

## Ἀποφάσεις

Τῇ προσκλήσει τῆς Α.Θ. Παναγιότητος, τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίου συνήλθον οἱ Μακαριώτατοι Προκαθήμενοι τῶν Ἀγιωτάτων Αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, ὡς καὶ οἱ Ἀντιπρόσωποι τῶν κωλυθέντων ἵνα παρασῶσιν αὐτοπροσώπως Μακαριωτάτων Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας κ.κ. Ἰωάννου Ι΄, Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν καὶ πάσης Ἑλλάδος κ.κ. Ἱερωνύμου Β΄ καὶ Μητροπολίτου Βαρσοβίας καὶ πάσης Πολωνίας κ.κ. Σάββα, εἰς Σύναξιν, πραγματοποιηθεῖσαν ἐν τῷ ἐν Σαμπεζὺ Γενεύης Ὁρθοδόξῳ Κέντρῳ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, ἀπὸ 21ης ἕως 28ης Ἰανουαρίου 2016, πρὸς ὀριστικὴν διαμόρφωσιν τῆς Ἡμερησίας Διατάξεως τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἐπίσπευσιν καὶ ὀλοκλήρωσιν τῆς προπαρασκευῆς αὐτῆς, διευθέτησιν δὲ πασῶν τῶν ἐν προκειμένῳ λεπτομερειῶν, καθ' ἣν ἀπεφασίσθησαν τὰ κάτωθι:

1. Ἡ Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλη Σύνοδος θὰ συνέλθῃ σὺν Θεῷ ἐν τῇ ἐν Κολυμπαρίῳ Κισιάμου Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἀκαδημίᾳ Κρήτης, ἀπὸ 18ης ἕως 27ης Ἰουνίου 2016. Τῇ 18ῃ ἰδίου μηνός, Σαββάτῳ τῶν Ψυχῶν, τελεσθήσεται Θεία Λειτουργία καὶ Ἱερὸν Μνημόσυνον ὑπὲρ ἀναπαύσεως πάντων τῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Πίστεως ἀγωνισαμένων καὶ τελειωθέντων ἐν αὐτῇ ὡς καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν κεκοιμηκότων διὰ τὴν προπαρασκευὴν τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου κεκοιμημένων πατέρων καὶ ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ Μεγάλῃ Ἑορτῇ τῆς Ἁγίας Πεντηκοστῆς τελεσθήσεται Συλλειτουργίον τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Προκαθημένων ἐν τῷ Ἱερῷ Ναῷ Ἁγίου Μηνᾶ Ἡρακλείου. Αἱ ἐργασίαι τῆς Συνόδου θὰ ἀρχίσουν μετὰ τὴν Θεϊαν Λειτουργίαν τῆς Δευτέρας τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ὀλοκληρωθήσονται δὲ ἐν Εὐχαριστιακῇ Συνάξει τῇ Κυριακῇ τῶν Ἁγίων Πάντων.

2. Εἰδικὴ Ἐπιτροπὴ, ἀπαρτιζομένη ἐξ ἐνὸς αντιπροσώπου ἐξ ἐκάστης Ἐκκλησίας, ἐξονομαζομένου μέχρι τέλους προσεχοῦς Φεβρουαρίου, θὰ συνέλθῃ ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἀκαδημίᾳ Κρήτης, ἀπὸ 9ης ἕως 16ης Ἰουνίου ἐ.ἔ., πρὸς σύνταξιν σχεδίου Μηνύματος τῆς Συνόδου, τὸ ὁποῖον θὰ θεωρηθῇ ὑπὸ τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Προκαθημένων, τῇ 17ῃ ἰδίου μηνός, πρὸς παραπομπὴν ἐν συνεχείᾳ τῇ Ἁγίᾳ καὶ Μεγάλῃ Συνόδῳ.

3. Εἰς τὴν Ἡμερησίαν Διάταξιν τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου, διαλαμβάνονται τὰ κάτωθι θέματα:

α) Ἀποστολή τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῷ συγχρόνῳ κόσμῳ.

β) Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Διασπορά. Ἡ Ἱερά Σύναξις ἀφ' ἑνὸς μὲν ἔκρινεν ὅτι ὁ ὑπὸ τῆς Δ' Προσυνοδικῆς Πανορθόδοξου Διασκέψεως (2009) συσταθεὶς θεσμὸς τῶν Ἐπισκοπικῶν Συνελεύσεων ἐκασταχοῦ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Διασπορᾶς ἐλειτούργησεν ἐπιτυχῶς καὶ ἀπεδείχθη λυσιτελής, ἐπειδὴ φανερώνει ἐμπράκτως τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας καὶ προωθεῖ τὴν συνεργασίαν τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν παρουσιῶν ἐν τῇ Διασπορᾷ, ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων πιστῶν, ἀφ' ἑτέρου δὲ διεπίστωσε τὴν ἀδυναμίαν, τό γε νῦν ἔχον, πρὸς μετάβασιν εἰς τὴν αὐστηρῶς κανονικὴν τάξιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὅθεν, ἀπεφάσισεν ὅπως εἰσηγηθῆ εἰς τὴν Ἁγίαν καὶ Μεγάλην Σύνοδον τὴν διατήρησιν τοῦ θεσμοῦ τούτου, ἄχρις οὗ ἐπιστῆ ὁ καιρὸς, κατόπιν ὠριμάνσεως τῶν συνθηκῶν, πρὸς ἐφαρμογὴν τῆς κανονικῆς ἀκριβείας.

γ) Τὸ Αὐτόνομον ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ὁ τρόπος ἀνακηρύξεως αὐτοῦ.

δ) Τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Γάμου καὶ τὰ κολύματα αὐτοῦ.

ε) Ἡ σπουδαιότης τῆς νηστείας καὶ ἡ τήρησις αὐτῆς σήμερον.

στ) Σχέσεις τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας πρὸς τὸν λοιπὸν χριστιανικὸν κόσμον.

Διαπιστωθέντος ὅτι τὰ θέματα τὸ Αὐτοκέφαλον ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ὁ τρόπος ἀνακηρύξεως αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ Δίπτυχα δὲν ἔτυχον ὁμοφώνου ἀποδοχῆς κατὰ τὰς ἐπανειλημμένας συνελεύσεις τῆς Διορθόδοξου Προπαρασκευαστικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς, ὥστε νὰ τύχουν τελικῶς ἐγκρίσεως ὑπὸ τινος Προσυνοδικῆς Διασκέψεως καὶ ἀποτελέσουν οὕτω θέματα τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου, δὲν συμπεριελήφθησαν εἰς τὴν Ἡμερήσιαν Διάταξιν αὐτῆς καὶ θὰ ἐξετασθοῦν ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι. Πρὸς τούτοις, ἀπεφασίσθη ὅπως ἐκάστη Ἐκκλησία ἀφεθῆ ἐλευθέρᾳ ἵνα ἀκολουθῆ τὴν ὑπ' αὐτῆς καθιερωθεῖσαν τάξιν τῶν Διπτύχων.

Ὅσον ἀφορᾷ εἰς τὸ *Ἡμερολογιακὸν Ζήτημα*, ἐκρίθη σκόπιμον ὅπως ἐκάστη Ἐκκλησία ἀφεθῆ ἐλευθέρᾳ ἵνα τηρῆ τὸ ὑπ' αὐτῆς θεωρούμενον ὡς λυσιτελὲς διὰ τὴν πνευματικὴν οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ ποιμνίου αὐτῆς Ἡμερολόγιον, χωρὶς τοῦτο νὰ ἐπηρρεάξῃ τὸν ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων κοινὸν ἑορτασμὸν τοῦ Πάσχα.

4. Συγκροτεῖται Πανορθόδοξος Γραμματεία τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου ἐξ ἑνὸς ἀντιπροσώπου ἐξ ἐκάστης Ἐκκλησίας, ἐξονομαζομένου μέχρι τέλους προσεχοῦς Φεβρουαρίου. Αὕτη θὰ λειτουργῆ ὑπὸ τὸν συντονισμὸν τοῦ Γραμματέως ἐπὶ τῆς Προπαρασκευῆς τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου. Ἔργον αὐτῆς θὰ εἶναι:

α) ἡ δημοσίευσις τῶν ὁμοφώνως ὑπὸ τῶν Προσυνοδικῶν Πανορθόδοξων Διασκέψεων καὶ τῶν Συνάξεων τῶν Προκαθημένων γενομένων ἀποδεκτῶν κειμένων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως τῆς Συνόδου εἰς τὴν ἐπὶ τούτῳ δημιουργηθησομένην ἰστοσελίδα,

β) ἡ πληροφόρησις τῶν Μέσων Γενικῆς Ἐνημερώσεως ἐπὶ τοῦ ἔργου καὶ τοῦ σκοποῦ τῆς Συνόδου, τῇ συνδρομῇ εἰδικῶν πρὸς τοῦτο συμβούλων,

γ) ἡ παροχὴ τῆς ἀπαιτουμένης διαπιστεύσεως, κατόπιν συστάσεως τῶν Ὁρθόδοξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, τῶν ἐνδιαφερομένων διὰ τὸ ἔργον τῆς Συνόδου δημοσιογράφων καὶ ἀνταποκριτῶν, καὶ

δ) ἡ ἐπιμέλεια λοιπῶν θεμάτων σχετιζομένων πρὸς τὴν γραμματειακὴν ὑποστήριξιν τῆς Συνόδου.

5. Αἱ Ὁρθόδοξαι Ἐκκλησίαι δύνανται νὰ δημοσιεύσωσιν εἰς τὰ ἐπίσημα αὐτῶν ὄργανα -ἠλεκτρονικὰ ἢ ἔντυπα- τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν Προσυνοδικῶν Πανορθόδοξων Διασκέψεων καὶ τῶν Συνάξεων τῶν Ὁρθόδοξων Προκαθημένων ὁμοφώνως γεγόμενα ἀποδεκτὰ κείμενα τῆς Ἡμερησίας Διατάξεως τῆς Συνόδου πρὸς πληροφόρησιν τοῦ ποιμνίου αὐτῶν, ὡς καὶ παντὸς ἐνδιαφερομένου.

6. Συνετάχθη καὶ ἐνεκρίθη Κανονισμὸς Ὁργανώσεως καὶ Λειτουργίας τῆς Συνόδου.

7. Αἱ Ὁρθόδοξαι Ἐκκλησίαι ἀναλαμβάνουν τὴν ἀπὸ κοινοῦ ἀντιμετώπισιν τῶν οικονομικῶν δαπανῶν τῆς συγκλήσεως καὶ λειτουργίας τῆς Συνόδου, ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει καταρτισθησομένου προϋπολογισμοῦ.

8. Προσκαλοῦνται εἰς τὴν ἐναρκτήριον καὶ τὴν καταληκτῆριον συνεδρίαν τῆς Συνόδου ὡς Παρατηρηταὶ ἐκπρόσωποι χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν ἢ Ὁμολογιῶν, μετὰ τῶν ὁποίων ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία διεξάγει Θεολογικὸν Διάλογον, ὡς καὶ ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν ὀργανώσεων, ὡς κάτωθι:

α) δύο ἐκ τῆς Ρωμαιοκαθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας,

β) εἷς ἐκ τῆς Κοπτικῆς Ἐκκλησίας,

γ) εἷς ἐκ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Αἰθιοπίας,

δ) εἷς ἐκ τῆς Ἀρμενικῆς Ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Ἐτσματζίν,

ε) εἷς ἐκ τοῦ Καθολικοσάτου τῆς Κιλικίας,

στ) εἷς ἐκ τῆς Συροϊακωβιτικῆς Ἐκκλησίας,

ζ) εἷς ἐκ τῆς Ἀγγλικανικῆς Ἐκκλησίας,

η) ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τῶν Παλαιοκαθολικῶν τῆς Ἐνώσεως τῆς Οὐτρέχτης,

θ) εἷς ἐκ τῆς Παγκοσμίου Λουθηρανικῆς Ὁμοσπονδίας,

ι) ὁ Γενικὸς Γραμματεὺς τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ ὁ Διευθυντὴς τῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς Πίστις καὶ Τάξις τοῦ αὐτοῦ Συμβουλίου,

- ια) ὁ Πρόεδρος τοῦ Συμβουλίου Εὐρωπαϊκῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν,  
 ιβ) ὁ Γενικός Γραμματεὺς τοῦ Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν Μέσης Ἀνατολῆς,  
 καὶ  
 ιγ) ὁ Πρόεδρος τοῦ Συμβουλίου τῆς Εὐαγγελικῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Γερμανίας.

Σαμπεζύ, 27 Ἰανουαρίου 2016

- † ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Βαρθολομαῖος, Πρόεδρος  
 † ὁ Μητροπολίτης Γέρων Λεοντοπόλεως Γαβριήλ  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀλεξανδρείας Θεοδώρου Β΄)  
 † ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἰσαάκ  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Ἰωάννου Ι΄)  
 † ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντίνης Ἀρίσταρχος  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων Θεοφίλου Γ΄)  
 † ὁ Μητροπολίτης Κιέβου Ὀνούφριος  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Μόσχας Κυρίλλου)  
 † ὁ Σερβίας Εἰρηναῖος  
 † ὁ Ρουμανίας Δανιήλ  
 † ὁ Βουλγαρίας Νεόφυτος  
 † ὁ Γεωργίας Ἡλίας Β΄  
 † ὁ Νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς καὶ πάσης Κύπρου Χρυσόστομος Β΄  
 † ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἡλείας Γερμανός  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν καὶ πάσης Ἑλλάδος  
 Ἱερωνύμου Β΄)  
 † ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος Σιεματίτσε Γεώργιος  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Βαρσοβίας καὶ πάσης Πολωνίας  
 Σάββα)  
 † ὁ Τιράνων καὶ πάσης Ἀλβανίας Ἀναστάσιος  
 † ὁ Πρέσφφ καὶ πάσης Τσεχίας καὶ Σλοβακίας Ρασισιλάβ

## *SYNAXIS OF THE PRIMATES OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES*

### Decisions

At the invitation of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Their Beatitudes, the Primate of the Most Holy Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the representatives of Their Beatitudes Patriarch John of Antioch, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece, and Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland, participated in a Synaxis convened at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Geneva from January 21-28, 2016, in order to finalize the Agenda of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, to accelerate and complete its preparation, and to coordinate all other related details. During the Synaxis, the following was decided:

1. The Holy and Great Council will convene –God-willing– at the Orthodox Academy of Crete in Kolymbari, Kissamos, from June 18-27, 2016. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Saturday of Souls, a Divine Liturgy will be celebrated, as will a Memorial Service for the repose of all those who struggled and died for the Orthodox Faith and for our fathers and brethren who labored for the preparation of the Holy and Great Council. Moreover, on the Great Feast of Pentecost, a Concelebration of the Orthodox Primate shall be held in the Holy Church of Saint Menas in Heraklion, Crete. The work of the Council shall begin following the Divine Liturgy on Monday of the Holy Spirit and shall conclude in a Eucharistic Synaxis on the Sunday of All Saints.
2. A Special Committee comprised by one representative from each Church, to be appointed by the end of this February, shall convene at the Orthodox Academy of Crete on June 9-16, 2016, to draft the Message of the Council, which shall be reviewed by the Orthodox Primate on June 17<sup>th</sup> and later presented to the Holy and Great Council.
3. The Agenda of the Holy and Great Council is as follows:
  - a. The mission of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary world.
  - b. The Orthodox Diaspora. On the one hand, the Holy Synaxis deemed that the institution of Episcopal Assemblies throughout the Orthodox Diaspora, as established by the 4<sup>th</sup> Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference

(2009), has thus far proven to function successfully and efficiently because it reveals the unity of the Orthodox Church in practice and promotes cooperation among ecclesiastical presences in the Diaspora for the benefit of the Orthodox faithful; on the other hand, the Holy Synaxis recognized the inability to presently transition into the precise canonical order of the Church. Thus, it was decided to propose to the Holy and Great Council the preservation of this Institution until such time when conditions ripen and allow for absolute conformity according to canonical precision.

- c. Autonomy in the Orthodox Church and the means by which it is proclaimed.
- d. The sacrament of Marriage and its impediments.
- e. The importance of fasting and its observance today.
- f. The relationship of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world.

Realizing that the issue of *Autocephaly in the Orthodox Church and the means by which it is proclaimed* and the matter of the Diptychs could not garner unanimous acceptance during repeated meetings of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, and therefore not providing the conditions for final approval by any Pre-Conciliar Meeting, which is required for issues to become subjects for consideration by the Holy and Great Council, they were excluded from the Agenda; they shall be reviewed in the future. In this way, it was decided that each Church may freely follow its own established order of the Diptychs.

Regarding the issue of the Church Calendar, it was deliberately agreed that each Church shall freely follow the Calendar she deems expedient for the spiritual edification of her flock, provided that such practice does not affect the common Orthodox celebration of Pascha.

4. A Pan-Orthodox Secretariat of the Holy and Great Council shall be established and comprised by one representative from each Church, who shall be appointed by the end of February. This Secretariat shall operate under the coordination of the Secretary for the Preparation of the Holy and Great Council. It is tasked with the following:
  - Publish the texts related to the Agenda that were unanimously accepted by the Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conferences and by the Synaxis of the Primates on the Council's website.

- With the assistance of special consultants, inform the Mass Media about the work and purpose of the Council.
  - At the recommendation of the Orthodox Churches, accredit those journalists and correspondents interested in the work of the Council.
  - Oversee other issues related to the Council's clerical needs.
5. In order to inform their flock and anyone interested in the Council, the Orthodox Churches may publish on their official channels – electronic or in print–the texts related to the Agenda of the Council that were unanimously accepted by the Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conferences and by the Synaxis of the Primates.
  6. *Rules of Operation* for the Holy and Great Council were composed and ratified.
  7. The Orthodox Churches shall jointly assume the cost of the convocation and operation of the Council, according to the formulated budget.
  8. The following representatives of those Christian Churches or Confessions with which the Orthodox Church maintains a Theological Dialogue, and representatives of other Christian organizations shall be invited to the opening and closing sessions of the Council as Observer:
    - Two from the Roman Catholic Church
    - One from the Coptic Church
    - One from the Church of Ethiopia
    - One from the Armenian Church of Etchmiadzin
    - One from the Cilician Catholicate
    - One from the Syro-Jacobite Church
    - One from the Anglican Church
    - The Archbishop of the Old Catholic Church Union of Utrecht
    - One from the World Lutheran Federation
    - The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and the Director of its *Faith and Order* Commission
    - The President of the European Council of Churches
    - The General Secretary of the Middle Eastern Council of Churches
    - The President of the Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany

Chambésy, 27 January 2016

† *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Chairman*

† Metropolitan Gabriel of Leontopolis  
(representative of Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria)

† Metropolitan Isaac  
(representative of Patriarch John of Antioch)

† Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina  
(representative of Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem)

† Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine  
(representative of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow)

† Patriarch Irinej of Serbia

† Patriarch Daniel of Romania

† Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria

† Patriarch Ilia of Georgia

† Archbishop Chrysostomos of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus

† Metropolitan Germanos of Ilias

(representative of Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece)

† Bishop George of Siemiatycze

(representative of Archbishop Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland)

† Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës and All Albania

† Archbishop Rastislav of Prešov and All Czech Lands and Slovakia



ΙΕΡΑ ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΚΑΘΗΜΕΝΩΝ  
ΤΩΝ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΩΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΩΝ

Κανονισμός Ὁργανώσεως καὶ Λειτουργίας  
τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου  
τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας

Ἄρθρον 1 – Εἰσαγωγή

Ἡ Ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλη Σύνοδος, τῇ χάριτι τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος, ἀποτελεῖ αὐθεντικὴν ἔκφρασιν τῆς κανονικῆς παραδόσεως καὶ τῆς διαχρονικῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς πράξεως διὰ τὴν λειτουργίαν τοῦ συνοδικοῦ συστήματος ἐν τῇ μιᾷ, ἁγίᾳ, καθολικῇ καὶ ἀποστολικῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ συγκαλεῖται ὑπὸ τῆς Α.Θ. Παναγιότητος τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου, συμφρονούντων καὶ τῶν Μακαριωτάτων Προκαθημένων πασῶν τῶν ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνεγνωρισμένων κατὰ τόπους αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, συγκροτεῖται δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ὀρισθέντων μελῶν τῶν ἀντιπροσωπειῶν αὐτῶν.

Ἄρθρον 2 – Σύγκλησις τῆς Συνόδου

Ἡ σύγκλησις τῆς Συνόδου ἐξαγγέλλεται διὰ τῶν καθιερωμένων Πατριαρχικῶν Γραμμάτων τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου πρὸς πάντας τοὺς Προκαθημένους τῶν κατὰ τόπους αὐτοκεφάλων Ἐκκλησιῶν, διὰ τῶν ὁποίων:

1. ἀναγγέλλεται ἡ περάτωσις τῆς πανορθόδοξως ἀποφασισθείσης προσυνοδικῆς προετοιμασίας τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως τῆς Συνόδου,

2. ὀρίζεται ὁ χρόνος καὶ ὁ τόπος συνελεύσεως τῆς Συνόδου, τῇ συναίνεσει τῶν Μακαριωτάτων Προκαθημένων πασῶν τῶν κατὰ τόπους αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, καὶ

3. καλεῖ τὰς κατὰ τόπους αὐτοκεφάλους Ὁρθοδόξους Ἐκκλησίας νὰ ὀρίσουν, κατὰ τὰ πανορθόδοξως συμπεφωνημένα εἰς τὰς *Ἱερὰς Συνάξεις* τῶν Μακαριωτάτων Προκαθημένων, τοὺς ἐκπροσώπους αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν Σύνοδον.

## Ἄρθρον 3 – Συγκρότησις τῆς Συνόδου

Μέλη τῆς Συνόδου εἶναι οἱ ὑφ' ἐκάστης αὐτοκεφάλου Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ὀριζόμενοι ἀρχιερεῖς ὡς ἐκπρόσωποι αὐτῆς,

1. ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μελῶν καθωρίσθη ὑπὸ τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνάξεως τῶν Προκαθημένων πασῶν τῶν κατὰ τόπους αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν (Φανάριον, Μάρτιος 2014),

2. αἱ ἀντιπροσωπεῖαι δύνανται νὰ συνοδεύωνται καὶ ὑπὸ εἰδικῶν συμβούλων, κληρικῶν, μοναχῶν ἢ λαϊκῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν δὲν δύναται κατὰ κανόνα νὰ ὑπερβαίῃ τὰ ἕξ (6) μέλη. Καλοῦνται ἐπίσης καὶ τρία βοηθητικὰ στελέχη (stewards) ἐξ ἐκάστης αὐτοκεφάλου Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας.

3. οἱ εἰδικοί σύμβουλοι δύνανται νὰ παρίστανται εἰς τὰς συνεδριάσεις τῆς Ὀλομελείας τῆς Συνόδου, χωρὶς ὅμως δικαίωμα λόγου ἢ ψήφου, ἐνῶ ὀφείλουν νὰ ἐπικουροῦν τὸ ἔργον τῆς Γραμματείας τῆς Συνόδου ἢ τῶν Συνοδικῶν Ἐπιτροπῶν μετὰ δικαιώματος λόγου καὶ νὰ ἀσκοῦν τὰ ἀνατιθέμενα εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰδικὰ καθήκοντα.

4. ἕκαστος τῶν Προκαθημένων δύναται νὰ ἔχη παρ' ἑαυτῶ ἓν ἢ δύο, εἰ δυνατόν, ἐκ τῶν ἀρχιερατικῶν μελῶν τῆς ἀντιπροσωπείας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν διάρκειαν τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου. Ὁ Πρόεδρος, λόγῳ τῶν ηὔξημένων ὑποχρεώσεων αὐτοῦ, δύναται νὰ ἔχη παρ' ἑαυτῶ δύο τοιαῦτα μέλη καὶ ἓνα γραμματέα. Πάντες οἱ σύμβουλοι κáθηται ὀπισθεν τῶν Προκαθημένων, καὶ

5. ἐν ἣ περιπτώσει Προκαθημένος Ἐκκλησίας τινὸς ἀδυνατεῖ νὰ παραστῆ εἰς τὰς ἐργασίας τῆς Συνόδου ἢ εἷς τινα τῶν συνεδριῶν αὐτῆς, ὀρίζεται ἀντιπρόσωπος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὰ ἐν ἐκάστη Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἰσχύοντα, ὅστις καὶ καταλαμβάνει τὴν θέσιν αὐτοῦ.

## Ἄρθρον 4 – Προεδρία τῆς Συνόδου

Ἡ προεδρία τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου ἀσκεῖται:

1. ὑπὸ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου. Οἱ Προκαθημένοι τῶν ἄλλων κατὰ τόπους Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν παρακάθηται ἐκατέρωθεν, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν τῶν Ἱερῶν Διπτύχων τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου.

2. τὰ μέλη τῶν ἀντιπροσωπειῶν τῶν κατὰ τόπους Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν κατατάσσονται, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν τῶν Ἱερῶν Διπτύχων, εἰς τὴν καθορισθεῖσαν

οϊκείαν θέσιν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ χώρῳ τῶν συνεδριῶν, εἰς τὴν συνάφειαν τῆς ὁποίας τοποθετοῦνται καὶ οἱ εἰδικοί σύμβουλοι ἐκάστης ἀντιπροσωπείας πρὸς διευκόλυνσιν τῆς συνεργασίας αὐτῶν.

### Ἄρθρον 5 Ἄρμοδιότητες τοῦ Προέδρου

Ὁ Πρόεδρος τῆς Συνόδου:

1. κηρύσσει τὴν ἔναρξιν καὶ τὴν λήξιν τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου,
2. συνεργάζεται μετὰ τῶν Προκαθημένων τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν διὰ τὸν προγραμματισμὸν τῶν ἐργασιῶν ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως τῆς Συνόδου, ὡς ἐπίσης καὶ διὰ τὴν ἄμεσον ἀντιμετώπισιν οἰουδήποτε ζητήματος εἰς τὴν διαδικασίαν ἢ εἰς τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῆς,
3. ἐγκρίνει τὸ πρόγραμμα τῆς λατρευτικῆς ζωῆς τῶν μελῶν τῆς Συνόδου,
4. διευθύνει τὰς διεξαγομένας συζητήσεις εἰς ἐκάστην συνεδρίαν μετὰ συντόμων κατὰ περίπτωσιν σχολίων διὰ τὸν πληρέστερον συντονισμὸν αὐτῶν πρὸς τὴν ἀποστολὴν τῆς Συνόδου,
5. δίδει τὸν λόγον εἰς τὰ μέλη τῆς Συνόδου καὶ ἐγγυᾶται τὴν πιστὴν τήρησιν καὶ τὴν ὀρθὴν ἐφαρμογὴν τῶν ἀρχῶν τοῦ παρόντος Κανονισμοῦ διὰ τὴν εὐρυθμον καὶ κατὰ κανόνα ἐκκλησιαστικὴν πορείαν τῶν ἐργασιῶν,
6. συντονίζει τὸ ἔργον τῆς Πανορθοδόξου Γραμματείας τῆς Συνόδου.

### Ἄρθρον 6 – Γραμματεία τῆς Συνόδου

Ἡ Γραμματεία τῆς Συνόδου εἶναι πανορθόδοξος καὶ πολυμελής, ἥτοι:

1. συγκροτεῖται ἐξ ἑνὸς ἀρχιερέως ἐξ ἐκάστης ἀντιπροσωπείας, ὡς ἐπίσης καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν Γραμματέα ἐπὶ τῆς προπαρασκευῆς τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐπιμελεῖται τοῦ ἔργου τῆς Πανορθοδόξου Γραμματείας, καὶ
2. τὰ μέλη τῆς Γραμματείας ἐπικουροῦνται εἰς τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν καὶ ὑπὸ καταλλήλων συμβούλων, κληρικῶν, μοναχῶν ἢ λαϊκῶν, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἐπιλέγονται ἐκ τῶν συμβούλων τῶν ἀντιπροσωπειῶν τῶν κατὰ τόπους Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ ὀφείλουσι νὰ ὑποστηρίζουσι τὸ εὐρύτατον καὶ πολύπτυχον ἔργον τῆς Πανορθοδόξου Γραμματείας. Ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν συμβούλων αὐτῶν δὲν δύναται νὰ ὑπερβαίῃ τοὺς δύο ἐξ ἐκάστης ἀντιπροσωπείας.

## Ἄρθρον 7 – Ἀρμοδιότητες τῆς Γραμματείας

Αἱ ἀρμοδιότητες τῆς Γραμματείας τῆς Συνόδου ἀφοροῦν:

1. εἰς τὴν συγκρότησιν τῶν φακέλων τοῦ σχετικοῦ ὑλικοῦ τῆς προπαρασκευαστικῆς διαδικασίας διὰ τὴν προετοιμασίαν τῶν κειμένων ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως τῆς Συνόδου εἰς τὰς καθιερωμένας γλώσσας τῶν ἐργασιῶν αὐτῆς,
2. εἰς τὴν εὐθύνην διὰ τὴν τήρησιν τῶν *Πρακτικῶν* τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου,
3. εἰς τὴν ὑποστήριξιν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς *Ὀλομελείας* καὶ τῶν *Ἐπιτροπῶν τῆς Συνόδου*,
4. εἰς τὴν διασφάλισιν τῆς ὀρθῆς λειτουργίας τοῦ συστήματος *ταυτοχρόνου διερμηνείας* τῶν συζητήσεων τῆς Συνόδου εἰς τὰς ἐπισήμους γλώσσας,
5. εἰς τὴν συγκρότησιν *Εἰδικῶν Ἐπιτροπῶν* τόσον διὰ τὴν σύνταξιν τῶν *Ἀνακοινωθέντων* πρὸς ἄμεσον ἐνημέρωσιν τῆς κοινῆς γνώμης περὶ τῆς πορείας τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου, ὅσον καὶ διὰ τὴν προετοιμασίαν τοῦ *Μηνύματος* αὐτῆς,
6. εἰς τὴν κατάλληλον πληροφόρησιν τῶν παρισταμένων *Παρατηρητῶν* τῶν ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν ἢ Ὁμολογιῶν διὰ τῆς ἐπιδόσεως τῶν σχετικῶν φακέλων ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως τῆς Συνόδου, καὶ
7. εἰς τὴν ἄμεσον ἀντιμετώπισιν παντὸς ἄλλου ἀπροβλέπτου *πραγματικοῦ* ἢ *διαδικαστικοῦ* ζητήματος.

## Ἄρθρον 8 – Ἔργασίαι τῆς Συνόδου

Αἱ ἐργασίαι τῆς Συνόδου ἄρχονται καὶ κατακλείονται διὰ πανορθοδόξου *θείας Λειτουργίας*, εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν προΐσταται ὁ Οἰκουμενικὸς Πατριάρχης καὶ μετέχουν πάντες οἱ Προκαθήμενοι τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν ἢ οἱ ἐκπρόσωποι αὐτῶν, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν τῶν ἱερῶν Διπτύχων τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου,

1. διεξάγονται ἐν Ὀλομελείᾳ ἢ καὶ εἰς Συνοδικὰς Ἐπιτροπὰς, συμφώνως πρὸς τὸ ἐκπονηθὲν πρόγραμμα ἐργασιῶν ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως, τὰ κείμενα τῶν ὁποίων ἔτυχον τῆς ὁμοφώνου ἐγκρίσεως Προσυνοδικῶν Πανορθοδόξων Διασκέψεων καὶ Συνάξεων τῶν Προκαθημένων τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων αὐτοκεφάλων Ἐκκλησιῶν,
2. δὲν εἶναι δυνατὸν νὰ εἰσαχθοῦν εἰς τὴν Σύνοδον πρὸς συζήτησιν τὰ μὴ ὁμοφώνως ἐγκριθέντα ὑπὸ τῶν Προσυνοδικῶν Πανορθοδόξων Διασκέψεων ἢ

τῶν Συνάξεων τῶν Προκαθημένων ἢ νέα θέματα, ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ τὸ τελικὸν Μήνυμα τῆς Συνόδου, τὸ ὁποῖον θὰ προετοιμασθῇ ἐν σχεδίῳ ὑπὸ Πανορθοδόξου Εἰδικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς μίαν ἐβδομάδα πρὸ τῆς συγκλήσεως αὐτῆς, τῇ ἐγκρίσει τῶν Προκαθημένων τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, καὶ

3. ἐκτὸς τῆς ἐνάξεως καὶ τῆς λήξεως τῆς Συνόδου, πᾶσαι αἱ ἄλλαι συνεδρῶναι διεξάγονται κεκλεισμένων τῶν θυρῶν.

### Ἄρθρον 9 – Διεξαγωγή τῶν συζητήσεων

1. Αἱ συζητήσεις διεξάγονται εἰς τὰς ἐπίσημους γλώσσας τῆς Συνόδου, ἧτοι τὴν ἑλληνικὴν, τὴν ρωσικὴν, τὴν γαλλικὴν καὶ τὴν ἀγγλικὴν γλῶσσαν, ὡς ἐπίσης καὶ εἰς τὴν ἀραβικὴν, ὡς γλῶσσαν ἐργασίας, καλύπτονται δὲ ὑπὸ συστήματος ταυτοχρόνου διερμηνείας.

2. Τὰ θέματα συζητοῦνται κατὰ τὴν σειρὰν αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ἡμερησίαν διάταξιν τῆς Συνόδου, αἱ δὲ συζητήσεις περιορίζονται αὐστηρῶς εἰς μόνον τὸ ὀριζόμενον διὰ τὴν συγκεκριμένην συνεδρῶναι θέμα.

3. Ἀπαγορεύεται οἰαδήποτε ἐκτὸς θέματος παρέμβασις, ἀφαιρουμένου τοῦ λόγου ἐκ τοῦ ὁμιλοῦντος, ἐκτὸς ἐὰν αὐτὴ ἀναφέρεται ἠτιολογημένως εἰς διαδικαστικὸν ἢ προσωπικὸν ζήτημα, διὸ καὶ, ἐν τοιαύτῃ περιπτώσει, ὁ ζητῶν τὸν λόγον ὀφείλει νὰ ἀναγράφῃ τὴν παραβιαζομένην διάταξιν τοῦ Κανονισμοῦ.

### Ἄρθρον 10 – Συμμετοχὴ τῶν μελῶν εἰς τὰς συζητήσεις

Ὁ λόγος εἰς τὰς ἐργασίας τῆς Συνόδου εἶναι ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλ' ὅμως οὐδεὶς δύναται νὰ ὁμιλήσῃ πρὶν ἢ ζητήσῃ καὶ λάβῃ τὴν ἐγκρίσιν τοῦ Προέδρου τῆς Συνόδου.

1. Ἡ ὑπὸ τινος τῶν μελῶν τῆς Συνόδου δήλωσις τῆς ἐπιθυμίας διὰ τὴν συμμετοχὴν εἰς τὴν συζήτησιν τοῦ θέματος γίνεται διὰ ἐπιδόσεως γραπτοῦ σημειώματος πρὸς τὸ ἀρμόδιον μέλος τῆς Γραμματείας τῆς Συνόδου, τὸ ὁποῖον τηρεῖ τὸν κατάλογον προτεραιότητος τῶν δηλωσάντων ἐπιθυμίαν νὰ ὁμιλήσουν καὶ τὸν παραδίδει εἰς τὸν Πρόεδρον τῆς Συνόδου.

2. Ἡ χρονικὴ διάρκεια τῆς παρεμβάσεως τοῦ ὁμιλητοῦ εἰς τὴν συζήτησιν δὲν δύναται νὰ ὑπερβῇ τὰ δέκα (10') λεπτὰ τῆς ὥρας, εἰς δὲ τὴν τυχὸν δευτερολογίαν, ἂν ζητηθῶν ἐξηγήσεις ἢ ἂν κριθῇ ὅτι εἶναι ἀναγκαία ἢ χρήσιμος ὑπὸ τοῦ Προέδρου τῆς Συνόδου, δὲν δύναται νὰ ὑπερβῇ τὰ πέντε (5') λεπτὰ τῆς ὥρας. Οἱ Προκαθημένοι τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν ἔχουν εἰς τὴν

διάθεσιν των διπλάσιον χρόνον ἀγορεύσεως.

3. Δὲν ἐπιτρέπονται ἄσχετοι διαλογικαὶ ἀντιπαραθέσεις ἢ προσωπικαὶ διενέξεις μεταξὺ τῶν μελῶν τῆς Συνόδου, διότι εἶναι ὄχι μόνον ξένα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντίθετοι πρὸς τὴν ἀποστολὴν αὐτῆς.

### Ἄρθρον 11 – Τροπολογίαι εἰς τὰ κείμενα

Αἱ κατὰ τὰς συζητήσεις ἐκάστου θέματος διατυπούμεναι προτάσεις τροπολογιῶν, διορθώσεων ἢ προσθηκῶν εἰς τὰ ὁμοφώνως ἐγκριθέντα κείμενα ὑπὸ Προσυνοδικῶν Πανορθοδόξων Διασκέψεων καὶ τῶν Συνάξεων τῶν Προκαθημένων ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως, ὡς ἐπίσης καὶ τὸ Μήνυμα τῆς Συνόδου,

1. ὑποβάλλονται εἰς τὴν Γραμματεῖαν τῆς Συνόδου διὰ νὰ παρουσιασθοῦν ὑπὸ τοῦ Προέδρου εἰς τὴν Ὀλομέλειαν τῆς Συνόδου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντιπροσωπειῶν τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ νὰ καταστῇ ἐπίσημος συνοδικὴ ἀπόφασις, καὶ

2. ἡ ἔγκρισις τῶν τροπολογιῶν, μετὰ τὴν ὀλοκλήρωσιν τῆς συζητήσεως αὐτῶν, ἐκφράζεται, κατὰ τὰ πανορθοδόξως καθιερωμένα, διὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ὁμοφωνίας τῶν ἀντιπροσωπειῶν πασῶν τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν. Τοῦτο σημαίνει ὅτι αἱ μὴ ὁμοφώνως ἀποδεκταὶ γινόμεναι τροπολογίαι δὲν ἐγκρίνονται.

### Ἄρθρον 12 – Ψηφοφορία καὶ ἔγκρισις τῶν κειμένων

Ἡ ψηφοφορία ἐπὶ τῶν συζητηθέντων καὶ ἀναθεωρηθέντων ὑπὸ τῆς Συνόδου κειμένων ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως,

1. συνδέεται πρὸς τὰς αὐτοκεφάλους Ὁρθοδόξους Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ὄχι πρὸς τὰ καθ' ἕναστον μέλη τῶν ἐν τῇ Συνόδῳ ἀντιπροσωπειῶν αὐτῶν, συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν ὁμόφωνον σχετικὴν ἀπόφασιν τῆς Ἱεράς Συνάξεως τῶν Προκαθημένων τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν,

2. ἡ κατὰ Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ὄχι κατὰ τὰ μέλη αὐτῶν ψήφισις ἐν τῇ Συνόδῳ τῶν κειμένων δὲν ἀποκλείει τὴν ἀρνητικὴν θέσιν ἑνὸς ἢ καὶ πλείονων ἀρχιερέων μιᾶς ἀντιπροσωπείας αὐτοκεφάλου τινὸς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ τῶν γενομένων τροπολογιῶν ἢ καὶ ἐπὶ ἑνὸς κειμένου γενικώτερον, ἢ διαφωνία τῶν ὁποίων καταχωρίζεται εἰς τὰ Πρακτικὰ τῆς Συνόδου, καὶ

3. ἡ ἀξιολόγησις τῶν διαφωνιῶν αὐτῶν εἶναι πλέον ἐσωτερικὸν ζήτημα τῆς εἰς ἣν ἀνήκουν αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας, ἢ ὅποια δύναται νὰ ὑποστηρίξῃ τὴν

θετικήν ψήφον αὐτῆς ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ἐσωτερικῆς πλειονοψηφίας, ἐκφράζεται δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ Προκαθημένου αὐτῆς, διὸ καὶ δεόν ὅπως προβλεφθῆ εἰς αὐτὴν ὁ ἀναγκαῖος χῶρος καὶ χρόνος δι' ἐσωτερικὴν συζήτησιν ἐπ' αὐτοῦ.

### Ἄρθρον 13 – Ἀποδοχὴ καὶ ὑπογραφή τῶν κειμένων

Τὰ ὁμοφώνως ἀποδεκτὰ γενόμενα κείμενα ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τῆς ἡμερησίας διατάξεως τῆς Συνόδου ἐκδίδονται εἰς τὰς τέσσαρας ἐπισήμους γλώσσας καὶ ἔχουν τὸ αὐτὸ κῦρος:

1. μονογραφοῦνται ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν Προκαθημένων τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν εἰς πάσας τὰς σελίδας αὐτῶν καὶ εἰς πάσας τὰς ἐπισήμους γλώσσας τῆς Συνόδου, ὑπογράφονται δὲ ἐν τέλει ὑπὸ τοῦ Προέδρου καὶ πάντων τῶν μελῶν τῆς Συνόδου.

2. αἱ ὑπογραφεῖσαι συνοδικαὶ ἀποφάσεις, ὡς καὶ τὸ *Μήνυμα* τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου, ἀποστέλλονται διὰ Πατριαρχικῶν Γραμμάτων τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου εἰς τοὺς Προκαθημένους τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, οἵτινες καὶ κοινοποιοῦν αὐτὰ εἰς τὰς Ἐκκλησίας αὐτῶν ἀντιστοίχως, ἔχουν δὲ πανορθόδοξον κῦρος.

### Ἄρθρον 14 – Συμμετοχὴ Παρατηρητῶν

*Παρατηρηταὶ* ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν ἢ Ὁμολογιῶν, ὡς ἐπίσης στελέχη ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν ὀργανώσεων, παρίστανται εἰς τὴν ἑναρξιν καὶ τὴν λήξιν τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου, ἄνευ δικαιώματος λόγου ἢ ψήφου.

### Ἄρθρον 15 – Δημοσίευσις τῶν Πρακτικῶν

Τὰ Πρακτικὰ τῶν ἐργασιῶν τῆς Συνόδου θὰ ἀπομαγνητοφωνηθοῦν καὶ θὰ τύχουν τῆς καθιερωμένης ἐπεξεργασίας, τῇ μερίμνῃ τῆς ἐπὶ τῶν *Πρακτικῶν* ἐιδικῆς Πανορθοδόξου Ἐπιτροπῆς τῆς Γραμματείας τῆς Συνόδου, ὀρισθείσης τῇ ἀποφάσει τῶν Προκαθημένων πασῶν τῶν αὐτοκεφάλων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, διὰ νὰ δημοσιευθοῦν εἰς τὰς ἐπισήμους γλώσσας καὶ νὰ ἀποσταλοῦν εἰς πάσας τὰς αὐτοκεφάλους Ὁρθοδόξους Ἐκκλησίας.

### Ἄρθρον 16 – Μέσα Ἐνημερώσεως

1. Τῇ ἀποφάσει τοῦ Προέδρου καὶ τῇ συναίνεσει τῶν ἄλλων Προκαθημένων τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν συγκροτεῖται μία δεκατετραμελής Συνοδικὴ Ἐπι-

τροπή, δι' ἑνὸς μέλους ἐξ ἑκάστης αὐτοκεφάλου Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, ἐπικουρούμενη ὑπὸ καταλλήλων εἰδικῶν συμβούλων, διὰ τὴν τακτικὴν ἐνημέρωσιν τῶν Μέσων Μαζικῆς Ἐνημερώσεως περὶ τῆς πορείας τῆς Συνόδου, καὶ

2. Οἱ δεόντως διαπεπιστευμένοι δημοσιογράφοι ὑπὸ τῆς Γραμματείας ἐπὶ τῆς προπαρασκευῆς τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου παρίστανται μόνον εἰς τὴν ἔναρξιν καὶ εἰς τὴν λήξιν τῆς Συνόδου.

Σαμπεζύ, 27 Ἰανουαρίου 2016

- † ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Βαρθολομαῖος, Πρόεδρος  
 † ὁ Μητροπολίτης Γέρων Λεοντοπόλεως Γαβριήλ  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀλεξανδρείας Θεοδώρου Β')
- † ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἰσαάκ  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Ἰωάννου Ι')
- † ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντίνης Ἀρίσταρχος  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων Θεοφίλου Γ')
- † ὁ Μόσχας Κύριλλος  
 † ὁ Σεβίας Εἰρηναῖος  
 † ὁ Ρουμανίας Δανιήλ  
 † ὁ Βουλγαρίας Νεόφυτος  
 † ὁ Γεωργίας Ἡλίας Β'
- † ὁ Νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς καὶ πάσης Κύπρου Χρυσόστομος Β'  
 † ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἡλείας Γερμανός  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν καὶ πάσης Ἑλλάδος  
 Ἱερωνύμου Β')
- † ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος Σιεματίσε Γεώργιος  
 (ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Βαρσοβίας καὶ πάσης Πολωνίας  
 Σάββα)
- † ὁ Τιράνων καὶ πάσης Ἀλβανίας Ἀναστάσιος  
 † ὁ Πρέσφφ καὶ πάσης Τσεχίας καὶ Σλοβακίας Ρατισλάβ



*SYNAXIS OF THE PRIMATES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES*

Organization and Working Procedures  
of the Holy and Great Council  
of the Orthodox Church

Article 1- Introduction

By the grace of the Holy Trinity, the Holy and Great Council is an authentic expression of the canonical tradition and diachronic ecclesiastical practice –through the work of the synodal system– in One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and is convened by His All-Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch, being of one mind with Their Beatitudes, the Primate of all the universally recognized autocephalous Local Orthodox Churches; and it shall be comprised of members appointed to each Church delegation.

Article 2 - The Convocation of the Council

The convocation of a Council shall be announced by the Ecumenical Patriarch through Patriarchal Letters issued to all the Primate of the local autocephalous Churches. Through these letters, he shall:

1. Announce the completion of the pan-Orthodox pre-conciliar preparation of the Council's agenda;
2. Determine the date and location of the Council, with the consent of Their Beatitudes, the Primate of all the local autocephalous Orthodox Churches, and
3. Requests from the local autocephalous Orthodox Churches, according to the pan-Orthodox agreements reached at the *Synaxes* of Their Beatitudes the Primate, to appoint their representatives to the Council.

Article 3 - Memberships of the Council

Members of the Council shall be those hierarchs designated by each autocephalous

Orthodox Church as its representatives:

1. The number of members has been determined by the *Synaxis* of the Primate of all the local autocephalous Orthodox Churches (Phanar, March 2014).
2. The delegations may be accompanied by special consultants –clergy, monastics or laypeople– but their number cannot exceed six (6). Invitations are also extended to three (3) assistants (stewards) for each autocephalous Orthodox Church.
3. The special consultants may attend the Council’s plenary sessions –without the right to speak or to vote– and are expected to assist the Council’s Secretariat or the Council’s Committees, with the right to speak and exercise special functions assigned to them.
4. During Council’s proceedings, each Primate may have by his side one or, if possible, two hierarchs from his Church’s delegation. Due to his numerous duties, the Chairman may have by his side two such members and one secretary. All of the consultants shall be seated behind the Primate;
5. In the event that a Primate of a Church is unable to personally attend the Council or any of its sessions, a representative shall be appointed, according to Church practice, and he shall assume his seat.

#### Article 4 - Chairmanship of the Council

The chairmanship of the Council shall be exercised by:

1. The Ecumenical Patriarch. The Primate of other Local Orthodox Churches shall be placed on his right and left according to the diptychs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
2. The delegate member of the local Orthodox Churches shall sit, according to the order of the Holy Diptychs, in assigned seats in the sacred space of the Council, with the special consultants of each delegation placed next to them to facilitate their collaboration.

#### Article 5 - The Chairman’s Responsibilities

The Chairman of the Council:

1. Announces the Council’s convening and conclusion
2. Works together with the Primate of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches to plan the work of the Council’s agenda items and immediately addresses all procedural or practical matter of the Council

3. Approves the liturgical program of the Council's members
4. Guides the discussions at each session by offering brief remarks, according to each circumstance, ensuring the greatest coordination of discussions according to the Council's mission
5. Extends the floor to members of the Council, and guarantees strict observance and correct application of the Articles of the present *Procedures* in an effort to ensure proper progress and ecclesiastical order of the proceedings
6. Coordinates the work of the Council's Pan-Orthodox Secretariat

#### Article 6 - Secretariat of the Council

The Secretariat of the Council is pan-Orthodox and consists of multiple members:

1. It shall be comprised by one hierarch from each delegation and the Secretary of the Council's Preconciliar Preparatory Committee, who supervises the work of the Pan-Orthodox Secretariat.
2. The members of the Secretariat shall be assisted by expert advisors (clergy, monastic, or laypersons), selected from among the consultants of the delegations of the local Orthodox Churches, who shall support the manifold work of the Pan-Orthodox Secretariat. The number of such advisers cannot exceed two (2) from each delegation.

#### Article 7 – Duties of the Secretariat of the Council

The responsibilities of Secretariat of the Council include:

1. Compile files with documents –in the official working languages– of the preconciliar process needed for the preparation of the texts associated with the Council's agenda
2. Taking *Minutes* during the Council's proceedings
3. Assisting the work of the *Plenary* and that of the Council's *Committees*
4. Ensuring proper implementation of simultaneous translation –in the official working languages– of the Council's discussions
5. Establishing *Special Committees* that will both, prepare *Press Releases* to directly inform the public of the progress of the Council's work, and prepare the Council's *Message*

6. Updating, as necessary, the *Observers* of other Christian Churches or Confessions by providing them with the files related to the Council's agenda
7. Immediately addressing all unforeseen practical or procedural issues

### Article 8 - The Work of the Council

The work of the Council shall begin and conclude with the celebration of the pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy, presided over by the Ecumenical Patriarch, with the participation of all the Primate of autocephalous Orthodox Churches or their representatives, in accordance with the holy Diptychs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

1. According to the daily agenda, the texts unanimously approved at Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Meetings and at *Synaxes* of the Primate of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches shall be considered in Plenary sessions and/or in Synodal Committees.
2. Except for the Council's final *Message*, new matters or those topics that were not unanimously approved during Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Meetings or during *Synaxes* of the Primate cannot be submitted to the Council for consideration. The draft of the Council's final *Message* shall be prepared by a Special Pan-Orthodox Committee a week before the convening of the Council and will be subject to the approval of the Primate of the Orthodox Churches.
3. With the exception of the Council's opening and closing sessions, all proceedings shall be held in closed-door session.

### Article 9 – Discussions

1. Discussions shall be held in the official languages of the Council, namely, Greek, Russian, French and English, as well as in Arabic as a working language. Simultaneous translations will be provided.
2. Topics shall be discussed according to the order in which they appear on the Council's agenda; discussions shall be strictly limited to the topic defined for each session.
3. Off-topic interventions are forbidden and will cause the speaker to lose his right to the floor, unless the intervention correctly relates to a procedural or personal matter; in this case, he who asks for the floor must indicate the Procedural provision that has been breached.

### Article 10 - Participation of Members in Discussions

Discussions during the Council's proceedings are open; however, no one may speak without first requesting and receiving approval by the Council's Chairman.

1. A member of the Council who wishes to participate in the discussion on a particular matter shall submit a written notice to the authorized member of the Council's Secretariat. This Secretariat member shall compile and prioritize a list of those who wish to speak and present it to the Council's Chairman.
2. An intervention by each speaker cannot exceed ten (10) minutes; in case of a reprise, whenever clarification is needed or if the Council's Chairman deems necessary or helpful, this cannot exceed five (5) minutes. The Primates of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches shall have twice as much time for their interventions.
3. Irrelevant dialogues and personal disputes between members of the Council are forbidden since these are not only unrelated, but also contrary, to the Council's mission.

### Article 11 - Modifications of Texts

Proposals to amend, correct, or append the Synodal texts that were unanimously approved by the Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Meetings and by *Synaxes* of the Primates, or to the Council's *Message*:

1. Shall be submitted by representatives of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches to the Council's Secretariat, and in turn presented by the Chairman during plenary session for official conciliar decision.
2. At the conclusion of deliberations, the approval of any change is expressed, according to pan-Orthodox procedures, by the consensus of the delegations of each autocephalous Orthodox Church. This means that an amendment that is not approved unanimously shall not be passed.

### Article 12 - Voting and Approval of Texts

Regarding the process of voting for issues discussed and reviewed vis-à-vis the texts of the Council:

1. Accordance with the unanimous decision of the Sacred *Synaxis* of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches, votes shall be cast by each autocephalous Orthodox Church and not by individual members of their delegations.
2. The vote of each Church –and not that of each member of its delegation– allows for one or more hierarchs in the delegation of a particular autocephalous Church to hold a dissenting opinion on proposed amendments or on entire texts. The dissenting position shall be registered in the Council's Minutes.
3. Dissenting opinions shall at that point be considered an internal matter of the autocephalous Church to which the hierarchs in question belong. In such instances, the Church may cast an affirmative vote based on the principle of internal majority, which is expressed by its Primate. For this reason, the necessary time and space must be afforded to each delegation, granting it the opportunity to consider this issue internally.

### Article 13 - Adoption and Signing of Texts

The texts on the Council's daily agenda that are approved unanimously shall be produced in the four official languages and shall possess the following authority:

1. The Primates of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches shall initial every page of each text; they shall initial every page of each official translation. The Chairman and all the members of the Council shall sign the final page of each text.
2. Possessing pan-Orthodox authority, the Council's signed decisions and the *Message* of the Holy and Great Council shall be circulated by the Ecumenical Patriarchate by Patriarchal Letters to the Primates of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches, who, in turn, communicate these decisions within their respective Churches.

### Article 14 - Participation of Observers

Observers from other Christian Churches or Confessions, as well leaders of inter-Christian organizations, shall be present at the opening and closing sessions of the Council but will not possess the right to vote or speak.

## Article 15 – Publishing of the Minutes

According to the decision of the Primates of all the autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the special *Pan-Orthodox Committee for Minutes* of the *Council's Secretariat* shall oversee the digital recording and transcription of the Council's Minutes, allowing for their publication in the official languages and their dissemination to every autocephalous Orthodox Church.

## Article 16 – The Media and Press

1. By decision of the Chairman, and with the consent of the other Primates of the Orthodox Churches, a *Synodal Committee* –consisting of fourteen (14) members (one from each autocephalous Church)– shall be established and will provide regular updates to the mass media regarding the progress of the Council's work. This Committee shall be supported by special consultants.
2. Journalists properly accredited by the Secretariat for the Preparation of the Holy and Great Council may only be present at the opening and closing sessions of the Council.

Chambésy, 27 January 2016

† *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Chairman*

† *Metropolitan Gabriel of Leontopolis*  
(representative of Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria)

† *Metropolitan Isaac*  
(representative of Patriarch John of Antioch)

† *Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina*  
(representative of Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem)

† *Patriarch Kirill of Moscow*

† *Patriarch Irinej of Serbia*

† *Patriarch Daniel of Romania*

† *Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria*

† *Patriarch Ilia of Georgia*

† *Archbishop Chrysostomos of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus*

- † *Metropolitan Germanos of Ilias*  
(*representative of Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece*)
- † *Bishop George of Siemiatycze*  
(*representative of Archbishop Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland*)
- † *Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës, and All Albania*
- † *Archbishop Rastislav of Presov and All Czech Lands and Slovakia*



## Ἡ ἀποστολή τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν τῷ συγχρόνῳ κόσμῳ

*Ἡ συμβολή τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας  
εἰς τὴν ἐπικράτησιν τῆς εἰρήνης, τῆς δικαιοσύνης,  
τῆς ἐλευθερίας, τῆς ἀδελφосύνης καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης  
μεταξὺ τῶν λαῶν, καὶ ἄρσιν τῶν φυλετικῶν  
καὶ λοιπῶν διακρίσεων*

### Ἀπόφαισις

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ ζῆ «ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ», ἀλλὰ δὲν εἶναι «ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου» (Ἰωάν. 17, 11 καὶ 14-15). Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἀποτελεῖ σημεῖον καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ, εὐαγγελιζομένη μίαν «καινὴν κτίσιν» (Β΄ Κορ. 5, 17), «καινοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ γῆν καινὴν... ἐν οἷς δικαιοσύνη κατοικεῖ» (Β΄ Πέτρο. 3, 13), ἕνα κόσμον, εἰς τὸν ὅποιον ὁ Θεός «ἐξαλείψει πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν (τῶν ἀνθρώπων), καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, οὔτε πένθος οὔτε κραυγὴ οὔτε πόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι» (Ἀποκ. 21, 4-5).

Τὴν προσδοκίαν αὐτὴν βιώνει ἤδη καὶ προγεύεται ἡ Ἐκκλησία, κατ' ἐξοχὴν ὁσάκις τελεῖ τὴν θεϊὰν Εὐχαριστίαν, συνάγουσα «ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό» (Α΄ Κορ. 11, 20) τὰ διεσκορπισμένα τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ (Ἰωάν. 11, 52) εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἄνευ διακρίσεως φυλῆς, φύλου, ἡλικίας, κοινωνικῆς ἢ ἄλλης καταστάσεως, ὅπου «οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος, οὐδὲ Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ» (Γαλ. 3, 28, πρβλ. Κολ. 3, 11), εἰς ἕνα κόσμον καταλλαγῆς, εἰρήνης καὶ ἀγάπης.

Τὴν πρόγευσιν αὐτὴν τῆς «καινῆς κτίσεως», τοῦ μεταμορφωμένου κόσμου, βιώνει ἐπίσης ἡ Ἐκκλησία εἰς τὰ πρόσωπα τῶν Ἁγίων τῆς, οἱ ὅποιοι διὰ τῆς ἀσκήσεως καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς τῶν κατέστησαν ἤδη εἰς τὴν ζωὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνες τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀποδεικνύοντες καὶ βεβαιοῦντες τοιοῦτοτρόπως ὅτι ἡ προσδοκία ἑνὸς κόσμου εἰρήνης, δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀγάπης δὲν εἶναι οὐτοπία, ἀλλὰ «ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις» (Ἑβρ. 11, 1), δυνατὴ μὲ τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὸν πνευματικὸν ἀγῶνα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Ἐμπνεομένη διαρκῶς ἀπὸ τὴν προσδοκίαν καὶ τὴν πρόγευσιν αὐτὴν τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡ Ἐκκλησία δὲν ἀδιαφορεῖ διὰ τὰ προβλήματα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῆς ἐκάστοτε ἐποχῆς, ἀλλὰ, ἀντιθέτως, συμμετέχει εἰς τὴν ἀγωνίαν καὶ τὰ ὑπαρξιακὰ προβλήματα τοῦ, αἴρουσα, ὅπως ὁ Κύριός της, τὴν ὀδύνην καὶ τὰς πληγὰς, τὰς ὁποίας προκαλεῖ τὸ κακὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐπιχέουσα, ὡς ὁ καλὸς Σαμαρεῖτης, ἔλαιον καὶ οἶνον εἰς τὰ τραύματα αὐτοῦ (Λουκ. 10, 34) διὰ τοῦ λόγου «τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ παρακλήσεως» (Ρωμ. 15, 4, Ἐβρ. 13, 22) καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμπράκτου ἀγάπης. Ὁ λόγος της πρὸς τὸν κόσμον ἀποβλέπει πρωτίστως ὄχι εἰς τὸ νὰ κρίνη καὶ καταδικάσῃ τὸν κόσμον (πρβλ. Ἰωάν. 3,17 καὶ 12, 47), ἀλλὰ εἰς τὸ νὰ προσφέρῃ εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς ὁδηγὸν τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὴν ἐλπίδα καὶ βεβαιότητα ὅτι τὸ κακόν, ὑπὸ οἰανδήποτε μορφῆν, δὲν ἔχει τὸν τελευταῖον λόγον εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν καὶ δὲν πρέπει νὰ ἀφεθῆ νὰ κατευθύνῃ τὴν πορείαν της.

Ἄντλοῦσα ἀπὸ τὰς ἀρχὰς αὐτὰς καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν ὄλην ἐμπειρίαν καὶ διδασκαλίαν τῆς πατερικῆς, λειτουργικῆς καὶ ἀσκητικῆς της παραδόσεως, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία συμμετέχει εἰς τὸν προβληματισμὸν καὶ τὴν ἀγωνίαν τοῦ συγχρόνου ἀνθρώπου ὡς πρὸς τὰ θεμελιώδη ὑπαρξιακὰ ζητήματα, τὰ ὁποῖα ἀπασχολοῦν τὸν σύγχρονον κόσμον, ἐπιθυμοῦσα νὰ συμβάλῃ εἰς τὴν ἀντιμετώπισίν των, ὥστε νὰ ἐπικρατήσῃ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Θεοῦ, «ἡ πάντα νοῦν ὑπερέχουσα» (Φιλ. 4, 7), ἡ καταλλαγὴ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη.

#### A. Ἡ ἀξία τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου προσώπου

1. Ἡ ἀξία τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου προσώπου, ἀπορρέουσα ἐκ τῆς δημιουργίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὡς εἰκόνας Θεοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀποστολῆς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ σχέδιον τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὸν κόσμον, ὑπῆρξεν πηγὴ ἐμπνεύσεως διὰ τοὺς Πατέρας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἐνεβάθυναν εἰς τὸ μυστήριον τῆς θείας οἰκονομίας. Ὁ ἅγιος Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος τονίζει χαρακτηριστικῶς διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ὅτι ὁ Δημιουργὸς «οἷόν τινα κόσμον ἕτερον, ἐν μικρῷ μέγαν, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἴστησιν, ἄγγελον ἄλλον, προσκνητὴν μικτόν, ἐπόπτην τῆς ὄρατῆς κτίσεως, μύστην τῆς νοουμένης, βασιλέα τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς, ... ζῶον ἐνταῦθα οἰκονομούμενον, καὶ ἀλλαγῆ μεθιστάμενον, καὶ πέρας τοῦ μυστηρίου, τῇ πρὸς Θεὸν νεύσει θεούμενον» (Λόγος ΜΕ', Εἰς τὸ Ἅγιον Πάσχα, 7. PG 36, 632 AB). Ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως τοῦ Λόγου Θεοῦ εἶναι ἡ θέωσις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Ὁ Χριστὸς, ἀνακαινίσας ἐν Ἐαυτῷ τὸν παλαιὸν Ἀδάμ (πρβλ. Ἐφ., 2,15), «συναπεθέου γε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀπαρχὴν τῆς ἡμῶν ἐλπίδος» (Εὐσεβίου, Εὐαγγελικὴ Ἀπόδειξις,

4, 14. PG 22, 289A). Τοῦτο διότι, ὅπως εἰς τὸν παλαιὸν Ἀδάμ ἐνυπῆρχεν ἡδὴ ὀλόκληρον τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος, οὕτω καὶ εἰς τὸν νέον Ἀδάμ συνεκεφαλαιώθη ὀλόκληρον ἐπίσης τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος. «*Ἄνθρωπος γέγονεν ὁ Μονογενής, ... ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι πάλιν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀναλαβεῖν τὸ διολισθῆσαν γένος, τουτέστι, τὸ ἀνθρώπινον*» (Κυρίλλου Ἀλεξανδρείας, *Ἑρμηνεία ἢ ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην Εὐαγγέλιον*, Θ' PG 74, 273D-275A). Ἡ διδασκαλία αὐτῆ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἶναι ἀνεξάντλητος πηγὴ πάσης χριστιανικῆς προσπαθείας διὰ τὴν περιφρούρησιν τῆς ἀξίας καὶ τοῦ μεγαλείου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

2. Ἐπ' αὐτῆς τῆς βάσεως εἶναι ἀπαραίτητον νὰ ἀναπτυχθῇ πρὸς ὅλας τὰς κατευθύνσεις ἡ διαχριστιανικὴ συνεργασία διὰ τὴν προστασίαν τῆς ἀξίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, αὐτονοήτως δὲ καὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τῆς εἰρήνης, οὕτως ὥστε αἱ εἰρηνευτικάι προσπάθειαι ὄλων ἀνεξαιρέτως τῶν Χριστιανῶν νὰ ἀποκοτῶν μεγαλύτερον βάρος καὶ δύναμιν.

3. Ὡς προϋπόθεσις μιᾶς εὐρύτερας ἐν προκειμένῳ συνεργασίας δύναται νὰ χρησιμεύσῃ ἡ κοινὴ ἀποδοχὴ τῆς ὑψίστης ἀξίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου προσώπου. Αἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι Ἐκκλησίαι καλοῦνται νὰ συμβάλουν εἰς τὴν διαθρησκειακὴν συνεννόησιν καὶ συνεργασίαν, δι' αὐτῆς δὲ εἰς τὴν ἀπάλειψιν τοῦ φανατισμοῦ ἀπὸ πάσης πλευρᾶς καὶ τοιοῦτοτρόπως εἰς τὴν συμφιλίωσιν τῶν λαῶν καὶ ἐπικράτησιν τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ τῆς εἰρήνης εἰς τὸν κόσμον πρὸς ἐξυπηρέτησιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀνεξαρτήτως φυλῆς καὶ θρησκειῶν. Ἐννοεῖται ὅτι ἡ συνεργασία αὕτη ἀποκλείει τόσον τὸν συγκρητισμὸν, ὅσον καὶ τὴν ἐπιδιώξιν ἐπιβολῆς οἰασδήποτε θρησκείας ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων.

4. Ἐχομεν τὴν πεποιθήσιν ὅτι ὡς «*Θεοῦ συνεργοί*» (Α' Κορ. 3, 9), δυνάμεθα νὰ προχωρήσωμεν εἰς τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην ἀπὸ κοινοῦ μεθ' ὄλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων καλῆς θελήσεως, τῶν ἀγαπώντων τὴν κατὰ Θεὸν εἰρήνην, ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης κοινωνίας ἐπὶ τοπικοῦ, ἐθνικοῦ καὶ διεθνοῦς ἐπιπέδου. Ἡ διακονία αὕτη εἶναι ἐντολὴ Θεοῦ (Ματθ. 5, 9).

## B. Περὶ ἐλευθερίας καὶ εὐθύνης

1. Ἐν ἐκ τῶν ὑψίστων δώρων τοῦ Θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τόσον ὡς συγκεκριμένον φορέα τῆς εἰκόνας τοῦ προσωπικοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅσον καὶ ὡς κοινωνίαν προσώπων ἀντανακλώντων κατὰ χάριν διὰ τῆς ἐνότητος τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου γένους τὴν ἐν τῇ Ἁγίᾳ Τριάδι ζωὴν καὶ κοινωνίαν τῶν θείων προσώπων, ἀποτελεῖ τὸ θεῖον δῶρον τῆς ἐλευθερίας. «*Ὁ πλάσας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐλεύθερον ἀφῆκε καὶ αὐτεξούσιον, νόμῳ τῷ τῆς ἐντολῆς μόνον κρατούμενον*» (Γρη-

γορίου Θεολόγου, *Λόγος ΙΔ΄, Περί φιλοπτωχίας*, 25. PG 35, 892A). Ἡ ἐλευθερία καθιστᾷ μὲν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἰκανὸν νὰ προοδεύῃ πρὸς τὴν πνευματικὴν τελειότητα, ἀλλὰ, συγχρόνως, ἐμπερικλείει τὸν κίνδυνον τῆς παρακοῆς, τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ αὐτονομήσεως καί, δι' αὐτῆς, τῆς πτώσεως, ἐξ οὗ καὶ αἱ τραγικαὶ συνέπειαι τοῦ κακοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

2. Συνέπεια τοῦ κακοῦ τούτου εἶναι αἱ ἐπικρατοῦσαι σήμερον ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ἀτέλειαι καὶ ἐλλείψεις, ὡς ἡ ἐκκοσμίκευσις, ἡ βία, ἡ ἔκλυσις τῶν ἠθῶν, τὰ παρατηρούμενα νοσηρὰ φαινόμενα τῆς λαίλαπος τῶν ναρκωτικῶν καὶ ἄλλων ἐξαρτήσεων εἰς μερίδα τῆς συγχρόνου νεότητος, ὁ φυλετισμὸς, οἱ ἐξοπλισμοὶ, οἱ πόλεμοι καὶ τὰ τούτων ἀπτόκα κοινωνικὰ κακά, ἡ καταπίεσις κοινωνικῶν ομάδων, θρησκευτικῶν κοινοτήτων καὶ λαῶν ὀλοκλήρων, ἡ κοινωνικὴ ἀνισότης, ὁ περιορισμὸς τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων εἰς τὸν χῶρον τῆς ἐλευθερίας τῶν συνειδήσεων καὶ τῆς θρησκευτικῆς εἰδικώτερον ἐλευθερίας, ἡ παραπληροφόρησις καὶ ἡ χειραγώγησις τῆς κοινῆς γνώμης, ἡ οἰκονομικὴ ἀθλιότης, ἡ ἄνισος κατανομή ἢ καὶ ἡ παντελὴς στέρησις τῶν ἀπολύτως ἀναγκαίων πρὸς τὸ ζῆν ἀγαθῶν, ἡ πείνα τῶν ὑποσιτιζομένων ἑκατομμυρίων ἀνθρώπων, αἱ βίαιαι μετακινήσεις πληθυσμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀθέμιτος διακίνησις ἀνθρώπων, τὸ προσφυγικὸν χάος, ἡ καταστροφή τοῦ περιβάλλοντος, ἡ ἀνεξέλεγκτος χρῆσις τῆς γενετικῆς βιοτεχνολογίας καὶ βιοϊατρικῆς ἀναφορικῶς πρὸς τὴν ἀρχήν, τὴν διάρκειαν καὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Πάντα ταῦτα ὑφαίνουσι τὸ ἀπέραντον ἄγχος τῆς ἀγωνιώδους συγχρόνου ἀνθρωπότητος.

3. Ἐναντι τῆς καταστάσεως αὐτῆς, ἡ ὁποία ὠδήγησεν εἰς τὴν ἀποδυνάμωσιν τῆς θεωρήσεως τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου προσώπου, καθῆκον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας εἶναι, ὅπως προβάλῃ σήμερον, διὰ τοῦ κηρύγματος, τῆς θεολογίας, τῆς λατρείας καὶ τοῦ ποιμαντικοῦ ἔργου τῆς, τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐλευθερίας. «Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν, ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν, ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα οἰκοδομεῖ. Μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω, ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου ἕκαστος... Ἴνα τί γὰρ ἡ ἐλευθερία μου κρίνεται ὑπὸ ἄλλης συνειδήσεως;» (Α΄ Κορ. 10, 23-24 καὶ 10,29). Ἐλευθερία ἄνευ εὐθύνης καὶ ἀγάπης ὀδηγεῖ τελικῶς εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν τῆς ἐλευθερίας.

## Γ. Περί εἰρήνης καὶ δικαιοσύνης

1. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀναγνωρίζει καὶ ἀναδεικνύει διαχρονικῶς τὴν κεντρικὴν θέσιν τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς δικαιοσύνης εἰς τὴν ζωὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Αὐτὴ αὕτη ἢ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀποκάλυψις χαρακτηρίζεται «εὐαγγέλιον τῆς εἰρήνης» (Ἐφ. 6,15), διότι ὁ Χριστός, «εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ» τὰ πάντα (Κολ. 1, 20), «εὐηγγελίσαστο εἰρήνην τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς ἐγγύς» (Ἐφ. 2, 17) καὶ κατέστη «ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν» (Ἐφ. 2, 14). Ἡ εἰρήνη αὕτη, ἢ «ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν» (Φιλ. 4, 7) εἶναι, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Κύριος εἰς τοὺς μαθητάς Του πρὸ τοῦ Πάθους, εὐρυτέρα καὶ οὐσιαστικωτέρα τῆς εἰρήνης, τὴν ὁποῖαν ἐπαγγέλλεται ὁ κόσμος: «Εἰρήνην ἀφήμι ὑμῖν, εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν δίδωμι ὑμῖν οὐ καθὼς ὁ κόσμος δίδωσιν, ἐγὼ δίδωμι ὑμῖν» (Ἰωάν. 14, 27). Καὶ τοῦτο, διότι ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι ὁ ὄριμος καρπὸς τῆς ἐν Αὐτῷ ἀνακεφαλαιώσεως τῶν πάντων, τῆς ἀναδείξεως τῆς ἀξίας καὶ τοῦ μεγαλείου τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου προσώπου ὡς εἰκόνας Θεοῦ· τῆς προβολῆς τῆς ἐν Αὐτῷ ὀργανικῆς ἐνότητος τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους καὶ τοῦ κόσμου· τῆς καθολικότητος τῶν ἀρχῶν τῆς εἰρήνης, τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ τῆς κοινωνικῆς δικαιοσύνης καί, τέλος, τῆς καρποφορίας τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἀγάπης μεταξὺ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν λαῶν τοῦ κόσμου. Ἡ πραγματικὴ εἰρήνη εἶναι ὁ καρπὸς τῆς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐπικρατήσεως ὄλων αὐτῶν τῶν χριστιανικῶν ἀρχῶν. Εἶναι ἡ ἄνωθεν εἰρήνη, περὶ τῆς ὁποίας πάντοτε εὐχεται ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία εἰς τὰς καθημερινὰς της δεήσεις, ἐξαιτουμένη ταύτην παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῦ τὰ πάντα δυναμένου καὶ εἰσακούοντος τὰς προσευχὰς τῶν μετὰ πίστεως Αὐτῷ προσερχομένων.

2. Ἐκ τῶν ἀνωτέρω καθίσταται δῆλον διατί ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ὡς «*Σῶμα Χριστοῦ*» (Α΄ Κορ. 12,27), δέεται πάντοτε ὑπὲρ εἰρήνης τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου, ἢ ὁποῖα εἰρήνη, κατὰ τὸν Κλήμεντα Ἀλεξανδρέα, εἶναι συνώνυμον τῆς δικαιοσύνης (Στρωματεῖς, 4, 25. PG 8, 1369B-72A). Ὁ δὲ Μέγας Βασίλειος προσθέτει: «οὐ δύναμαι πείσαι ἐμαυτὸν, ὅτι ἄνευ τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀγάπης καὶ ἄνευ τοῦ, τὸ εἰς ἐμὲ ἦκον, εἰρηνεύειν πρὸς πάντας δύναμαι ἄξιος κληθῆναι δοῦλος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ» (Ἐπιστολὴ 203,1. PG 32,737B). Τοῦτο εἶναι, ὡς σημειώνει ὁ αὐτὸς Πατὴρ, τόσον αὐτονόητον διὰ τὸν Χριστιανόν, ὥστε «οὐδὲν οὕτως ἰδιὸν ἐστὶ Χριστιανοῦ ὡς τὸ εἰρηνοποιεῖν» (Ἐπιστολή, 114. PG 32, 528B). Ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι ἡ μυστικὴ δύναμις, ἢ ὁποῖα πηγάζει ἀπὸ τὴν καταλλαγὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν οὐράνιον Πατέρα Του, «κατὰ πρόνοιαν Ἰησοῦ, τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ἐνεργοῦντος, καὶ ποιῶντος εἰρήνην ἄρρητον καὶ ἐξ αἰῶνος προωρισμένην καὶ ἀποκαταλλάσσοντος ἡμᾶς ἐαυτῷ καὶ ἐν ἐαυτῷ τῷ Πατρί» (Διονυσίου Ἀρεοπαγίτου, *Περὶ θείων ὀνομάτων*, 11, 5, PG 3,953AB).

3. Ὁφείλομεν συγχρόνως νὰ ὑπογραμμίσωμεν ὅτι τὰ δῶρα τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἐξαρτῶνται καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης συνεργίας. Τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα χο-

ρηγῆ πνευματικά δῶρα, ὅταν ἐν μετανοίᾳ ἐπιζητῶμεν τὴν εἰρήνην καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τὰ δῶρα ταῦτα τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἐμφανίζονται ἐκεῖ ἔνθα οἱ Χριστιανοὶ καταβάλλουν προσπαθείας εἰς τὸ ἔργον τῆς πίστεως, τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν (Α΄ Θεσ. 1,3).

4. Ἡ ἁμαρτία εἶναι πνευματικὴ ἀσθένεια, τῆς ὁποίας τὰ ἐξωτερικὰ συμπτώματα εἶναι αἱ ταραχαί, αἱ ἔριδες, τὰ ἐγκλήματα καὶ οἱ πόλεμοι, μετὰ τῶν τραγικῶν αὐτῶν συνεπειῶν. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἐπιδιώκει νὰ ἐξαλείψῃ οὐ μόνον τὰ ἐξωτερικὰ συμπτώματα αὐτῆς τῆς ἀσθενείας, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὴν ταύτην τὴν ἀσθένειαν, τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

5. Συγχρόνως, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία θεωρεῖ καθήκον αὐτῆς νὰ ἐπικροτῇ πᾶν ὅ,τι ἐξυπηρετεῖ πράγματι τὴν εἰρήνην (Ρωμ. 14,19) καὶ ἀνοίγει τὴν ὁδὸν πρὸς τὴν δικαιοσύνην, τὴν ἀδελφοσύνην, τὴν ἀληθῆ ἐλευθερίαν καὶ τὴν ἀμοιβαίαν ἀγάπην μεταξὺ ὄλων τῶν τέκνων τοῦ ἐνὸς οὐρανοῦ Πατρὸς, ὡς καὶ μεταξὺ ὄλων τῶν λαῶν τῶν ἀποτελούντων τὴν ἐνιαίαν ἀνθρωπίνην οἰκογένειαν. Συμπάσχει δὲ μεθ' ὄλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἱ ὅποιοι εἰς διάφορα μέρη τοῦ κόσμου στεροῦνται τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς δικαιοσύνης.

#### Δ. Ἡ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡ ἀποτροπὴ τοῦ πολέμου

1. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καταδικάζει γενικῶς τὸν πόλεμον, τὸν ὁποῖον θεωρεῖ ἀπόρροιαν τοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κακοῦ καὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας. «Πόθεν πόλεμοι καὶ μάχαι ἐν ὑμῖν; Οὐκ ἐντεῦθεν, ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν;» (Ἰακ. 4,1). Ἐκαστος πόλεμος ἀποτελεῖ ἀπειλὴν καταστροφῆς τῆς δημιουργίας καὶ τῆς ζωῆς.

Ὅμως ἰδιαίτερος, εἰς περιπτώσεις πολέμων δι' ὄπλων μαζικῆς καταστροφῆς, αἱ συνέπειαι θὰ εἶναι τρομακτικαί, ὄχι μόνον διότι θὰ ἐπέλθῃ ὁ θάνατος εἰς ἀπρόβλεπτον ἀριθμὸν ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλὰ καὶ διότι δι' ὅσους θὰ ἐπιζήσουν ὁ βίος θὰ καταστῇ ἀβίωτος. θὰ ἐμφανισθοῦν ἀνίατοι ἀσθένειαι, θὰ προκληθοῦν γενετικαὶ ἀλλαγαὶ καὶ ἄλλα δεινά, τὰ ὁποῖα θὰ ἐπηρεάζουν καταστρεπτικῶς καὶ τὰς ἐπομένους γενεάς.

Λίαν ἐπικίνδυνος δὲν εἶναι μόνον ὁ πυρηνικὸς ἐξοπλισμὸς, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ χημικοί, οἱ βιολογικοὶ καὶ πάσης μορφῆς ἐξοπλισμοί, οἱ ὅποιοι δημιουργοῦν τὴν ψευδαίσθησιν τῆς ὑπεροχῆς καὶ κυριαρχίας ἐπὶ τοῦ περιβάλλοντος κόσμου. Τοιοῦτοι ἐξοπλισμοὶ καλλιεργοῦν ἀτμόσφαιραν φόβου καὶ ἐλλείψεως ἐμπιστοσύνης καὶ καθίστανται αἰτία ἐνὸς νέου ἀνταγωνισμοῦ ἐξοπλισμῶν.

2. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ, θεωροῦσα κατ' ἀρχὴν τὸν πόλεμον ἀπόρροιν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ κακοῦ καὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ἐνθαρρύνει πᾶσαν πρωτοβουλίαν καὶ προσπάθειαν πρὸς πρόληψιν ἢ ἀποτροπὴν αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ διαλόγου καὶ διὰ παντὸς ἄλλου προσφόρου μέσου. Εἰς περίπτωσιν κατὰ τὴν ὁποίαν ὁ πόλεμος καταστῆ ἀναπόφευκτος, ἡ Ἐκκλησία συνεχίζει προσευχομένη καὶ μεριμνῶσα ποιμαντικῶς διὰ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, τὰ ὁποῖα ἐμπλέκονται εἰς τὰς πολεμικὰς συγκρούσεις διὰ τὴν ὑπεράσπισιν τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας αὐτῶν, καταβάλλουσα πᾶσαν προσπάθειαν διὰ τὴν ταχύτεραν ἀποκατάστασιν τῆς εἰρήνης καὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας.

3. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία καταδικάζει ἐντόνως τὰς ποικιλομόρφους συγκρούσεις καὶ τοὺς πολέμους, τοὺς ὀφειλομένους εἰς φανατισμόν, προερχόμενον ἐκ θρησκευτικῶν ἀρχῶν. Βαθεῖαν ἀνησυχίαν προκαλεῖ ἡ μόνιμος τάσις αὐξήσεως τῶν καταπιέσεων καὶ διώξεων τῶν χριστιανῶν καὶ ἄλλων κοινοτήτων, ἐξ αἰτίας τῆς πίστεως αὐτῶν, εἰς τὴν Μέσην Ἀνατολήν καὶ ἄλλαχού, καθὼς καὶ αἱ ἀπόπειραι ἐκρίζώσεως τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ ἐκ τῶν παραδοσιακῶν κοιτίδων αὐτοῦ. Τοιουτοτρόπως, ἀπειλοῦνται αἱ ὑφιστάμεναι διαθρησκειακαὶ καὶ διεθνεῖς σχέσεις, ἐνῶ πολλοὶ χριστιανοὶ ἀναγκάζονται νὰ ἐγκαταλείψουν τὰς ἐστίας αὐτῶν. Οἱ ἀνὰ τὸν κόσμον Ὁρθόδοξοι συμπάσχουν μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν χριστιανῶν καὶ ὄλων τῶν ἄλλων διωκομένων ἐν τῇ περιοχῇ καὶ καλοῦν εἰς ἐξεύρεσιν δικαίας καὶ μόνιμου λύσεως τῶν προβλημάτων τῆς περιοχῆς.

Καταδικάζονται ἐπίσης πόλεμοι, ἐμπνεόμενοι ὑπὸ ἐθνικισμοῦ, προκαλοῦντες ἐθνοκαθάρσεις, μεταβολὰς κρατικῶν ὁρίων καὶ κατάληψιν ἐδαφῶν.

## Ε. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἔναντι τῶν διακρίσεων

1. Ὁ Κύριος, ὡς Βασιλεὺς τῆς δικαιοσύνης (Ἑβρ. 7, 2-3), ἀποδοκιμάζει τὴν βίαν καὶ τὴν ἀδικίαν (Ψαλμ. 10, 5) καὶ καταδικάζει τὴν ἀπάνθρωπον στάσιν πρὸς τὸν πλησίον (Μάρκ. 25, 41-46. Ἰακ. 2, 15-16). Εἰς τὴν Βασιλείαν Αὐτοῦ, ἡ ὁποία εἰκονίζεται καὶ εἶναι παροῦσα ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ Του ἡδὴ ἐδῶ εἰς τὴν γῆν, δὲν ὑπάρχει τόπος οὔτε διὰ τὸ μῖσος, οὔτε δι' ἔχθραν καὶ μισαλλοδοξίαν (Ἦσ. 11, 6. Ρωμ. 12, 10).

2. Ἡ θέσις τῆς Ὁρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας εἶναι ἐν προκειμένῳ σαφής. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία πιστεύει ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς «ἐποίησεν ἐξ ἑνὸς αἵματος πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γῆς» (Πράξ. 17, 26) καὶ ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ «οὐκ ἔστι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἔστι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔστι ἄρσεν καὶ

θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ εἶς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ» (Γαλ. 3, 28). Εἰς τὸ ἐρώτημα «καί τίς ἐστί μου πλησίον;» ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπήντησε διὰ τῆς παραβολῆς τοῦ καλοῦ Σαμαρείτου (Λουκ. 10,25-37). Καὶ οὕτως ἐδίδαξε τὴν κατάλυσιν παντὸς μεσοτοίχου ἔχθρας καὶ προκαταλήψεως. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ὁμολογεῖ ὅτι ἕκαστος ἄνθρωπος, ἀνεξαρτήτως χρώματος, θρησκείας, φυλῆς, φύλου, ἐθνικότητος, γλώσσης, ἔχει δημιουργηθῆ κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν Θεοῦ καὶ ἀπολαμβάνει ἴσα δικαιώματα ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ. Συνεπῆς πρὸς τὴν πίστιν αὐτήν, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία δὲν δέχεται τὰς διακρίσεις δι' ἕκαστον ἐκ τῶν προαναφερθέντων λόγων, ἐφ' ὅσον αὐταὶ προυποθέτουν ἀξιολογικὴν διαφορὰν μεταξὺ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

3. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ σεβασμοῦ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων καὶ τῆς ἴσης μεταχειρίσεως τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀξιολογεῖ τὴν ἐφαρμογὴν τῶν ἀρχῶν αὐτῶν ὑπὸ τὸ φῶς τῆς διδασκαλίας αὐτῆς περὶ τῶν μυστηρίων, τῆς οἰκογενείας, τῆς θέσεως τῶν δύο φύλων ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ τῶν ἐν γένει ἀξιών τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς παραδόσεως. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἔχει δικαίωμα ἵνα διακηρύττῃ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῆς διδασκαλίας τῆς εἰς τὸν δημόσιον χῶρον.

**ΣΤ. Ἡ ἀποστολή τῆς Ὁρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας ὡς μαρτυρία ἀγάπης ἐν διακονίᾳ.**

1. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία, ἐπιτελοῦσα τὴν σωτήριον αὐτῆς ἀποστολὴν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, μεριμνᾷ ἐμπράκτως διὰ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους χρῆζοντες βοηθείας, τοὺς πεινῶντας, τοὺς ἀπόρους, τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς, τοὺς ἀναπήρους, τοὺς ὑπερήλικας, τοὺς διωκομένους, τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους, τοὺς φυλακισμένους, τοὺς ἀστέγους, τὰ ὀρφανὰ, τὰ θύματα τῶν καταστροφῶν καὶ τῶν πολεμικῶν συγκρούσεων, τῆς ἐμπορίας ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν συγχρόνων μορφῶν δουλείας. Αἱ καταβαλλόμεναι ὑπὸ τῆς Ὁρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας προσπάθειαι διὰ τὴν καταπολέμησιν τῆς ἐνδείας καὶ τῆς κοινωνικῆς ἀδικίας ἀποτελοῦν ἔκφρασιν τῆς πίστεως αὐτῆς καὶ διακονίαν Αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐταύτισεν Ἐαυτὸν πρὸς πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἰδίως πρὸς τοὺς ἐν ἀνάγκαις εὐρισκομένους: «Ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε» (Ματθ. 25, 40). Ἐν τῇ πολυπτύχῳ ταύτῃ κοινωνικῇ διακονίᾳ, ἡ Ἐκκλησία δύναται νὰ συνεργάζηται μετὰ τῶν διαφόρων σχετικῶν κοινωνικῶν φορέων.

2. Οἱ ἀνταγωνισμοὶ καὶ αἱ ἐχθρότητες ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ εἰσάγουν ἀδικίαν καὶ ἀνισότητα εἰς τὴν συμμετοχὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν λαῶν εἰς τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς



θείας δημιουργίας. Στεροῦν ἀπὸ ἑκατομμύρια ἀνθρώπων τὰ βασικά ἀγαθὰ καὶ ὀδηγοῦν εἰς ἐξαθλίωσιν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ὑπάρξεως, προκαλοῦν μαζικὰς μεταναστεύσεις πληθυσμῶν, διεγείρουν ἐθνικὰς, θρησκευτικὰς καὶ κοινωνικὰς συγκρούσεις, αἱ ὁποῖαι ἀπειλοῦν τὴν ἐσωτερικὴν συνοχὴν τῶν κοινοτήτων.

3. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία δὲν δύναται νὰ μείνῃ ἀδιάφορος ἔναντι τῶν οικονομικῶν καταστάσεων, αἱ ὁποῖαι ἐπηρεάζουν ἀρνητικῶς ὁλόκληρον τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. Ἐπιμένει εἰς τὴν ἀνάγκην, οὐχὶ μόνον ἡ οἰκονομία νὰ ἐρείδῃται ἐπὶ ἠθικῶν ἀρχῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμπράκτως νὰ διακονῆται δι' αὐτῆς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, συμφώνως καὶ πρὸς τὴν διδασκαλίαν τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου, «κοπιῶντας δεῖ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων, μνημονεύειν τε τῶν λόγων τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶπε· μακάριόν ἐστι μᾶλλον δίδόναι ἢ λαμβάνειν» (Πράξ. 20,35). Ὁ Μ. Βασίλειος γράφει ὅτι «σκοπὸς οὖν ἐκάστῳ προκειῖσθαι ὀφείλει ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ ἢ ὑπηρεσία τῶν δεομένων, οὐχὶ ἡ ἰδία αὐτοῦ χρεία» (Ὅροι κατὰ πλάτος ΜΒ. ΡΓ 31, 1025 Α).

4. Τὸ χάσμα μεταξὺ πλουσίων καὶ πτωχῶν διευρύνεται δραματικῶς ἐξ αἰτίας τῆς οικονομικῆς κρίσεως, ἡ ὁποία εἶναι συνήθως ἀποτέλεσμα κερδοσκοπίας χωρὶς φραγμοὺς ἐκ μέρους οἰκονομικῶν παραγόντων, συγκεντρώσεως τοῦ πλούτου εἰς χεῖρας ὀλίγων καὶ στρεβλῆς οἰκονομικῆς δραστηριότητος, ἡ ὁποία, στερουμένη δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἀνθρωπιστικῆς εὐαισθησίας, δὲν ἐξυπηρετεῖ, τελικῶς, τὰς πραγματικὰς ἀνάγκας τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος. Βιώσιμος οἰκονομία εἶναι ἐκείνη, ἡ ὁποία συνδυάζει τὴν ἀποτελεσματικότητα μετὰ δικαιοσύνης καὶ κοινωνικῆς ἀλληλεγγύης.

5. Ὑπὸ τὰς τραγικὰς ταύτας καταστάσεις, κατανοεῖται ἡ τεράστια εὐθύνη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας διὰ τὴν καταπολέμησιν τῆς πείνης καὶ πάσης ἄλλης μορφῆς ἐνδείας ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Ἐν τοιοῦτον φαινόμενον εἰς τὴν ἐποχὴν μας, κατὰ τὴν ὁποῖαν αἱ χῶραι ζοῦν ὑπὸ καθεστῶς παγκοσμιοποιημένης οἰκονομίας, ὑποδηλοῖ τὴν σοβαρὰν κρίσιν ταυτότητος τοῦ συγχρόνου κόσμου, διότι ἡ πείνα οὐχὶ μόνον ἀπειλεῖ τὸ θεῖον δῶρον τῆς ζωῆς ὁλοκλήρων λαῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ θίγει τὸ μεγαλεῖον καὶ τὴν ἱερότητα τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου προσώπου, συγχρόνως δὲ προσβάλλει καὶ τὸν ἴδιον τὸν Θεόν. Διὰ τοῦτο, ἂν ἡ μέριμνα διὰ τὴν ἰδικὴν μας τροφὴν εἶναι θέμα ὑλικόν, ἡ μέριμνα διὰ τὴν τροφὴν τοῦ συνανθρώπου μας εἶναι θέμα πνευματικόν (Ἰακ. 2, 14-18). Ἀποτελεῖ, ἐπομένως, ἀποστολὴν ὅλων τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν νὰ ἐπιδεικνύουν ἀλληλεγγύην καὶ νὰ ὀργανώνουν ἀποτελεσματικῶς τὴν βοήθειάν των πρὸς τοὺς ἐνδεεῖς ἀδελφούς.

6. Ἡ Ἁγία τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἐκκλησία ἐν τῷ καθολικῷ σώματι αὐτῆς, περικλείουσα εἰς τοὺς κόλπους αὐτῆς πολλοὺς λαοὺς τῆς γῆς, ἀναδεικνύει τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς

πανανθρωπίνου ἀλληλεγγύης καὶ ὑποστηρίζει τὴν στενοτέραν συνεργασίαν λαῶν καὶ κρατῶν πρὸς εἰρηνικὴν ἐπίλυσιν τῶν διαφορῶν.

7. Ἀνησυχίαν προκαλεῖ εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν ἡ διαρκῶς αὐξανομένη ἐπιβολὴ εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα ἐνὸς καταναλωτικοῦ τρόπου ζωῆς, ὁ ὁποῖος στερεῖται τῶν χριστιανικῶν ἠθικῶν ἀξιῶν. Ὑπὸ τὴν ἔννοιαν αὐτὴν, ὁ καταναλωτισμὸς οὗτος, ἐν συνδυασμῷ μετὰ τῆς ἐκκοσμικευμένης παγκοσμιοποιήσεως, τείνει νὰ ὀδηγήσῃ τοὺς λαοὺς εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν τῶν πνευματικῶν καταβολῶν αὐτῶν, εἰς τὴν ἱστορικὴν ἀμνησίαν καὶ εἰς τὴν λήθην τῶν παραδόσεων.

8. Τὰ μέσα γενικῆς ἐνημερώσεως οὐχὶ σπανίως τελοῦν ὑπὸ τὸν ἔλεγχον μιᾶς ἰδεολογίας φιλελευθέρως παγκοσμιοποιήσεως καὶ οὕτω καθίστανται διάλυοι διαδόσεις τοῦ καταναλωτισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνηθικότητος. Ἰδιαιτέραν ἀνησυχίαν προκαλοῦν περιστατικά, καθ' ἃ ἡ στάσις ἐναντι τῶν θρησκευτικῶν ἀξιῶν χαρακτηρίζεται διὰ τὴν ἔλλειψιν σεβασμοῦ, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ διὰ βλασφημίαν, προξενοῦντα διχασμοὺς καὶ ἐξεγέρσεις ἐντὸς τῆς κοινωνίας. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία προειδοποιεῖ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς διὰ τὸν κίνδυνον τοῦ ἐπηρασμοῦ τῶν συνειδήσεων διὰ τῶν μέσων ἐνημερώσεως καὶ τῆς χρήσεως αὐτῶν οὐχὶ διὰ τὴν προσέγγισιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν λαῶν, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν χειραγώγησίν των.

9. Εἰς τὴν πορείαν, ἣν διανύει ἡ Ἐκκλησία, κηρύττουσα καὶ ἀσκοῦσα τὴν σωτήριον ἀποστολὴν αὐτῆς διὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, ὀλοὲν καὶ τακτικώτερον ἔρχεται ἀντιμέτωπος μετὰ τῶν ἐκφάνσεων τῆς ἐκκοσμικεύσεως. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καλεῖται νὰ ἐπαναδιατυπώσῃ καὶ φανερώσῃ τὴν προφητικὴν μαρτυρίαν τῆς εἰς τὸν κόσμον, στηριζομένη εἰς τὴν ἐμπειρίαν τῆς πίστεως, ὑπενθυμίζουσα ἐν ταυτῷ καὶ τὴν πραγματικὴν ἀποστολὴν αὐτῆς, διὰ τῆς καταγγελίας τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς καλλιιεργείας συνειδήσεως ἐνότητος εἰς τὸ ποίμνιον αὐτῆς. Οὕτω, διανοίγεται εὐρὺ πεδῖον δι' αὐτὴν, δεδομένου ὅτι ὡς οὐσιαστικὸν στοιχεῖον τῆς ἐκκλησιολογικῆς τῆς διδασκαλίας προβάλλει εἰς τὸν διεσπασμένον κόσμον τὴν εὐχαριστιακὴν κοινωνίαν καὶ ἐνότητα.

10. Ὁ πόθος τῆς συνεχοῦς αὐξήσεως τῆς εὐημερίας καὶ ἡ ἄμετρος κατανάλωσις ἀναποφεύκτως ὀδηγοῦν εἰς τὴν δυσανάλογον χρῆσιν καὶ τὴν ἐξάντλησιν τῶν φυσικῶν πόρων. Ἡ δημιουργηθεῖσα ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ κτίσις, ἡ ὁποία ἐδόθη εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον «ἐργάζεσθαι καὶ φυλάσσειν» αὐτὴν (πρβλ. Γεν. 2.15), ὑφίσταται τὰς συνεπείας τῆς ἀμαρτίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: «Τῇ γὰρ ματαιότητι ἡ κτίσις ὑπετάγη, οὐχ ἑκούσα, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὅτι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις ἔλευθερωθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ Θεοῦ. Οἶδαμεν γάρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν» (Ρωμ. 8.20-22).

Ἡ οἰκολογική κρίσις, ἡ ὁποία συνδέεται πρὸς τὰς κλιματολογικὰς ἀλλαγὰς καὶ τὴν ὑπερθέρμανσιν τοῦ πλανήτου, καθιστᾷ ἐπιτακτικὸν τὸ χρέος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὅπως συμβάλῃ, διὰ τῶν εἰς τὴν διάθεσιν αὐτῆς πνευματικῶν μέσων, εἰς τὴν προστασίαν τῆς δημιουργίας τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκ τῶν συνεπειῶν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἀπληστίας. Ἡ ἀπληστία διὰ τὴν ἱκανοποίησιν τῶν ὑλικῶν ἀναγκῶν ὀδηγεῖ εἰς τὴν πνευματικὴν πτώχευσιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ εἰς τὴν καταστροφὴν τοῦ περιβάλλοντος. Δὲν πρέπει νὰ λησμονῆται, ὅτι ὁ φυσικὸς πλοῦτος τῆς γῆς δὲν εἶναι περιουσία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλὰ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ: «*Τοῦ Κυρίου ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτῆς, ἡ οἰκουμένη καὶ πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ*» (Ψαλμ. 23,1). Οὕτως, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία τονίζει τὴν προστασίαν τῆς δημιουργίας τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ τῆς καλλιέργειας τῆς εὐθύνης τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔναντι τοῦ θεοσδότου περιβάλλοντος καὶ διὰ τῆς προβολῆς τῶν ἀρετῶν τῆς ὀλιγαρκείας καὶ τῆς ἐγκρατείας. Ὁφείλομεν νὰ ἐνθυμώμεθα, ὅτι ὄχι μόνον αἱ σημεριναί, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ μελλοντικαὶ γενεαὶ ἔχουν δικαίωμα ἐπὶ τῶν φυσικῶν ἀγαθῶν, τὰ ὁποῖα μᾶς ἐχάρισεν ὁ Δημιουργός.

11. Διὰ τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν, ἡ ἱκανότης πρὸς ἐπιστημονικὴν ἔρευναν τοῦ κόσμου ἀποτελεῖ θεόσδοτον δῶρον εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον. Συγχρόνως ὁμως πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν κατάφασιν, ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἐπισημαίνει τοὺς κινδύνους, οἱ ὁποῖοι ὑποκρύπτονται εἰς τὴν χρῆσιν ὠρισμένων ἐπιστημονικῶν ἐπιτευγμάτων. Θεωρεῖ ὅτι ὁ ἐπιστήμων εἶναι μὲν ἐλεύθερος νὰ ἐρευνᾷ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅτι ὀφείλει νὰ διακόπτῃ τὴν ἔρευνάν του, ὅταν παραβιάζονται βασικαὶ χριστιανικαὶ καὶ ἀνθρωπιστικαὶ ἀρχαί: «*Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν, ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει*» (Α΄ Κορ. 6, 12) καὶ «*Τὸ καλὸν οὐ καλόν, ὅταν μὴ καλῶς γίνηται*» (Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου, *Λόγος Θεολογικός Α΄*, 4, PG 36, 16 C). Ἡ θέσις αὕτη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀποδεικνύεται πολλαπλῶς ἀπαραίτητος διὰ τὴν ὀρθὴν ὀριοθέτησιν τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ τὴν ἀξιοποίησιν τῶν καρπῶν τῆς ἐπιστήμης, εἰς πάντας σχεδὸν τοὺς τομεῖς τῆς ὁποίας, ἰδίᾳ δὲ τῆς βιολογίας, ἀναμένονται νέα ἐπιτεύγματα, ἀλλὰ καὶ κίνδυνοι. Ἐν ταύτῳ, ὑπογραμμίζομεν τὴν ἀναμφισβήτητον ἱερότητα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς ἀπὸ τῆς συλλήψεως μέχρι τοῦ φυσικοῦ θανάτου.

12. Κατὰ τὰ τελευταῖα ἔτη, παρατηρεῖται ἀλματώδης ἀνάπτυξις εἰς τὰς βιοεπιστήμας καὶ εἰς τὴν συνδεδεμένην με αὐτὰς βιοτεχνολογίαν, πολλὰ ἐπιτεύγματα τῶν ὁποίων θεωροῦνται εὐεργετικά διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ δημιουργοῦν ἠθικὰ διλήμματα, ἐνῶ ἀλλὰ κρίνονται ἀπορριπτέα. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία πιστεύει ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος δὲν εἶναι ἀπλοῦν σύνολον κυττάρων, ἰστῶν καὶ ὀργάνων, οὔτε καὶ προσδιορίζεται μόνον ἀπὸ βιολογικοὺς παράγοντας. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀποτελεῖ δημιούργημα «*κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ*» (Γεν. 1, 27) καὶ θὰ πρέπει ἡ

ἀναφορὰ εἰς αὐτόν νὰ γίνηται μὲ τὸν δέοντα σεβασμόν. Ἡ ἀναγνώρισις τῆς θεμελιώδους αὐτῆς ἀρχῆς ὀδηγεῖ εἰς τὸ συμπέρασμα, ὅτι τόσον κατὰ τὴν ἐπιστημονικὴν ἔρευναν, ὅσον καὶ κατὰ τὴν πρακτικὴν ἐφαρμογὴν τῶν νέων ἀνακαλύψεων καὶ ἐφευρέσεων, δέον ὅπως διαφυλάσσηται τὸ ἀπόλυτον δικαίωμα κάθε ἀνθρώπου νὰ ἀπολαύῃ σεβασμοῦ καὶ τιμῆς εἰς πᾶν στάδιον τῆς ζωῆς του, καθὼς καὶ ἡ βούλησις τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς αὕτη ἐφανερώθη κατὰ τὴν δημιουργίαν. Ἡ ἔρευνα πρέπει νὰ λαμβάνη ὑπ' ὄψιν τῆς τὰς ἠθικὰς καὶ πνευματικὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰ χριστιανικὰ θέσμιμα. Ἀπαραίτητος σεβασμὸς δέον νὰ ἐπιδεικνύηται καὶ εἰς ὅλην τὴν Δημιουργίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ τόσον κατὰ τὴν χρῆσιν αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὅσον καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἔρευναν, συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν ἐντολήν τοῦ Θεοῦ πρὸς αὐτόν (Γεν. 2, 15).

13. Κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους τούτους τῆς ἐκκοσμηκείσεως, ἰδιαίτερος προβάλλει ἡ ἀνάγκη, ὅπως ἐξαρθῇ ἡ σημασία τῆς ἀγιότητος τοῦ βίου, ἐν ὧσιν τῆς πνευματικῆς κρίσεως, ἡ ὁποία χαρακτηρίζει τὸν σύγχρονον πολιτισμόν. Ἡ παρανόησις τῆς ἐλευθερίας ὡς ἐλευθεριότητος ὀδηγεῖ εἰς τὴν αὐξήσιν τῆς ἐγκληματικότητος, τὴν καταστροφὴν καὶ τὴν βεβήλωσιν τῶν σεβασμάτων, τὴν ἐξάλειψιν τοῦ σεβασμοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τοῦ πλησίον καὶ τὴν ἱερότητα τῆς ζωῆς. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Παράδοσις, διαμορφωθείσα διὰ τῆς βιώσεως ἐν τῇ πράξει τῶν χριστιανικῶν ἀληθειῶν, εἶναι φορεὺς πνευματικότητος καὶ ἀσκητικοῦ ἠθους, τὸ ὁποῖον δέον νὰ ἐξαρθῇ καὶ προβληθῇ ὅλως ἰδιαίτερος κατὰ τὴν ἐποχὴν ἡμῶν.

14. Ἡ εἰδικὴ ποιμαντικὴ μέριμνα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πρὸς τοὺς νέους τυγχάνει διαρκῆς καὶ ἀμετάπτωτος διὰ τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ διαπαιδαγώγησιν των. Αὐτονόητος τυγχάνει ἡ προέκτασις τῆς ποιμαντικῆς εὐθύνης τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ εἰς τὸν θεόδοτον θεσμόν τῆς οἰκογενείας, ἣτις ἀείποτε καὶ ἀπαραιτήτως ἐστηρίχθη εἰς τὸ ἱερόν μυστήριον τοῦ χριστιανικοῦ γάμου, ὡς ἐνώσεως ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικός, ἡ ὁποία εἰκονίζει τὴν ἔνωσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας Του (Ἐφ. 5,32). Τοῦτο καθίσταται ἐπίκαιρον, ἐν ὧσιν μάλιστα καὶ ἀποπειρῶν νομιμοποιήσεως εἰς χώρας τινὰς καὶ θεολογικῆς θεμελιώσεως εἰς χριστιανικὰς τινὰς κοινότητας, μορφῶν συμβιώσεως, ἀντιτιθεμένων εἰς τὴν χριστιανικὴν παράδοσιν καὶ διδασκαλίαν.

15. Εἰς τὴν σύγχρονον ἐποχὴν καὶ ἀείποτε, ἡ προφητικὴ καὶ ποιμαντικὴ φωνὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀπευθύνεται εἰς τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ καλεῖ αὐτόν, μετὰ τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου, ἵνα ἐνστερνωσθῇ καὶ βιώσῃ «ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἀγνά, ὅσα προσφιλῆ, ὅσα εὐφρημα» (Φιλιπ. 4,8), τὴν θυσιαστικὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ Ἐσταυρωμένου Κυρίου τῆς, τὴν μόνην ὁδὸν

πρὸς ἓνα κόσμον εἰρήνης, δικαιοσύνης, ἐλευθερίας καὶ ἀγάπης μεταξύ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῶν λαῶν.

Σαμπεζύ, 26 Ἰανουαρίου 2016

- † ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Βαρθολομαῖος, Πρόεδρος  
† ὁ Ἀλεξανδρείας Θεόδωρος Β΄  
† ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἰσαάκ  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας  
Ἰωάννου Ι΄)  
† ὁ Ἱεροσολύμων Θεόφιλος Γ΄  
† ὁ Μόσχας Κύριλλος  
† ὁ Σερβίας Εἰρηναῖος  
† ὁ Ρουμανίας Δανιήλ  
† ὁ Βουλγαρίας Νεόφυτος  
† ὁ Γεωργίας Ἡλίας Β΄  
† ὁ Νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς καὶ πάσης Κύπρου Χρυσόστομος Β΄  
† ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἡλείας Γερμανός  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν  
καὶ πάσης Ἑλλάδος Ἱερωνύμου Β΄)  
† ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος Σιεματίτσε Γεώργιος  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Βαρσοβίας  
καὶ πάσης Πολωνίας Σάββα)  
† ὁ Τιράνων καὶ πάσης Ἀλβανίας Ἀναστάσιος  
† ὁ Πρέσωφ καὶ πάσης Τσεχίας καὶ Σλοβακίας Ρατισλάβ

SYNAXIS OF ORTHODOX PRIMATES

The Mission of the Orthodox Church  
in Today's World

DECISION

*The contribution of the Orthodox Church in realizing peace, justice, freedom, fraternity and love between peoples, and in the removal of racial and other discriminations.*

The Church of Christ exists *in the world*, but is *not of the world* (cf. Jn 17:11, 14-15). The Church, as the sign and image of the Kingdom of God in history, proclaims the good news of a *new creation* (II Cor 5:17), of *new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells* (II Pt 3:13); news of a world in which *God will wipe away every tear from people's eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain* (Rev 21:4-5).

Such hope is experienced and foretasted by the Church, especially each time the Divine Eucharist is celebrated, bringing *together* (I Cor 11:20) the *scattered children of God* (Jn 11:52) without regard to race, gender, age, social, or any other condition into a single body where *there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female* (Gal 3:28; cf. Col 3:11).

This foretaste of the *new creation* –of a world transfigured– is also experienced by the Church in the countenance of her saints who, through their spiritual struggles and virtues, have already revealed the image of the Kingdom of God in this life, thereby proving and affirming that the expectation of a world of peace, justice, and love is not a utopia, but the *substance of things hoped for* (Heb 11:1), attainable through divine grace and spiritual struggle.

Finding constant inspiration in this expectation and foretaste of the Kingdom of God, the Church cannot remain indifferent to the problems of humanity in each period. On the contrary, she shares in our anguish and existential problems, taking upon herself –as the Lord did– our suffering and wounds, which are caused by evil in the world and, like the Good Samaritan, pouring oil and wine upon our wounds through a *patient, comforting* (Rom 15:4; Heb 13:22), and loving word (Lk 10:34). The word addressed to the world is not pri-

marily meant to judge and condemn the world (cf. Jn 3:17; 12:47), but rather to offer to the world the guidance of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God – namely, the hope and assurance that evil, no matter its form, does not have the last word in history and must not be allowed to dictate its course.

Drawing from these principles and the accumulated experience and teaching of her patristic, liturgical, and ascetical tradition, the Orthodox Church shares the concern and anxiety of contemporary humanity with regard to fundamental existential questions that preoccupy the world today. She thus desires to help resolve these issues, allowing the *peace of God, which surpasses all understanding* (Phil 4:7), reconciliation, and love to prevail in the world.

## 1. The Dignity of the Human Person

1. The human person's dignity, which stems from being created in the image of God and from our role in God's plan for humanity and the world, was the source of inspiration for the Church Fathers, who delved into the mystery of divine *oikonomia*. Regarding the human person, St. Gregory the Theologian characteristically emphasizes that: *The Creator makes a sort of second world, which is great in the small, he places on earth another angel, a worshipper composed of various natures, a contemplator of visible creation, a witness of the mysteries of creation as comprehended by the intellect, a king over all that is on the earth who is subject to the heavenly kingdom... a living being, prepared here and transported to another world and (which is the culmination of the mystery) who attains deification through striving for God* (Homily 45, On Holy Pascha, 7. PG 36, 632AB). The purpose of the incarnation of the Word of God is the deification of the human person. Christ, having renewed within himself the old Adam (cf. Eph 2:15), *made the human person divine like himself, the beginning of our hope* (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Demonstrations on the Gospel*, Book 4, 14. PG 22, 289A). For just as the entire human race was contained in the old Adam, so too, the entire human race is now gathered in the new Adam: *The Only-begotten One became man in order to gather into one and return to its original condition the fallen human race* (Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Book 9, PG 74, 273D–275A). This teaching of the Church is the endless source of all Christian efforts to safeguard the dignity and majesty of the human person.

2. On this basis, it is essential to develop inter-Christian cooperation in every direction for the protection of human dignity and of course for the good of peace, so that the peace-keeping efforts of all Christians without exception may acquire greater weight and significance.
3. To help foster such broader cooperation, it is essential to maintain a common approach to the preeminent value of the human person. Orthodox Churches are called to contribute to inter-religious understanding and cooperation, whereby she may contribute to the efforts to eradicate fanaticism of every kind, establish reconciliation among peoples, as well as help freedom and peace prevail throughout the world in order to serve humankind, irrespective of race and religion. Of course, such cooperation excludes both syncretism and the desire of one religion to impose itself over others.
4. We are convinced that, as *God's fellow workers* (I Cor 3:9), we can advance to this common service together with all people of good will, who love peace that is pleasing to God, for the sake of human society on the local, national, and international levels. This ministry is a commandment of God (Mt 5:9).

## 2. Freedom and Responsibility.

1. Freedom is one of God's greatest gifts to humanity as a specific bearer of the image of a personal God and member of a community of persons, which, through the unity of the human race, reflects by grace the life and communion of the Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. *He who created the human person in the beginning made him free and autonomous, limiting him solely by the laws of the commandment* (Gregory the Theologian, *Homily 14, On Love for the Poor*, 25. PG 35, 892A). Freedom renders the human person capable of progressing toward spiritual perfection; yet, it also includes the risk of disobedience as independence from God and consequently the fall, which tragically gives rise to evil in the world.
2. The consequences of evil include those imperfections and shortcomings prevailing today, including: secularism; violence; moral laxity; negative phenomena such as the plague of drugs and other addictions in the lives of certain youth; racism; the arms race and wars, as well as the resulting social catastrophes; the oppression of certain social groups, religious communities, and entire peoples; social inequality; the restriction of human rights in the field of



freedom of conscience – in particular religious freedom; the misinformation and manipulation of public opinion; economic misery; the disproportionate redistribution of vital resources or complete lack thereof; the hunger of millions of people; forced migration of populations and human trafficking; the refugee crisis; the destruction of the environment; and the unrestrained use of genetic biotechnology and biomedicine at the beginning, duration, and end of human life. These all create infinite anxiety for humanity today.

3. Faced with this situation, which has degraded the concept of the human person, the duty of the Orthodox Church today is—through its preaching, theology, worship, and pastoral activity—to promote the truth of freedom in Christ. *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being...for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?* (I Cor 10:23-24, 29) Freedom without responsibility and love eventually leads to loss of freedom.

### 3. Peace and Justice

1. The Orthodox Church has diachronically recognized and revealed the centrality of peace and justice in people's lives. The very revelation of Christ is characterized as a *gospel of peace* (Eph 6:15), for Christ has brought *peace to all through the blood of his Cross* (Col 1:20), *preached peace to those afar and near* (Eph 2:17), and has become *our peace* (Eph 2:14). This peace, *which surpasses all understanding* (Phil 4:7), as the Lord Himself told His disciples before His passion, is broader and more essential than the peace promised by the world: *peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you* (Jn 14:27). This is because the peace of Christ is the ripe fruit of the restoration of all things in Him, the revelation of the human person's dignity and majesty as an image of God, the manifestation of the organic unity in Christ between humanity and the world, the universality of the principles of peace, freedom, and social justice, and finally the blossoming of Christian love among people and nations of the world. The reign of all these Christian principles on earth gives rise to authentic peace. It is the peace from above, for which the Orthodox Church prays constantly in its daily petitions, asking this of the almighty God, Who hears the prayers of those that draw near to Him in faith.

2. From the aforementioned, it is clear why the Church, as *the body of Christ* (I Cor 12:27), always prays for the peace of the whole world; this peace, according to Clement of Alexandria, is synonymous with justice (*Stromates* 4, 25. PG 8, 1369B-72A). To this, Basil the Great adds: *I cannot convince myself that without mutual love and without peace with all people, in as far as it is within my possibilities, I can call myself a worthy servant of Jesus Christ* (*Epistle* 203, 2. PG 32, 737B). As the same Saint notes, this is self-evident for a Christian, for *nothing is so characteristic of a Christian as to be a peacemaker* (*Epistle* 114. PG 32, 528B). The peace of Christ is a mystical power that springs forth from the reconciliation between the human person and the heavenly Father, *according to the providence of Christ, Who brings all things to perfection in Him and who makes peace ineffable and predestined from the ages, and who reconciles us with Himself, and in Himself with the Father* (Dionysius the Aeropagite, *On the Divine Names*, 11, 5, PG 3, 953AB).
3. At the same time, we are obligated to underline that the gifts of peace and justice also depend on human synergy. The Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts when, in repentance, we seek God's peace and righteousness. These gifts of peace and justice are manifested wherever Christians strive for the work of faith, love, and hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thes 1:3).
4. Sin is a spiritual illness, whose external symptoms include conflict, division, crime, and war, as well as the tragic consequences of these. The Church strives to eliminate not only the external symptoms of illness, but the illness itself, namely, sin.
5. At the same time, the Orthodox Church considers it is her duty to encourage all that which genuinely serves the cause of peace (Rom 14:19) and paves the way to justice, fraternity, true freedom, and mutual love among all children of the one heavenly Father as well as between all peoples who make up the one human family. She suffers with all people who in various parts of the world are deprived of the benefits of peace and justice.

#### 4. Peace and the Aversion of War

1. The Church of Christ condemns war in general, recognizing it as the result of the presence of evil and sin in the world: *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war*

*in your members?* (Jm 4:1). Every war threatens to destroy creation and life. This is most particularly the case with wars with weapons of mass destruction because their consequences would be horrific not only because they lead to the death of an unforeseeable number of people, but also because they render life unbearable for those who survive. They also lead to incurable diseases, cause genetic mutations and other disasters, with catastrophic impact on future generations.

The amassing of all kinds of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons poses very serious dangers inasmuch as they create a false sense of superiority and dominance over the rest of the world. Moreover, such proliferation creates an atmosphere of fear and mistrust, becoming the impetus for a new arms race.

2. The Church of Christ, which understands war as essentially the result of evil and sin in the world, supports all initiatives and efforts to prevent or avert it through dialogue and every other viable means. When war becomes inevitable, the Church continues to pray and care in a pastoral manner for her children who are involved in military conflict for the sake of defending their life and freedom, while making every effort to bring about the swift restoration of peace and freedom.
3. The Orthodox Church resolutely condemns the multifaceted conflicts and wars provoked by fanaticism that derives from religious principles. There is grave concern over the permanent trend of increasing oppression and persecution of Christians and other communities in the Middle East and elsewhere because of their beliefs; equally troubling are the attempts to uproot Christianity from its traditional homelands. As a result, existing interfaith and international relations are threatened, while many Christians are forced to abandon their homes. Orthodox Christians throughout the world suffer with their fellow Christians and all those being persecuted in this region, while also calling for a just and lasting resolution to the region's problems. Wars inspired by nationalism and leading to ethnic cleansing, the violation of state borders, and the seizure of territory are also condemned.

## 5. The Attitude of the Church Toward Discrimination

1. The Lord, as King of righteousness (Heb 7:2-3) denounces violence and injustice (Ps 10:5), while condemning the inhumane treatment of one's neighbor (Mt

- 25:41-46; Jm 2:15-16). In His Kingdom, reflected and present in His Church on earth, there is no place for hatred, enmity, or intolerance (Is 11:6; Rom 12:10).
2. The Orthodox Church's position on this is clear. She believes that God *has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth* (Acts 17:26) and that in Christ *there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Gal 3:28). To the question: *Who is my neighbor?* Christ responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). In so doing, He taught us to tear down all barriers erected by enmity and prejudice. The Orthodox Church confesses that every person, regardless of color, religion, race, gender, ethnicity, and language, is created in the image and likeness of God, and enjoys equal rights in society. Consistent with this belief, the Orthodox Church rejects discrimination for any of the aforementioned reasons since these presuppose an intrinsic difference between people.
  3. The Church, in the spirit of respecting human rights and equal treatment of all, values the application of these principles in the light of her teaching on the sacraments, the family, the role of both genders in the Church, and the overall principles of Church tradition. The Church has the right to proclaim and witness to her teaching in the public sphere.

## 6. The Mission of the Orthodox Church As a Witness of Love through Service

1. In fulfilling her salvific mission in the world, the Orthodox Church actively cares for all people in need, including the hungry, the poor, the sick, the disabled, the elderly, the persecuted, those in captivity and prison, the homeless, the orphans, the victims of destruction and military conflict, those affected by human trafficking and modern forms of slavery. The Orthodox Church's efforts to confront destitution and social injustice are an expression of her faith and the service to the Lord, Who identifies Himself with every person and especially with those in need: *Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me* (Mt 25:40). This multidimensional social service enables the Church to cooperate with various relevant social institutions.
2. Competition and enmity in the world introduce injustice and inequitable access among individuals and peoples to the resources of divine creation. They

- deprive millions of people of fundamental goods and lead to the degradation of human existence; they incite mass migrations of populations, and they engender ethnic, religious, and social conflicts, which threaten the internal cohesion of communities.
3. The Church cannot remain indifferent before economic conditions that negatively impact humanity as a whole. She insists not only on the need for the economy to be grounded upon ethical principles, but that it must also tangibly serve the needs of human beings in accordance with the teaching of the Apostle Paul: *By laboring like this, you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35)*. Basil the Great writes that *each person should make it his duty to help those in need and not satisfy his own needs (Moral Rules, 42. PG 31, 1025A)*.
  4. The gap between rich and poor is dramatically exacerbated due to the financial crisis, which normally results from the unbridled profiteering in some financial circles, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, and perverted business practices devoid of justice and humanitarian sensitivity, which ultimately do not serve humanity's true needs. A sustainable economy is that which combines efficiency with justice and social solidarity.
  5. In light of such tragic circumstances, the Church's great responsibility is perceived in terms of overcoming hunger and all other forms of deprivation in the world. One such phenomenon in our time –whereby nations operate within a globalized economic system– points to the world's serious identity crisis, for hunger not only threatens the divine gift of life for all peoples, but also offends the splendor and sanctity of the human person, while simultaneously offending God. Therefore, if concern over our own sustenance is a material issue, then concern over feeding our neighbor is a spiritual issue (Jm 2:14-18). Consequently, it is the mission of all Orthodox Churches to exhibit solidarity and administer assistance effectively to those in need.
  6. The Holy Church of Christ, in her universal body—embracing in her fold many peoples on earth—emphasizes the principle of universal solidarity and supports the closer cooperation of peoples and nations for the sake of resolving conflicts peacefully.
  7. The Church is concerned about the ever-increasing imposition upon society of a consumerist lifestyle, devoid of Christian ethical principles. In this sense, consumerism combined with secular globalization tends to lead to the loss of

- nations' spiritual roots, their historical loss of memory, and the forgetfulness of their traditions.
8. Mass media frequently operates under the control of an ideology of liberal globalization and is thus rendered an instrument for disseminating consumerism and immorality. Instances of disrespectful—at times blasphemous—attitudes toward religious values are cause for particular concern, inasmuch as arousing division and conflict in society. The Church warns her children of the risk of influence on their conscience by the mass media, as well as its use to manipulate rather than bring people and nations together.
  9. Even as the Church proceeds to preach and realize her salvific mission for the world, she is all the more frequently confronted by expressions of secularism. The Church of Christ is called to reformulate and reveal her prophetic witness to the world, grounded on the experience of faith and recalling her true mission through the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the cultivation of a sense of unity among her flock. In this way, she opens up a broad field of opportunity since an essential element of her ecclesiology promotes Eucharistic communion and unity within a shattered world.
  10. The yearning for continuous growth in prosperity and an unfettered consumerism inevitably lead to a disproportionate use and depletion of natural resources. Nature, which was created by God and given to humankind to *work and preserve* (cf. Gen 2:15), endures the consequences of human sin: *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now* (Rom 8:20-22).  
The ecological crisis, which is connected to climate change and global warming, makes it incumbent upon the Church to do everything within her spiritual power to protect God's creation from the consequences of human greed. As the gratification of material needs, greed leads to spiritual impoverishment and to environmental destruction. We should not forget that the earth's natural resources are not our property, but the Creator's: *The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world, and those who dwell therein* (Ps 23:1). Therefore, the Orthodox Church emphasizes the protection of God's creation through the cultivation of human responsibility for our God-given environment and the promotion of the virtues of frugality and self-restraint.

- We are obliged to remember that not only present, but also future generations have a right to enjoy the natural goods granted to us by the Creator.
11. For the Orthodox Church, the ability to explore the world scientifically is a gift from God to humanity. However, along with this positive attitude, the Church simultaneously recognizes the dangers latent in the use of certain scientific achievements. She believes that the scientist is indeed free to conduct research, but that the scientist is also obliged to interrupt this research when it violates basic Christian and humanitarian values. According to St. Paul, *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful* (I Cor 6:12), and according to St. Gregory the Theologian, *Something good is not good if it is not achieved through good means* (1st Theological Oration, 4, PG 36, 16C). This perspective of the Church proves necessary for many reasons in order to establish proper boundaries for freedom and the application the fruits of science, where in almost all disciplines, but especially in biology, we can expect both new achievements and risks. At the same time, we emphasize the unquestionable sacredness of human life from conception to natural death.
  12. Over the last years, we observe an immense developments in the biological sciences and in corresponding biotechnologies. Many of these achievements are considered beneficial for humankind, while others raise ethical dilemmas and still others are deemed unacceptable. The Orthodox Church believes that the human person is not merely a composition of cells, bones, and organs; nor again is the human person defined solely by biological factors. The human person is created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and reference to humanity must take place with due respect. The recognition of this fundamental principle leads to the conclusion that, both in the process of scientific investigation as well as in the practical application of new discoveries and innovations, we should preserve the absolute right of each individual to be respected and honored at all stages of life. Moreover, we should acknowledge the will of God as manifested through creation. Research must take into account ethical and spiritual principles, as well as Christian precepts. Indeed, due respect must be rendered to all of God's creation in regard to both the way humanity treats and science explores it, in accordance to God's commandment (Gen 2:15).
  13. In these times of secularization marked by a spiritual crisis characteristic of contemporary civilization, it is especially necessary to highlight the signifi-

- cance of life's sacredness. The misunderstanding of freedom as permissiveness leads to an increase in crime, the destruction and defacement of those things held in high regard, as well as the total disrespect of our neighbor's freedom and of the sacredness of life. Orthodox Tradition, shaped by the experience of Christian truths in practice, is the bearer of spirituality and the ascetic ethos, which must especially be encouraged in our time.
14. The Church's special pastoral care for young people represents an unceasing and unchanging Christ-centered process of formation. Of course, the pastoral responsibility of the Church also extends to the divinely-granted institution of family, which has always been and must always be founded on the sacred mystery of Christian marriage as a union between man and woman, as reflected in the union of Christ and His Church (Eph 5:32). This is especially vital in light of attempts in certain countries to legalize and in certain Christian communities to justify theologically other forms of human cohabitation that are contrary to Christian tradition and teaching.
15. In our times, just as throughout history, the prophetic and pastoral voice of the Church appeals to the heart of humankind, calling us, with the Apostle Paul, to embrace and experience *whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report* (Phil 4:8)—namely, the sacrificial love of the Crucified Lord, the only way to a world of peace, justice, freedom, and love among peoples and between nations.

Chambésy, 26 January 2016

† *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Chairman*

† *Patriarch Theodore of Alexandria*

† *Metropolitan Isaac*

(*representative of Patriarch John of Antioch*)

† *Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem*

† *Patriarch Kirill of Moscow*

† *Patriarch Irinej of Serbia*

† *Patriarch Daniel of Romania*

† *Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria*



† *Patriarch Ilia of Georgia*

† *Archbishop Chrysostomos of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus*

† *Metropolitan Germanos of Ilias*

*(representative of Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece)*

† *Bishop George of Siemiatycze*

*(representative of Archbishop Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland)*

† *Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës, and All Albania*

† *Archbishop Rastislav of Prešov the Czech Lands and Slovakia*



## Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Διασπορά

### Ἀπόφασις

Ἡ Δ΄ Προσυνοδική Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, συγκληθεῖσα ὑπὸ τῆς Α.Θ. Παναγιότητος, τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου κ. Βαρθολομαίου, τῆ συμφώνῳ γνώμῃ τῶν Μακαριωτάτων Προκαθημένων τῶν Ἀγιωτάτων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, ἐκφρασθεῖση κατὰ τὴν ἐν Φαναρίῳ Ἱερὰν Σύναξιν αὐτῶν τὸν Ὀκτώβριον τοῦ ἔτους 2008, συνήλθεν εἰς τὸ ἐν Σαμπεζῦ Ὁρθόδοξον Κέντρον τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου ἀπὸ 6ης μέχρι 13ης Ἰουνίου 2009, ὑπὸ τὴν προεδρίαν τοῦ Σεβασμιωτάτου Μητροπολίτου Περγάμου κ. Ἰωάννου, ἐκπροσώπου τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου.

Ἡ Διάσκεψις αὕτη, εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν προσεκλήθησαν καὶ ἐξεπροσωπήθησαν πᾶσαι αἱ ἀγιώταται Ὁρθόδοξοι Αὐτοκέφαλοι Ἐκκλησίαι, ἡσχολήθη περὶ τὸ θέμα τῆς κανονικῆς ὀργανώσεως τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Διασπορᾶς καὶ συνεζήτησε, συμφώνως πρὸς τὸ ἄρθρον 16 τοῦ Κανονισμοῦ Λειτουργίας τῶν Προσυνοδικῶν Πανορθοδόξων Διασκέψεων, τὰ ὑπὸ τῆς Διορθοδόξου Προπαρασκευαστικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς τῶν ἐτῶν 1990 καὶ 1993 ὑποβληθέντα αὐτῇ σχετικὰ κείμενα, τροποποιήσασα καὶ ἐγκρίναςα αὐτὰ ὡς ἀκολούθως:

1. α) Διεπιστώθη ὅτι ἀποτελεῖ κοινὴν βούλησιν πασῶν τῶν ἀγιωτάτων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, ὅπως ἐπιλυθῆ τὸ ζήτημα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Διασπορᾶς τὸ ταχύτερον δυνατὸν καὶ ὅπως ὀργανωθῆ αὕτη κατὰ τρόπον σύμφωνον πρὸς τὴν ὀρθόδοξον ἐκκλησιολογίαν καὶ τὴν κανονικὴν παράδοσιν καὶ πράξιν τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας.
- β) Διεπιστώθη ὡσαύτως ὅτι κατὰ τὴν παροῦσαν φάσιν δὲν εἶναι ἐφικτὴ δι' ἱστορικοὺς καὶ ποιμαντικοὺς λόγους ἢ ἄμεσος μετάβασις εἰς τὴν αὐστηρῶς κανονικὴν τάξιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς πρὸς τὸ ζήτημα τοῦτο, τοὔτεστιν εἰς τὴν ὑπαρξιν ἑνὸς μόνου Ἐπισκόπου εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν τόπον. Διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον ἤχθη εἰς τὴν ἀπόφασιν, ὅπως προτείνῃ τὴν δημιουργίαν μεταβατικῆς τινος καταστάσεως, ἣτις καὶ θὰ προετοιμάσῃ τὸ ἔδαφος διὰ τὴν αὐστηρῶς κανονικὴν λύσιν τοῦ προβλήματος, ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει ἀρχῶν καὶ κατευθύνσεων, αἱ ὁποῖαι διαγράφονται κατωτέρω. Ἡ τοιαύτη προε-

τοίμασία δὲν θὰ πρέπει νὰ βραδύνη πέραν τῆς μελλούσης νὰ συνέλθῃ Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλῃς Σύνοδου τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, ὥστε νὰ δυναθῇ αὕτη νὰ προβῆ εἰς μίαν κανονικὴν λύσιν τοῦ προβλήματος.

2. α) Προτείνεται, ὅπως κατὰ τὸ μεταβατικὸν στάδιον, κατὰ τὸ ὅποιον θὰ προετοιμασθῇ ἡ κανονικὴ λύσις τοῦ ζητήματος δημιουργηθοῦν (ἢ ἰδρυθοῦν) εἰς ἐκάστην ἐκ τῶν κατωτέρω μνημονευομένων περιοχῶν «Ἐπισκοπικαὶ Συνελεύσεις» πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ περιοχῇ ἐκείνῃ ὡς κανονικῶν ἀναγνωριζομένων ἐπισκόπων, οἵτινες θὰ ἐξακολουθοῦν νὰ ὑπάγονται εἰς τὰς κανονικὰς δικαιοδοσίας, εἰς ἃς ὑπάγονται σήμερον.
  - β) Αἱ συνελεύσεις αὗται θὰ συνίστανται ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐν ἐκάστῃ περιοχῇ ἐπισκόπων, οἵτινες εὐρίσκονται ἐν κανονικῇ κοινωνίᾳ μετὰ πασῶν τῶν ἀγιωτάτων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ θὰ προεδρεύονται ὑπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἐκ τῶν εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ὑπαγομένων ἀρχιερέων, ἐλλείψει δὲ τούτου συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν τάξιν τῶν Διπτύχων. Αὗται θὰ ἔχουν ἐκτελεστικὴν Ἐπιτροπὴν, ἀποτελουμένην ἐκ τῶν πρώτων ἱεραρχῶν τῶν διαφόρων δικαιοδοσιῶν, αἱ ὁποῖαι ὑπάρχουν εἰς τὴν περιοχὴν.
  - γ) Ἔργον καὶ εὐθύνη τῶν ἐπισκοπικῶν τούτων συνελεύσεων θὰ εἶναι ἡ μεριμνα διὰ τὴν φανέρωσιν τῆς ἐνότητος τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας καὶ τὴν ἀνάπτυξιν κοινῆς δράσεως ὅλων τῶν ὀρθοδόξων ἐκάστης περιοχῆς πρὸς θεραπείαν τῶν ποιμαντικῶν ἀναγκῶν τῶν ἐκεῖ διαβιούντων ὀρθοδόξων, κοινὴν ἐκπροσώπησιν πάντων τῶν ὀρθοδόξων ἐναντι τῶν ἑτεροδόξων καὶ τῆς ὅλης κοινωνίας τῆς περιοχῆς, καλλιέργειαν τῶν θεολογικῶν γραμμάτων καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς παιδείας κ.λπ. Αἱ ἐπὶ τῶν θεμάτων τούτων ἀποφάσεις θὰ λαμβάνονται καθ' ὁμοφωνίαν τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν αἱ ὁποῖαι ἐκπροσωποῦνται εἰς τὴν συγκεκριμένην Συνέλευσιν.
3. Αἱ περιοχαί, εἰς τὰς ὁποίας θὰ δημιουργηθοῦν εἰς ἕν πρῶτον στάδιον Ἐπισκοπικαὶ συνελεύσεις, ὀρίζονται ὡς ἑξῆς:
  - i. Βόρειος καὶ Κεντρικὴ Ἀμερική.
  - ii. Νότιος Ἀμερική.
  - iii. Αὐστραλία, Ν. Ζηλανδία καὶ Ὠκεανία.
  - iv. Μ. Βρεταννία καὶ Ἴρλανδία.
  - v. Γαλλία.
  - vi. Βέλγιον, Ὁλλανδία καὶ Λουξεμβούργον.
  - vii. Αὐστρία.
  - viii. Ἰταλία καὶ Μάλτα.

ix. Ἑλβετία καὶ Λιχτενστάιν

x. Γερμανία.

xi. Σκανδιναυϊκὰ Χῶραι (ἐκτὸς τῆς Φιλλανδίας).

xii. Ἰσπανία καὶ Πορτογαλία.

Οἱ ἐπίσκοποι τῆς Διασπορᾶς, οἱ ὅποιοι κατοικοῦν εἰς τὴν Διασπορὰν καὶ ἔχουν ἐνορία εἰς περισσοτέρας περιοχάς, θὰ εἶναι μέλη τῶν Ἐπισκοπικῶν Συνελεύσεων καὶ τῶν περιοχῶν αὐτῶν.

4. Εἰς τὰς συνελεύσεις ταύτας, αἱ ὁποῖαι συγκροτοῦνται κατ' ἀπόφασιν τῆς παρούσης Διασκέψεως, ἀνατίθεται ἡ εὐθύνη, ὅπως ὀλοκληρώσουν ἐν ταῖς λεπτομερείαις τὸν ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἐγκριθέντα κανονισμὸν λειτουργίας αὐτῶν καὶ ἐφαρμόσουν αὐτὸν τὸ ταχύτερον δυνατὸν καὶ ὁπωσδήποτε πρὸ τῆς συγκλήσεως τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου.

5. Αἱ Ἐπισκοπικαὶ Συνελεύσεις δὲν ἀποστεροῦν ἀπὸ τοὺς Ἐπισκόπους μέλη αὐτῶν ἀρμοδιότητος διοικητικοῦ καὶ κανονικοῦ χαρακτήρος οὔτε περιορίζουν τὰ δικαιώματα αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν Διασπορὰν. Αἱ Ἐπισκοπικαὶ Συνελεύσεις ἀποβλέπουν εἰς τὴν διαμόρφωσιν κοινῆς θέσεως τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ διαφόρων θεμάτων, τοῦτο οὐδόλως ἐμποδίζει τοὺς Ἐπισκόπους μέλη, οἱ ὅποιοι μένουσιν ὑπόλογοι εἰς τὰς ἰδικὰς τῶν Ἐκκλησίας, νὰ ἐκφράσουν τὰς ἀπόψεις τῶν ἰδικῶν τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἔξω κόσμου.

6. Οἱ πρόεδροι τῶν Ἐπισκοπικῶν Συνελεύσεων συγκαλοῦν καὶ προεδροῦν πασῶν τῶν κοινῶν συνάξεων τῶν ἐπισκόπων τῆς περιοχῆς αὐτῶν (λειτουργικῶν, ποιμαντικῶν, διοικητικῶν κ.λπ.). Εἰς ζητήματα γενικωτέρου ἐνδιαφέροντος, ἀπαιτοῦνται, κατ' ἀπόφασιν τῆς Ἐπισκοπικῆς Συνελεύσεως, πανορθόδοξον ἀντιμετώπισιν ὁ πρόεδρος αὐτῆς ἔχει τὴν ἀναφορὰν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν Οἰκουμενικὸν Πατριάρχην διὰ τὰ περαιτέρω κατὰ τὰ πανορθοδόξως ἰσχύοντα.

7. Αἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι Ἐκκλησίαι δεσμεύονται, ὅπως μὴ προβαίνουν εἰς ἐνεργείας δυναμένας νὰ παραβλάψουν τὴν ὡς ἄνω διαγραφομένην πορείαν πρὸς κανονικὴν ἐπίλυσιν τοῦ θέματος τῆς Διασπορᾶς, θὰ πράττωσι δὲ πᾶν τὸ δυνατὸν πρὸς διευκόλυνσιν τοῦ ἔργου τῶν Ἐπισκοπικῶν Συνελεύσεων καὶ ἀποκατάστασιν τῆς ὁμαλῆς κανονικῆς τάξεως ἐν τῇ Διασπορᾷ.

6-12 Ἰουνίου 2009

† ὁ Περγάμου Ἰωάννης, πρόεδρος

† ὁ Καλῆς Ἐλπίδος Σέργιος

† ὁ ἐν Δυτικῇ καὶ Κεντρῷα Εὐρώπῃ Ἰωάννης  
† ὁ Καπιτωλιάδος Ἠσύχιος  
† ὁ Βολοκολάμοσ Ἰλαρίων  
† ὁ Μπάσκασ Εἰρηναῖος  
† ὁ Ὀλτενίας Εἰρηναῖος  
† ὁ Ρούσσης Νεόφυτος  
† ὁ Ζουκνίδι καὶ Τσαῖσι Γεράσιμος  
† ὁ Πάφου Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Περιστερίου Χρυσόστομος  
† ὁ Σιεματίσε Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Κορυτσᾶς Ἰωάννης  
† ὁ Κομάρο Τύχων  
† ὁ Ἑλβετίας Ἱερεμίας, γραμματεὺς

## The Orthodox Diaspora

### *DECISION*

The Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference was convened by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with the consensus of Their Beatitudes the Primate of the Most Holy Orthodox Churches expressed during their Sacred Synaxis at the Phanar in October 2008. The Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference met at the Orthodox Center of Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, from 6 to 13 June 2009 under the chairmanship of His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

This Conference, to which all of the most holy Orthodox Autocephalous Churches were invited and were represented, studied the issue of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Diaspora. Pursuant to article 16 of the Rules of Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences, this Conference discussed the relevant documents submitted in 1990 and 1993 by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, amending and approving them as follows:

1. It is affirmed that is the common will of all of the most holy Orthodox Churches that the problem of the Orthodox Diaspora be resolved as quickly as possible, and that it be organized in accordance with Orthodox ecclesiology, and the canonical tradition and practice of the Orthodox Church.

Likewise, it is affirmed that during the present phase it is not possible, for historical and pastoral reasons, for an immediate transition to the strictly canonical order of the Church on this issue, that is, the existence of only one bishop in the same place. For this reason, the Conference came to the decision to propose the creation of a temporary situation that will prepare the ground for a strictly canonical solution of the problem, based on the principles and guidelines set out below. Of necessity, this preparation will not extend beyond the convening of the future Great and Holy Council of the Or-

thodox Church, so that it (the Council) can proceed with a canonical solution of the problem.

2. This Conference proposes that, for the transitional period where the canonical solution of the issue will be prepared, “Episcopal Assemblies” of all canonically recognized bishops in each region should be created (or founded) in each of the regions defined below. The bishops will continue to be subject to the same canonical jurisdictions to which they are subject today.

These Assemblies will consist of all the bishops in each region who are in canonical communion with all of the most holy Orthodox Churches, and will be chaired by the first among the prelates of the Church of Constantinople and, in the absence of thereof, in accordance with the order of the Diptychs. These Assemblies will have an Executive Committee composed of the first hierarchs of the different jurisdictions that exist in the region.

The work and the responsibility of these Episcopal Assemblies will be the concern for manifesting the unity of Orthodoxy, the development of common action of all the Orthodox of each region to address the pastoral needs of Orthodox living in the region, a common representation of all Orthodox vis-à-vis other faiths and the wider society in the region, the cultivation of theological scholarship and ecclesiastical education, etc. Decisions on these subjects will be taken by consensus of the Churches who are represented in the particular Assembly.

3. The regions in which Episcopal Assemblies will be created in a first stage are defined as follows:
  - a. North America and Central America
  - b. South America
  - c. Australia, New Zealand and Oceania
  - d. Great Britain and Ireland
  - e. France
  - f. Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg
  - g. Austria
  - h. Italy and Malta
  - i. Switzerland and Lichtenstein
  - j. Germany



k. Scandinavian countries (except Finland)

l. Spain and Portugal

The Bishops of the Diaspora, living in the Diaspora and possessing parishes in multiple regions, will be members of the Episcopal Assemblies of those regions.

4. These Assemblies, which are formed by the decision of this present Conference, have the responsibility to complete the regulation of their operation in the specifications approved by this Conference, and to apply this regulation as soon as possible, and certainly before the convening of the Great and Holy Council.
5. The Episcopal Assemblies do not deprive the Member Bishops of their administrative competencies and canonical character, nor do they restrict their rights in the Diaspora. The Episcopal Assemblies aim to form a common position of the Orthodox Church on various issues. In no way does this prevent Members Bishops from remaining responsible to their own Churches, and to express the views of their own Churches to the outside world.
6. The chairmen of the Episcopal Assemblies convene and preside at all joint meetings of the Bishops of their region (liturgical, pastoral, administrative, etc.). As for matters of a more general concern that require, by the decision of the Assembly of Bishops, a pan-Orthodox approach, the Assembly's chairman refers it to the Ecumenical Patriarch for further pan-Orthodox actions.
7. The Orthodox churches are bound not to advance actions that could hinder the above process for a canonical resolution of the issue of the Diaspora, and to do their utmost to facilitate the work of the Episcopal Assemblies and the restoration of normal canonical order in the Diaspora.

*Chambésy, 21-28 January 2016*

*† Metropolitan John of Pergamon, Chairman*

*† Archbishop Sergios of Good Hope*

*† Metropolitan John  
(Patriarchate of Antioch)*

*† Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolas*

*† Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk*

- † *Metropolitan Irinej of Bačka*  
† *Metropolitan Irenaeus of Oltenia*  
† *Metropolitan Neophytos of Ruse*  
† *Metropolitan Gerasimos of Zoukdidi and Tsaissi*  
† *Metropolitan George of Paphos*  
† *Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristeri*  
† *Bishop George of Siemiatycze*  
† *Metropolitan John of Korçë*  
† *Bishop Tikhon of Komárno*  
† *Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland,*  
*Secretary for the Preparation*  
*of the Holy and Great Council*

## Τὸ αὐτόνομον καὶ ὁ τρόπος ἀνακηρύξεως αὐτοῦ

### Ἀπόφασις

Ἡ Ε΄ Προσυνοδικὴ Πανορθόδοξος Διάσκεψις, ἐργασθεῖσα ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει τοῦ συμφωνηθέντος καὶ ἐγκριθέντος ὑπὸ τῆς Διορθοδόξου Προπαρασκευαστικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς ἐν Chambésy ἀπὸ 9ης ἕως 17ης Δεκεμβρίου 2009 κειμένου «Τὸ Αὐτόνομον καὶ ὁ τρόπος ἀνακηρύξεως αὐτοῦ», ἐξήτασε τὰς ἐκκλησιολογικάς, τὰς κανονικάς καὶ τὰς ποιμαντικάς πτυχὰς τοῦ θεσμοῦ τοῦ Αὐτονόμου, ἀνεξήτησε δὲ τὴν ὁμόφωνον διατύπωσιν τῆς ἐνιαίας πανορθοδόξου θέσεως ἐπὶ τοῦ θέματος.

Τὰ ἀπασχολήσαντα τὴν Ε΄ Προσυνοδικὴν Πανορθόδοξον Διάσκεψιν ζητήματα, τὰ ὁποῖα προκύπτουν ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ θέματος κειμένου τῆς ὡς ἄνω Διορθοδόξου Προπαρασκευαστικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς, ἀνεφέροντο:

α) εἰς τὴν ἔννοιαν, τὸ περιεχόμενον καὶ τὰ ποικίλα σχήματα τοῦ θεσμοῦ τοῦ Αὐτονόμου,

β) εἰς τὰς προϋποθέσεις τοπικῆς τινος Ἐκκλησίας διὰ τὴν ἐπιζητήσῃ τὴν Αὐτονομίαν αὐτῆς ἐκ τῆς εἰς ἣν ὑπάγεται Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας,

γ) εἰς τὴν ἀποκλειστικὴν ἀρμοδιότητα τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας νὰ κινήσῃ καὶ νὰ ὁλοκληρώσῃ τὴν διαδικασίαν ἀποδόσεως τῆς Αὐτονομίας εἰς τμῆμα τῆς κανονικῆς δικαιοδοσίας αὐτῆς, Αὐτονόμων Ἐκκλησιῶν μὴ ἰδρυομένων εἰς τὸν γεωγραφικὸν χῶρον τῆς Ὁρθόδοξου Διασποράς, καὶ

δ) εἰς τὰς συνεπειὰς τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς αὐτῆς πράξεως διὰ τὰς σχέσεις τῆς ἀνακηρυχθείσης Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας τὸσον πρὸς τὴν εἰς ἣν ἀναφέρεται Αὐτοκέφαλον Ἐκκλησίαν, ὅσον καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἄλλας Αὐτοκεφάλους Ὁρθόδοξους Ἐκκλησίας.

1. Ὁ θεσμὸς τοῦ Αὐτονόμου ἐκφράζει κατὰ κανονικὸν τρόπον τὸ καθιερωμένον τῆς σχετικῆς ἢ μερικῆς ἀνεξαρτησίας ἐνὸς συγκεκριμένου ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ τμήματος ἐκ τῆς κανονικῆς δικαιοδοσίας τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας, εἰς τὴν ὁποῖαν κανονικῶς ἀναφέρεται.

- α) Κατὰ τὴν ἐφαρμογὴν τοῦ θεσμοῦ τούτου εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν προᾶξιν διεμορφώθησαν βαθμίδες ἐξαρτήσεως, ἀφορῶσαι εἰς τὰς σχέσεις τῆς Αὐτόνομου πρὸς τὴν Αὐτοκέφαλον Ἐκκλησίαν, εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν αὕτη ἀναφέρεται.
- β) Ἡ ἐκλογή τοῦ Πρώτου τῆς Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας ἐγκρίνεται ἢ διενεργεῖται ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρμοδίου ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ ὄργανου τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας, τὸν Προκαθήμενον τῆς ὁποίας οὗτος μνημονεύει καὶ εἰς τὸν ὅποιον κανονικῶς ἀναφέρεται.
- γ) Εἰς τὴν λειτουργίαν τοῦ θεσμοῦ τοῦ Αὐτονόμου ὑφίστανται διάφορα σχήματα κατὰ τὴν ἐφαρμογὴν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν προᾶξιν, τὰ ὁποῖα προσδιορίζονται ἐκ τῆς ἐκτάσεως τῆς ἐξαρτήσεως τῆς Αὐτονόμου ἀπὸ τὴν Αὐτοκέφαλον Ἐκκλησίαν.
- δ) Εἰς σχήματά τινα ὁ βαθμὸς ἐξαρτήσεως τῆς Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας ἐκφράζεται καὶ διὰ τῆς συμμετοχῆς τοῦ Πρώτου αὐτῆς εἰς τὴν Σύνοδον τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας.

2. Ἡ κίνησις καὶ ἡ ὀλοκλήρωσις τῆς διαδικασίας διὰ τὴν ἀπόδοσιν τοῦ Αὐτονόμου εἰς τμήμα τῆς κανονικῆς δικαιοδοσίας τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας ἀνήκει εἰς τὴν κανονικὴν ἀρμοδιότητα αὐτῆς, πρὸς τὴν ὁποίαν ἀναφέρεται ἢ ἀνακηρυσσομένη Αὐτόνομος Ἐκκλησία. Οὕτως:

- α) Ἡ ζητοῦσα τὴν Αὐτονομίαν αὐτῆς τοπικὴ Ἐκκλησία, ἐὰν διαθέτῃ τὰς ἀναγκαίας ἐκκλησιαστικὰς καὶ ποιμαντικὰς προϋποθέσεις, ὑποβάλλει τὸ σχετικὸν αἴτημα εἰς τὴν πρὸς ἣν ἔχει τὴν ἀναφορὰν αὐτῆς Αὐτοκέφαλον Ἐκκλησίαν, ἐξηγοῦσα καὶ τοὺς σοβαροὺς λόγους, οἱ ὅποιοι ὑπαγορεύουν τὴν ὑποβολὴν τοῦ αἰτήματος αὐτῆς.
- β) Ἡ Αὐτοκέφαλος Ἐκκλησία, δεχομένη τὸ αἴτημα αὐτῆς, ἀξιολογεῖ ἐν Συνόδῳ τὰς προϋποθέσεις καὶ τοὺς λόγους τῆς ὑποβολῆς τοῦ αἰτήματος καὶ ἀποφασίζει διὰ τὴν ἀπόδοσιν ἢ μὴ τοῦ Αὐτονόμου. Εἰς περιπτώσιν θετικῆς ἀποφάσεως ἐκδίδει τὸν σχετικὸν Τόμον, ὁ ὁποῖος καθορίζει τὰ γεωγραφικὰ ὄρια καὶ τὰς σχέσεις τῆς Αὐτονόμου πρὸς τὴν εἰς ἣν ἀναφέρεται Αὐτοκέφαλον Ἐκκλησίαν, συμφώνως πρὸς τὰ καθιερωμένα κριτήρια τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς παραδόσεως.
- γ) Ὁ Προκαθήμενος τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας ἀνακοινοῖ πρὸς τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸν Πατριαρχεῖον καὶ τὰς ἄλλας Αὐτοκεφάλους Ὁρθόδοξους Ἐκκλησίας τὴν ἀνακήρυξιν τῆς Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας.
- δ) Ἡ Αὐτόνομος Ἐκκλησία ἐκφράζεται διὰ τῆς ἐξ ἧς ἔλαβε τὴν αὐτονο-

μίαν αὐτῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὰς διορθοδόξους, διαχριστιανικὰς καὶ διαθρησκευτικὰς σχέσεις αὐτῆς.

- ε) Ἐκάστη Αὐτοκέφαλος Ἐκκλησία δύναται νὰ παραχωρῇ αὐτόνομον καθεστῶς μόνον ἐντὸς τῶν ὁρίων τῆς κανονικῆς γεωγραφικῆς περιφερείας αὐτῆς. Εἰς τὸν χώρον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Διασπορᾶς δὲν ἰδρύνονται Αὐτόνομοι Ἐκκλησίαι, εἰ μὴ μόνον μετὰ πανορθόδοξον συναίνεσιν, ἑξασφαλιζομένην ὑπὸ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου κατὰ τὰ πανορθοδόξως ἰσχύοντα.
- στ) Εἰς περιπτώσεις ἀπονομῆς αὐτονόμου καθεστῶτος εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν γεωγραφικὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν περιοχὴν ὑπὸ δύο Αὐτοκεφάλων Ἐκκλησιῶν, καί, ὡς ἐκ τούτου, ἐγειρομένης ἀμφισβητήσεως ἑκατέρου Αὐτονόμου, αἱ ἐμπλεκόμενα πλευρὰ ἀναφέρονται, ὁμοῦ ἢ κεχωρισμένως, εἰς τὸν Οἰκουμενικὸν Πατριάρχην ἵνα οὗτος ἐξεύρη τὴν κανονικὴν λύσιν ἐπὶ τοῦ θέματος κατὰ τὰ πανορθοδόξως ἰσχύοντα.

3. Αἱ ἐκ τῆς ἀνακηρύξεως τοῦ Αὐτονόμου προκύπτουσαι διὰ τὴν Αὐτόνομον Ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τὴν σχέσιν αὐτῆς πρὸς τὴν Αὐτοκέφαλον Ἐκκλησίαν συνέπειαι εἶναι αἱ κάτωθι:

- α) Ὁ Πρῶτος τῆς Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας μνημονεῦει μόνον τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ Προκαθήμενου τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας.
- β) Τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πρώτου τῆς Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας δὲν ἀναγράφεται εἰς τὰ Δίπτυχα.
- γ) Ἡ Αὐτόνομος Ἐκκλησία παραλαμβάνει τὸ Ἅγιον Μύρον ἐκ τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας.
- δ) Οἱ Ἐπίσκοποι τῆς Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας ἐκλέγονται καὶ καθίστανται ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀρμόδιου ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ ὄργανου αὐτῆς. Εἰς περίπτωσιν βεβαίας πρὸς τοῦτο ἀδυναμίας τῆς Αὐτονόμου Ἐκκλησίας, ἐπικουρεῖται αὕτη ὑπὸ τῆς Αὐτοκεφάλου Ἐκκλησίας εἰς ἣν ἀναφέρεται.

Σαμπεζύ, 15 Ὀκτωβρίου 2015

† ὁ Περγάμου Ἰωάννης, Πρόεδρος  
† ὁ Καλῆς Ἐλπίδος Σέργιος  
† Μητροπολίτης Δαμασκηνός  
(Πατριαρχεῖον Ἀντιοχείας)  
† ὁ Καπιτωλιάδος Ἡσύχιος  
† ὁ Βολοκολάμσκ Ἰλαρίων

† ὁ Μαυροβουνίου καὶ Παραθαλασσίας  
Ἄμφιλόχιος  
† ὁ Τριγκοβιστίου Νήφων  
† ὁ Βάρνης Ἰωάννης  
† ὁ Ζουκίδι καὶ Τσαΐσι Γεράσιμος  
† ὁ Πάφου Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Περιστερίου Χρυσόστομος  
† ὁ Σιεματίτσε Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Κορυτσᾶς Ἰωάννης  
† ὁ Μιχαλόβτσε Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Ἑλβετίας Ἱερεμίας,  
Γραμματεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς Προπαρασκευῆς  
τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου

## Autonomy and the Means by Which it is Proclaimed

### DECISION

The 5<sup>th</sup> Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference, upon the completion of its work on the text, *Autonomy and the Means by Which it is Proclaimed*, already agreed upon and adopted by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Committee during its session in Chambésy on December 9-17, 2009, considered the ecclesiological, canonical, and pastoral aspects of the institution of Autonomy and sought a unanimous pan-Orthodox position on the matter.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference, which grounded its work on the text adopted by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Committee, addressed:

1. The concept, nature, and various forms of the institution of autonomy.
2. The prerequisites for a local Church to request Autonomy from the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs.
3. The exclusive prerogative of an Autocephalous Church to initiate and complete the process of granting Autonomy to a certain segment of its canonical jurisdiction; Autonomous Churches shall not be established in the geographical region of the Orthodox Diaspora.
4. The impact of this ecclesiastical act on the relationship between the proclaimed Autonomous Church and the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs and with other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

\* \* \*

1. The institution of Autonomy is a canonical expression of the relative or partial independence of a particular ecclesiastical region from the canonical jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Church to which it canonically refers.
  - a. The implementation of this institution through ecclesiastical praxis has given rise to various degrees of dependence with respect to the relation-

- ship of the Autonomous Church to the Autocephalous Church to which it canonically refers.
- b. The election of the Primate of an Autonomous Church is approved or executed by the appropriate ecclesiastical entity of the Autocephalous Church. The Primate of the Autonomous Church commemorates and has as his canonical reference point the Primate of the Autocephalous Church.
  - c. In the application of the institution of Autonomy, we find various forms of its implementation in ecclesiastical praxis defined by the degree of dependence of the Autonomous Church on the Autocephalous Church.
  - d. In some forms of Autonomy, the level of dependence of an Autonomous Church is also expressed through the participation of its Primate in the Synod of the Autocephalous Church.
2. The initiation and completion of the process for granting Autonomy to a region within the canonical jurisdiction of an Autocephalous Church is the canonical prerogative of the Autocephalous Church. The Church proclaimed Autonomous refers to the Autocephalous Church. Accordingly:
- a. A local Church that requests Autonomy, after showing that it has fulfilled all necessary ecclesiastical and pastoral prerequisites, may submit its application to the Autocephalous Church to which it refers, explaining the serious reasons prompting such a request.
  - b. Upon receiving the application, the Autocephalous Church considers, in Council, all of the prerequisites and reasons for the submission, and decides whether or not to grant Autonomy. In the event of a favorable decision, the Autocephalous Church issues a Tomos, which defines the geographical boundaries of the Autonomous Church and its relationship with the Autocephalous Church to which it refers, in accordance with the established criteria of ecclesiastical tradition.
  - c. The Primate of the Autocephalous Church informs the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches of the proclamation of the Autonomous Church.
  - d. The Autonomous Church realizes its inter-Orthodox, inter-Christian, and inter-religious associations through the Autocephalous Church from which it received Autonomy.



- e. Each Autocephalous Church may only grant Autonomy within the borders of its canonical geographical region. Autonomous Churches are not established in the region of the Orthodox Diaspora, except by pan-Orthodox consensus, upheld by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in accordance with prevailing pan-Orthodox practice.
  - f. In the event that two Autocephalous Churches grant autonomous status within the same geographical ecclesiastical region, prompting doubt over the status of each Autonomous Church, the parties involved appeal –together or separately– to the Ecumenical Patriarch so that he may find a canonical solution to the matter in accordance with prevailing pan-Orthodox practice.
3. The implications for the Autonomous Church with respect to its relationship to the Autocephalous Church, following its proclamation of Autonomy, are as follows:
- a. The Primate of the Autonomous Church only commemorates the name of the Primate of the Autocephalous Church.
  - b. The name of the Primate of the Autonomous Church is not entered into the Diptychs.
  - c. The Autonomous Church receives Holy Chrism from the Autocephalous Church.
  - d. The bishops of the Autonomous Church are elected and appointed by its own appropriate ecclesiastical entity. In the event that the Autonomous Church finds this absolutely impossible, it receives assistance from the Autocephalous Church to which it refers.

Chambésy, 15 October 2015

† *Metropolitan John of Pergamon, Chairman*

† *Archbishop Sergios of Good Hope*

† *Metropolitan Damaskinos  
(Patriarchate of Antioch)*

† *Metropolitan Isychios of Capitoliás*

† *Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk*

† *Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral*

- † *Honorable Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste*  
† *Metropolitan John of Varna and Veliki Preslav*  
† *Metropolitan Gerasimos of Zoukdidi and Tsaissi*  
† *Metropolitan George of Paphos*  
† *Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristeri*  
† *Bishop George of Siemiatycze*  
† *Metropolitan John of Korçë*  
† *Archbishop George of Michalovce and Košice*  
† *Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland,*  
*Secretary for the Preparation*  
*of the Holy and Great Council*

## Τὸ Μυστήριον τοῦ Γάμου καὶ τὰ κωλύματα αὐτοῦ

### I. Ὁ Ὁρθόδοξος Γάμος

1. Ὁ θεσμὸς τῆς οἰκογενείας εὐρίσκεται σήμερον ὑπὸ τὴν ἀπειλὴν τῆς ἐκκοσμικεύσεως, ὡς ἐπίσης καὶ τοῦ ἠθικοῦ σχετικισμοῦ. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία διδάσκει τὴν ἱερότητα τοῦ γάμου ὡς μίαν θεμελιώδη καὶ ἀδιαμφισβήτητον διδασκαλίαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ἡ ἐλευθέρα ἔνωσις μεταξὺ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς εἶναι μία ἀπαραίτητος προϋπόθεσις.

2. Ὁ γάμος θεωρεῖται εἰς τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν ὡς ὁ ἀρχαιότερος θεσμὸς θείου δικαίου, διότι εἰσήχθη συγχρόνως πρὸς τὴν δημιουργίαν τῶν πρώτων ἀνθρώπων, τοῦ Ἀδάμ καὶ τῆς Εὔας (Γεν. 2, 23). Ἡ ἔνωσις αὕτη συνεδέθη ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὄχι μόνον πρὸς τὴν πνευματικὴν κοινωνίαν τοῦ ζεύγους, τοῦ ἀνδρὸς καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὴν δυνατότητα ἐξασφαλίσεως τῆς συνεχείας τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους. Οὕτως, ὁ γάμος ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς εὐλογηθεὶς ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ κατέστη ἐν ἱερὸν μυστήριον, τὸ ὁποῖον ἀναφέρεται εἰς τὴν Καινὴν Διαθήκην, ὅτε ὁ Χριστὸς ἐτέλεσε τὸ «πρῶτον σημεῖον» διὰ τῆς μεταβολῆς τοῦ ὕδατος εἰς οἶνον εἰς τὸν ἐν Κανᾶ τῆς Γαλιλαίας γάμον, ἀποκαλύπτων οὕτω τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ (Ἰω. 2, 11). Τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ ἀκαταλύτου δεσμοῦ μεταξὺ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς εἶναι εἰκὼν τῆς ἐνώσεως Χριστοῦ καὶ Ἐκκλησίας (Ἐφ. 5, 32).

3. Ἡ χριστοκεντρικὴ λοιπὸν τυπολογία τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ γάμου ἐξηγεῖ τὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου ἢ πρεσβυτέρου εὐλογίαν τοῦ ἱεροῦ δεσμοῦ δι' εἰδικῆς εὐχῆς (ἱερολογίας), διὸ καὶ ὁ ἅγιος Ἰγνάτιος ὁ Θεοφόρος εἰς τὴν πρὸς τὸν Πολύκαρπον Σμύρνης Ἐπιστολὴν αὐτοῦ ἐτόνιζεν, ὅτι οἱ προσερχόμενοι εἰς γάμου κοινωνίαν πρέπει «*μετὰ γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τὴν ἔνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι, ἵνα ὁ γάμος ᾗ κατὰ Κύριον καὶ μὴ κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν (=ἀνθρωπίνην). Πάντα εἰς τιμὴν Θεοῦ γινέσθω*» (V, 2). Οὕτω, τόσον ἡ ἱερότης τοῦ θεοσυστάτου δεσμοῦ, ὅσον καὶ τὸ ὑψηλὸν πνευματικὸν περιεχόμενον τῆς ἐγγάμου συζυγίας ἐξηγοῦν τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὥστε νὰ ἀναδειχθῇ «*τίμιος ὁ γάμος καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος*»

(Ἐβρ. 13, 4), διὸ καὶ ἀπεδοκιμάζετο οἰαδῆτις προσβολὴ τῆς καθαρότητος αὐτοῦ (Ἐφεσ. 5, 2-5. Α΄ Θεσσ. 4, 4. Ἐβρ. 13, 4 κ.ἄ.).

4. Ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ ἔνωσις ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς συνιστᾷ μίαν μικρὰν ἐκκλησίαν ἢ μίαν εἰκόνα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὑπὸ τὴν ἔννοιαν αὐτήν, ὁ Κλήμης ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς διακηρύσσει: «*Τίνες δὲ οἱ τρεῖς ὑπάρχουσιν, ἐν ὀνόματι Χριστοῦ συναγόμενοι, παρ' οἷς μέσος ἐστὶν ὁ Κύριος. Ἡ οὐχὶ ἄνδρα καὶ γυναῖκα καὶ τέκνον τοὺς τρεῖς λέγει; Ὅτι ἄνδρι γυνὴ διὰ Θεοῦ ἀρμόζεται*» (Στρωματεῖς, 3, 10. PG 8, 1169 B). Ἡ ἔνωσις ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς διὰ τῆς εὐλογίας τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑποῦται εἰς ὑψηλότερον βαθμόν, διότι ἡ κοινωνία εἶναι ὑπεροχωτέρα τῆς ἀτομικῆς ὑπάρξεως, ἀφοῦ τοὺς εἰσάγει εἰς τὴν τάξιν τῆς Βασιλείας τῆς παναγίας Τριάδος. Ἀπαραίτητος προϋπόθεσις διὰ τὸν γάμον εἶναι ἡ πίστις εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, μία πίστις, τὴν ὁποίαν ὀφείλουσαν νὰ ἀποδέχωνται ὁ νυμφίος καὶ ἡ νύμφη, ὁ ἀνὴρ καὶ ἡ γυνή. Ἄλλωστε, τὸ θεμέλιον τῆς ἐνότητος τοῦ γάμου εἶναι ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ ἐνότης, ἴνα, διὰ τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος εὐλογίας τῆς συζυγικῆς ἀγάπης, δυνηθῆ τὸ ζεῦγος νὰ ἀντανακλᾷ τὴν ἀγάπην Χριστοῦ καὶ Ἐκκλησίας ὡς μυστηρίου τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

5. Ἡ προστασία τῆς ἱερότητας τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ γάμου ὑπῆρξε πάντοτε ἰδιαζόντως σημαντικὴ διὰ τὴν προστασίαν τῆς Οἰκογενείας, ἡ ὁποία ἀκτινοβολεῖ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῶν συζευγνυμένων προσώπων τόσον εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, ὅσον καὶ εἰς τὴν ὅλην Κοινωνίαν. Οὕτως, ἡ διὰ τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ γάμου ἐπιτυγχανομένη κοινωνία προσώπων λειτουργεῖ ὄχι ἀπλῶς ὡς μία συμβατικὴ φυσικὴ σχέσις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς μία οὐσιαστικὴ καὶ δημιουργικὴ πνευματικὴ δύναμις διὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ θεσμοῦ τῆς Οἰκογενείας. Αὕτη βεβαιώνει τὴν προστασίαν καὶ τὴν παιδείαν τῶν τέκνων τόσον εἰς τὴν πνευματικὴν ἀποστολὴν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὅσον καὶ εἰς τὴν λειτουργίαν τῆς κοινωνίας.

6. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἀντιμετώπιζε πάντοτε μετὰ τῆς ἀναγκαίας αὐστηρότητας καὶ τῆς δεούσης ποιμαντικῆς εὐαισθησίας, κατὰ τὸ ὑπόδειγμα τῆς ἐπεικειᾶς τοῦ ἀποστόλου τῶν ἐθνῶν Παύλου (Ρωμ. 7, 2-3. Α΄ Κορ. 7, 12-15, 39 κ.ἄ.), τόσον τὰς θετικὰς προϋποθέσεις (διαφορὰ φύλου, νόμιμος ἡλικία κ.ἄ.), ὅσον καὶ τὰς ἀρνητικὰς προϋποθέσεις (συγγένεια ἐξ αἵματος καὶ ἐξ ἀγχιστείας, πνευματικὴ συγγένεια, ὑπάρχων γάμος, ἑτεροθρησκεία κ.ἄ.) διὰ τὴν σύναψιν γάμου. Ἡ ποιμαντικὴ εὐαισθησία ἦτο ἀναγκαία ὄχι μόνον διότι ἡ βιβλικὴ παράδοσις καθορίζει τὴν σχέσιν τοῦ φυσικοῦ δεσμοῦ τοῦ γάμου μετὰ τοῦ μυστηρίου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ διότι ἡ ἐκκλησιαστικὴ προᾶξις δὲν ἀποκλείει τὴν πρόσληψιν ὠρισμένων περὶ γάμου ἀρχῶν τοῦ ἐλληνορωμαϊκοῦ φυσικοῦ Δικαίου, αἱ ὁποῖα προβάλλουν τὸν δεσμόν τοῦ

γάμου άνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς ὡς «*θείου τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνου δικαίου κοινωνίαν*» (Μοδεστίνος) καὶ εἶναι συμβαταὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀποδιδομένην ὑπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἱερότητα τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ γάμου.

7. Ὑπὸ τὰς τοσοῦτον δυσχερεῖς συγχρόνους συνθήκας διὰ τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ γάμου καὶ διὰ τὸν ἱερὸν θεσμὸν τῆς Οἰκογενείας, οἱ ἐπίσκοποι καὶ οἱ ποιμένες ὀφείλουν νὰ ἀναπτύξουν σύντονον ἐργασίαν εἰς τὸν ποιμαντικὸν τομέα διὰ νὰ προστατεύσουν τοὺς πιστοὺς πατρικῶς, συμπαριστάμενοι εἰς αὐτούς, διὰ νὰ ἐνισχύσουν τὴν κλονισθεῖσαν ἐλπίδα αὐτῶν ἐκ τῶν ποικίλων δυσχερειῶν, θεμελιοῦντες τὸν θεσμὸν τῆς Οἰκογενείας ἐπὶ ἀκλονήτων θεμέλιων, τὰ ὅποια οὔτε ἡ βροχή, οὔτε οἱ ποταμοί, οὔτε οἱ ἄνεμοι δύνανται νὰ καταστρέψουν, ἀφοῦ τὰ θεμέλια ταῦτα εἶναι ἡ πέτρα, ἡ δὲ πέτρα εἶναι ὁ Χριστός (Ματθ. 7, 25).

8. Τὸ τιθέμενον σήμερον ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ζήτημα εἶναι ὁ γάμος, ὁ ὁποῖος εἶναι τὸ κέντρον τῆς Οἰκογένειας καὶ ἡ Οἰκογένεια δικαιοῦναι τὸν γάμον. Ἡ ἀσκουμένη εἰς τὸν σύγχρονον κόσμον πίεσις διὰ τὴν ἀναγνώρισιν νέων μορφῶν συμβιώσεως ἀποτελεῖ μίαν πραγματικὴν ἀπειλήν διὰ τοὺς ὀρθόδοξους χριστιανούς. Ἡ κρίσις τοῦ γάμου καὶ τῆς οἰκογενείας εἰς διαφόρους μορφὰς ἀνησυχεῖ βαθέως τὴν Ὀρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν ὄχι μόνον ἕνεκα τῶν ἀρνητικῶν συνεπειῶν εἰς τὴν δομὴν τῆς κοινωνίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἕνεκα τῆς ἀπειλῆς διὰ τὰς εἰδικωτέρας σχέσεις εἰς τοὺς κόλπους τῆς παραδοσιακῆς οἰκογενείας. Κύρια θύματα τῶν τάσεων αὐτῶν εἶναι τὸ ζεῦγος καὶ ἰδιαίτερος τὰ τέκνα, διότι δυστυχῶς αὐτὰ ὑφίστανται συνήθως ἐκ τῆς παιδικῆς ἤδη ἡλικίας αὐτῶν τὸ μαρτύριον, καίτοι οὐδεμίαν ἔχουν εὐθύνην δι' αὐτό.

9. Ὁ νομίμως καταγεγραμμένος *πολιτικὸς γάμος* μεταξὺ ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς δὲν ἔχει μυστηριακὸν χαρακτῆρα, ἀποτελεῖ πρᾶξιν συμβιώσεως κυρωθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τοῦ κράτους, διάφορον πρὸς τὸν εὐλογούμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας γάμον. Τὰ συνάπτοντα *πολιτικὸν γάμον* μέλη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πρέπει νὰ ἀντιμετωπίζωνται μετὰ ποιμαντικῆς εὐθύνης, ἢ ὅποια ἐπιβάλλεται διὰ νὰ κατανοήσουν τὴν ἀξίαν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ γάμου καὶ τῶν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀπορρουσῶν εὐλογιῶν δι' αὐτούς.

10. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία δὲν ἀποδέχεται διὰ τὰ μέλη αὐτῆς *σύμφωνα συμβιώσεως* τοῦ αὐτοῦ φύλου ἢ καὶ πᾶσαν ἄλλην μορφήν συμβιώσεως διὰ τὰ μέλη αὐτῆς, διαφόρους τοῦ γάμου. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία πρέπει νὰ καταβάλλῃ πάσας τὰς δυνατὰς ποιμαντικὰς προσπάθειας, ὥστε τὰ παρεκκλίνοντα μέλη αὐτῆς εἰς τοιαύτας μορφὰς συμβιώσεως νὰ δυνηθοῦν νὰ κατανοήσουν τὴν πραγματικὴν ἔννοιαν τῆς μετανοίας καὶ τῆς ἠὺλογημένης ὑπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀγάπης.

11. Αἱ βαρύτεραι συνέπειαι τῆς κρίσεως ταύτης ἐκφράζονται διὰ τῆς ἐπικινδύνου ἀυξήσεως τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τῶν διαζυγίων, τῶν ἀμβλώσεων καὶ πολλῶν ἄλλων ἐσωτερικῶν προβλημάτων εἰς τὴν οἰκογενειακὴν ζωὴν. Αἱ συνέπειαι αὗται εἶναι μία μεγάλη πρόκλησις διὰ τὴν ἀποστολὴν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὸν σύγχρονον κόσμον, διὸ καὶ οἱ ποιμένες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὀφείλουσι νὰ καταβάλλουσι πᾶσαν δυνατὴν προσπάθειαν διὰ τὴν ἀντιμετώπισιν τῶν προβλημάτων αὐτῶν. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία καλεῖ ἐν ἀγάπῃ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς καὶ ὅλους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καλλῆς θελήσεως νὰ ὑπερασπισθοῦν τὴν πιστότητα εἰς τὴν ἱερότητα τῆς οἰκογενείας.

## II. Κωλύματα Γάμου

1. Σχετικῶς μὲ τὰ κωλύματα γάμου λόγῳ ἐξ αίματος, ἐξ ἀγχιστείας, ἐξ υἰοθεσίας καὶ πνευματικῆς συγγενείας ἰσχύει ὅ,τι προβλέπεται ὑπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν κανόνων (53 καὶ 54 τῆς Πενθέκτης Οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου) καὶ τῆς συνῶδα τούτοις ἐκκλησιαστικῆς πράξεως, ὡς αὕτη ἐφαρμόζεται σήμερον εἰς τὰς κατὰ τόπους αὐτοκεφάλους Ὁρθόδοξους Ἐκκλησίας, καθορίζεται δὲ καὶ περιγράφεται ἐν τοῖς Καταστατικοῖς Χάρταις αὐτῶν καὶ ταῖς σχετικαῖς συνοδικαῖς ἀποφάσεσιν αὐτῶν.

2. Περὶ τοῦ μὴ ἀμετακλήτως λυθέντος ἢ ἀκυρωθέντος γάμου καὶ τοῦ προϋπάρξαντος τρίτου, ἰσχύει ὅτι συνιστοῦν ἀπόλυτα κωλύματα πρὸς συναψιν γάμου, συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν κατηγορηματικῶς καταδικάζουσαν τὴν διγαμίαν καὶ τὸν τέταρτον γάμον Ὁρθόδοξον κανονικὴν παράδοσιν.

3. Συμφώνως πρὸς τοὺς ἱεροὺς κανόνας κωλύεται κατ' ἀκρίβειαν ἡ ἱερολόγησις γάμου μετὰ τὴν μοναχικὴν κουράν (καν. 16 τῆς Δ' Οἰκουμενικῆς συνόδου καὶ 44 τῆς Πενθέκτης ἐν Τρούλλῳ συνόδου).

4. Ἡ ἱερωσύνη ἀποτελεῖ, συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν ἰσχύουσαν κανονικὴν παράδοσιν (κανὼν 3 τῆς Πενθέκτης ἐν Τρούλλῳ συνόδου) κώλυμα πρὸς συναψιν γάμου.

5. Περὶ τῶν μικτῶν γαμῶν Ὁρθοδόξων μεθ' ἑτεροδόξων καὶ μὴ Χριστιανῶν ἤχη εἰς τὴν ἀπόφασιν, ὅπως

i. ὁ γάμος Ὁρθοδόξων μεθ' ἑτεροδόξων κωλύεται κατὰ κανονικὴν ἀκρίβειαν, μὴ δυνάμενος νὰ εὐλογηθῆ (κανὼν 72 τῆς Πενθέκτης ἐν Τρούλλῳ συνόδου) δυνάμενος ὅμως νὰ εὐλογηθῆ κατὰ συγκατάβασιν καὶ διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν, ὑπὸ τὸν ρητὸν ὅρον ὅτι τὰ ἐκ τοῦ γάμου τούτου τέκνα θέλουσι βαπτισθῆ καὶ ἀναπτυχθῆ ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ.

ii. ὁ γάμος Ὁρθοδόξων μετὰ μὴ χριστιανῶν κωλύεται ἀπολύτως κατὰ κανονικὴν ἀκρίβειαν.

6. Ἡ κατὰ τὴν ἐφαρμογὴν τῆς περὶ κωλυμάτων γάμου ἐκκλησιαστικῆς παραδόσεως πρᾶξις δεόν νὰ λαμβάνη ὑπ' ὄψιν καὶ τὰς διατάξεις τῆς ἐκασταχοῦ σχετικῆς κρατικῆς νομοθεσίας, ἄνευ ὑπερβάσεως τῶν ὁρίων τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς οἰκονομίας.

7. Ἡ ἐφαρμογὴ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς οἰκονομίας σχετικῶς ὀφείλει νὰ ἀντιμετωπίζεται ὑπὸ τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου ἐκάστης ἀντοκεφάλου Ὁρθόδοξου Ἐκκλησίας, συμφώνως πρὸς τὰς ἀρχὰς τῶν ἱερῶν κανόνων, ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ποιμαντικῆς διακρίσεως, ἐπὶ τῷ σκοπῷ τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Σαμπεζύ, 27 Ἰανουαρίου 2016

- † ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Βαρθολομαῖος, Πρόεδρος  
† ὁ Μητροπολίτης Γέρον Λεοντοπόλεως Γαβριήλ  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀλεξανδρείας Θεοδώρου Β΄)  
† ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἰσαάκ  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἀντιοχείας Ἰωάννου Ι΄)  
† ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντίνης Ἀρίσταρχος  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων Θεοφίλου Γ΄)  
† ὁ Αἰδεσιμολογιώτατος Πρωθιερεὺς Νικόλαος Μπαλασῶφ  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Πατριάρχου Μόσχας Κυρίλλου)  
† ὁ Σερβίας Εἰρηναῖος  
† ὁ Ρουμανίας Δανιήλ  
† ὁ Βουλγαρίας Νεόφυτος  
† ὁ Γεωργίας Ἡλίας Β΄  
† ὁ Νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς καὶ πάσης Κύπρου Χρυσόστομος Β΄  
† ὁ Μητροπολίτης Ἡλείας Γερμανὸς  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν καὶ πάσης Ἑλλάδος  
Ἱερωνύμου Β΄)  
† ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος Σιεματίσε Γεώργιος  
(ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Βαρσοβίας  
καὶ πάσης Πολωνίας Σάββα)  
† ὁ Τιράνων καὶ πάσης Ἀλβανίας Ἀναστάσιος  
† ὁ Πρέσοφ καὶ πάσης Τσεχίας καὶ Σλοβακίας Ρασισιλάβ

## The Sacrament of Marriage and its Impediments

### DECISION

#### I. On Orthodox Marriage

1. The institution of family is threatened today by such phenomena as secularization and moral relativism. The Orthodox Church maintains, as its fundamental and indisputable teaching, that marriage is sacred. The free union of man and woman is an indispensable condition for marriage.
2. In the Orthodox Church, marriage is considered to be the oldest institution of divine law because it was instituted simultaneously as the creation of Adam and Eve, the first human beings (Gen 2:23). Since its origin, this union not only contributed to the spiritual communion of a married couple –a man and a woman– but also assured the continuation of the human race. As such, the marriage of man and woman, which was blessed in Paradise, became a holy mystery, as mentioned in the New Testament where Christ performs *His first sign*, turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and thus reveals His glory (Jn 2:11). The mystery of the indissoluble union between man and woman is an icon of the unity of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32).
3. Thus, the christocentric typology of the sacrament of marriage explains why a bishop or a presbyter blesses this sacred union with a special prayer. In his letter to Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius the God-Bearer stressed that those who enter into the communion of marriage *must also have the bishop's approval, so that their marriage may be according to God, and not after their own desire. Let everything be to the glory of God* (V, 2). Therefore, the sacredness of the God-established union and the lofty spiritual content of married life explain the affirmation: *So that marriage should be honored among all, and the bed undefiled* (Heb 13:4). That is why the Orthodox Church condemns any defilement of its purity (Eph 5:2-5; 1 Thes 4:4; Heb 13:4ff).
5. The union of man and woman in Christ constitutes “a small church” or an icon of the Church. Clement of Alexandria affirms: *Who are the two or three gathered in the name of Christ, in whose midst the Lord is? Does he not by*



“three” mean husband, wife, and child? For the woman is united to the man by God (Stromata, 3.10, PG 8, 1169 B). Through God’s blessing, the union of man and woman is elevated to a higher level, for communion is greater than individual existence because it initiates the spouses into the order of the Kingdom of the All-Holy Trinity. A necessary condition of marriage is faith in Jesus Christ, which must be shared by the bridegroom and the bride, man and woman. Consequently, unity in Christ is the foundation of marital unity. Thus, marital love blessed by the Holy Spirit enables the couple to reflect the love between Christ and the Church as a mystery of the Kingdom of God – as the eternal life of humanity in the love of God.

5. Defending the sacredness of marriage has always been crucially important for the preservation of the Family, which reflects the communion of the persons yoked together both in the Church and in Society at large. Therefore, communion achieved through the sacrament of marriage does not merely serve as an example of a typical natural relationship, but also as an essential and creative spiritual force in the sacred institution of the Family. Such a communion of persons ensures the safety and formation of children, both for the spiritual mission of the Church as well as in the function of society.
6. It was always with necessary austerity and proper pastoral sensibility, in the compassionate manner of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles (Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:12-15, 39), that the Church treated both *the positive preconditions* (difference of sexes, legal age, etc.) and *the negative impediments* (kinship by blood and affinity, spiritual kinship, an existing marriage, difference in religion, etc.) for the joining in marriage. Pastoral sensibility was necessary not only because the biblical tradition determines the relationship between the natural bond of marriage and the sacrament of the Church, but also because church practice does not exclude the incorporation of certain Greco-Roman natural law principles that acknowledge the marital bond between man and woman as *a communion of divine and human law* (Modestin) compatible with the sacredness of the sacrament of marriage attributed by the Church.
7. Given our current context, which is unfavorable for the sacrament of marriage and the sacred institution of Family, hierarchs and shepherds must develop an active ministry in pastorally and paternally protecting the faithful, standing by them to fortify their hope shaken by many hardships, and asserting the institution of Family upon an unshakable foundation that neither rain, nor river, nor wind can destroy, since this foundation is the rock which is Christ (Mt 7:25).

8. The pressing issue in society today is marriage, which is the center of the Family, and the Family is what justifies marriage. Pressure to recognize new forms of cohabitation constitutes a real threat for Orthodox Christians. This variously-manifested crisis in marriage and family profoundly concerns the Orthodox Church not only in light of negative consequences on the fabric of society, but also in light of its threat to particular relationships within the bounds of the traditional family. The main victims of these trends are the couples themselves, and especially the children, since regrettably the children often endure this great suffering from an early age, while nonetheless bearing no responsibility for the situation.
9. A civil marriage between a man and a woman registered in accordance with the law lacks sacramental character and represents an act of State-recognized cohabitation, which is different than the marriage blessed by God and the Church. The members of the Church who contract a civil marriage ought to be regarded with pastoral responsibility, which is necessary to help them understand the value of the sacrament of marriage and that many blessings result for them.
10. The Church does not recognize same-sex civil unions or any other union arrangement entered therein by its members beyond marriage. The Church shall exert all possible pastoral efforts to help her members who enter into such unions understand the true meaning of repentance and love as blessed by the Church.
11. The grave consequences brought about by this crisis are manifested in the increase in number of divorces, abortions, and other domestic problems. These consequences constitute a great challenge to the mission of the Church in the modern world, which is why the shepherds of the Church are obligated to make every possible effort to address these problems. The Orthodox Church lovingly invites her children and all people of good will to defend this fidelity to the sacredness of the family.

## II. On Impediments to Marriage

- 1 Concerning impediments to marriage due to kinship by blood, kinship by affinity and adoption, and spiritual kinship, the prescriptions of canons (Canons 53 and 54 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council) and the church practice derived from them are valid as applied by local Autocephalous Or-

- thodox Churches. Moreover, these canonical prescriptions and practices are determined and defined in their Charters and their respective conciliar decisions.
2. A marriage that is not completely dissolved or annulled and a third marriage constitute absolute impediments to entering into marriage, according to Orthodox canonical tradition, which categorically condemns bigamy and a fourth marriage.
  3. In accordance with the strict interpretation (*akribeia*) of holy canons, entering into a marriage after monastic tonsure is forbidden (Canon 16 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council and Canon 44 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council).
  4. The priesthood, according to the prevailing canonical tradition, represents an impediment to entering into marriage (Canon 3 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council).
  5. Concerning mixed marriages of Orthodox Christians with non-Orthodox Christians or non-Christians:
    - a. Marriage between Orthodox with non-Orthodox Christians is forbidden and is not blessed in the Church, according to canonical *akribeia* (Canon 72 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council). However, such a marriage can be blessed by dispensation and out of love, on the condition that the children born of this marriage will be baptized and raised within the Orthodox Church.
    - b. Marriage between Orthodox and non-Christians is categorically forbidden in accordance with canonical *akribeia*.
  6. The practice adopted in implementing ecclesiastical tradition, with respect to impediments to marriage, should take into account relevant provisions of State legislation, without going beyond the limits of ecclesiastical dispensation (*oikonomia*).
  7. With salvation of man as the goal, the exercise of ecclesiastical *oikonomia* must be considered by the Holy Synod of each Autocephalous Orthodox Church according to the principles of the holy canons and in the spirit of pastoral discernment.

Chambésy, 27 January 2016

† *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Chairman*

† *Metropolitan Gabriel of Leontopolis  
(representative of Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria)*

† Metropolitan Isaac  
(representative of Patriarch John of Antioch)

† Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina  
(representative of Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem)

† Archpriest Nicholas Balashov  
(representative of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow)

† Patriarch Irinej of Serbia

† Patriarch Daniel of Romania

† Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria

† Patriarch Ilia of Georgia

† Archbishop Chrysostomos of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus

† Metropolitan Germanos of Ilias  
(representative of Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece)

† Bishop George of Siemiatycze  
(representative of Archbishop Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland)

† Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durrës, and All Albania

† Archbishop Rastislav of Prešov and All Czech Lands and Slovakia

## Ἡ σπουδαιότης τῆς νηστείας καὶ ἡ τήρησις αὐτῆς σήμερον

### Ἀπόφασις

1. Ἡ νηστεία εἶναι θεία ἐντολή (Γεν. 2, 16-17). Κατὰ τὸν Μ. Βασίλειον, «*συνηλικιωτὶς ἐστὶ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος· νηστεία γάρ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ἐνομοθετήθη*» (Περὶ νηστείας, 1, 3. PG 31, 168 A). Εἶναι μέγα πνευματικὸν ἀγώνισμα καὶ ἡ κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἔκφρασις τοῦ ἀσκητικοῦ ιδεώδους τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀπαρεγκλίτως στοιχοῦσα εἰς τε τὰ ἀποστολικὰ θεσπίσματα καὶ τοὺς συνοδικοὺς κανόνας καὶ εἰς τὴν καθ' ὅλου πατερικὴν παράδοσιν, διεκήρυξε πάντοτε τὴν ὑψίστην ἀξίαν τῆς νηστείας διὰ τὸν πνευματικὸν βίον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τὴν σωτηρίαν αὐτοῦ. Εἰς τὸν κύκλον τῆς λατρείας τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου προβάλλεται ἡ ὅλη περὶ τῆς νηστείας πατερικὴ παράδοσις καὶ διδασκαλία διὰ τὴν συνεχή καὶ ἀδιάπτωτον ἐργήγορσιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τὴν ἐπίδοσιν αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς πνευματικούς ἀγῶνας. Διὸ καὶ ὑμνεῖται εἰς τὸ Τριώδιον ὡς χάρις πολύφωτος, ὡς ὄπλον ἀκαταμάχητον, ὡς πνευματικῶν ἀγώνων ἀρχή, ὡς καλλίστη τρίβος ἀρετῶν, ὡς τροφὴ ψυχῆς, ὡς πηγὴ φιλοσοφίας ἀπάσης, ὡς ἀφθάρτου διαγωγῆς καὶ ἰσαγγέλου πολιτείας τὸ μίμημα, ὡς μήτηρ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀπάντων καὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν καὶ ὡς εἰκὼν τῆς μελλούσης ζωῆς.

2. Ἡ νηστεία ὡς ἀρχαιότατος θεσμὸς ἀπαντᾷ ἤδη εἰς τὴν Παλαιὰν Διαθήκην (Δευτ. 9, 18. Ἦσ. 58, 4-10. Ἰωήλ 2, 15. Ἰωνᾶς 3, 5-7), βεβαιοῦται δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς Καινῆς. Αὐτὸς ὁ Κύριος ἐνήστευσεν ἐπὶ τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας πρὸ τῆς ἐνάρξεως τῆς δημοσίας δράσεως αὐτοῦ (Λουκ. 4, 1-2) καὶ ἔδωκεν ὁδηγίαν ὡς πρὸς τὸν τρόπον ἀσκήσεως τῆς νηστείας (Ματθ. 6, 16-18). Εἰς τὴν Καινὴν Διαθήκην γενικώτερον συνιστᾶται ἡ νηστεία ὡς μέσον ἐγκρατείας, μετανοίας καὶ πνευματικῆς ἀνατάσεως (Μάρκ. 1, 6. Πράξ. 13, 2. 14, 23. Ρωμ. 14, 21). Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀποστολικῆς ἐποχῆς, διεκήρυξε τὴν ὑψίστην σημασίαν τῆς νηστείας καὶ ὥρισε τὴν Τετάρτην καὶ τὴν Παρασκευὴν ὡς ἡμέρας νηστείας (Διδαχὴ 8, 1), ὡς ἐπίσης καὶ τὴν πρὸ τοῦ Πάσχα νηστείαν (Εἰρηναῖος Λουγδούνου, ἐν: Εὐσεβίου, Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Ἱ-

στορία 5, 24. PG 20, 497B-508 AB). Βεβαίως, εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν προῶξιν, τὴν ἀνὰ τοὺς αἰῶνας μαρτυρουμένην, ὑπερῆξεν ποικιλία οὐχὶ μόνον εἰς τὴν ἑκτασιν τῆς νηστείας πρὸ τοῦ Πάσχα (Διονυσίου Ἀλεξανδρείας, Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Βασιλείδην ἐπίσκοπον, PG 10, 1277), ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς πρὸς τὸν ἀριθμὸν καὶ τὸ περιεχόμενον τῶν ὑπολοίπων περιόδων νηστείας, αἵτινες διεμορφώθησαν ὑπὸ τὴν ἐπιρροὴν ποικίλων παραγόντων, πρωτίστως λειτουργικῶν καὶ μοναστικῶν, προκειμένου νὰ συντελεῖται μεταξὺ ἄλλων καὶ ἡ κατάλληλος προετοιμασία πρὸ τῶν μεγάλων ἑορτῶν. Οὕτως, ὁ ἄρρηκτος δεσμὸς νηστείας καὶ λατρείας παρέχει τὸ μέτρον καὶ τὸν σκοπὸν τῆς νηστείας καὶ ἀναδεικνύει τὸν πνευματικὸν χαρακτήρα αὐτῆς, διὸ καὶ ἅπαντες οἱ πιστοὶ καλοῦνται νὰ ἀνταποκριθῶν, ἕκαστος κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν καὶ δυνατότητα, χωρὶς ὅμως νὰ παρέχεται καὶ ἐλευθερία καταφρονήσεως τοῦ ἱεροῦ τούτου θεσμοῦ: «ὄρα μὴ τις σὲ πλανήσῃ ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς διδαχῆς... Εἰ μὲν γὰρ δύνασαι βαστάσαι ὅλον τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ Κυρίου, τέλειος ἔσει· εἰ δὲ οὐ δύνασαι, ὃ δύνῃ τοῦτο ποίει. Περὶ δὲ τῆς βρωσεως, ὃ δύνασαι, βάσασον» (Διδαχὴ 6, 1-3).

3. Ἡ ἀληθὴς νηστεία, ὡς πνευματικὸν ἀγώνισμα, συνδέεται πρὸς τὴν ἀδιάλειπτον προσευχὴν καὶ τὴν εἰλικρινῆ μετάνοιαν. «Μετάνοια χωρὶς νηστείας ἀργή» (Μ. Βασιλείου, Περὶ νηστείας 1, 3. PG 31, 168 A), ὡς ἐπίσης καὶ νηστεία ἄνευ ἔργων εὐποιίας εἶναι νεκρά, ἰδίᾳ δὲ κατὰ τὴν σύγχρονον ἐποχὴν, καθ' ἣν ἡ ἄνισος καὶ ἄδικος κατανομή τῶν ἀγαθῶν στερεῖ καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐπιουσίου ἄρτου ὀλοκλήρους λαοῦς. «Νηστεύοντες ἀδελφοὶ σωματικῶς, νηστεύσωμεν καὶ πνευματικῶς· λύσωμεν πάντα σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας· διαρρήξωμεν στραγγαλιὰς βιαιῶν συναλλαγμάτων· πᾶσαν συγγραφὴν ἀδικον διασπάσωμεν· δώσωμεν πεινῶσιν ἄρτον, καὶ πτωχοὺς ἀστέγους εἰσαγάγωμεν εἰς οἴκους» (Στιχηρὸν, Ἰδιόμελον Τετάρτης, Α' Ἑβδομάδος Νηστειῶν. Πρβλ. Ἠσαΐου 58,6-7). Ἡ νηστεία δὲν ἐξαντλεῖται εἰς ἀπλὴν καὶ τυπικὴν ἀποχὴν ἕκ τινων μόνον καθωρισμένων τροφῶν. «Οὐ μέντοι ἐξαρκεῖ καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἡ ἀποχὴ βρωμάτων πρὸς τὴν ἐπαινετὴν νηστείαν, ἀλλὰ νηστεύσωμεν νηστείαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ Θεῷ. Ἀληθὴς νηστεία ἡ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλοτρίωσις, ἐγκράτεια γλώσσης, θυμοῦ ἀποχὴ, ἐπιθυμιῶν χωρισμὸς, καταλαλιᾶς, ψεύδους, ἐπιπορκίας. Ἡ τούτων ἔνδεια νηστεία ἐστὶν ἀληθής. Ἐν τούτοις μὲν ἡ νηστεία καλόν» (Μ. Βασιλείου, Περὶ νηστείας 2, 7. PG 31, 196 D). Ἡ κατὰ τὴν νηστείαν ἀποχὴ ἕκ τινων καθωρισμένων τροφῶν καὶ ἡ κατ' αὐτὴν ὀλιγόρθεια, οὐ μόνον κατὰ τὸ εἶδος, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ποσότητα τῶν μεταλαμβανομένων τροφῶν, ἀποτελοῦν τὸ αἰ-

σθητόν στοιχείον τοῦ πνευματικοῦ ἀγωνίσματος. «Ἡ νηστεία ἀποχή τροφῆς ἐστὶ κατὰ τὸ σημαινόμενον. Τροφή δὲ οὐδὲν δικαιοτέρους ἡμᾶς ἢ ἀδικοτέρους ἀπεργάζεται· κατὰ δὲ τὸ μυστικὸν δηλοῖ ὅτι, ὡσπερ τοῖς καθ' ἓνα ἐκ τροφῆς ἢ ζωῆς, ἡ δὲ ἀτροφία θανάτου σύμβολον, οὕτως καὶ ἡμᾶς τῶν κοσμικῶν νηστεύειν χρή, ἵνα τῷ κόσμῳ ἀποθάνωμεν, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο, τροφῆς θείας μεταλαβόντες, Θεῷ ζήσωμεν» (Κλήμεντος Ἀλεξανδρέως, Ἐκ τῶν Προφητικῶν Ἐκλογαί, PG 9, 704D-705A). Οὕτως, ἡ ἀληθῆς νηστεία ἀναφέρεται εἰς τὴν καθ' ὅλου ἐν Χριστῷ ζωὴν τῶν πιστῶν καὶ κορυφούται διὰ τῆς συμμετοχῆς αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν θείαν λατρείαν καὶ ἰδίᾳ εἰς τὸ μυστήριον τῆς Θείας Εὐχαριστίας.

4. Ἡ τεσσαρακονθήμερος νηστεία τοῦ Κυρίου κατέστη ὑπόδειγμα τῆς νηστείας τῶν πιστῶν, ἡ ὁποία ἐνεργοποιεῖ τὴν μετοχὴν αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Κυρίου, ἵνα δι' αὐτῆς, «ὄ μὴ φυλάξαντες ἀποβεβλήκαμεν, φυλάξαντες ἀπολάβωμεν» (Γρηγορίου Θεολόγου, Λόγος ΜΕ', Εἰς τὸ Ἅγιον Πάσχα, 28. PG 36, 661C). Ἡ χριστοκεντρικὴ κατανόησις τοῦ πνευματικοῦ χαρακτήρος τῆς νηστείας, ἰδίᾳ τῆς Μ. Τεσσαρακοστῆς, κανὼν εἰς τὴν καθ' ὅλου πατερικὴν παράδοσιν, συγκεφαλαιοῦται χαρακτηριστικῶς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Παλαμᾶ: «Ἐὰν οὕτω νηστεύης, οὐ μόνον συμπάσχων ἔση καὶ συννεκρούμενος, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνανιστάμενος καὶ συμβασιλεύων Χριστῷ εἰς αἰῶνας τοὺς ἀπεράντους· σύμφυτος γάρ γεγωνὸς διὰ τῆς τοιαύτης νηστείας τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως κοινωνὸς ἔση καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ ζωῆς κληρονόμος» (Ὁμιλία ΙΓ', τῆ Ε' Κυριακῆ τῶν Νηστειῶν, PG 151, 161AB).

5. Κατὰ τὴν ὀρθόδοξον παράδοσιν, τὸ μέτρον τῆς πνευματικῆς τελειώσεως εἶναι τὸ «μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ» (Ἐφεσ. 4,13) καὶ ἕκαστος ὀφείλει, ἂν θέλῃ νὰ φθάσῃ εἰς αὐτό, νὰ ἀγωνισθῇ καὶ ὑψωθῇ ἀναλόγως. Ἀκριβῶς δὲ διὰ τοῦτο, ἡ ἄσκησις καὶ ὁ πνευματικὸς ἀγὼν δὲν ἔχουν τέλος ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ, ὅπως καὶ ἡ τελειότης τῶν τελείων. Πάντες καλοῦνται νὰ ἀνταποκρίνωνται, ὄση δύναμις αὐτοῖς, εἰς τὰς ἐπιταγὰς τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου ὑψηλοῦ μέτρου μὲ σκοπὸν τὴν κατὰ χάριν θέωσιν. Καὶ αὐτοί, παρ' ὅτι πράττουν πάντα τὰ διατεταγμένα, οὐδέποτε ὑψηλοφρονοῦν, ἀλλ' ὁμολογοῦν ὅτι «δοῦλοι ἀχρεῖοί ἐσμεν, ὃ ὀφείλομεν ποιῆσαι πεποιήκαμεν» (Λουκ. 17,10). Πάντες ἔχουν –κατὰ τὴν ὀρθόδοξον περὶ πνευματικῆς ζωῆς ἀντίληψιν– χρέος νὰ μὴν ἐγκαταλείπουν τὸν καλὸν τῆς νηστείας ἀγῶνα, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτομεμψίᾳ καὶ συναισθήσει τῆς ταπεινότητος τῆς καταστάσεως αὐτῶν, νὰ ἐπαφίενται διὰ τὰς παραλείψεις των εἰς τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Θεοῦ, καθ'

ὅσον ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος πνευματικὴ ζωὴ εἶναι ἀνεπίτευκτος χωρὶς τὸν πνευματικὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς νηστείας.

6. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία, ὡς φιλόστοργος μήτηρ, ὥρισε τὰ εἰς σωτηρίαν συμφέροντα καὶ προέταξε τοὺς ἱεροὺς καιροὺς τῆς νηστείας ὡς θεοδώρητον «φυλακτήριον» τῆς καινῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς τῶν πιστῶν κατὰ πάσης ἐπιβουλῆς τοῦ ἄλλοτρίου. Στοιχοῦσα τοῖς θείοις Πατρᾶσι, φυλάσσει, ὡς καὶ πρότερον, τὰ ἱερὰ ἀποστολικά θεσπίσματα, τοὺς συνοδικοὺς κανόνας καὶ τὰς ἱερὰς παραδόσεις, προβάλλει πάντοτε τὰς ἱερὰς νηστείας ὡς ἀρίστην ἐν τῇ ἀσκήσει τρίβον πνευματικῆς τελειώσεως καὶ σωτηρίας τῶν πιστῶν καὶ κηρύσσει τὴν ἀνάγκην τηρήσεως ὑπ' αὐτῶν τῶν τεταγμένων νηστειῶν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου, ἥτοι τῆς Μ. Τεσσαρακοστῆς, τῆς Τετάρτης καὶ τῆς Παρασκευῆς, αἵτινες μαρτυροῦνται ὑπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν κανόνων, ὡς καὶ τῶν νηστειῶν τῶν Χριστουγέννων, τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων, τῆς Κοιμήσεως τῆς Θεοτόκου, καὶ τῶν μονοημέρων τῆς Ὑψώσεως τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ, τῆς παραμονῆς τῶν Θεοφανείων καὶ τῆς ἀποτομῆς τῆς τιμίας κεφαλῆς Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου, πρὸς τούτοις δὲ καὶ πασῶν τῶν κατὰ ποιμαντικὴν μέριμναν ὀριζομένων ἐκάστοτε νηστειῶν ἢ τῶν κατὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν τῶν πιστῶν τηρούμενων.

7. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ὅμως ἔθετο ἅμα, κατὰ ποιμαντικὴν διάκρισιν, καὶ ὅρια φιλάνθρωπου οἰκονομίας τοῦ καθεστῶτος τῆς νηστείας. Διὸ καὶ προέβλεψε τὴν δι' ἀσθένειαν τοῦ σώματος ἢ δι' ἀδήριτον ἀνάγκην ἢ καὶ διὰ τὴν χαλεπότητα τῶν καιρῶν ἀνάλογον ἐφαρμογὴν τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς οἰκονομίας κατὰ τὴν ὑπεύθυνον κρίσιν καὶ ποιμαντικὴν μέριμναν τοῦ σώματος τῶν ἐπισκόπων τῶν κατὰ τόπους Ἐκκλησιῶν.

8. Εἶναι γεγονός, ὅτι σήμερον πολλοὶ πιστοὶ δὲν τηροῦν ἀπάσας τὰς περὶ νηστείας διατάξεις, εἴτε ἐξ ὀλιγωρίας εἴτε λόγῳ τῶν ὑπαρχουσῶν συνθηκῶν ζωῆς, οἰαιδήποτε κὰν ᾧσιν αὐται. Ἄπασαι ὅμως αἱ περιπτώσεις αὐταὶ τῆς χαλαρώσεως τῶν περὶ νηστείας ἱερῶν διατάξεων, εἴτε εἶναι γενικώτεραι, εἴτε ἀτομικαί, δέον ὅπως τυγχάνουν τῆς ποιμαντικῆς μερίμνης ἐκ μέρους τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, διότι ὁ Θεός «οὐ θέλει τὸν θάνατον τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ ὡς τὸ ἐπιστρέψαι καὶ ζῆν αὐτόν» (πρβλ. Ἰεζ. 33,11), χωρὶς ὅμως νὰ περιφρονῆται ἡ ἀξία τῆς νηστείας. Ὅθεν διὰ τοὺς ἔχοντας δυσκολίαν εἰς τὴν τηρήσιν τῶν ἰσχυουσῶν περὶ νηστείας διατάξεων εἴτε ἐκ λόγων ἀτομικῶν (ἀσθένεια, στράτευσις, συνθήκαι ἐργασίας κ.λπ.) εἴτε γενικωτέρων (εἰδικαὶ συνθήκαι ἐπικρατοῦσαι εἰς τινὰς χώρας ἀπὸ πλευρᾶς κλίματος, καθὼς καὶ κοινωνικο-οἰκονομικαὶ ἰδιαιτερότηται τινῶν χωρῶν λ.χ. ἀδυναμία εὐρέσε-



ως νηστησίμων τροφῶν) ἐπαφίεται εἰς τὴν διάκρισιν τῶν κατὰ τόπους Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν νὰ καθορίσουν τὴν φιλόνητον οἰκονομίαν καὶ ἐπιείκειαν, ἀπαλύνουσαι, κατὰ τὰς εἰδικὰς ταῦτας περιπτώσεις, τὸ τυχόν «στύφον» τῶν ἱερῶν νηστειῶν. Πάντα δὲ ταῦτα ἐντὸς τῶν πλαισίων τῶν ὡς ἄνω λεχθέντων καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ σκοπῷ νὰ μὴ ἀτονήσῃ ποσῶς ὁ ἱερὸς θεσμὸς τῆς νηστείας. Ἡ φιλόνητος αὕτη συγκατάβασις πρέπει νὰ ἀσκηθῇ ὑπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μετὰ πάσης φειδοῦς, ὅπωςδήποτε δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ ἐπιεικότερον διὰ τὰς νηστείας ἐκείνας, δι' ἧς δὲν ὑπάρχει ὁμοίομορφος πάντοτε καὶ εἰς ἀπάσας τὰς περιπτώσεις παράδοσις καὶ πρᾶξις ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ. «...Καλὸν τὸ νηστεύειν πᾶσαν ἡμέραν, ἀλλ' ὁ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω. Ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις οὐ νομοθετεῖν, οὐ βιάζεσθαι, οὐκ ἀναγκαστικῶς ἄγειν τὸ ἐγγχειρισθὲν προσήκει ποιμνιον, πειθοῖ δὲ μᾶλλον, καὶ ἡπιότητι, καὶ λόγῳ ἄλατι ἡρτυμένῳ...» (Ἰωάννου Δαμασκηνοῦ, *Περὶ τῶν ἀγίων νηστειῶν*, 3. PG 95, 68 B).

9. Ὡσαύτως, ὀφείλει τὸ σύνολον τῶν πιστῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας νὰ τηρῇ τὰς ἱερὰς νηστείας καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ μεσονυκτίου ἀσιτίαν προκειμένου νὰ προσέρχεται τακτικῶς εἰς τὴν θεῖαν Μετάληψιν, ἥτις εἶναι ἡ κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἔκφρασις τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ὀντότητος, νὰ ἐθισθῇ δὲ ὥστε νὰ νηστεύῃ εἰς ἔνδειξιν μετανοίας, εἰς ἐκπλήρωσιν πνευματικῆς ὑποσχέσεως, πρὸς ἐπίτευξιν ἱεροῦ τινος σκοποῦ, εἰς καιροὺς πειρασμοῦ, ἐν συνδυασμῷ πρὸς αἰτήματα αὐτοῦ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ, πρὸ τοῦ βαπτίσματος (διὰ τοὺς προσερχομένους εἰς τὸ βάπτισμα ἐνηλίκους), πρὸ τῆς χειροτονίας, εἰς περιπτώσεις ἐπιτιμίων, κατὰ τὰς ἱερὰς ἀποδημίας καὶ εἰς ἄλλας παρομοίας περιστάσεις.

Σαμπεξύ, 16 Ὀκτωβρίου 2015

† Ὁ Γαλλίας Ἐμμανουήλ, Πρόεδρος  
 † Ὁ Καλῆς Ἑλπίδος Σέργιος  
 † Ὁ Μητροπολίτης Δαμασκηνός  
 (Πατριαρχεῖον Ἀντιοχείας)  
 † Ὁ Καπιτωλιάδος Ἡσύχιος  
 † Ὁ Βολοκολάμσκ Ἰλαρίων  
 † Ὁ Μαυροβουνίου Ἀμφιλόχιος  
 † Ὁ Τιργκοβιστίου Νήφων  
 † Ὁ Βάρνης Ἰωάννης  
 † Ὁ Ζουκνίδι καὶ Τσαῖσι Γεράσιμος

† Ὁ Πάφου Γεώργιος  
† Ὁ Περιστερίου Χρυσόστομος  
† Ὁ Σιεματίτσε Γεώργιος  
† Ὁ Κορυτσᾶς Ἰωάννης  
† Ὁ Μιχαλόβτσε Γεώργιος

† Ὁ Ἑλβετίας Ἱερεμίας,  
Γραμματεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς Προπαρασκευῆς τῆς  
Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου

## The Importance of Fasting and its Observance Today

### DECISION

1. Fasting is a divine commandment (Gen 2:16-17). According to Basil the Great, fasting is as old as humanity itself; it was prescribed in paradise (*On Fasting*, 1, 3. PG 31, 168 A). It is a great spiritual endeavor and the foremost expression of the Orthodox ascetic ideal. The Orthodox Church, in strict conformity with the apostolic precepts, the synodal canons, and the patristic tradition as a whole, has always proclaimed the great significance of fasting for our spiritual life and salvation. The annual liturgical cycle reflects the entire patristic teaching on fasting, the teaching on constant and unceasing watchfulness of the human person, and our participation in spiritual struggles. Accordingly, the Triodion praises fasting as grace that is full of light, as an invincible weapon, the beginning of spiritual struggles, the perfect path of virtues, the nourishment for the soul, the source of all wisdom, life imperishable, an imitation of the angelic life, the mother of all good things and virtues, and an icon of the life to come.
2. As an ancient institution, fasting was mentioned already in the Old Testament (Deut 9:18; Is 58:4-10; Joel 2:15; Jonah 3:5-7) and affirmed in the New Testament. The Lord Himself fasted for forty days before commencing His public ministry (Lk 4:1-2) and provided instructions on how to practice fasting (Mt 6:16-18). Fasting is generally prescribed in the New Testament as a means of abstinence, repentance and spiritual resurrection (Mk 1:6; Acts 13:2; 14:23; Rom 14:21). Since the apostolic times, the Church has proclaimed the profound importance of fasting, and established Wednesday and Friday as days of fasting (Didache 8, 1), as well as the fast before Pascha (Irenaeus of Lyons, as cited in Eusebius, *Church History* 5, 24. PG 20 497B-508AB). In ecclesiastical practice that has existed for centuries, there has always been diversity with regard not only to the length of the fast before East-

er (Dionysius of Alexandria, *Letter to Basilides*, PG 10, 1277), but also the number and content of other periods of fasting which became customary under the influence of various factors, primarily, of the liturgical and monastic traditions, with a view to proper preparation for the great feasts. Thus, the indissoluble link between fasting and worship indicates the extent and purpose of fasting and reveals its spiritual nature. For this reason, all the faithful are invited to respond accordingly, each to the best of his or her strength and ability, while not allowing such liberty to diminish this holy institution: *See that no one make thee to err from this path of doctrine... If thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou wilt be perfect; but if thou art not able, what thou art able, that do. But concerning meat, bear that which thou art able to do* (Didache 6, 1-3).

3. As a spiritual endeavor, the true fast is inseparable from unceasing prayer and genuine repentance. Repentance without fasting is fruitless (Basil the Great, *On Fasting* 1, 3 PG 31, 168A), as fasting without merciful deeds is dead, especially nowadays when the unequal and unjust distribution of goods deprives entire nations of their daily bread. *While fasting physically, brethren, let us also fast spiritually. Let us loose every knot of iniquity; let us tear up every unrighteous bond; let us distribute bread to the hungry, and welcome into our homes those who have no roof over their heads...* (Sticheron at Vespers on Wednesday of the First Week of Lent; cf. Is 58:6-7). Fasting cannot be reduced to simple and formal abstinence from certain foods. *So let us not be selfish as we begin the abstinence from foods that is the noble fast. Let us fast in an acceptable manner, one that is pleasing to God. A true fast is one that is set against evil, it is self-control of the tongue. It is the checking of anger, separation from things like lusts, evil-speaking, lies, and false oaths. Self-denial from these things is a true fast, so fasting from these negative things is good* (Basil the Great, *On Fasting*, 2, 7. PG 31, 196D). Abstinence from certain foods during the fast and temperance, not only with regard to what to eat but also how much to eat, constitutes a visible aspect of this spiritual endeavor. *In the literal sense, fasting is abstinence from food, but food makes us neither more nor less righteous. However, in the spiritual sense, it is clear that, as life comes from food for each of us and the lack of food is a symbol of death, so it is necessary that we fast from worldly things, in order that we might die to the world and after this, having partaken of the divine nourishment, live in God* (Clement of Alexandria,

- From the Prophetic Eclogae, PG 9, 704D-705A*). Therefore, the true fast affects the entire life in Christ of the faithful and is crowned by their participation in divine worship, particularly in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.
4. The forty-day fast of the Lord exemplifies fasting for the faithful, initiating their participation in the obedience in the Lord, that through it *we might recover by its observance that which we have lost by not observing it* (Gregory the Theologian, *Homily 45, On Holy Pascha*, 28 PG 36, 661C). The christocentric understanding of the spiritual dimension of fasting—in particular the fast of Great Lent—is a general rule in the entire patristic tradition and is characteristically epitomized by St Gregory Palamas: *When you fast like this you not only suffer with Christ and are dead with Him, but you are also risen with Him and reign with Him forever and ever. If through such a fast you have been planted together in the likeness of His death, you shall also share in His resurrection and inherit life in Him* (*Homily 13, On the Fifth Sunday of Lent*, PG 151, 161AB).
  5. According to the Orthodox Tradition, the *measure of spiritual perfection is the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Eph 4:13), and all who want to attain this should strive and grow accordingly. For this very reason, *asceticism* and spiritual struggle, like the refinement of the perfect, are endless in this life. Everyone is called to strive, to the best of his or her abilities, to reach the lofty Orthodox standard, which is the goal of deification by grace. Indeed, while they should do all things that they were commanded, they should nonetheless never vaunt themselves, but confess that *they are unprofitable servants and have only done that which was their duty to do* (Lk 17:10). According to the Orthodox understanding of the spiritual life, all people are obligated to maintain the good struggle of the fast; however, in a spirit of self-reproach and humble recognition of their condition, they must rely upon God's mercy for their shortcomings, inasmuch as the Orthodox spiritual life is unattainable without the spiritual struggle of the fast.
  6. Like a nurturing mother, the Orthodox Church has defined what is necessary for people's salvation and established the holy periods of fasting as God-given protection in the believers' new life in Christ against every snare of the enemy. Following the example of the Holy Fathers, the Church preserves today, as she did in the past, the holy apostolic precepts, synodal canons, and sacred traditions, always advancing the holy fasts as the perfect ascetic path for the faithful leading to spiritual perfection and salvation, while proclaiming the

- necessity to observe all the fasts throughout the year, namely, the fasts of Great Lent, Wednesdays and Fridays, testified in the sacred canons, as well as the fasts of the Nativity, the Holy Apostles, and the Dormition of the Theotokos; there are also the single-day fasts on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on the eve of the Epiphany, and on the day commemorating the Beheading of John the Baptist, in addition to the fasts established for pastoral reasons or observed at the desire of the faithful.
7. The Church, however, has also established, with pastoral discernment, boundaries of philanthropic dispensation (*oikonomia*) concerning the rules of fasting. In this regard, the Church has considered physical infirmity, extreme necessity, and difficult times where she has ordained the application of the principle of ecclesiastical *oikonomia*, through the responsible discernment and pastoral care of the body of bishops in the local Churches.
  8. It is a fact that many faithful today do not observe all the prescriptions of fasting, whether due to faint-heartedness or their living conditions, whatever these may be. However, all these instances where the sacred prescriptions of fasting are loosened, either in general or in particular instances, should be treated by the Church with pastoral care, *for God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live* (Ezek 33:11), without, however, ignoring the value of the fast. Therefore, with regard to those find it difficult to observe the prevailing guidelines for fasting, whether for personal reasons (illness, military service, conditions of work, etc.) or general reasons (particular existing conditions in certain regions with regard to climate, as well as socioeconomic circumstances, i.e., inability to find lenten foods), it is left to the discretion of the local Orthodox Churches to determine how to exercise philanthropic *oikonomia* and empathy, relieving in these special cases the “burden” of the holy fast. All this should take place within the aforementioned context and with the objective of not diminishing the importance of the sacred institution of fasting. The Church should extend her philanthropic dispensation with prudence, undoubtedly to a greater extent when it comes to those fasts, on which the ecclesiastical tradition and practice have not always been uniform. *It is good to fast, but may the one who fasts not blame the one who does not fast. In such matters you must neither legislate, nor use force, nor compel the flock entrusted to you; instead, you must use persuasion, gentleness and a word seasoned with salt* (John of Damascus, *On the Holy Fasts, Homily 3, PG 95, 68 B*).

9. Moreover, the totality of the Church's faithful must observe the holy fasts and the abstinence from food from midnight for frequent participation in Holy Communion, which is the most profound expression of the essence of the Church. The faithful should become accustomed to fasting as an expression of repentance, as the fulfillment of a spiritual pledge, to achieve a particular spiritual end in times of temptation, in conjunction with supplications to God, for adults approaching the sacrament of baptism, prior to ordination, in cases where penance is imposed, as well as during pilgrimages and other similar instances.

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† *Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Chairman*

† *Archbishop Sergios of Good Hope*

† *Metropolitan Damaskinos  
(Patriarchate of Antioch)*

† *Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolias*

† *Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk*

† *Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral*

† *Honorable Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste*

† *Metropolitan John of Varna and Veliki Preslav*

† *Metropolitan Gerasimos of Zoukdidi and Tsaissi*

† *Metropolitan George of Paphos*

† *Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristeri*

† *Bishop George of Siemiatycze*

† *Metropolitan John of Korçë*

† *Archbishop George of Michalovce and Košice*

† *Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland,  
Secretary for the Preparation  
of the Holy and Great Council*







νη πρὸς τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, ἀλλ' ἀποτελεῖ συνεπῆ ἔκφρασιν τῆς ἀποστολικῆς πίστεως καὶ παραδόσεως, ἐντὸς νέων ἱστορικῶν συνθηκῶν.

5. Οἱ σύγχρονοι διμερεῖς θεολογικοὶ διάλογοι τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, ὡς καὶ ἡ συμμετοχὴ αὐτῆς εἰς τὴν Οἰκουμενικὴν Κίνησιν ἐρείδονται ἐπὶ τῆς συνειδήσεως ταύτης τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας καὶ τοῦ οἰκουμενικοῦ αὐτῆς πνεύματος ἐπὶ τῷ τέλει τῆς ἀναζητήσεως, βάσει τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς παραδόσεως τῆς ἀρχαίας Ἐκκλησίας τῶν ἑπτὰ Οἰκουμενικῶν Συνόδων, τῆς ἀπολεσθείσης ἐνότητος τῶν Χριστιανῶν.

6. Κατὰ τὴν ὄντολογικὴν φύσιν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἡ ἐνότης αὐτῆς εἶναι ἀδύνατον νὰ διαταραχθῆ. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀναγνωρίζει τὴν ἱστορικὴν ὑπαρξίν ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ Ὁμολογιῶν μὴ εὐρισκομένων ἐν κοινῶνίᾳ μετ' αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πιστεύει ὅτι αἱ πρὸς ταύτας σχέσεις αὐτῆς πρέπει νὰ στηρίζονται ἐπὶ τῆς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὅσον ἔνεστι ταχυτέρας καὶ ἀντικειμενικωτέρας ἀποσαφηνίσεως τοῦ ὅλου ἐκκλησιολογικοῦ θέματος καὶ ἰδιαιτέρως τῆς γενικωτέρας παρ' αὐταῖς διδασκαλίας περὶ μυστηρίων, χάριτος, ἱερωσύνης καὶ ἀποστολικῆς διαδοχῆς. Οὕτω, ἦτο εὖνους καὶ θετικῶς διατεθειμένη τόσον διὰ θεολογικούς, ὅσον καὶ διὰ ποιμαντικούς λόγους, πρὸς θεολογικὸν διάλογον μετὰ διαφόρων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ Ὁμολογιῶν καὶ πρὸς τὴν συμμετοχὴν γενικώτερον εἰς τὴν Οἰκουμενικὴν Κίνησιν τῶν νεωτέρων χρόνων, ἐν τῇ πεποιοθήσει ὅτι διὰ τοῦ διαλόγου δίδει δυναμικὴν μαρτυρίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἀληθείας καὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν αὐτῆς θησαυρῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἐκτὸς αὐτῆς, μὲ ἀντικειμενικὸν σκοπὸν τὴν προλείανσιν τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς ὁδηγούσης πρὸς τὴν ἐνότητα.

7. Ὑπὸ τὸ ἀνωτέρω πνεῦμα, ἅπασαι αἱ κατὰ τόπους Ἀγιώταται Ὁρθόδοξοι Ἐκκλησίαι συμμετέχουν σήμερον ἐνεργῶς εἰς ἐπίσημους θεολογικοὺς διαλόγους, ἡ δὲ πλειονότης ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ εἰς διαφόρους ἐθνικούς, περιφερειακοὺς καὶ διεθνεῖς διαχριστιανικοὺς ὀργανισμούς, παρὰ τὴν προκύψασαν βαθεῖαν κρίσιν εἰς τὴν Οἰκουμενικὴν Κίνησιν. Ἡ πολυσχιδῆς αὕτη δραστηριότης τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας πηγάζει ἐκ τοῦ αἰσθήματος ὑπευθυνότητος καὶ ἐκ τῆς πεποιοθήσεως ὅτι ἡ ἀμοιβαία κατανόησις, ἡ συνεργασία καὶ αἱ κοιναὶ προσπάθειαι πρὸς ἀποκατάστασιν τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἐνότητος τυγχάνουν οὐσιώδεις, «ἵνα μὴ ἐγκοπὴν τινα δῶμεν τῷ Εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ» (Α' Κορ. 9, 12).

8. Βεβαίως, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία, διαλεγόμενη μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν Χριστιανῶν, δὲν παραγνωρίζει τὰς δυσκολίας τοῦ τοιοῦτου ἐγχειρήματος, κατανοεῖ ὅμως ταύτας ἐν τῇ πορείᾳ πρὸς τὴν κοινὴν κατανόησιν τῆς παραδόσεως τῆς

ἀρχαίας Ἐκκλησίας καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ἐλπίδι ὅτι τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, ὅπερ «ὄλον συγκροτεῖ τὸν θεσμόν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας» (στιχηρὸν Ἑσπερινοῦ Πεντηκοστῆς), θὰ «ἀναπληρώσῃ τὰ ἐλλείποντα» (εὐχὴ χειροτονίας). Ἐν τῇ ἐννοίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία εἰς τὰς σχέσεις αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν λοιπὸν χριστιανικὸν κόσμον δὲν στηρίζεται μόνον εἰς τὰς ἀνθρωπίνους δυνάμεις τῶν διεξαγόντων τοὺς διαλόγους, ἀλλ' ἀπεκδέχεται πρωτίστως τὴν ἐπιστασίαν τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ Κυρίου, εὐχηθέντος «ἵνα πάντες ἔν ὧσιν» (Ἰω. 17, 21).

9. Οἱ σύγχρονοι διμερεῖς θεολογικοὶ διάλογοι, κηρυχθέντες ὑπὸ Πανορθόδοξων Διασκέψεων, ἐκφράζουν τὴν ὁμόθυμον ἀπόφασιν πασῶν τῶν κατὰ τόπους ἀγιωτάτων Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, αἱ ὁποῖαι ἔχουν χρέος νὰ συμμετέχουν ἐνεργῶς καὶ συνεχῶς εἰς τὴν διεξαγωγὴν αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ παρακωλύηται ἡ ὁμόφωνος μαρτυρία τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας πρὸς δόξαν τοῦ ἐν Τριάδι Θεοῦ. Ἐν ἧ περιπτώσει τοπικὴ τις Ἐκκλησία ἠθέλην ἀποφασίσει νὰ μὴ ὀρίσῃ ἐκπροσώπους αὐτῆς εἰς τινὰ διάλογον ἢ συνέλευσιν διαλόγου, ἐὰν ἡ ἀπόφασις αὕτη δὲν εἶναι πανορθόδοξος, ὁ διάλογος συνεχίζεται. Πρὸ τῆς ἐνάρξεως τοῦ διαλόγου ἢ τῆς συνελεύσεως ἀντιστοίχως, ἡ ἀπουσία τοπικῆς Ἐκκλησίας τινὸς δέον ὅπως συζητηθῇ ὅπωςδήποτε ὑπὸ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐπιτροπῆς τοῦ διαλόγου πρὸς ἔκφρασιν τῆς ἀλληλεγγύης καὶ τῆς ἐνότητος τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας.

10. Τὰ προβλήματα, τὰ ὁποῖα ἀνακύπτουν κατὰ τὰς θεολογικὰς συζητήσεις τῶν Μεικτῶν Θεολογικῶν Ἐπιτροπῶν δὲν συνιστοῦν πάντοτε ἐπαρκῆ αἰτιολόγησιν μονομεροῦς ἀνακλήσεως τῶν ἀντιπροσώπων αὐτῆς ἢ καὶ ὀριστικῆς διακοπῆς τῆς συμμετοχῆς αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τινος κατὰ τὸπον Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας. Ἡ ἀποχώρησις ἐκ τοῦ διαλόγου Ἐκκλησίας τινὸς δέον ὅπως κατὰ κανόνα ἀποφεύγηται, καταβαλλομένων τῶν δεουσῶν διορθοδόξων προσπαθειῶν διὰ τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν τῆς ἀντιπροσωπευτικῆς ὁλοκληρίας τῆς ἐν τῷ διαλόγῳ τούτῳ ὀρθοδόξου Θεολογικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς. Ἐὰν τοπικὴ τις Ἐκκλησία ἢ καὶ ἄλλαι τινὲς Ὁρθόδοξοι Ἐκκλησῖαι ἀρνῶνται νὰ συμμετάσχουν εἰς τὰς συνελεύσεις τῆς Μεικτῆς Θεολογικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς ὀρισμένου διαλόγου, ἐπικαλούμεναι σοβαροὺς ἐκκλησιολογικοὺς, κανονικοὺς, ποιμαντικοὺς ἢ ἠθικῆς φύσεως λόγους, ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἢ αἱ Ἐκκλησῖαι αὗται κοινοποιοῦν ἐγγράφως τὴν ἄρνησιν αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν Οἰκουμενικὸν Πατριάρχην καὶ εἰς πάσας τὰς Ὁρθοδόξους Ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τὰ πανορθόδοξως ἰσχύοντα. Κατὰ τὴν πανορθόδοξον διαβούλευσιν ὁ Οἰκουμενικὸς Πατριάρχης ἀναζητεῖ τὴν ὁμόφωνον συναίνεσιν τῶν λοιπῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν διὰ τὰ ἐφ' ἑξῆς δέοντα γενέσθαι, συμπεριλαμβανομένης καὶ τῆς ἐπαναξιολογήσεως τῆς πορείας τοῦ συγκεκριμένου θεολογικοῦ διαλόγου, ἐφ' ὅσον τοῦτο κριθῆ ὁμοφώνως ἀναγκαῖον.

11. Ἡ κατὰ τὴν διεξαγωγὴν τῶν θεολογικῶν διαλόγων ἀκολουθουμένη μεθοδολογία ἀποσκοπεῖ εἰς τε τὴν λύσιν τῶν παραδεδομένων θεολογικῶν διαφορῶν ἢ τῶν τυχόν νέων διαφοροποιήσεων καὶ εἰς τὴν ἀναζήτησιν τῶν κοινῶν στοιχείων τῆς χριστιανικῆς πίστεως, προϋποθέτει δὲ τὴν σχετικὴν πληροφόρησιν τοῦ πληρώματος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐπὶ τῶν διαφορῶν ἐξελίξεων τῶν διαλόγων. Ἐν περιπτώσει ἀδυναμίας ὑπερβάσεως συγκεκριμένης τινὸς θεολογικῆς διαφορᾶς ὁ θεολογικὸς διάλογος δύναται νὰ συνεχίζηται, καταγραφομένης τῆς διαπιστωθείσης ἐπὶ τοῦ συγκεκριμένου θέματος θεολογικῆς διαφωνίας καὶ ἀνακοινουμένης τῆς διαφωνίας ταύτης πρὸς πάσας τὰς κατὰ τόπους Ὁρθοδόξους Ἐκκλησίας διὰ τὰ ἐφ' ἑξῆς δέοντα γενέσθαι.

12. Εἶναι εὐνόητον ὅτι κατὰ τὴν διεξαγωγὴν τῶν θεολογικῶν διαλόγων κοινὸς πάντων σκοπὸς εἶναι ἡ τελικὴ ἀποκατάστασις τῆς ἐν τῇ ὀρθῇ πίστει καὶ τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐνότητος. Ὅπωςδήποτε ὅμως αἱ ὑφιστάμεναι θεολογικαὶ καὶ ἐκκλησιολογικαὶ διαφοραὶ ἐπιτρέπουν ποιάνα τινα ἱεράρχησιν ὡς πρὸς τὰς ὑφισταμένας δυσχερείας διὰ τὴν πραγμάτωσιν τοῦ πανορθόδοξως τεθειμένου σκοποῦ. Ἡ ἑτερότης τῶν προβλημάτων ἐκάστου διμεροῦς διαλόγου προϋποθέτει διαφοροποιήσιν μὲν τῆς τηρηθησομένης ἐν αὐτῷ μεθοδολογίας, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ καὶ διαφοροποιήσιν σκοποῦ, διότι ὁ σκοπὸς εἶναι ἐνιαῖος εἰς πάντας τοὺς διαλόγους.

13. Ἐν τούτοις, ἐπιβάλλεται, ἐν περιπτώσει ἀνάγκης, ὅπως ἀναληφθῆ προσπάθεια συντονισμοῦ τοῦ ἔργου τῶν διαφορῶν Διορθοδόξων Θεολογικῶν Ἐπιτροπῶν, τοσοῦτ' ἢ μᾶλλον ὅσῳ ἡ ὑπάρχουσα ἄρρηκτος ὀντολογικὴ ἐνότης τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας πρέπει νὰ ἀποκαλύπτηται καὶ ἐκδηλοῦται καὶ ἐν τῷ χώρῳ τῶν διαλόγων τούτων.

14. Ἡ περᾶτως οἰουδήποτε ἐπίσημος κηρυχθέντος θεολογικοῦ διαλόγου συντελεῖται διὰ τῆς ὀλοκληρώσεως τοῦ ἔργου τῆς ἀντίστοιχου Μεικτῆς Θεολογικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς, ὁπότε ὁ Πρόεδρος τῆς Διορθοδόξου Ἐπιτροπῆς ὑποβάλλει ἔκθεσιν πρὸς τὸν Οἰκουμενικὸν Πατριάρχην, ὁ ὁποῖος, ἐν συμφωνίᾳ καὶ μετὰ τῶν Προκαθήμενων τῶν κατὰ τόπους Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, κηρύσσει τὴν λήξιν τοῦ διαλόγου. Οὐδεὶς διάλογος θεωρεῖται περατωθεὶς πρὶν ἢ κηρυχθῆ λήξας διὰ τοιαύτης πανορθόδοξου ἀποφάνσεως.

15. Ἡ μετὰ τὴν τυχόν ἐπιτυχῆ ὀλοκλήρωσιν τοῦ ἔργου θεολογικοῦ τινος διαλόγου πανορθόδοξος ἀπόφασις διὰ τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς κοινωνίας δέον ὅπως ἐρεΐδηται ἐπὶ τῆς ὁμοφωνίας πασῶν τῶν κατὰ τόπους Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν.

16. Ἐν ἐκ τῶν κυρίων ὀργάνων ἐν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως εἶναι τὸ Παγκόσμιον Συμβούλιον Ἐκκλησιῶν (Π.Σ.Ε.). Ὁρισμέναι Ὁρθόδο-

ξοι Ἐκκλησίαι ὑπῆρξαν ἰδρυτικὰ μέλη καὶ ἐν συνεχείᾳ ἅπασαι ἀπέβησαν μέλη αὐτοῦ. Τὸ Π.Σ.Ε. εἶναι ἐν συγκροτημένον διαχριστιανικὸν σῶμα, παρὰ τὸ γεγονός ὅτι τοῦτο δὲν συμπεριλαμβάνει ἅπασας τὰς Χριστιανικὰς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ Ὁμολογίας. Παραλλήλως, ὑφίστανται καὶ ἄλλοι διαχριστιανικοὶ ὀργανισμοὶ καὶ περιφερειακὰ ὄργανα, ὡς ἡ Διάσκεψις τῶν Εὐρωπαϊκῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν (Κ.Ε.Κ.) καὶ τὸ Συμβούλιον Ἐκκλησιῶν Μέσης Ἀνατολῆς (Σ.Ε.Μ.Α.). Ταῦτα μετὰ τοῦ Π.Σ.Ε. πληροῦν σημαντικὴν ἀποστολὴν διὰ τὴν προώθησιν τῆς ἐνότητος τοῦ χριστιανικοῦ κόσμου. Αἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι Ἐκκλησίαι Γεωργίας καὶ Βουλγαρίας ἀπεχώρησαν ἐκ τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν, ἡ μὲν πρώτη ἐν ἔτει 1997, ἡ δὲ δευτέρα ἐν ἔτει 1998, ὡς ἔχουσαι ἰδίαν αὐτῶν γνώμην περὶ τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ οὕτω δὲν συμμετέχουν εἰς τὰς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων διαχριστιανικῶν ὀργανισμῶν δραστηριότητας.

17. Αἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι κατὰ τόπους Ἐκκλησίαι-μέλη τοῦ Π.Σ.Ε., μετέχουν πλήρως καὶ ἰσοτίμως ἐν τῷ ὀργανισμῷ τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ συμβάλλουν δι' ὅλων τῶν εἰς τὴν διάθεσιν αὐτῶν μέσων εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὴν προαγωγὴν τῆς ἐνότητος τῶν Χριστιανῶν. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀπεδέχθη προθύμως τὴν ἀπόφασιν τοῦ Π.Σ.Ε. νὰ ἀνταποκριθῆ εἰς τὸ αἶτημα τῆς περὶ συστάσεως Εἰδικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς διὰ τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον συμμετοχὴν εἰς τὸ Π.Σ.Ε., συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν ἐντολὴν τῆς Διορθοδόξου Συναντήσεως τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης (1998). Τὰ ὑπὸ τῆς Εἰδικῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς καθιερωθέντα κριτήρια, τὰ ὁποῖα προετάθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων καὶ ἐγένοντο δεκτὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Π.Σ.Ε., ὠδήγησαν εἰς τὴν σύστασιν τῆς Μονίμου Ἐπιτροπῆς Συνεργασίας καὶ Συναινέσεως, ἐπεκυρώθησαν καὶ ἐνετάχθησαν εἰς τὸ Καταστατικὸν καὶ εἰς τὸν Κανονισμὸν λειτουργίας τοῦ Π.Σ.Ε.

18. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία πιστὴ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησιολογίαν αὐτῆς, εἰς τὴν ταυτότητα τῆς ἐσωτερικῆς αὐτῆς δομῆς καὶ εἰς τὴν διδασκαλίαν τῆς ἀρχαίας Ἐκκλησίας τῶν ἑπτὰ Οἰκουμενικῶν Συνόδων, συμμετέχουσα ἐν τῷ ὀργανισμῷ τοῦ Π.Σ.Ε., οὐδόλως ἀποδέχεται τὴν ἰδέαν τῆς «ἰσότητος τῶν Ὁμολογιῶν» καὶ οὐδόλως δύναται νὰ δεχθῆ τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς τινα διομολογιακὴν προσαρμογὴν. Ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τούτῳ, ἡ ἐνότης ἡ ὁποία ἀναζητεῖται ἐν τῷ Π.Σ.Ε. δὲν δύναται νὰ εἶναι προῖον μόνον θεολογικῶν συμφωνιῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἐν τοῖς μυστηρίοις τηρουμένης καὶ βιουμένης ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐνότητος τῆς πίστεως.

19. Αἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι Ἐκκλησίαι μέλη θεωροῦν ὡς ἀπαραίτητον ὄρον τῆς συμμετοχῆς εἰς τὸ Π.Σ.Ε. τὸ ἄρθρον-βάσιν τοῦ Καταστατικοῦ αὐτοῦ, συμφώνως τῷ ὁποίῳ, μέλη αὐτοῦ δύναται νὰ εἶναι μόνον αἱ Ἐκκλησίαι καὶ αἱ Ὁμολογι-

αι, αἱ ἀναγνωρίζουσαι τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ὡς Θεὸν καὶ Σωτῆρα κατὰ τὰς Γραφὰς καὶ ὁμολογοῦσαι τὸν ἐν Τριάδι Θεόν, Πατέρα, Υἱὸν καὶ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα κατὰ τὸ Σύμβολον Νικαίας-Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Ἔχουν δὲ βαθεῖαν τὴν πεποίθησιν ὅτι αἱ ἐκκλησιολογικαὶ προϋποθέσεις τῆς Δηλώσεως τοῦ Toronto (1950), τιτλοφορουμένης «Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, αἱ Ἐκκλησίαι καὶ τὸ Παγκόσμιον Συμβούλιον Ἐκκλησιῶν» εἶναι κεφαλαιώδους σημασίας διὰ τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον συμμετοχὴν εἰς τὸ Συμβούλιον. Ὅθεν, αὐτονόητον, ὅτι τὸ Π.Σ.Ε. δὲν εἶναι καὶ ἐν οὐδεμιᾷ περιπτώσει ἐπιτρέπεται νὰ καταστή ὑπέρ-Ἐκκλησία. «Σκοπὸς τοῦ Παγκοσμίου Συμβουλίου Ἐκκλησιῶν δὲν εἶναι νὰ διαπραγματευεῖται ἐνώσεις μεταξὺ τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν, ὅπερ δύναται νὰ γίνῃ μόνον ὑπὸ τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν, ἐνεργουσῶν ἐξ ἰδίας πρωτοβουλίας, ἀλλὰ νὰ φέρῃ τὰς Ἐκκλησίας εἰς ζῶσαν ἐπαφὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλας καὶ νὰ προαγάγῃ τὴν μελέτην καὶ συζήτησιν τῶν ζητημάτων τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἐνότητος» (Δήλωσις τοῦ Toronto, § 2).

20. Αἱ προοπτικαὶ τῶν θεολογικῶν διαλόγων τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων χριστιανικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ Ὁμολογιῶν προσδιορίζονται πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει τῶν κανονικῶν κριτηρίων τῆς ἤδη διαμορφωμένης ἐκκλησιαστικῆς παραδόσεως (κανόνες 7 τῆς Β΄ καὶ 95 τῆς Πενθέκτης Οἰκουμενικῶν σύνοδων).

21. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἐπιθυμεῖ τὴν ἐνίσχυσιν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς Ἐπιτροπῆς «Πίστις καὶ Τάξις» καὶ μετ' ἰδιαιτέρου ἐνδιαφέροντος παρακολουθεῖ τὴν μέχρι τοῦδε θεολογικὴν αὐτῆς προσφορὰν. Ἐκτιμᾷ θετικῶς τὰ ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἐκδοθέντα θεολογικὰ κείμενα, τῇ σπουδαίᾳ συνεργίᾳ καὶ ὀρθοδόξων θεολόγων, τὰ ὁποῖα ἀποτελοῦν ἀξιόλογον βῆμα εἰς τὴν Οἰκουμενικὴν Κίνησιν διὰ τὴν προσέγγισιν τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν. Ἐν τούτοις ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία διατηρεῖ ἐπιφυλάξεις διὰ κεφαλαιώδη ζητήματα πίστεως καὶ τάξεως.

22. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία θεωρεῖ καταδικαστέαν πᾶσαν διάσπασιν τῆς ἐνότητος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὑπὸ ἀτόμων ἢ ομάδων, ἐπὶ προφάσει τηρήσεως ἢ διήθεν προασπίσεως τῆς γνησίας Ὁρθοδοξίας. Ὡς μαρτυρεῖ ἡ ὅλη ζωὴ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, ἡ διατήρησις τῆς γνησίας ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως διασφαλίζεται μόνον διὰ τοῦ συνοδικοῦ συστήματος, τὸ ὁποῖον ἀνεκαθεν ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀπετέλει τὸν ἀρμόδιον καὶ ἔσχατον κριτὴν περὶ τῶν θεμάτων πίστεως.

23. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἔχει κοινὴν τὴν συνείδησιν περὶ τῆς ἀναγκαϊότητος τοῦ διαχριστιανικοῦ θεολογικοῦ διαλόγου, διὸ καὶ κρίνει ἀναγκαῖον νὰ συνοδεύηται οὗτος πάντοτε ὑπὸ τῆς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ μαρτυρίας διὰ πράξεων ἀμοιβαίας κατανοήσεως καὶ ἀγάπης, αἱ ὁποῖαι ἐκφράζουν τὴν «ἀνεκκλήτητον χάραν» τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου (Α΄ Πέτρ. 1, 8), ἀποκλειομένης πάσης πράξεως προση-

λυτισμοῦ ἢ ἄλλης προκλητικῆς ἐνεργείας ὁμολογιακοῦ ἀνταγωνισμοῦ. Ὑπὸ τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτό, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία θεωρεῖ σημαντικὸν ὅπως ὅλοι οἱ χριστιανοί, ἐμπνεόμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν κοινῶν θεμελιωδῶν ἀρχῶν τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν, προσπαθήσωμεν νὰ δώσωμεν εἰς τὰ ἀκανθώδη προβλήματα, διὰ τῶν ὁποίων προκαλεῖ ἡμᾶς ὁ σύγχρονος κόσμος, μίαν ὀλοπρόθυμον καὶ ἀλληλέγγυον ἀπάντησιν, βασιζομένην εἰς τὸ ἰδανικὸν πρότυπον τοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ καινοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

24. Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἔχει συνείδησιν τοῦ γεγονότος, ὅτι ἡ κίνησις πρὸς ἀποκατάστασιν τῆς ἐνότητος τῶν Χριστιανῶν λαμβάνει νέας μορφάς, ἵνα ἀνταποκριθῇ εἰς τὰς νέας συνθήκας καὶ ἀντιμετωπίσῃ τὰς νέας προκλήσεις τοῦ συγχρόνου κόσμου. Εἶναι ἀπαραίτητος ἡ συνέχισις τῆς μαρτυρίας τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας εἰς τὸν διηρημένον χριστιανικὸν κόσμον ἐπὶ τῇ βάσει τῆς ἀποστολικῆς παραδόσεως καὶ πίστεώς της.

Δεόμεθα ὅπως οἱ χριστιανοὶ ἐργασθῶσιν ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, ὥστε νὰ ἀποβῇ ἐγγὺς ἡ ἡμέρα, καθ' ἣν ὁ Κύριος θὰ ἐκπλήρωσῃ τὴν ἐλπίδα τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ «γενήσεται μία ποιμήν, εἷς ποιμὴν» (Ἰω. 10, 16).

Σαμπεζύ, 15 Ὀκτωβρίου 2015

† ὁ Περγάμου Ἰωάννης, Πρόεδρος  
† ὁ Καλῆς Ἐλπίδος Σέργιος  
† Μητροπολίτης Δαμασκηνός  
(Πατριαρχεῖον Ἀντιοχείας)  
† ὁ Καπιτωλιάδος Ἡσύχιος  
† ὁ Βολοκολάμσκ Ἰλαρίων  
† ὁ Μαυροβουνίου καὶ Παραθαλασσίας  
Ἀμφιλόχιος  
† ὁ Τιργκοβιστίου Νήφων  
† ὁ Βάρνης Ἰωάννης  
† ὁ Ζουκδίδι καὶ Τσαΐσι Γεράσιμος  
† ὁ Πάφου Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Περιστερίου Χρυσόστομος  
† ὁ Σιεματίτσε Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Κορυστᾶς Ἰωάννης  
† ὁ Μιχαλόβτσε Γεώργιος  
† ὁ Ἑλβετίας Ἱερεμίας, Γραμματεὺς  
ἐπὶ τῆς Προπαρασκευῆς τῆς Ἀγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Σύνοδου

## Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World

### DECISION

1. The Orthodox Church, as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, in her profound ecclesiastical conscience, firmly believes that she maintains a central place in matters pertaining to the promotion of unity among Christians in the contemporary world.
2. For the Orthodox Church, Church unity is grounded on the establishment of the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ, and also on communion in the Holy Trinity and sacramental communion. This unity is experienced in the Church to this day and made manifest through apostolic succession and the patristic tradition. It is the mission and duty of the Orthodox Church to transmit and preach the truth in its fullness as present in the Holy Bible and Holy Tradition. This mission is what bestows upon the Church her universal quality.
3. The Orthodox Church's ecumenical mission and her responsibility to preserve unity were articulated by the Ecumenical Councils, which stressed the indissoluble link between true faith and the sacramental communion.
4. The Orthodox Church, which unceasingly prays "for the union of all", has always cultivated dialogue with those estranged from her, both far and near. The Church has led the way in recent efforts to restore unity between those who believe in Christ, and she has participated in the Ecumenical Movement since its commencement, contributing to its formation and further development. Thus, the Orthodox Church, because of the ecumenical and philanthropic spirit which distinguishes her, and in accordance with the divine dispensation that *all men may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim 2:4), has always advocated for the restoration of Christian unity. Therefore, Orthodoxy's participation in the movement to restore unity between Christians does not contradict the nature and history of the Orthodox Church, but rather represents a consistent expression of the apostolic faith and tradition in a new historical context.



5. The ongoing bilateral theological dialogues of the Orthodox Church and her participation in the Ecumenical Movement are based on her ecumenical conscience and spirit to reclaim the lost unity of Christians on the basis of the faith and tradition of the ancient Church of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.
6. According to the Church's ontological nature, her unity can never be shattered. The Orthodox Church acknowledges the historical existence of other Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her and believes that her affiliation with them should be based on a speedy and objective elucidation of all ecclesiological topics, most especially their general teachings on sacraments, grace, priesthood, and apostolic succession. Accordingly, for theological and pastoral reasons, Orthodoxy has viewed dialogue with various Christian Churches and Confessions, as well her participation, in general, in the present-day Ecumenical Movement in a favorable manner. She is hopeful that through dialogue she will bear dynamic witness to the fullness of Christ's truth and to her spiritual treasures to those who are separated from her. Her objective purpose, therefore, is to tread upon the path that leads to unity.
7. In spite of the deep crisis in the Ecumenical Movement, every local Holy Orthodox Church today takes an active part in official theological dialogues; moreover, most of the Churches participate in the work of various national, regional, and international inter-Christian organizations. Such diverse undertakings by the Orthodox Church spring from a sense of responsibility and from a conviction that mutual understanding, cooperation, and common efforts to reconstitute Christian unity are of fundamental importance if we wish never to *hinder the gospel of Christ* (1 Cor 9:12).
8. Certainly, while the Orthodox Church dialogues with other Christians, she does not underestimate challenges present in this endeavor; however, she responds to these challenges on her journey toward a common understanding of the tradition of the ancient Church with hope that the Holy Spirit, Who *holds together the whole institution of the Church*, (*Sticheron* at Vespers of Pentecost), will *complete that which is lacking* (Ordination Prayer). In this regard, the Orthodox Church, in her relations with the rest of the Christian world, relies not only on the human efforts of those involved in dialogue, but especially on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the grace of God, Who prayed *that...all may be one* (Jn 17:21).

9. Current bilateral theological dialogues, announced by the Pan-Orthodox Conferences, express the unanimous decision of all holy local Orthodox Churches. Therefore, these Churches have a duty actively and consistently to promote this work in an effort to avoid diminishing the unanimous witness of Orthodoxy to the glory of the Triune God. In the event that a certain local Church does not wish to assign a representative to a particular dialogue or one of its sessions, the dialogue still continues if this decision is not pan-Orthodox. Prior to the start of a dialogue or each session, the Orthodox Committee of the dialogue ought to discuss the absence of the local Church as an expression of the harmony and unity of the Orthodox Church.
10. The problems arising during theological discussions within Joint Theological Commissions are not always sufficient grounds for any local Orthodox Church unilaterally to recall its representatives or definitively withdraw from the dialogue. As a general rule, the withdrawal of a Church from a particular dialogue should be avoided; in those instances when this occurs, inter-Orthodox efforts to reestablish representational fullness in the Orthodox Theological Commission of the dialogue in question should be initiated. Should one or more Orthodox Churches refuse to take part in the sessions of the Joint Theological Commission of a particular dialogue, citing serious ecclesiological, canonical, pastoral, or ethical reasons, this/these Church(es) shall notify the Ecumenical Patriarch and all the Orthodox Churches in writing, in accordance with pan-Orthodox practice. Regarding possible courses of action, during a pan-Orthodox meeting the Ecumenical Patriarch shall seek to create a consensus among the Orthodox Churches, which shall –if they deem necessary– reevaluate the progress of the theological dialogue in question.
11. The process of engaging in theological dialogue attempts to overcome traditional theological differences, reveal possible new disagreements, and identify common principles of the Christian faith. This process requires that the entire Church is kept informed of the dialogue's progress. In the event that it is impossible to overcome a specific theological difference, theological dialogue may continue, recording the identified difference and bringing it to the attention of all the local Orthodox Churches for their consideration.
12. It is clear that the complete restoration of unity in true faith and love is the goal of theological dialogue. However, theological and ecclesiological dif-

- ferences reveal a certain hierarchy of the challenges lying in the way of meeting this pan-Orthodox objective. The manifold problems of any bilateral dialogue call for the methodology to be applied in diverse ways, but not for divergence in purpose since all dialogues pursue a common goal.
13. To this end, efforts should be made to coordinate the work of the different Inter-Orthodox Theological Committees, bearing in mind that the indissoluble ontological unity of the Orthodox Church must also be revealed and manifested in this area of dialogue.
  14. The end of an official theological dialogue occurs with the completion of the relevant work of the Joint Theological Commission. This then requires the Chairman of the Inter-Orthodox Commission to submit a report to the Ecumenical Patriarch, who, with the consent of the Primates of the local Orthodox Churches, declares the conclusion of the dialogue. A dialogue is not considered complete before it is proclaimed thus by pan-Orthodox decision.
  15. Upon the successful conclusion of the work of a theological dialogue, the restoration of ecclesiastical communion may be announced following a unanimous pan-Orthodox decision by all local Orthodox Churches.
  16. One of the principal bodies in the history of the Ecumenical Movement is the World Council of Churches (WCC). Certain Orthodox Churches were among the Council's founding members; later, all the local Orthodox Churches became members. The WCC is a structured inter-Christian body, despite the fact that it does not include all Christian Churches and Confessions. At the same time, there are other inter-Christian organizations and regional bodies, such as the Conference of European Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches. These, along with the WCC, fulfill an important mission by promoting the unity of the Christian world. The Orthodox Churches of Georgia and Bulgaria withdrew from the WCC: the former in 1997, and the latter in 1998. They have their own particular opinion on the work of the World Council of Churches and, hence, do not participate in its activities and those of other inter-Christian organizations.
  17. The local Orthodox Church-members participate fully and equally in the WCC, contributing to the witness and promotion of unity among Christians by all means available. The Orthodox Church readily accepted the WCC's decision to respond to her request concerning the establishment of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of

Churches, which was mandated by the Inter-Orthodox Conference held in Thessaloniki in 1998. The established criteria of the Special Commission, proposed by the Orthodox and accepted by the WCC, led to the formation of the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration. The criteria were approved and included in the Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches.

18. Faithful to her ecclesiology, to the identity of her internal structure, and to the teaching of the ancient Church of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Orthodox Church's participation in the WCC does not signify that she accepts the notion of the "equality of Confessions", nor that she understands Church unity as an inter-confessional compromise. In this spirit, the unity that is sought within the WCC cannot simply be the product of theological agreement, but must also be founded on the unified faith, which is sacramentally preserved and lived in the Orthodox Church.
19. The Orthodox Church-members believe that participation in the WCC must be grounded in the principle article of its Constitution, which affords membership only to those Churches and Confessions that recognize the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior –according to the Scriptures– and confess the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – according to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. It is their deep conviction that the ecclesiological presuppositions of the 1950 Toronto Statement, *On the Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches*, are of paramount importance for Orthodox participation in the Council. It is therefore clear that the WCC does not by any means constitute a "super-Church". *The purpose of the World Council of Churches is not to negotiate unions between Churches, which can only be done by the Churches themselves acting on their own initiative, but to bring Churches into living contact with each other and to promote the study and discussion of the issues of Church unity (Toronto Statement, § 3.2).*
20. The prospects for conducting theological dialogues between the Orthodox Church and other Christian Churches and Confessions shall always be derived from the canonical criteria of established Church Tradition (Canon 7 of the Second Ecumenical Council and Canon 95 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council).
21. The Orthodox Church wishes to support the work of the Commission on Faith and Order and follows its theological contribution with particular in-

- terest to this day. It views favorably the Commission's theological documents, which were developed with significant participation of Orthodox theologians and represent a praiseworthy step in the Ecumenical Movement for the rapprochement of the Churches. Nonetheless, the Orthodox Church maintains reservations concerning principal issues of faith and order.
22. The Orthodox Church considers all efforts to break the unity of the Church, undertaken by individuals or groups under the pretext of maintaining or defending true Orthodoxy, as being worthy of condemnation. As evidenced throughout the life of the Orthodox Church, only conciliarity –always the suitable and final judge in matters of faith in the Church– can preserve the authentic Orthodox faith.
  23. The Orthodox Church has a common awareness of the necessity for conducting inter-Christian theological dialogue. It therefore believes that dialogue should always be accompanied by witness to the world through acts expressing mutual understanding and love, which convey the ineffable joy of the Gospel (1 Pt 1:8). However, it rejects all forms of proselytism and every offensive act of inter-confessional competition. In this spirit, the Orthodox Church deems it important for all Christians, inspired by common fundamental principles of our faith, to offer a generous and charitable response to the difficult challenges posed today by the world, and to base this response on the ideal of humankind renewed in Christ.
  24. The Orthodox Church is aware that the movement to restore Christian unity assumes new forms in order to respond to new circumstances and address new challenges of today's world. The continued witness of the Orthodox Church to the divided Christian world on the basis of the apostolic tradition and faith is imperative.
  25. We pray that all Christians may work together so that the day may soon come when the Lord will fulfill the hope of the Orthodox Churches for *one fold and one shepherd* (Jn 10:16).

Chambésy, October 15, 2015

† *Metropolitan John of Pergamon, Chairman*

† *Archbishop Sergios of Good Hope*

† *Metropolitan Damaskinos  
(Patriarchate of Antioch)*

- † *Metropolitan Isychios of Capitolas*
- † *Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk*
- † *Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral*
- † *Honorable Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste*
- † *Metropolitan John of Varna and Veliki Preslav*
- † *Metropolitan Gerasimos of Zoukdidi and Tsaissi*
- † *Metropolitan George of Paphos*
- † *Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristeri*
- † *Bishop George of Siemiatycze*
- † *Metropolitan John of Korçë*
- † *Archbishop George of Michalovce and Košice*
- † *Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland,  
Secretary for the Preparation  
of the Holy and Great Council*