

## 2. MEETING BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

*Moscow, January 12-17, 1990*

*Recommendations for the normalization of relations between Orthodox and Catholics of the Eastern Rite in the Western Ukraine, January 17, 1990*

### a) PRESS COMMUNIQUE

The meeting between representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church took place at Moscow, in the patriarchal residence at the Monastery of St. Daniel, from 12-17 January, 1990.

Catholic participants in the meeting were: His Eminence Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; His Excellency Most Rev. Edward Idris Cassidy, titular Archbishop of Amantia, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; His Excellency Most Rev. Miroslav Stefan Marusyn, titular Archbishop of Cadi, Secretary of the Congregation for Oriental Churches; His Excellency Most Rev. Pierre Duprey, titular Bishop of Thibaris, Secretary of the Pon-

tifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Mons. Salvatore B. Scribano, secretary of the delegation.

Orthodox participants were: His Excellency Most Rev. Filaret, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galic, Patriarchal Exarch of the Ukraine; His Excellency Most Rev. Juvenaly, Metropolitan of Krutitsy and Kolomna; His Excellency Most Rev. Kyrill, Archbishop of Smolensk and Kalliningrad, President of the Department of External Ecclesiastical Relations of the Patriarchate of Moscow; His Excellency Most Rev. Irenaeus, Archbishop of Lvov and Drogobytch; Rev. Hegumen Nestor (Zhiliaev), secretary of the delegation.

During the meeting the two delegations, in a spirit of fraternal charity and trust, discussed the situation of the Orthodox and of the Eastern Rite Catholics in the western Ukraine and the prospects for the normalization of their mutual relations.

Concerned about the above-mentioned situation, the members of the two delegations invited to

Moscow some representatives of the Catholic communities of Eastern Rite and some representatives of the Orthodox communities. On 16 January 1990, two meetings took place, respectively, between the delegation of the Roman Catholic Church and the representatives of the Catholics of the Eastern Rite and between the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church and the representatives of the Orthodox community in the western Ukraine. The two delegations then met jointly with each of the two groups. The conversations provided an opportunity for a basic exchange of views and the invited groups presented their understanding of the situation.

Speaking of the general evolution of ecclesial life in the Soviet Union, including that of the Eastern Rite Catholics in the Ukraine following a period of *de facto* illegality, the two delegations expressed their satisfaction with the process. The members of the delegation are convinced that Orthodox and Catholics must contribute to the efforts of the Soviet society in which they live, with a view to the construction of a State in which by law all citizens may freely express their religious convictions.

Such a right naturally includes Catholics of the Eastern Rite — and offers them the possibility of organizing their ecclesial structures within the Roman Catholic Church — as it also includes the Orthodox of the Patriarchate of Moscow.

Obviously the solution of the problems between the Eastern Rite Catholics and the Orthodox in the western Ukraine must be sought in the light and love of the Gospel and in a spirit of fraternal dialogue between our sister Churches.

For the practical realization of this prospect, including among other things, the full recognition, on the part of both Catholics and Orthodox, of the right to express their faith peacefully and harmoniously in appropriate places of worship, the delegations hope to continue the contacts between the two Churches, in such a way as to deepen and extend the consensus which has already been achieved between them. In the course of the meeting a document was drafted (see "Recommendations" below) which will be made public after its approval by the higher authorities of the two Churches.

Expressing their concern about the difficulties facing interconfessional relations in the western Ukraine, the representatives of the two Churches observed that the problems in the region are not always truly religious in origin: they emphasized their conviction that hostility and violence must be considered incompatible with the Christian spirit. Furthermore, they must be condemned in order to permit the two Churches to bear witness together to the peace and love given by Christ for the salvation of the world.

The conversations were accompanied by intense prayer. Each day the Catholic delegation celebrated Mass in the church of St Louis in Moscow. On 14 January 1990, at the invitation of

Metropolitan Juvenaly, the two delegations prayed together during the divine liturgy celebrated in the church of the Monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin. During the liturgy Cardinal Johannes Willebrands and Metropolitan Juvenaly exchanged greetings and explained the significance of the Roman delegation's visit to Moscow.

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#### b) TEXT OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Following an exchange of messages between His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and His Holiness Pope John Paul II, representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and of the Holy See met in Moscow from 12 to 17 January 1990 at the patriarchal residence in St. Daniel's Monastery. The delegations were composed as follows:

##### *Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church:*

1. His Eminence Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and Galig, Patriarchal Exarch for the Ukraine, head of the delegation.
2. His Eminence Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna.
3. His Excellency Archbishop Kyrill of Smolensk and Kalliningrad.
4. His Excellency Archbishop Irenaeus of Lvov and Drohobytch.
5. Rev. Hegumen Nestor Zhiliaev (secretary of the delegation).

##### *Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church:*

1. His Eminence Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.
2. His Excellency Edward Idris Cassidy, Titular Archbishop of Amantia, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.
3. His Excellency Miroslav Marusyn, Titular Archbishop of Cadi, Secretary of the Congregation for Oriental Churches.
4. His Excellency Pierre Duprey, Titular Bishop of Thibaris, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian unity.
5. Msgr. Salvatore B. Scribano, secretary of the delegation.

This meeting was characterized by a spirit of mutual brotherhood and trust which allowed for a frank discussion of the delicate problem of the situation of Eastern-rite Catholics in the western Ukraine, as well as the difficulties and worries which the evolution of this situation has caused for the Orthodox.

The participants in this meeting give thanks to their common Lord for permitting them to reach the following conclusions together as a first step in their effort to resolve this question.

1. In confirming the commitment of their Church to the principles of religious freedom, and while recognizing that in the conditions of a constitutional State, these principles must be carried out in conformity with the law, in the same way for all and without any discrimination, the two delegations deem as necessary the quickest possible normalization of the situation of Eastern rite Catholics in the western Ukraine.

2. This normalization should open a new page in the history of relations between Catholics and Orthodox in this region. The conflicts and reciprocal injustices of the past must be overcome in a spirit of sincere forgiveness and reconciliation in order to make way for cooperation and common witness to Jesus Christ whom the Church has the mission to announce.

3. This normalization, carried out in the context of the democratic changes taking place in the country, should guarantee for Eastern rite Catholics the right to religious activity as recognized by the Constitution and legislation of the USSR.

At the same time, the exercise of this right should not fail to take into account the rights and legitimate interests of Orthodox groups and other religious groups.

We are of the opinion that Christians of the USSR should contribute to the contemporary common effort to create in their country a constitutional State.

4. It is of the greatest importance in this context that all illegal actions, and especially all violent actions, be avoided. Such acts are incompatible with the Christian spirit and consequently must be condemned. Moreover, they constitute an obstacle to the registration of Eastern rite Catholic parishes.

5. At the same time, the two delegations affirm that Eastern rite Catholic communities presently have the right and the possibility of being registered according to the legal procedure.

6. Catholic Eastern rite communities which are registered in this manner, as well as the communities of other confessions, have the right to receive from the State buildings intended for worship, to be used freely and in an unlimited manner, as well as the right to construct new churches, and to buy or rent property.

7. Taking note of the fact that in certain cases parish communities are divided into two groups, Catholic and Orthodox, both of which equally claim exclusive use of a church, we call upon both sections of these communities to overcome their

opposed claims, in conformity with the law, without hostility, and in view of arriving at a fraternal accord which respects personal free choice, and is reached without any pressure whatsoever.

8. In order to resolve the practical questions which will be encountered in the process of normalization of relations between Orthodox and Eastern rite Catholics, by common agreement it is requested that a commission be set up in which representatives of the Holy See and the Moscow Patriarchate be included with Orthodox and Catholic representatives from the western Ukraine. Each party making up the commission would have the same number of representatives, one or two at the most. The purpose of this commission would be to ensure the carrying out of the above agreement and the solution of disputes in a spirit of Christian charity and fraternal cooperation. The most urgent cases to be resolved should be those concerning churches occupied by Eastern rite Catholics without having obtained the consent, as required by law, of the community which had been gathering in the particular church, and before the Catholic community had been registered.

9. The Eastern rite Catholic community in the western Ukraine was seen, 400 years ago, as an attempt to overcome the division between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. This attempt did not reach its desired goal and, over the centuries, the continuing division has often been a source of conflict and suffering both for Orthodox and Catholics.

In fidelity to Christ's commandment "that all may be one", and in seeking to realize this commandment in their relationship, the two Churches have set out on the path of dialogue, profoundly convinced that it is not the method of union employed in the past, but rather dialogue which will be able to help them resolve together the problems which divide them. Such dialogue has become possible thanks to new approaches to the question of the unity of Christians on the part of the Second Vatican Council and several Pan-Orthodox Conferences.

The Eastern Catholic Churches which have resulted from the unions of past centuries, and thus became part of the Catholic Church, base their attitudes towards the Orthodox on the principles of the Second Vatican Council. This gives them the possibility of being a constructive element in Orthodox-Catholic relations.

The two delegations are firmly convinced that both today and in the future these relations must be purified of all intention to proselytize and of all reciprocal suspicion. Indeed, it is only in an atmosphere of trust and cooperation that one can travel successfully along the path of dialogue.

10. In the wish to pursue and intensify the effort towards unity, it would be very desirable that

the setting up of a hierarchical structure for Eastern rite Catholics in the western Ukraine be the subject of contacts between our Churches in order to avoid giving the impression of opposing one hierarchy to another, and in order to strive together to realize the mutual obligations which ensue from their theological dialogue and the new kind of fraternal relations which result therefrom.

11. The two delegations will immediately submit the above recommendations, which were fully agreed upon, to the authorities of their Churches. These recommendations will remain confidential until they have been approved and will be made public as soon as such approval has been given. We hope that in the new spirit which has just been described, Catholics and Orthodox in the western Ukraine will work together in promoting the development of the process which has begun and which, as we all believe, will result in the complete normalization of the situation and contribute to increasing communion between Catholics and Orthodox for the glory of God.

Moscow  
Saint Daniel Monastery  
17 January 1990