



"A Painful Remembrance"

1924-2004: The Eightieth Anniversary of the Calendar Reform

"The Greatest Snare of the Enemy"*

The World Council of Churches: The World Hodgepodge of Heresies

Sixteen years have passed [thirty by now—Ed.] since the ever-memorable Archimandrite Justin (Popović) of Čelije (†1979), an outstanding dogmatic theologian, composed the superb text, reprinted below, in which he sets forth a correct confession of the Orthodox Faith.

Unfortunately, the Orthodox ecumenists paid no attention to it; not only have they not terminated their participation in the so-called World Council of Churches, but they have even strengthened it.

In its "Proclamation" on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the W.C.C., on 16 August 1973, the Ecumenical Patriarchate stated:

"The long-lasting ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches, which has existed in the context of this movement for twenty-five years as an institutional expression and organized form thereof, constitute one of the ways which the Lord has chosen, in order to make better known among men the 'new commandment' of love and to make the injunction to promote reconciliation, peace, and concord more honored among His Churches."¹

However, the "participation of the Orthodox Church" in the W.C.C. has been aptly characterized as "grotesque, preposterous, and destructive of Orthodox canonical order and Holy Tradition," as "an admixture of things that cannot be mixed and a grotesque monstrosity," which "constitutes the greatest snare of the Enemy in the history of the Church Militant of Christ for the erosion and disintegration of the redemptive work of the Orthodox Catholic Church."²

Likewise, the W.C.C. has been dubbed the "World Hodgepodge of Heresies," an organization within which Orthodoxy and falsehood co-exist and collaborate, and in this way "the mystery of iniquity is being realized under the corrosive influence of global religious syncretism."³

And even today, Œcumenical Patriarch Demetrios, speaking indeed, as he himself states, on behalf of the entire Orthodox Church, “whose Catholic expression and witness we serve in love from the Divine watchtower of the Œcumenical Throne,” regards the pan-heretical ecumenical movement as blessed by God, since he perceives dialogue between Christian Churches, and ecumenism in general, “as a God-pleasing movement inspired by the Holy Spirit for the union of all who have been Baptized in the Name of the Triune God and who accept in its totality the Catholic and saving truth of the undivided Church.”⁴

In this period, therefore, in which “the œcumenical and worldwide ship of Orthodoxy is being tossed about in the midst of a tempest provoked by the heresy of ecumenism,” and in which “the most dangerous” profane hand (and dark power), i.e., the “so-called ecumenical movement of the W.C.C., that world hodgepodge of the heresies and heretics,”⁵ is endeavoring to divert the Holy Ark of the Orthodox Church from her redemptive mission, it is a great blessing for us to have before our eyes apposite and instructive texts, which are veritable tablets of the Holy Spirit.

Orthodoxy and Ecumenism

An Orthodox Appraisal and Testimony
by Archimandrite Justin (Popović).⁶

1. Introductory Remarks

(by Hieromonk Irinej [Bulović])⁷

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY of Yugoslavia, under its official title “Yugoslavian Conference of Bishops” (Biskupska Konferencija Jugoslavije), recently sent a letter to the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, signed by both of the leading Roman Catholic prelates in Yugoslavia, Archbishop Franjo Kuharić, Primate of the Croatian Roman Catholics and President of the so-called “Conference of Bishops” of the country as a whole, and Archbishop Držecnik, Primate of the Roman Catholics in Slovenia and president of the commission on ecumenism of the “Yugoslavian Conference of Bishops,” which corresponds to our Synod of Bishops.

In the name of this conference of bishops and as spokesmen thereof, the two Papist archbishops, Kuharić of Croatia and Držecnik of Slovenia, officially propose to the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in Serbia that they permit Orthodox clergy to participate

in the common prayers and “ecumenical services” which the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia is organizing during the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,” from 18 to 25 January 1975.

As the letter from the Roman Catholic Hierarchy gives us to understand, the program and the content of these “inter-confessional” common prayers and services for the year 1975 was compiled and determined by the Vatican’s Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity and the Geneva-based World Council of Churches.

It should also be noted that the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, in its letter, did not fail to mention that, following the conclusion of this week of ecumenical joint prayers, a report was to be sent to the Vatican regarding the progress and the overall conduct of the week-long “ecumenical program.”

The program prescribes and specifies the following elements:

1. The keynote theme (taken from Scripture and, in particular, Ephesians 1:3-10) and, appended to this, an explanation or instruction concerning what the “unity of the Church” is and in what it consists, and what we must do in order to attain and realize it.

2. Biblical readings which, according to the judgment of those in Rome and Geneva who compiled the “program,” are relevant—and should be related—to the problem of Christian unity and union, and

3. (most important!), a detailed outline of the content of the “joint ecumenical services,” as follows:

- a) joint worship and devotions,
- b) an act of collective repentance,
- c) “unity in the Word,” i.e., common preaching, and
- d) common prayer, i.e., joint prayer per se.

Before the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church responded to the foregoing proposal from the official channels of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Yugoslavia (where the majority, the Serbian people, are Orthodox and the minority, that is, the Croats and the Slovenes, are Roman Catholics), it asked Father Justin (Popović) for his opinion on this matter.

The comments that follow, below, are precisely what Father Justin said in the appraisal that he gave to the Holy Synod.

It was subsequently disclosed that the Holy Synod of the Serbian Church met to discuss this issue and, taking into consideration the eminently theological appraisal of Father Justin, and perhaps also certain other information and data, responded negatively to the Roman Catholic bishops of Yugoslavia regarding their invitation to the Serbian Orthodox Church to take an active part in the joint prayers and, in general, in the events of the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” instituted by Rome and Geneva.

We have not included, here, the preface of Father Justin’s appraisal, which deals with the externals that we cited above, but the main part, which is purely theological.

However, in his preface, Father Justin emphasizes the fact, overlooked so much by certain Orthodox, that the West is in the habit of artfully and cleverly imposing its own “program,” a “particular framework,” which is dictated by its own mentality and which determines a priori the conditions for participation in “ecumenical coöperation” and “ecumenical common prayer.”

A typical example of this is the aforementioned program of joint prayers and “ecumenical services.” It is self-evident that Western ecclesiology, with the “Branch Theory” that it spawned, that is, the theory of the “divided Church,” and with its dogmatic minimalism and the dogmatic compromises between Rome and Geneva, forms the basis of this program.

Needless to say, all of these things were unacceptable to Father Justin, as they are to any Orthodox Christian.

Hence, Father Justin comments on each and every point of this program of “ecumenical worship,” in jest, though with sorrow, in order to demonstrate the incompatibility of the program in question with the fundamental presuppositions of Orthodoxy.

Thus, for example, with regard to the proposed “common worship,” Father Justin observes that the Roman Catholic document does not clarify whether it is talking about worship “in spirit and in truth” or about some other kind of worship.

With regard to the proposed act of “collective repentance,” Father Justin asks whether, according to the understanding of “our separated brethren,” the Westerners, one should repent only for falsehood, or also for the truth.

Again, with regard to the proposal for common preaching, he asks: “Preaching of what? Of the word of God as the Pope interprets it? Or as Luther interprets it? Or as the Holy Fathers and the Holy Synods interpret it?”

To put it briefly, for Father Justin, any joint prayer between Orthodox and heterodox is impossible, since the latter believe in God in a different way.

For Father Justin, the sole basis for communion in worship is the same faith—the immaculate Orthodox Faith, of course.

But let us see what he himself says about these matters, which, as he states, “the Orthodox Christian conscience, and still more the Priestly and theological conscience, puts to itself.”

2. Text

(translated from the Serbian into Greek by Marina Skliri)

I

MOST REVEREND FATHERS:

The Church of Christ has defined her stand towards heretics—



and all non-Orthodox are heretics—once and for all through the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers, namely, through the Holy Theanthropic Tradition, which is unique and immutable.

In keeping with this stand, Orthodox are forbidden to engage in joint prayer or liturgical communion with heretics. For, “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (II Corinthians 6:14-15).

The Forty-fifth Canon of the Holy Apostles decrees: “Let a Bishop, Presbyter, or Deacon, who has merely prayed with heretics be excommunicated; but if he has permitted them to perform any clerical function, let him be deposed.”⁸

This sacred Canon of the Holy Apostles does not specify precisely

what kind of prayer or service is prohibited, but it does prohibit any common prayer with heretics, even in private (“has prayed with...”). In the case of ecumenical joint prayers, do things not occur that are both more explicit and on a broader scale than these?

The Thirty-second Canon of the Synod of Laodicæa decrees: “It is unlawful to receive the blessings of heretics, for they are absurdities [ἀλογίαι] rather than blessings [εὐλογίαι].” Now, does it not happen that heretics give blessings at ecumenical meetings and joint prayers: Roman Catholic bishops and priests, Protestant pastors, and even women? [!]

These and all of the other pertinent Canons of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers were not valid only in the ancient period, but continue to be completely valid today, as well, for all of us contemporary Orthodox Christians.

They are unquestionably valid also for our stance towards Roman Catholics and Protestants. For, Roman Catholicism is a manifold heresy, and about Protestantism, what are we to say? It is better not to say anything.

Already in his time, seven and half centuries ago, did St. Sava not call Roman Catholicism “the Latin heresy”? And how many new dogmas has the Pope not devised and “infallibly” proclaimed since then?! There is no room for doubt that, through the dogma of Papal infallibility, Roman Catholicism has become a panheresy. Even the much-lauded Second Vatican Council did not change anything concerning this outrageous heresy, but, on the contrary, upheld it.⁹

For this reason, if we are Orthodox and wish to remain Orthodox, then we, too, ought to maintain the attitude of St. Sava, St. Mark of Ephesus, St. Cosmas Aitolos, St. John of Kronstadt, and the other Holy Confessors, Martyrs, and New Martyrs of the Orthodox Church towards Roman Catholics and Protestants, absolutely none of whom believe correctly and in an Orthodox manner in the two basic dogmas of Christianity: in the Holy Trinity and in the Church.¹⁰

II

YOUR BEATITUDE AND HOLY FATHERS OF THE SYNOD:

How long will we slavishly degrade our Holy Orthodox Church of

the Holy Fathers and St. Sava through our pitifully and dreadfully anti-traditional stance towards ecumenism and the so-called Ecumenical [i.e., World] Council of Churches?

Any sincere Orthodox Christian reared under the guidance of the Holy Fathers is overcome by embarrassment when he reads that the Orthodox members of the Fifth Pan-Orthodox Consultation in Geneva (8-16 July 1968), with regard to the participation of Orthodox in the work of the “World Council of Churches,” decided, at that time, “to express the common recognition of the Orthodox Church that she is an organic member of the World Council of Churches” (see Glasnik S.D. Crkve [a periodical published by the Serbian Orthodox Church—*Trans.*] [Belgrade], No. 8 [1968], p. 168).

This decision is apocalyptically horrendous in its unorthodoxy and anti-Orthodoxy. Was it really necessary for the Orthodox Church, the all-immaculate Theanthropic Body and organism of the God-Man Christ, to be so monstrously humiliated that Her theological representatives, including even Hierarchs¹¹ (among whom were also Serbs), should seek after “organic” participation and inclusion in the World Council of Churches, which thus becomes a new ecclesiastical “organism,” a “new Church” above the churches, of which the Orthodox Church and non-Orthodox churches are merely “members,” “organically” joined to each other? Alas, an unprecedented betrayal!

We reject thereby the Orthodox Theanthropic Faith, this organic bond with the Lord Jesus, the God-man, and His all-immaculate Body—the Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles, Fathers, and Ecumenical Synods—and wish to become “organic members” of a heretical, humanistic, man-made and man-worshipping assembly, which is composed of 263 heresies, each one of them spiritual death!

As Orthodox, we are “members of Christ.” “Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!” (I Corinthians 6:15). And this we do through our “organic” connection with the World Council of Churches, which is nothing other than a revival of the atheistic worship of man and idols.

Most Reverend Fathers, our Orthodox Church of the Holy Fathers and St. Sava, the Church of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers, of the Holy Confessors, Martyrs, and New Martyrs, must now, at the eleventh hour, cease ecclesiastical, Hierarchical, and liturgical involve-

ment with the so-called World Council of Churches and renounce for good any participation whatsoever in joint prayers and worship (for worship, in the Orthodox Church, is organically linked together in a totality and is consummated in the Divine Eucharist) and, in general, participation in any ecclesiastical endeavor [with the heterodox] which, as such, bears within itself and expresses the unique and incomparable character of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which is ever One and unique.

III

IF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH, faithful as she is in every respect to the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers, were to avoid ecclesiastical involvement with heretics, be they those of Geneva or those of Rome, she would not thereby be renouncing her Christian mission or her evangelical obligation: that she should humbly, but boldly, bear witness before the contemporary world, both non-Orthodox and non-Christian, to the Truth, to the All-Truth, to the living and true God-Man, and to the all-saving and all-transfiguring power of Orthodoxy.

Guided by Christ, our Church, through the Patristic spirit and character of her theologians, will always be ready “to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us” (cf. I St. Peter 3:15).

And our Hope, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages, and unto all eternity, is single and unique: the God-Man Jesus Christ in His Theanthropic Body, the Church of the Holy Apostles and the Fathers.

Orthodox theologians should participate not in “ecumenical joint prayers,” but in theological dialogues in the Truth and about the Truth, as the Holy and God-bearing Fathers have done throughout the ages.

The Truth of Orthodoxy and the right Faith is the “portion” only “of those who are being saved” (cf. the Seventh Canon of the Second Ecumenical Synod).

Wholly-true is the proclamation of the Holy Apostle: “salvation through sanctification...and belief of the Truth” (II Thessalonians 2:13). Belief in the God-Man is “belief of the Truth.” The essence of this belief is the Truth, the only Whole-Truth, that is, the God-Man Christ. Love for the God-Man is “love of the truth” (II Thessalonians

2:10). The essence of this love is the Whole-Truth, that is, the God-Man Christ. And this belief and this love are the heart and conscience of the Orthodox Church.

All of these things have been preserved intact and undistorted only in martyric, Patristic Orthodoxy, to which Orthodox Christians are called to witness fearlessly before the West and its false faith and false love.

Commemoration of St. John Chrysostomos

13/26 November 1974

Holy Convent of Čelije

The unworthy Archimandrite Justin
commends himself to the holy Apostolic
prayers of Your Beatitude
and the holy Fathers and Hierarchs
of the Holy Synod



* **Source:** Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐνοστασις καὶ Μαρτυρία, Nos. 18-21 (January-December 1990), pp. 166-173.

Notes

1. For the full text of this “Proclamation,” see Antonios Papadopoulos, *Κείμενα Διορθοδόξων καὶ Διαχριστιανικῶν Σχέσεων, Οἰκουμενικά II* [*Documents Concerning Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Relations: Ecumenica II*] (Thessaloniki: Kyriakides Bros. Publications, 1984), pp. 131-141; see also Basil T. Stavrides, *Ἱστορία τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως* [*History of the Ecumenical Movement*] (Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies, 1984), 2nd ed., pp. 339-347 (the passage cited is from §A2).

2. Constantine D. Mouratides, *Οἰκουμενικὴ Κίνησις: ὁ σύγχρονος μέγας πειρασμὸς τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας* [*The Ecumenical Movement: The Great Contemporary Temptation of Orthodoxy*] (Athens: “Orthodoxos Typos” Publications, 1973), 2nd ed., p. 24.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

4. See Ἐπίσκεψις, No. 445 (15 September 1990), p. 22. These remarks are from an address by Patriarch Demetrios at an “ecumenical service” (Boston, U.S.A., 26 July 1990).

5. Mouratides, *Οἰκουμενικὴ Κίνησις*, pp. 84, 85.

6. See *Κοινωνία*, March-April 1975, pp. 97-101. This “Appraisal” was also published in *Ἐκκλήσια καὶ Οἰκουμένη* (No. 235 [1 June 1975]).

7. Father Irinej (Bulović), a Serbian theologian fluent in Greek, and a professor at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade, is regarded as one of Father Justin’s disciples. He was Consecrated Bishop of Moravia (Serbian Orthodox Church) on 20 May 1990 (Sunday of the Blind Man) at the Monastery of Peć, the ancient See of the Serbian Patriarchate, in Kosovo [Irinej is currently Bishop of Bačka, Serbia and Montenegro—*Trans.*].

8. The Forty-sixth and Sixty-fifth Apostolic Canons decree likewise, as also does the Thirty-third Canon of the Synod of Laodicea.

9. See the *Constitutio de Ecclesia* [*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*] of the Second Vatican Council.

10. For a more detailed treatment of these issues, see our study *Ἐκκλήσια καὶ Οἰκουμένη* [*The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism*] (Thessaloniki: “Orthodoxos Kypsele” Publications, 1974).

11. “Is it possible for an Orthodox Hierarch, who, at his Consecration, has subscribed and attested his obedience to the Symbol of Faith and the ordinances of the Œcumenical Synods, which constitute the fundamental principles of the Orthodox Church, to subscribe to the principles of another Christian body, such as Protestantism?” (Metropolitan Irenæus of Samos [†]). According to Metropolitan Irenæus, a certain Orthodox Hierarch once stated “that it would be preferable for ‘his hands to be cut off’ than for him to subscribe a Protestant confession and thereby to cancel his signature on the document in which he attested the confession of faith that he made at his Episcopal Consecration” (See Archimandrite Spyridon Bilalis, *Ἐκκλήσια καὶ Παπισμός* [*Orthodoxy and Papism*] [Athens: “Orthodoxos Typos” Publications, 1969], Vol. I, pp. 368-369]).