



PONTIFICIO CONSIGLIO
PER LA PROMOZIONE
DELL'UNITÀ DEI CRISTIANI

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

REPORT

Eleventh Meeting

Pampakuda, India, January 28 to February 1, 2014

The eleventh meeting of the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place at the Samanvaya Retreat Centre in Pampakuda, Kerala, India, from January 28 to February 1, 2014. The meeting was hosted by His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, and was chaired jointly by His Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and by His Eminence Archbishop Nareg Alemezian of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia in the absence of His Eminence Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette.

Joining delegates from the Catholic Church were representatives of the following Oriental Orthodox Churches: the Armenian Apostolic Church (Catholicosate of All Armenians), the Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. No representative of the Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Church or the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church was able to attend.

The two delegations met separately in the afternoon of January 28. The Joint Commission held plenary sessions on January 29, 30, 31, and February 1, each of which began with a brief prayer service using material prepared for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

At the beginning of the first session, Cardinal Koch announced that a number of the members had been unable to attend the meeting and that some of them had sent representatives. He also congratulated Archbishop Basilios Georges Casmoussa who was named Apostolic Visitor to the Syrian Catholic communities in Western Europe since the last meeting. The Cardinal also reported on significant ecumenical developments that had taken place since the 2013 meeting in Rome. His Holiness Pope Francis strongly reaffirmed the commitment of the Catholic Church to Christian unity in his address to heads and representatives of various churches and ecclesial communities who had come to Rome for his installation in March 2013. Since that time Pope Francis received visits from His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church on May 10, and from His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, on September 5. Cardinal Koch also reviewed the direct bilateral dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church which was a result of the meeting of Pope John Paul II and Catholicos Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Mathews I in Kottayam in 1986.

At this eleventh meeting, the members continued their study of the ways in which full communion among our churches was expressed in the first five centuries with special emphasis on the development of the various Eucharistic Prayers (Anaphoras) in the early Church and the significance of pilgrimages. Thus the following papers were presented during the meeting: "The Development of the Eucharistic Prayer (anaphora) as a Case Study in the Communion and Communication among the Churches" by Rev. Father Columba Stewart, OSB, "Jerusalem Between Liturgy and Pilgrimage: A Case Study in the Armenian Tradition" by Very Rev. Father Shahe Ananyan, "Anaphora and Liturgy" by Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette (read in his absence by Bishop Daniel), "Liturgy as an Element of Communion and Communication between Churches Till Mid-Sixth Century" by Rev. Father Baby Varghese (read in his absence by Rev. Father Abraham Thomas), "Pilgrimage as a Sign of Communion With a Particular Regard to the Tradition of the early Armenian Church" by Rev. Father Boghos Levon Zekian (read in his absence by Rev. Father Mark Sheridan, OSB), "Pilgrimages in the Early Church" by Rev. Father Shenouda Maher Ishak (read in his absence by Bishop Daniel), "The Role and Significance of Pilgrimage in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Tradition" by Rev. Father Daniel SeifeMichael Feleke, "The Concept of Christian Pilgrimage" by Mor Theophilus George Saliba (read in his absence by Metropolitan Youhanon Mar Demetrios), and "The Visit of Dignitaries as an Expression of Communion between the Churches Till the End of the Fifth Century A.D." by Metropolitan Youhanon Mar Demetrios. Drawing upon the material presented in these papers, the Joint Commission's drafting committee continued its work on the proposed agreed text entitled, "The Exercise of Communion in the Life of the Early Church and its Implications for our Search for Communion Today." The latest draft was reviewed by the Joint Commission on January 31.

In the evening of January 29, the members of the Commission attended a festive dinner hosted by His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Paulose II at Madaparambil River Banks in Thodupuzha. Also present were a

number of other Malankara Orthodox Bishops, clergy and prominent laypeople. The Catholicos offered gifts to the members of the commission, and Cardinal Koch presented the Catholicos with a gift from His Holiness Pope Francis. The two co-chairmen spoke briefly at the end of the dinner.

In his address the Catholicos warmly welcomed those present. "I take this opportunity," he said, "to thank the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity for the extended cooperation and for all the remarkable contributions in making the ongoing dialogue fruitful, and more particularly, the department of Ecumenical Relations of our Church in hosting the meeting of the Joint Commission." Referring to the members of the Joint Commission, the Catholicos said that "we have enormous trust in your academic ability, theological commitment and ecclesial fidelity. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide you in building bridges between our ancient traditions." Recalling his visit to Rome last September, the Catholicos said, "I take this opportunity to thank Cardinal Kurt Koch and the Pontifical Council for their gracious hospitality in the Vatican. The life and message of His Holiness Pope Francis give us new hope in Inter-Church relations. The Ancient Christian heritage and traditions of the Oriental Orthodox and the Catholic Churches together could contribute greater things in this divided world. We would like to see the spirit of this dialogue to continue in the coming years, so that we can further explore new areas of collaboration and mutual enrichment."

In the evening of January 30, the two co-chairmen of this session along with Rev. Father Gabriel Quicke of the staff of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, paid a courtesy visit to His Beatitude Basileos Thomas I, Catholicos of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church.

On Friday evening January 31, the members of the Joint Commission attended a cultural event which presented a number of dances native to India, portraying the rich and beautiful heritage of the country.

In the morning of Saturday February 1, the members were invited by Father John Abraham Konat to visit the Konattu Mathen Malpan Syriac Research Centre of Pampakuda containing his family's important collection of manuscripts and archives, and to visit the parish church adjacent to it.

On Sunday February 2, the members of the Joint Commission accepted an invitation from Father Jacob Kurian, Principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary (Old Seminary) in Kottayam, to attend the inauguration of celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the seminary's founding.

The twelfth meeting of the International Joint Commission will take place in Rome, hosted by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Arrivals will be on Saturday January 24, 2015, and the members will be invited to attend the Vespers service presided over by Pope Francis at the Basilica of Saint Paul's Outside the Walls on Sunday evening January 25. Family meetings will take place on Monday January 26, followed by plenary sessions on Tuesday to Friday, January 27 to 30, with departures on Saturday January 31.

The members concluded with joyful thanks to God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for what has been accomplished at this meeting.

The members of the Commission are:

Representatives of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (in alphabetical order)

Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Church: H.E. Mor Theophilus George Saliba, Archbishop of Mount Lebanon, Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Beirut, Lebanon (unable to attend); H.E. Kuriakose Theophilose, Metropolitan of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary and President of the Ecumenical Secretariat of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church in India, Ernakulam, India (unable to attend); Armenian Apostolic Church: Catholicosate of all Armenians: H.E. Khajag Barsamian, Archbishop of the Eastern Diocese of the USA, New York (unable to attend, represented by Reverend Father Shahe Ananyan, Director of the Publishing Department, Etchmiadzin, Armenia); H.E. Archbishop Yeznik Petrossian, General Secretary of Bible Society of Armenia, Etchmiadzin, Armenia (unable to attend, represented by H.G. Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Ecumenical Officer, Etchmiadzin, Armenia);

Armenian Apostolic Church: Holy See of Cilicia: H.E. Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy in the USA, New York (unable to attend); H.E. Archbishop Nareg Alemezian, Ecumenical Officer of the Holy See of Cilicia, Antelias, Lebanon;

Coptic Orthodox Church: H.E. Anba Bishoy (co-chair), Metropolitan of Damiette, Egypt (unable to attend, represented by H.G. Bishop Barnaba El Soryany, Rome, Italy); Rev. Fr. Shenouda Maher Ishak, West Henrietta, New York, USA (unable to attend, represented by H.G. Bishop Daniel of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Sydney, Australia);

Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church: Rev. Fr. Kaleab Gebreselassie Gebru, Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Patriarchate, Asmara, Eritrea (unable to attend);

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church: Archbishop Markos of Eastern Gojjam (unable to attend); Rev. Fr. Daniel Seifemichael Feleke of Holy Trinity Theological University College in Addis Ababa;

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church: H.E. Metropolitan Dr. Gabriel Mar Gregorios, President of the Department of Ecumenical Relations and Metropolitan of the Diocese of Trivandrum, India; H.E. Metropolitan Dr. Youhanon Mar Demetrios (co-secretary), Metropolitan of the Diocese of Delhi, India; Father Abraham Thomas, Secretary

of the Department of Ecumenical Relations, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Kottayam (observer); Father Dr. K. M. George (observer).

Representatives of the Catholic Church

His Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch (co-chair), President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity;
Most Reverend Paul-Werner Scheele, Bishop Emeritus of Würzburg, Germany (unable to attend);
Most Reverend Youhanna Golta, Patriarchal Auxiliary Bishop of the Coptic Catholic Patriarchate, Cairo, Egypt;
Most Reverend Archbishop Basilios Georges Casmoussa, Syrian Catholic Patriarchate, Beirut, Lebanon;
Most Reverend Peter Marayati, Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Aleppo, Syria (unable to attend);
Most Reverend Woldetensae Ghebreghiorgis, Apostolic Vicar of Harar, Ethiopia, President of the Ecumenical Commission of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia and Eritrea;
Most Reverend Paul Rouhana, OLM, Bishop of the Patriarchal Maronite Vicariate of Sarba, Jounieh, Lebanon;
Rev. Fr. Frans Bouwen M.Afr., Consultant to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Jerusalem (unable to attend);
Rev. Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB, Executive Director, Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, Saint John's Abbey and University, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA;
Rev. Fr. Ronald G. Roberson, CSP, Associate Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC, USA;
Rev. Fr. Mark Sheridan, OSB, Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, Rome;
Rev. Fr. Mathew Vellanickal, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry, India;
Rev. Fr. Boghos Levon Zekiyan, Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome (unable to attend);
Prof. Dietmar W. Winkler, Consultant to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Salzburg, Austria.
Rev. Fr. Gabriel Quicke, Official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Rome (co-secretary).

Pampakuda , Kerala, India, February 2, 2014