



THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN UNITY

JOINT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR THE THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Elounda, Crete, Greece, 27 September-04 October 2008

The Coordinating Committee of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church met in Elounda, Crete, Greece from 27 September to 4 October 2008. At the opening session, the two Co-Presidents of the Commission, His Eminence Cardinal Walter Kasper (President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) and His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon (Ecumenical Patriarchate), expressed their joy and thankfulness to God for the continuation of the theological dialogue between the two Churches. They reaffirmed the goal of the dialogue as stated at its beginning in 1980: "The purpose of the dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church is the re-establishment of full communion between these two churches. This communion, based on unity of faith according to the common experience and tradition of the early Church, will find its expression in the common celebration of the Eucharist". The aim of the present meeting of the Joint Coordinating Committee was to prepare the working document to be presented at the next plenary meeting of the Commission, scheduled to take place in Cyprus in 2009, at the invitation of the Church of Cyprus. In addition to the Co-Presidents, the participants were: from the Orthodox Church — H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate, Co-Secretary of the Commission), H.E. Metropolitan Makarios of Kenya (Patriarchate of Alexandria), V. Rev. Archimandrite Demetrios Charbak (Patriarchate of Antioch), H.E. Bishop Ignatije of Branitsevo (Patriarchate of Serbia), H.E. Bishop Petroniu of Salaj (Patriarchate of Romania), H.E. Metropolitan Georgios of Paphos (Church of Cyprus), H.E. Metropolitan Athanasios of Achaia (Church of Greece); from the Roman Catholic Church — H.E. Archbishop Ioannis Spiteris of Corfu, H.E. Bishop Gérard Daucourt of Nanterre, H.E. Bishop Brian Farrell (Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity), H.E. Bishop Dimitrios Salachas (Athens, Greece), Mgr Piero Coda (President, Italian Theological Association), Mgr Paul McPartlan (Catholic University of America, Washington DC), Rev. Frans Bouwen (St Anne, Jerusalem), Prof. Theresia Hainthaler (Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt a. Main), Mgr Eleuterio Fortino (Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Co-Secretary of the Commission). The work of the Coordinating Committee has to be seen in continuity with the previous agreed statements of the Joint Theological Commission. The Ravenna Document (2007), entitled: "Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority", called for "The role of the Bishop of Rome in the koinonia/communion of the Church in the first millennium" to be examined in greater depth. On the basis of two preparatory documents, the Coordinating Committee has now prepared a document on this subject which will be submitted to the next plenary (2009). The meeting of the Coordinating Committee in Crete was characterized by a strong spirit of commitment to the theological task before it, as well as by a clear sense of mutual trust and friendship between the members. The generous hospitality of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and in particular of His Eminence Metropolitan Nektarios of Petra and Cherronisos and of the civil authorities of the area was greatly appreciated. The Catholic delegation was present at the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Metropolitan Nektarios and the Orthodox members of the Committee in the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary in Neapolis. They also celebrated Mass with the small local Catholic community in a church placed at its disposal by the Orthodox Church in Aghios Nikolaos. The participants were able to visit the famous islands of Saint Phocas and Spinalonga, the archaeological site of Knossos, and the Cathedral of Saint Minas in Heraklion. They were graciously hosted by His Eminence Irineos, Archbishop of Crete in Heraklion, by His Eminence Evgenios, Metropolitan of Ierapytna and Siteia and on various occasions by H.E. Metropolitan Nektarios. The members of the Coordinating Committee are thankful to all those who support this dialogue through prayer and spiritual solidarity. They commend the future journey of the Churches towards peace and reconciliation to the intercession of the entire people of God.

Elounda, Greece, October 3, 2008

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