ ΠΑΠΑΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ»

38

ΠΕΤΡΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΔΗΣ–ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΑΔΗΣ-ΚΑΤΕΡΙΝΑ ΔΡΟΣΙΑ (εκδ.)

ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΤΗΣ ΜΙΑΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ CEMES
Θεσσαλονίκη 2022

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PREFACE

FOR THE VISIBLE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Center for Ecumenical, Missiological and Environmental Studies "Metropolitan Panteleimon Papageorgiou" (CEMES) has launched the 2021-22 academic year a series of ecumenical activities, the most important of which was the Open Public Lectures of its Master program in "Orthodox Ecumenical Theology" (MOET), dedicated to the "The Visible Unity of the One Church of Christ". More precisely to the "Eastern/Oriental Orthodox-Latin/Greek Catholic relations," which will hopefully lead to the visible unity of the Church of Christ.

And it decided to start these lectures on a historic date: the very day of the thronal Feast of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the 30th anniversary of H.A.H. Patriarch Bartholomew's elevation to the throne of New Rome. But also, the year of H.H. Pope Francis' courageous initiative to start a conciliar process that will pave the way to an authentic synodality of the entire Church of Christ.

The English program of the Open Publish Lectures of MOET was jointly organized by CEMES (and the Scientific Committee and Teaching Staff of MOET), and the Ecumenical Institute of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (Angelicum), as well as by scholars of the Ecumenical Monastery of Bose, and the Oriental Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches.

Parallel to these English lectures, this academic year CEMES has also planned a series of Open Public Lectures in Greek for the Greek-speaking public around the globe. In both the English and the Greek series of lectures, in addition to the main speaker and the coordinator, other scholars have joined them for an in-depth discussion in an as much as possible balanced selection.

Let us remind ourselves what the famous papal encyclical "Ut Unum Sint" said: "To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ's prayer: "Ut unum sint" (INA ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ ΩΣΙΝ)."

Despite the successful outcome of many official theological dialogues, no significant steps have yet been taken towards full Eucharistic unity, due to certain preoccupations and prejudices, which this series of lectures intends to analyze in order to overcome, as far as possible, any obstacle, canonical, historical, ecclesiological, theological etc, standing to this very day against the command of our Lord 'that we may all be one' ".

Because of the tragic events of the Russian military invasion to Ukraine, and especially the attempt by the ecclesiastical leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church to theologially justify the murderous war, as well as their uncanonical invasion to the canonical territory of other autocephalous orthodox Churches, first by establishing - with a synodical decision - an exarchate in Africa, and also threatening to establish similar uncanonical ecclesiastical structures in those Orthodox Churches that recognized the Ukrainian autocephaly, extraordinary workshops were held, both in English and in Greek.

All the over-30 presentations and discussions, in English and in Greek, by academic theologians, clergy and lay people, of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, and Greek Catholic, Churches are posted on the CEMES website, being also available at the CEMES YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VBKY2maTKI&t=104s>)

Pascha 2022

The Editors

*Dedicated to His All-Holiness
Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
On his 30 years on the Throne of the New Rome*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SOME PROPOSALS TO THE BISHOPS OF THE OLD AND THE NEW ROME

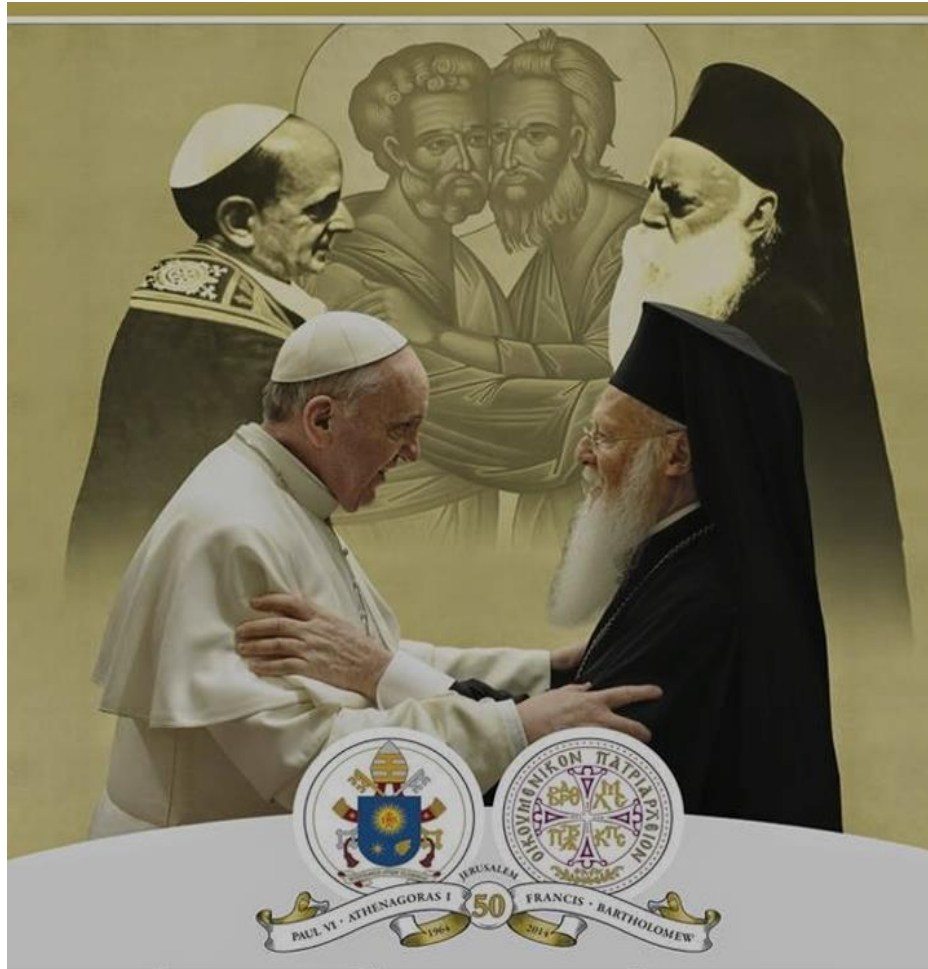
CAT=Catholic – ORO=Oriental Orthodox - ORT=Orthodox – GCA=Greek Catholic

- (CAT) H. Destivelle:** When the Catholic Church speaks of 'imperfect communion', it means an ontological and spiritual communion in faith, sacraments, and ministries which is real, but incomplete, as it is not yet manifested in the canonical and the Eucharistic communion.
- (ORO) K. M. George:** I attach great importance to an evolutionary view of our past conflicts and divisions with a view to experience the healing and unity of the Church as the one Body of Christ in true faith, forgiveness, and love.
- (ORT) J. Getcha:** In anticipation of the 1.700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council, that Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch are planning to celebrate in 2025 in Nicea, the common celebration of Pascha is an urgent need. Easter should be celebrated on the Sunday after the first full moon of spring, using for calculating the date the astronomical data (spring equinox and full moon). And to develop the most accurate scientific data, using as a basis for calculation the meridian of Jerusalem, place of death and resurrection of Christ.
- (ORT) D. Keramidas:** The reasons for the break of communion between the Catholic and the Orthodox Church were of political, cultural, linguistic, and theological nature. The term “estrangement” describes the interaction between these factors, that lead to the episode of 1054 and eventually to the division between the Greek and the Latin church. But if separation is first lived and then declared, also unity will be first lived and then formally declared.
- (CAT) G. Puglisi:** Pope Francis has provided new regulations enforcing stronger implications, including removal from office, for those in leadership. The accountability of leadership within the local church is very much “vertically” understood. Yet, if the church is moving from a hierarchical to a more synodal understanding the question needs to be raised as to what this may imply for being held accountable.
- (ORT) P. Vassiliadis:** For many centuries, especially in the second half of the second millennium, we Orthodox have unconsciously developed a “*negative*” Orthodox identity: we are not what the Bible and our Tradition have left us as a legacy, but what the others, mainly the Catholics, are not, *i.e.*, without a primacy, the visible expression of the Church’s unity, accompanied of course by conciliarity. The New Rome must unilaterally heal the non-existing schism with the Old Rome the way of our Churches lifted the anathemas in the past.
- (GCA) A. Krawchuk:** Since its origins in the undivided Christianity of the “Old” Rome, Ukraine’s religious dynamics have been determined by centrifugal factors of geography (1054) and power (1589), and by centripetal forces of reconciliation (1445, 1596). In the present war independent Ukraine is demonstrating agency and the will to restore unity in communion with the “New” Rome.

- (GCA) I. Shaban:** No one knows what the future of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue will be like., but we do know in what direction this dialogue should develop. Its goal was and remains to restore full and visible unity between the Western (Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) Churches. As Uniates we now know that this old model of unity cannot be applied today in the ecumenical era. And we are very delighted by Pope Francis conciliar process that is now going on in the Catholic Church.
- (ORT) A. Bairactaris:** The unity of Christianity is like a marathon with a lot of phases and miles to run. The *ecclesiology of Sister Churches* and Chiara Lubich's notions of *Jesus Forsaken* and the *Spirituality of Unity*, as well as the vision of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras on Christian Unity, are examples to be imitated today for our Churches' journey towards Eucharistic union.
- (ORT) S. Muksuris:** Commemorating non-Orthodox names in the Eucharistic service of Proskomede brings us face to face with the problem of the boundaries of the Church and sacramental grace in a new perspective. One cannot embrace the world in theory and simultaneously remain xenophobic, not acknowledging our common humanity and refusing to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who, although different from us, still share our imperfections and struggles but also our aspirations.
- (CAT) A. Kateusz:** The continued restoration of the order of women deacons has popular support not only among the laity in both Eastern Orthodox and western Catholic church communities, but in recent years also by Pope Francis' institution of two commissions to consider their restoration. This initiative, as well as similar ones in the East, quite likely will not only lead the way for the West, but also, would help unify East and West in the desire to return to the practices of the unified early Church, practices seen in art in both East and West.
- (ORT) C. Hovorun:** The schism between the East and the West was in making for centuries. I would argue that it started with the Acacian schism towards the end of the fifth century and was accomplished only in the eighteenth century. Then the Churches of both Old and New Rome officially refused to recognize all sacraments of each other. This schism is being undone approximately ten times faster than it was done. This gives us hope that we could restore our unity sooner than later.
- (ORT) A. Arjakovsky:** Ecumenical Metaphysics means to adopt real discourses of truth and justice. We should relaunch Orthodox conciliarity in order to condemn the heresy of the so-called "Russian world and to judge the perpetrators of the war against the Ukrainian nation. Truth is not only hurting, it is also a saving strength. The unity of the Churches will occur, or rather will be discovered, when ecumenical metaphysics will have sufficiently penetrated consciences for such a discourse to be grasped by all Christians as authentically orthodox and life giving.
- (ORT) N. Dimitriadis:** The importance of a theology of leadership in a religious diverse world underlines the responsibility that all faith based leaders, clergy and laity, men and women, should have towards all people on earth and in a more holistic approach towards all creation. Such praxis that is expressed by serving and sacrificing for others, it is not identified by a moral improvement, but is an ontological change of man to the life in Christ. And this is something that will enhance the possibilities of a Christian reconciliation and lead to the Eucharistic communion between Old and New Rome

Few more important recommendations by some Greek-speaking presentations

- (ORT) Gr. **Larentzakis** concluded that there no canonical or ecclesiological schism. Orthodox and Catholic are real sister churches.
- (CAT) I. **Spiteris** proposed that his Catholic Church should not to ignore the ancient pentarchy, but also hopes that Pope Francis should return his title as the Patriarch of the West
- (ORT) D. **Moschos**: Suggested that we should not underestimate the political socio-economic factors that contributed to the Rome-Constantinople estrangement by a cryptotheology
- (ORT) St. **Yagazoglou** suggested that we should abandoned the style and content of the old dividing our churches arguments and follow the traditional Gospel message, until we have a full Eucharistic communion.
- (ORT) Sister Dr. **Theologia** underlined the correctness of both Easter and Western Churches' attempt to re-institute the traditional order of women deacons



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CEMES devoted the 2021-22 Open Public Lectures of its Master program in "Orthodox Ecumenical Theology" (MOET) to "The Visible Unity of the One Church of Christ». This book contains their proceedings and is dedicated to Patriarch Bartholomew for the 30th anniversary of his elevation to the throne of New Rome.

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(From the Preface of the book)

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