

THE MISFORTUNE OF THE OFFICIAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ORTHODOX AND ROMAN CATHOLICS

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The very title of this paper indicates that it shall not deal in a purely academic manner with a theoretical problem of Christian ethics or sociology. Time-tested common sense states that the more precisely a problem is formulated and recorded, the more evident it will become, and therefore the more likely and timely its solution will be. If that is true, then it would be superfluous to seek the forgiveness of the readers – or at least certain readers from the outset - who will almost certainly be disturbed by the relevant revelations. We sincerely hope that they who deserve to be troubled will be, but in a beneficial way of course!

The most significant moral and dogmatic questions encountered in the daily struggle of the Church often hide within them an excessive degree of cowardice if not self-interest which borders on insensitivity. This is at least known within theological circles under the guise of apparent politeness, prudence or whatever other name one could give the general and vague treatment of these questions from a so-called academic distance. Yet we know very well that the sacred words of the Revelation through the ‘disciple of love’, St John the Evangelist (Rev. 3:16), have for all times rightfully described and condemned this lukewarm and irresponsible behaviour.

We are, then, understandably dealing here with a cry of desperation from the front line, so to speak, of the Church militant, where for some 20 years or more – under the watchful eye of international public opinion –

what has been placed at risk is the sacred expectation for reunification in Christ of Christians from East and West who have devoutly prayed for this. What is also placed in jeopardy is the honour (in the eyes of the world) of all Autocephalous and Autonomous Orthodox Churches which have freely assembled into a single formation, coming face to face with the Church of Rome at the table of the official Theological Dialogue after so many centuries.

This coming together face to face today – in contrast to the past – takes place theoretically in absolute freedom and ‘on equal terms’ (as had been agreed from the beginning)! However, in practice, it takes place *vis-a-vis* the incomparable might of the Vatican which, as a matter of course, is more emphatic due to it having the dual nature of both a State and Church. Needless to say, in so far as this is a harsh reality and not a feeling of inferiority it establishes the sacred cause of the Orthodox not only more difficult and totally unequal in human terms, but in fact martyric.

It is not of course the first time that the author has, from some years ago, been compelled to constantly and officially denounce – due to his responsibility as Co-Chairman of the Dialogue, yet not always with wide publicity - a whole range of ‘cunning’ occurrences that took place from year to year during the many obstacles that confronted the Theological Dialogue, an endeavour once so significant that its commencement had inspired hope among Christians of East and West and, through them, all who fervently desired peace throughout the world.

In spite of this, it must unfortunately be stated that the suggestions and observations made with appropriate care and respect, almost never received the response that would have been expected. Yet, let no one believe, with Pharisaic self-complacency, that ‘cunningness’ should only be ascribed one-sidedly and collectively to the other side, namely to the familiar diplomatic maneuverings and other greater or lesser intrigues of the Vatican. The Orthodox have unfortunately distinguished themselves equally, in analogous evasiveness and neglectfulness – although not of an institutional kind – which have, however, left them no less exposed than the Roman Catholics. Indeed, given our largely ‘Balkan’ mentality, we

sometimes ignore even the most basic rules of good manners, thereby completely and arrogantly deriding what we call 'social decency', so necessary in the creation and maintenance of a climate of mutual trust. It could therefore be said that we as Orthodox are perhaps unaware that we often expose ourselves more than our western dialogue partners.¹

Here is the appropriate place to mention that precisely because of the irresponsibility shown in the Dialogue over the years by both the Vatican and the Orthodox, which occasionally exceeded the limits of the writer's tolerance and patience, he did not hesitate to submit his resignation from the Chairmanship and leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's two-member delegation to the Dialogue in writing and with reasons, and indeed very early on.² This occurred not only as a sign of objection. It was also carried out in the hope of awakening from indifference those who bear *ex officio* the highest responsibility in the coordination of the Dialogue. Yet until now, this has not been achieved in the slightest.

At the present time, therefore, when we still do not know officially how or whether the Holy Synod at Phanar will finally react through concrete actions to my second and irrevocable resignation, it is necessary to state here at least some of the many highly characteristic examples of the relevant official correspondence. In particular, the publication of several recent documents is deemed necessary as they substantiate in a very tragic way the present misfortune of this aspiring Dialogue about which the people of God on both sides can no longer entertain any illusions.

If today we did not choose to proceed to at least a selective publication of material proving the current insensitivity, then this would of course be inexcusable in the eyes of God primarily but also *vis-a-vis* all those who are genuinely interested in the progress of this sacred task between the two great sections of historical Christianity in East and West, which has been totally and inexplicably abandoned.

However, not even the more temperate theologians on each side would be able to form a complete picture of the present situation before the respective official Reports are published in due course. Up until now,

they have been kept confidentially in the Synodical offices in accordance with established practice. Much light will undoubtedly be shed on these also by the forthcoming book of the writer titled 'Texts of Pain'³, even though its contents will not be restricted to the Dialogue, as it will also refer to other great problems of more recent and inconsolable times.

At any rate, in order to give here an overall but also clear description of the main reasons that would have led sooner or later to the present situation of this major – and by definition more difficult – Dialogue in which the Orthodox world is engaged, we must present two sections under the following headings: (a) phenomena relating to the relaxation of ethical and canonical order in the Church; and (b) phenomena relating to a lack of vigilance, but also insincerity or hubris on the part of those who are in the first line of responsibility, both Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Before proceeding to describe that which most characteristically and fully expresses the manifold crisis facing the Dialogue, we must look at the relevant factors within the prevailing climate, for the sake of a fairer evaluation.

As known, our times show a general laxity in morals and customs generally. It is as if people today – regardless of religious persuasion or ideology – suddenly find themselves overly tired, due to the strict adherence to rules from long ago. Thus in a silent manner, some contribute actively while others tolerate passively the bold changes and decline on the world scene that we have observed for many years. It is not by chance that the term 'relax' - which also indicates rest and even relief - has become popular internationally through the universally simplified Americanization of lifestyles.

It is noteworthy that the yielded freedom of some (to the point of insensitivity sometimes) almost automatically provokes a greater hardening and fundamentalist reaction from others. Thus the middle⁴ way of social and spiritual balance is lost. This in turn brings about an unconscious change of both competing currents towards extremities, to the detriment not only of each of them, but also of the general stability of the global community.

Phenomena relating to the relaxation of ethical and canonical order in the Church

1. Surely it is the external negative factors which are primarily responsible for the greatest destabilization of the ethico-canonical order within the Church. Yet responsibility weighs no less on the shoulders of Christian leaders of both East and West, many of whose actions or omissions do not express the spirit of the Gospel convincingly.

The first and perhaps most significant technical omission of both Churches⁵ which had from long ago prepared themselves to enter into official Theological Dialogue, was the fact that no one unfortunately thought to formulate fundamental By-Laws which could immediately deal with potential problems as they arose. And one would of course have expected such problems, given the underlying scepticism on the part of these great Churches which developed in isolation for a thousand years, and were continually incited by fanatics on both sides due to many prejudices, gross ignorance, malice and sometimes unacceptable personal ambition.

In the absence of By-Laws which are always deemed necessary internationally, it was inevitable that the Chairmanship comprised of the two Co-Chairmen⁶, as well as the related Secretariat, would remain entirely unprotected executive officers in the face of all impropriety, abuse or even paranoia! Pathological phenomena, at any rate, are not unknown in every human society. However, they appeared and unfortunately took effect in our Dialogue more acutely than would have been expected. This came not from those sincerely interested or else mistrusting people on both sides – primarily from the multitude of faithful who are external to the Joint Commission – but, worse still, from some of its own members. Without doubt, this second category comprising Commission members and official delegates was always the more disappointing. As will be substantiated below through painfully concrete examples, it was these people who irresponsibly and irreverently undermined the peaceful course of the Dialogue discussions.⁷ However, if the By-Laws (which were not foreseen) could perhaps have assisted the Chair and Secretariat to some degree, no

power could have possibly restrained any of today's Synods or Heads of the Orthodox Churches from doing whatever they pleased.⁸

With regard to our interlocutors, it is unfortunately known that the Vatican and the Roman Church in general, in spite of the renewal and ecclesiological improvements brought about - after much effort - by the truly significant Second Vatican Council,⁹ is still largely bound by its predominantly medieval mentality. As such, the Roman Curia believes in its own infallibility as much as it believes in Papal infallibility and finds it impossible to forget its habits in any matter of major importance. While this totalitarian behaviour of the Vatican authorities was always more or less transparent (on some occasions rigid and categorical¹⁰ while on others it was shrewd, through cunning excuses made on account of the multifaceted and often uncoordinated services within the Vatican State), the negligence on the part of the Orthodox Synods or isolated Church leaders, as well as other curious practices, always remain enigmatic and a point of conjecture, being dictated either by personal friendship or hatred.

The first item which must be noted here as a tragic symptom of fundamental indifference concerning the fate of the Dialogue is its silent downgrading by the more powerful centres of each interested party which, on account of their very nature and position, should have protected it against every assault. Unfortunately, it is not only Rome but also the Churches of Constantinople, Moscow and Athens that share the blame. Given that the Orthodox comment on the Vatican on any given occasion, it is imperative to recall that the downgrading on the part of the Orthodox occurred only four or five years after the enthusiastic commencement of the Dialogue. In this regard, some of the most experienced and distinguished theologians of the Orthodox delegations were unacceptably absent on an almost permanent basis - as if by common agreement - on the pretext that they had other more serious commitments! Without resigning or being replaced appropriately, they became the cause of double harm; not only did they deprive the Joint Commission of concrete contributions in its critical stages but more importantly, they in fact disheartened those others who persevered with the sacred task assigned

to them, especially the writer. We shall present a more thorough and fully substantiated paper concerning these deserters at another time.

Bypassing certain scandalous incidents involving individuals on both sides, we must underline generally the essential change in Orthodox ethos and *phronema* that is evident in several distinguished sections of the Church. We refer firstly to the clergy, to those who teach in the theological colleges (whether ordained or lay, male or female), to some monks from various institutions, particularly those who roam freely under the title of 'Preacher', 'Elder' or 'Gifted Spiritual Father', as well as some who belong to the newer constructions of Christian 'Brotherhoods' or 'Associations', who usually seek secular power above all else. These people, whether writing privately or speaking publicly in various forums on topics which are of vital theological significance or pastoral sensitivity rarely recall fundamental principles of Church order and deontology, neglecting in particular self-evident Orthodox discipline, obedience or, at least, respect towards the Episcopal office.

As a result of the above lack of responsible observation and relevant intervention by the administrative leadership of the Church, it was only natural that the most disastrous consequences were felt by the broader body of faithful in both Churches. Here, however, is not the place to outline in a responsible manner the mentioned erosion of ecclesiastical ethos in the West. Therefore, we are obliged on a practical and moral level to restrict our comments to the Orthodox, whom we of course know from first hand. This is also obligatory since we seek nothing other than the pure ecclesiastical ethos!

2. Phenomena of ecclesiastical disorder and moral laxity – at least over the past four decades – could not have been imagined even in one's wildest fantasy and bear witness to the stark alteration in the age-old Orthodox ethos. Thus, while we boast that we are the Church *par excellence* of the Synodical system, thereby proclaiming our fidelity and adherence to Tradition, not only in terms of the structure of the Body of the Church and

its administration, but also in terms of the *phronema* and method of examining and solving each issue arising in the Church (so that the famous phrase ‘let all things be done decently and in order’ (1 Cor. 14:40) may also be verified in practice), we observe of late such insolence and audacity – especially in matters of canonical order and exactness of Faith – that not even the most liberal Protestant denominations would have anything like it. Protestants, as we know, are each entitled to believe whatever they choose about the Faith or even to establish a ‘Church’ according to personal specifications, yet they never dare to call their brother a heretic – something inconceivable even on the grounds of purely social decency!

We Orthodox hypocritically confess of course during every Divine Liturgy that ‘with one mind and one heart’ we diligently request the ‘unity of Faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit’ but in practice we try to defame each of our brothers who does not follow our personal preferences (in terms of opportunism as well as recruiting and teaming up with others) as a heretic! This occurs for the sake of self-promotion alone.

As such, certain monks, priests and even lay theologians (parading as philosophers and sociologists rather than as theologians) do not hesitate to label those hierarchs and university professors sent by synods to official theological dialogues as ‘perjurers’ or ‘illiterate’. It is as if they have no confidence whatsoever in the leadership of bishops and institutional bodies around the world, through which the Church is able to follow developments competently and give its viewpoint accordingly. Since this fundamental trust is lacking, these individuals have never taken the time to be informed by the official Reports submitted, regarding the responsible position taken by each person on every issue.

Of course, no one can deny the rights of all the faithful to give expression to their *phronema*,¹¹ whenever they feel that the highest good – namely the integrity of Faith – is endangered. However, this self-professed opinion must be submitted appropriately in the form of a memorandum to the Church, which is to say ‘to those who preside’, as St. John Chrysostom stated. Every other method of making public personal evaluations in matters of Faith – particularly in the unruly realm of mass media or in self-sufficient

papers which are normally rebellious in nature – cannot honestly be for the edification of the faithful, nor even of the one whom they are attempting to correct. It is simply an example of the irreverent self-promotion and self-righteousness of those who would wish to aggressively intervene in this way.¹²

Included in this completely unorthodox behaviour with regards to hierarchical structure and Synodical responsibility within the Church, there are unfortunately also several Bishops, who have thereby given the worst example of ecclesiastical ‘obedience’. First of all, we must mention the intractable Metropolitan Augustine Kantiotis¹³ and Serbian Bishop Artemios of Raska and Prizrena, who have stirred and continue to stir up a host of naïve Orthodox, both within their own locality and abroad, encouraging them in an unsacred rebellion against their canonical Church leaders. The relatively small number of other Bishops, in mainly rural areas, who sometimes proclaim that they are in solidarity with the mentioned troublemakers will not occupy our attention here since they have never tried to articulate officially a theological or other viewpoint on controversial topics.

3. However, when looking overall at the damage caused by these demagogic reactions against the Dialogue as a whole - or against specific persons and documents related to it - we must admit that this was mostly the responsibility of the Church of Greece, which systematically undermined the Dialogue from the outset. This applies both during the office of the late Archbishop Seraphim as well as the current Archbishop Christodoulos.

In order that this claim may not appear excessive or unjust, it must be said that the official representatives of the Church of Greece in the Dialogue – Metropolitan Chrysostom of Peristeri and Professor Megas Farandos¹⁴ (who was sometimes replaced by Professor Theodore Zissis) – almost never asked to speak at the meetings without severely criticizing the already agreed upon procedures (namely, agenda, method, mixed composition of Committees and texts) as well as the position taken by each of the speakers, whether Orthodox or Roman Catholic!

That they simply came to make an impression is evident from the fact that they never ceased to criticise everyone and everything so as to disturb the proceedings, without refraining from public criticism of Heads of Churches – especially the Pope – together with the entire western Church. They furthermore denied that the latter should be characterised as a ‘Church’, pitifully forgetting that we have a Dialogue of ‘Churches’ which, while not being in communion for a thousand years, did not officially renounce each other collectively, on account of heresies and the Schism, which were precisely the purpose and immediate object of the Dialogue. In so doing, they not only behaved improperly and unjustly; they also found themselves methodologically ‘off the topic’, thus often losing their right to speak – especially in the case of Professor Farandos – while the relevant efforts of the Chair to maintain a calm atmosphere in the meeting room were always in vain.¹⁵

The extent of the decline which has unfortunately arisen out of disdain for fundamental principles, institutions and instrumentalities relevant to modern Greek affairs, is evident in other phenomena, especially Monasticism (and that of Mt Athos is no exception)! As if the rumoured financial and sexual scandals were not enough, even in renowned centres of Monasticism, a new phenomenon of so-called ‘rock singing priests’ has appeared in a peculiar Monastery in the Phokida region, under the guidance of Archimandrite Nectarios Moulatsiotis¹⁶ who travels freely in order to secretly gather spiritual children and economic support. The fact that the Church of Greece, which promotes itself since the time Archbishop Christodoulos came into office as being buoyant and entitled to speak on every matter, either did not want to or was unable to discipline until now this curious ‘monastic’ (nor the other demolisher of Church order and peace, Archimandrite S. Logothetis, also an Abbot of a Monastery, who lays claim to independence in all things from his own Metropolitan of Nafpaktos) is of course indicative of how cunning the times are for sacred institutions, such as Synodical Bodies, Holy Monasteries, Theological Schools *etc.*¹⁷

We have left until last the phenomenon of the Old Calendarists, because it is by definition outside the Canonical Church. However, its increasingly audacious growth has reached the point of having at present a multitude of 'Synods' in Greece, with friction between themselves. Their expansion among the Orthodox of the diaspora makes caution on the part of every responsible person imperative, particularly in light of the damaging effects of this Lernaean hydra on the Orthodox ethos and *phronema* in general.¹⁸

In focusing somewhat more extensively on the negative aspects of the broader Greek-speaking world, this in no way implies that we are overlooking analogous aberrations on the part of other Orthodox as well. On the contrary, we are not only aware of them, but have also properly denounced the same through stern reports to those who respectively bear the main responsibility. For it is certain that such matters, systematically observed by the Nuncia and other diplomatic services of the Vatican around the world, greatly contribute to Rome's formulation of a disdainful opinion of the moral strength and standing of the Orthodox in general. This in turn naturally makes the Vatican hard-liners more audacious in their unrelenting – as it turns out – goal of proselytism.

Similarly, we do not ignore, nor did we tolerate in any way whatsoever throughout 20 years of Dialogue deliberations until the present, the largely unstable, if not at times wavering, conduct on the part of several Orthodox Churches, such as the Patriarchates of Antioch, Romania and Russia and at times even the Autonomous Church of Finland. By unfortunately placing their everyday interests (mostly racial in character) above the authority and sanctity of Orthodoxy as a whole, they have undoubtedly damaged the short-term and long-term sacred aims of the Dialogue.

We also do not overlook or undervalue in any way the relevant responsibilities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, especially during the office of the current Patriarch Bartholomew who unfortunately stands out due to his excessive movements abroad. We shall therefore look at this below perhaps with greater strictness because we have the responsibility as well

as the honoured privilege of belonging directly to the jurisdiction of the venerable and martyric Ecumenical Throne. More important, however, is the fact that this Church of Constantinople, being first in honour, has as we know - on the basis of the sacred Canons - the highest responsibility of leading vigilantly, of coordinating beneficially, and of protecting with all its strength the progress in God of the entire Orthodox world, for the good of all humanity.

However, given that in the mentioned Orthodox Churches – which mostly function with the system and character of a Patriarchate – the leading Prelate in each local Church has, as a general self-evident rule, his proper measure of responsibilities (which include the Dialogue) we will attempt to look immediately at the role of the Church leaders.

Instances of inadequate vigilance, but also insincerity or hubris, on the part of those who are in the first line of responsibility, among both Orthodox and Roman Catholics

The emphasis upon, and substantiation of, vital responsibilities of modern Church leaders in this regard – together with certain co-workers in their local jurisdictions – should in no way be misunderstood as a lack of respect or esteem on the part of the writer towards those who hold these important positions. His personal ties with at least some of them are at any rate well-known from long ago, as are his sincerity and selflessness in each responsibility assigned to him by the Church.

Yet this bitter cup could not be avoided for the sake of the truth, since it was deemed necessary to present, with fear of God, the substantial causes for the apparent breakdown in the greatest theological endeavour of Orthodoxy in modern times, namely its official Dialogue with Rome.

It must be stated from the outset that a considerable portion of the inexpert actions or serious oversights of the mentioned leaders are unfortunately due to an insufficient theological grounding. At times, even when this is present, there is displayed a curious disregard for theology

(and especially ecclesiology), as an essential presupposition for God-pleasing and time-tested pastoral work.¹⁹ At other times, there is perhaps no intention to devalue theology as such, yet in terms of the true interests of the Church, certain social and apparently harmless cases (although in fact dangerous) have not been evaluated correctly – as can be seen when one studies them with the necessary theological insight - otherwise they would have undoubtedly been recognised beforehand as wiles of the evil one.²⁰

There are also of course cases whereby Church leaders, in their anxious attempt to deal with pressing problems of the present are misled into placing these practical considerations above the authority and sanctity of Orthodoxy as a whole. As a result, some of their public positions can prove to be damaging for the peace and proper *phronema* of the faithful.²¹ We can see such instances in the regions of the ancient Patriarchates, the very survival of which, amidst a hostile environment, is a painful yet daily feat. For this reason there is certainly a moral obligation to judge many of their more incongruous gestures more leniently. However, there is another factor, which is the generator of terrible decisions and *modus operandi* on the part of Church leaders. This is the purely secular hegemonic behaviour of the most senior Churchmen who are in doctrinal terms equal. While the prevailing view was that such behaviour stemmed from accursed nationalism, which has been condemned in Synod, we will nonetheless attempt to claim that this scourge (as it clearly turns out to be) is due much more to the unfortunate surplus of emptiness and vanity of certain protagonists recently, than to the particularity of their race.²²

The problem of hegemony or nationalism is not however confined to the known rivalry between Constantinople and Moscow (with the theory of the latter being the ‘Third Rome’). Similar tendencies, which put into question the primacy of honour belonging to the First Throne of the Church of Constantinople, have also been shown by the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Romania and of late, with unusual aggressiveness, the Church of Greece, previously a daughter Church of Constantinople which was elevated to being a sister Church via an ecclesiastical *coup d’etat*, so to speak.²³

These and many other problems are known and well-exploited by Vatican diplomacy. Yet perhaps one should not be surprised that, following the successful course of the Dialogue over several years, the Roman Curia actually retracted vital theological positions – gradually in the beginning, but then officially – on which we had drawn near with the help of God, following very laborious discussions at the Dialogue table. Above all, this included the common rejection of Unia – as a *method*, distinct from the actual Uniates who arose out of this – in the hope that such a necessary distinction would assist in finding a solution to that thorny problem. Both sides involved in the Dialogue believed that, in clarifying sufficiently the historical and other circumstances under which the Uniate communities were formed, it would prove easier for them today to decide in total freedom where they wished to belong, whether to the Church of the East from which they were violently torn away, or to the Church of Rome.

The last meeting however of the Joint Commission in Baltimore (9-19 July 2000) showed, in the most disappointing manner, how greatly the theologians engaged in the Dialogue were misguided concerning the true intentions of the Vatican. Just prior to the Baltimore meeting, Pope John-Paul II wrote the following very cynically to Co-Chairman Edward Cassidy: ‘It must be stated to the Orthodox that the Eastern Catholic Churches enjoy the same respect from the Church of Rome as all other Churches in communion with Rome.’²⁴ Following such a grim and direct statement of the Pope, it was only natural that scope no longer remained for the Orthodox to continue a Dialogue which, having passed through many hardships, had to be confined to the sole topic of ‘Uniatism and related proselytism’!

Space unfortunately does not permit us to present the organic sequence or even the chronology of all the unsatisfactory occurrences during that fateful Plenary Session at Baltimore. What is certain, however, is that it will remain in the memories of those who attended as the most disgraceful page in the history of the Dialogue. We should revisit this topic with a more extensive article, in order to give a fully substantiated evaluation both of the indescribably disturbing behaviour of Mr M. Farandos, as well as the inappropriate action taken as one body by the

Roman Catholic delegation. For the first time ever, that delegation exited the room in protest, an action for which it subsequently officially apologised through Co-Chairman Cardinal Cassidy. Such tactfulness of course would not have been expected from Mr Farandos, nor unfortunately even from the Church of Greece which he represented, as was later made evident.

We have placed as a footnote our letter of protest²⁵ to the Church of Greece concerning the relevant actions and the totally slanderous report of Mr Farandos. Unfortunately, instead of investigating accordingly and restoring the damaged honour of the entire Inter-Orthodox delegation in Baltimore, His Beatitude Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and the standing Holy Synod thought it easier and more ‘christian’ to reward such coarseness with a Synodical letter of congratulations (*cf.* ‘Orthodox Typos’, no. 1401, 23-2-2001, pp. 1-5, in Greek). It is highly characteristic that, to date, no response has been given to concretely substantiated accusations. This is apparently how His Beatitude Archbishop Christodoulos understands the meaning of justice and collaboration in Christ!

In presenting the serious responsibility of Church leaders in matters pertaining to the Dialogue, the promise was made above to describe also the personal responsibility of the important advisers respectively. Unfortunately, for purely practical reasons, this proves impossible for us at this point. We expect to do so very soon in an appropriate publication, which will in any case necessitate more space due to the abundance of evidence to be provided – so that there are no complaints and related protestations.

Suffice it to say in closing that it is extremely sad to see these persons are highly exalted, having a mostly good reputation. Yet, for those who know things from the inside, it was they who severely undermined the sacred endeavour of the Dialogue examined here, while at the same time even presenting themselves as its pioneers and as distinguished representatives of modern Orthodox theology. All that remains for us is to exclaim, together with the author of compunction, A. Papadiamandis: ‘Have mercy on us, Lord’!

Acknowledgement - This article was translated from the Greek by Dimitri Kepreotes, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. An earlier version appeared in the *Epistimoniki Epetirida* of the Theological School, Aristotekian University of Thessalonika, vol. 13, 2003.

NOTES:

- ¹ The author made a rudimentary evaluation of the axiomatic and practical difficulties arising from the Dialogue in the main hall of the Aristotelian University of Thessalonika (May 10, 1985), under the title 'The Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics – Problems and Prospects'. (cf. *The Academic Journal of the Theological School*, Aristotelian University of Thessalonika, 1986-1989, vol. 29, pp. 7-31 for the full text).

The same lecture was delivered in German at the University of Graz, Austria, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of its establishment, and immediately after in Vienna upon the special invitation of its distinguished Cardinal Konig, at the *Pro Oriente* institution. Back then, the Dialogue was still the idyll of the two Churches and the chronic illnesses of current behaviour on both sides had not yet appeared. Yet it was precisely these that subsequently established the unusual ethos which, without having been dealt with appropriately, gradually led to the continual decline of the Dialogue, which we hope will not lead ultimately to its dissolution. So as this may not be considered alarmist, allow me to mention one of the most common weak points among many others. How is one to characterise the fact that Orthodox Autocephalous or Autonomous Churches that freely participated in the Dialogue would often either not reply at all to invitations routinely issued by the Chair to attend meetings that had been mutually agreed upon or else would not attend them in the end despite their explicit promise to do so and without even explaining the reasons for their absence? For as long as these Churches found themselves behind the Iron Curtain they could easily invoke the understandable difficulties in communicating with the outside world. When the Communist regimes fell, however, in eastern and central Europe they no longer had an excuse. This unacceptable situation has nonetheless continued intrepidly right up unto the present!

Let me also mention another indicative example. We witnessed with sacred indignation, during the 1986 meeting in Bari, Italy, certain Orthodox delegates deciding at the last minute to stubbornly abstain from the theological meetings. Yet the same delegates still insisted, in spite of this, to remain guests of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of the city during each day of proceedings, enjoying the hospitality of the hosts as if they were in a hotel! This of course did not honour themselves or the Churches they represented nor Orthodoxy as a whole which was in official discussions with Rome. Strictly speaking, the

responsibility for this once again belonged to the Church of Greece and in particular to the philologist Mr I. Hatzifotis, adviser over a number of years to the late Archbishop Seraphim, who was unfamiliar with theological matters. The former encouraged, by telephone from Athens, each Orthodox delegation arriving in Bari to turn their backs on the Dialogue meeting supposedly in order to protest against the exhibition of Byzantine Icons that had been held shortly before in the Vatican Museum, which he regarded as propaganda for the schismatic Church of Skopje. How such a truly unbrotherly occurrence in Church policy could be considered equivalent to the sacredness of the official Theological Dialogue is something that only the sensitivity of Mr Hatzifotis could determine.

- 2 The first resignation occurred by way of my brief letter dated April 16, 1985 to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to which the late Patriarch Demetrios responded warmly and with much love on behalf of the Holy Synod. In his response of May 11, 1985, he categorically refused to accept the resignation.

The second resignation was submitted to the Chief Secretariat of the Holy Synod in a letter dated April 15, 2002, together with another letter to my Co-Chairman in the Dialogue, Cardinal Walter Kaspar (April 14, 2003), expressing my great disappointment and outlining in detail my objections to the Vatican on account of concrete actions or omissions. Unfortunately, it was necessary to send a third letter to the venerable Centre (10-10-2002) stating categorically – so that they would not continue to relay matters concerning the Dialogue to me – that my resignation was final and irrevocable. Yet once again no response was given up until the time that this was written, another convincing sign of how just my insistence to resign remains.

- 3 This collection will selectively include my writings to relevant Church officials on topics of special significance, which however were unfortunately never treated seriously, whenever they received a reply at all! This in itself is sufficient reason to publish them, so that every current leader of the Church may finally assume his responsibilities in the matters raised.
- 4 With regard to the general cultural imbalance of today, cf. Zisimos Lorentzatos 'The Lost Centre', in *On Seferis*, Athens, 1961.
- 5 The only protective measure taken in this regard was to conduct the discussions 'behind closed doors' to ensure the necessary peace and tranquility. On certain occasions, this unfortunately became a cause for misunderstanding whenever officials of the hosting Church were not permitted to stay in the discussion venue or to have immediate knowledge of the preliminary stage of the working papers drafted by the Joint Commission or the Sub-Committees.

- ⁶ The Orthodox Chairman is elected from among the Inter-Orthodox delegation, while the Roman Catholic counterpart is appointed directly from Rome.
- ⁷ At the first meeting in Rhodes, the delegates from the Church of Greece immediately raised the issue of the presence of Uniates among the Roman Catholic delegation, insisting that they depart immediately, otherwise they themselves would have to leave the Dialogue. All other Orthodox delegates similarly expressed indignation at their presence which was considered unacceptable. However, without wishing to deny Rome the mutually agreed right of appointing representatives whom it deemed appropriate in the Dialogue, and furthermore not wanting to block the enthusiasm with which the Dialogue was anticipated from the outset we agreed in the end to make a common statement of protest. This directly condemned Uniatism, and sought an opportunity for us to examine together that very thorny problem within the organic context of the discussion topics of the Dialogue. It was eventually accepted. In spite of this, both of the mentioned delegates boasted the same day – in the secular press of Athens – that they had supposedly ‘saved the honour of Orthodoxy’, as if the other Orthodox delegates had betrayed it! This slanderous tactic was faithfully pursued by both persons in their relevant official Reports to the Church of Greece which had selected them throughout all stages of the Dialogue right up until the General Assembly in Baltimore (2000) during which their conduct (especially that of Mr Farandos) reached an unworkable climax, as we shall see below.
- ⁸ Who, for example, could have restrained the late Patriarch Diodoros of Jerusalem from withdrawing from all modern theological Dialogues – without explanation to the other Orthodox – stating to all that his Church was ‘not in need of Dialogue’ as it ‘possessed the truth, and whoever desires to can receive it from there’? Yet was this a greater insolence or more irreverent conduct than to have insensitively and hypocritically entered other jurisdictions by force as he did not only Australia but also America, western Europe, Greece and elsewhere, prompting the related Great and Supreme Synod in Constantinople (30-31 July, 1993)? That Synod put an end to all these indescribable actions which the other Orthodox Churches had silently tolerated without the slightest protest. Regarding this grievous topic of intervention, especially in Australia, cf. Bishop Joseph Harkiolakis of Arianzos ‘An historical and canonical critique of the attempt of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to intervene in the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia (1991-1993)’, Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies, Thessaloniki, 2000.
- ⁹ cf. Archimandrite S. Harkianakis *The ‘Constitution on the Church’ of Vatican II*, (professional dissertation submitted to the University of Thessalonica), 1969.
- ¹⁰ The sudden intervention of *Congregatio Fidei* under Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger with regard to the proceedings texts of the official Theological Dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, which were considered by the Joint Commission

conducting the Dialogue to be most satisfactory, was internationally regarded as a totalitarian and disappointing move. Needless to say, this intervention of *Congregatio Fidei* essentially put an undignified end to that Dialogue, thus demystifying the phrases concerning 'mutual respect' and 'brotherly regard for one another' which Rome speaks of so often, especially in the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

- ¹¹ We do not say 'conscience' here, as this is a personal matter which, as is known, has the final word only within Protestantism. Within Orthodoxy what applies is *phronema*, which is held in common and is determined by the 'mind of Christ'.
- ¹² Dreadful examples have been given to all Orthodox by Protopresbyters and Professors J. Romanides (recently passed away), Th. Zisis, G. Metallinos, Monk Theoklitos Dionysiatis, Abbot G. Kapsanis etc. The notorious Metropolitan Augustine of Florina and his assorted printed media (*Spitha*, *Stavros*, *Ecclesiasticos Agon* etc.), as well as the newspaper *Orthodoxos Typos* that has likewise slandered any rank of Clergy, whether living or dead, from the Patriarch down, constitute a host which for this very reason could appropriately be called 'legion' (cf. Mark 5:9). This was verified more formally by the divisive lay theologian and philologist N. Sotiropoulos, who never acknowledged his excommunication by the Great and Supreme Synod (30-31/7/93), but instead continues to persist in his accusations against certain individuals, primarily against the writer and even against the Synod itself that excommunicated him, as if the Autocephalous Church of Greece, to which he directly belongs, did not take part in it! It is curious how and why the current Archbishop of Athens continues to dare to ask with persistence for his 'restoration', even though he is provocatively unrepentant. Also curious is the way in which several Hierarchs of the Church of Greece, including Metropolitan Panteleimon of Corinth, Metropolitan Efstathios of Sparta and others officially honour this person, thereby showing unacceptable disdain for their own Autocephalous Church. However, secular justice through the Athens Court of Appeal (115/8-1-2001) stated irrevocably that Sotiropoulos was "not a theologian, but a falsifier", following an official lawsuit by one of his colleagues from the circle of Kandiotis, namely the well-known educationalist A. Eleftheriadis. The sentence of the same soul-saving Sotiropoulos by the Ministry of Finance is not less serious, when its audit found that he had embezzled in excess of 400 million drachma out of the funds of the missionary association called 'Stavros' (cf. *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* newspaper, Athens, 3-3-2002 and the *VEMA* newspaper, Sydney, March 2002).
- ¹³ See a special pamphlet by the writer, designed to address this behaviour in the recent history of the Church of Greece, titled 'A necessary response to Metropolitan Augustine of Florina', published by the *Voice of Orthodoxy*, Sydney, May 1986.

- ¹⁴ The question remains as to why this Autocephalous Church which freely chose to participate in the Orthodox effort in the Dialogue, as all others did, did not act more sincerely by withdrawing from it officially, as did other Autocephalous Churches at various times, thereby avoiding further problems for those Orthodox who remained in the Dialogue.
- ¹⁵ It would be superfluous to mention that whatever they concocted during the breaks between meetings – literally ‘off the cuff’ and without sober study – they would then read in the Plenary sessions and waffle on, and so waste valuable discussion time which justly caused the protestation and disappointment of the other delegates. The same nonsense was presented by them in their official Reports to the relevant Synodical Committee of the Church of Greece and they would normally pre-publicise a portion of this in the secular press, so as to denounce the other Orthodox participants – primarily the Orthodox Chairman and the Ecumenical Patriarchate – as alleged betrayers, while presenting themselves as the saviours of Orthodoxy! However, these wilfully blinded opponents of the Dialogue never wanted to acknowledge the following two fundamental and often repeated truths as presuppositions for a just and objective evaluation of the texts: (a) these texts were always drafted by Joint Committees and as such could not possibly have satisfied one side completely, since they were not exhaustive treatises on its teachings. Rather, they were indications of the degree of rapprochement between the two traditions that had been achieved through discussions up until that point; and (b) it was never said by any official in the Dialogue that these ‘were, or would ever be, final agreements concerning the ‘Faith’, as slanderously and diabolically reported by Protopresbyter J. Romanides who passed away recently, and several others! On the contrary, all of us who were involved in the Dialogue never ceased to underline, together with the Heads of the dialoguing Churches themselves that these were draft documents or working papers which would always remain ‘open’ to amendments from either side.
- ¹⁶ It is noteworthy that, although forbidden to come by our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, he arrived some years ago and dared also to try and concelebrate with the Assistant Bishop Ezekiel of Dervis in Melbourne, while audaciously denying his own identity when asked by the Bishop! Upon departing a little while later, he took with him under-aged youngsters from our community so as to enlist them into the Monastery which he was at that time establishing (with its 300 chimes and 62 bells)! Yet at that stage, he had not diverged to the point of introducing for the first time into the history of Orthodox monasticism, the secularity shown by his ‘pop music priests’ in various Greek media, with the tolerance – if not the blessing – of Archbishop Christodoulos.
- ¹⁷ During the international Orthodox Theological Conference on the theme ‘Thessalonika – Centre of Orthodox Theology’ organised in 1997 by the Theological School of the Aristotelian University of Thessalonika, in conjunction with the ‘Thessalonika – Cultural Capital of Europe’ Organisation, having gladly

accepted the invitation to present a paper in the capacity of the Dean of St Andrew's Theological College in Sydney, we had expressed the following in response to a certain question: "The first and foremost problem within Orthodoxy today is that the most sacred and absolutely correlative institution of the Synod no longer functions. Of course, a kind of Synod is called in each local Church, but it does not function! The Synod is trapped from the outset by a small number of Bishops – normally those who are around the First. The irreverent usurpers of the freedom and responsibility of each member of the Holy Synodical Body have silently managed to impose themselves at all times, and to secure in advance ready solutions (by scaring and blackmailing some, while enticing and pandering to others)! The most infuriating aspect is that these people usually have a clear conscience that everything takes place harmoniously and unanimously, when in reality it is the most frightful of sins, being against the Holy Spirit which "will not be forgiven" (Mat. 12:31). For this reason, St Paul does not simply recommend but actually commands "Do not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19)."

So that the audience did not think that only Bishops are responsible for this violation and spiritual insensitivity, we then explained that the 'Synodical Ideal' is also suffering among professors of the theological schools. One need only recall that even up until just a few decades ago, they would willingly act as one body and circulate a 'resolution' on any significant topic arising from the Church and Christian society. Today, however, they avoid doing so, even when asked, except if it is for a personal – and usually well rewarded – opinion! It is very characteristic that none of the Bishops or professors present at that Conference, who were more than a few, tried to contradict what was said, but instead agreed, while indeed others applauded enthusiastically.

- ¹⁸ It would be impossible not to mention the damaging role played by 'distinguished' politicians over recent years in supporting all kinds of charlatans of the Old Calendarist movement. This has taken place purely for the purpose of gaining votes, even though they always claim that they act in the interests of democratic equality! First among them was the unpredictable Theodore Pangalos who, while Minister for Foreign Affairs, also led astray the otherwise highly respectable President of the Hellenic Republic, C. Stephanopoulos. Thus he became the first Head of State in Greece to receive officially Old Calendarists (that is, wearing the *engolpion* and carrying a pastoral staff), something which his predecessors would do only if the Old Calendarists presented themselves in plain cassocks! It is unfortunate that he responded to protests of the Holy Synod in Athens by saying with a degree of annoyance that he was obliged to receive them as 'the President of all Greeks'. We were compelled to state in the general media nonetheless that despite our deep regard for Mr Stephanopoulos he had fallen into a grave error. For, in spite of the abovementioned deep respect for Mr Stephanopoulos, he could not ignore, as an esteemed legal scholar, the fundamental law concerning 'the wrongful claiming of authority and uniform'.

- ¹⁹ The manner in which the late Patriarch Athenagoras – who was otherwise great – would make fun of the theological sensitivity of his more theologically educated co-workers is memorable. He would say ‘I am not a theologian, I am a bureaucrat! I also of course received a Diploma in Theology, but I fortunately lost it very early in the piece. I would gladly gather all the theologians on a peaceful island, enabling them to chatter on endlessly on the doctrinal differences that they themselves created, and allowing us Shepherds to do our work undisturbed!’ Similar – if not worse – words have been exchanged between others whenever they have had to give an account of their own theologically unfounded actions or omissions. However, an actual example of contempt for ecclesiology was unhesitatingly shown by the Patriarchate of Antioch, especially during the office of the current Patriarch Ignatios IV on the issue of Unia!
- ²⁰ A classic example of such an unfortunately historic trap on the part of Rome is as follows. We mention it here in its natural context, as we now know with the benefit of hindsight that this had damaging consequences in terms of the Unia problem which is now the touchstone for the continuation or otherwise of our longstanding Dialogue.

Immediately following the Vatican II Council, Rome wasted no time in establishing two significant institutions in Vienna – that major gateway towards the Orthodox peoples – with the objective of improving awareness and cooperation between the Vatican and the Christian East. These were the well-known *Pro Oriente* Centre, and the less known *Law Society of the Eastern Churches*, created as an adjunct to the Law School of the University of Vienna. No one could possibly question the *Pro Oriente* Centre. This is precisely why the writer has repeatedly and willingly addressed people there, having been invited to do so. However, the same could not be said of the Society due to the misleading nature of its stated goal. While through the term ‘Eastern Churches’ Rome clearly meant the Uniates there was still the open possibility that many Orthodox would take this as flatteringly referring to the *Orthodox Churches*! In such a case, they would enter into unreserved collaboration as members of the mentioned Society. The writer nonetheless stated – as theological circles in Thessaloniki and the Phanar would no doubt recall – that, if the Society did not have the aim of proselytism, it should modify the phrase ‘Eastern Churches’ to the more correct and general term ‘Christian East’. This would avoid placing the Orthodox Eastern Churches on the one hand, and the heteroclitite host of ‘Orientals’ in general (Copts, Assyrians, Armenians, Uniates) on the other, on the same ecclesiological level and under the same banner. As this did not eventuate, we alerted others by saying ‘no Orthodox theologian, and certainly no hierarchy, should become a member of such a Society’! Unfortunately, it turned out to be the greatest irony that two of the first people to hastily become members and subsequently Vice Chairmen, of the Society, were Orthodox Canon lawyers! They were the then Metropolitan of Philadelphia, who is now Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (having been a *founding* member

also!) and Archimándrite Pandeileimon Rodopoulos (now Metropolitan of Tyroloi and Serentiou).

- ²¹ An example of decisions erroneously made was the personal participation of both Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Anastasios of Albania in the annual inter-religious meeting led by the Pope in Assisi while other Orthodox Churches sent only low-ranking Clergymen. The televised presence of the Pope in an unacceptably raised stand, presiding over all, would have offended the sentiments of many Orthodox, including the writer, who objected by letter to both mentioned Hierarchs.
- ²² The unprecedented antagonism shown towards the Mother Church of Constantinople by Metropolitan Christodoulos of Dimitriados once he was enthroned as Archbishop of Athens could not of course have any racial motive since Patriarch Bartholomew is also a Greek! See a psychological analysis of the phenomenon in *A two-way pathogeny*, by Archbishop Stylianos of Australia, in the *VEMA* newspaper, Sydney, August 2002.
- ²³ cf. Archbishop Stylianos *The 'positives' and 'negatives' of Orthodoxy in the new world*, in the academic publication of the 'Estia' Association of Theologians of Halki [in Greek], vol. 3, Athens 1994, pp.573-603.
- ²⁴ This papal letter, tabled by Co-Chairman Cardinal Cassidy in the Phanar, was officially forwarded to the writer, who immediately replied to His All Holiness and the Holy Synod on November 2, 1999, as follows:

...The letter of His Holiness the Pope to Cardinal Cassidy is not only a provocation of the highest degree, by stating so bluntly, and indeed trying to impose upon us, the 'ecclesiological identity' of the Uniates according to Rome. It is also absolutely certain that – as I had categorically stated to Cardinal Cassidy during his visit to me on 31-8-99 – any possible circulation of that unacceptable letter to our Orthodox delegates in the Dialogue would create further turmoil, which would not be at all constructive for responsible theological discussion between us. I also fear for the general relations between the two Churches in Dialogue.

...At any rate, the letter is directed to Cardinal Cassidy, and concerns only the relations between the relevant Pontifical Council on which the Cardinal presides, and the Pope from whom he receives direction and instructions. It cannot be communicated to the Ecumenical Patriarch as well in this way, as such a gesture constitutes, among other things, an unacceptable interference in the task of the Joint Commission, for as long as this continues under circumstances which are sufficiently adverse so as to bring the Dialogue to an end.

...Consequently, I humbly believe – as I had mentioned to Cardinal Cassidy – that it would be a prudent act and imperative form of respect for moral order, to write to the Vatican that we shall treat the said letter as if it had not arrived,

since it does not concern us in the slightest. We will therefore not accept that it be placed on the discussion table until we succeed in finding a fundamental theological *rapprochement* on the thorny topic of Unia, in the hope, God willing, of better understanding over time.

²⁵ The letter is reproduced here in full:

‘Your Beatitude and Your Eminences,

I write this letter in my capacity as Chairman of the Inter-Orthodox Committee in the official Theological Dialogue with the Roman Catholics, in order to protest with reasonable and sacred indignation at your hasty, improper and totally misjudged action in rewarding Synodically, by way of a dithyrambic congratulatory letter, the misdemeanours of one of your representatives, Mr M. Farandos, to the detriment of the entire Inter-Orthodox delegation in terms of what occurred in Baltimore, as reported at least by the relevant news item in the publication titled *Orthodoxos Typos* (no. 1401, 23-2-2001).

While it may appear that these attacks, both of Mr Farandos and of your Synodical action, are only against my humble person, for those who have followed with pain the occurrences in the administration of the Church of Greece, particularly over recent years, it is blatantly obvious whom they intend to hurt yet again.

Therefore, out of concern for the truth in God, and no less out of sincere brotherly love for the kudos of the Church of Greece itself, I am obliged to hereby underline only a few vital points of moral deontology which you have collectively overlooked through ‘zeal without knowledge’, such that the step you have taken will become a ‘boomerang’, at least for those who wish to evaluate the situation objectively.

1. As is known, your Church of Greece was represented in Baltimore not only by the layman Mr Farandos, but also by His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostom of Peristeri, who was the leader of the Greek delegation. It could then be asked: Should you not then have taken into consideration his responsible opinion - at least *in addition*, if not *primarily* - before rushing to praise Mr Farandos who prides himself as the ‘guardian of Orthodoxy’? Those who have seriously taken part in the Dialogue know that this often problematic gentleman not only did not possess theological maturity and relevant preparation, whenever you assigned him to Inter-Christian Dialogues. He was not even fundamentally equipped in technical know-how, to the ridicule of both Greek theology and the Church of Greece (with his unprecedented impertinence, and even though he could not speak any other language fluently, he never used the headphones with the translation, so as not to expose himself in this regard). This of course explains a lot!

2. Would it not have been appropriate, before Synodically supporting the libel of Farandos (even if it was only directed towards my person, who is nevertheless a Greek and Orthodox Hierarch, having reached a ripe age in the field of theology in both Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Dialogue) to have *also* asked the other Orthodox delegations which had worked together with me in Baltimore about these accusations?
3. Would it not have been appropriate before making such a sensationalist gesture (as usual) to have approached my ecclesiastical authority, namely the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in order to obtain – if you were sincerely interested – correct and absolutely verified information, not only concerning the events in Baltimore, but also about my 20-year unwavering service to this most difficult of all modern Theological Dialogues in which the Orthodox are engaged?
4. Even a totally uninformed reader of the slanderous comments of Mr Farandos would be able to detect the schizophrenic interpretation he gave to the Pope's controversial letter to my Co-Chairman Cardinal Cassidy, in which the Pontiff states the most amazing equivalence of the Uniates 'with every other Church in communion with Rome'. Given that Mr Farandos claims that I was the only person who had extensively informed the Inter-Orthodox delegation about this in Baltimore, how was it then possible for me to be annoyed that Mr Farandos mentioned the same letter during the discussions, and that I wanted supposedly to support the Roman Catholics in this regard? I had expressed to the entire Inter-Orthodox delegation my immediate reaction as soon as I was informed from the Phanar about the Papal letter, and my austere critique of this is to be found documented both in the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as in the relevant Secretariat of the Vatican, in which case you are able to request it officially at any time.
5. I am sending today by registered mail a video of the television interview Co-Chairman Cassidy and I had given upon the conclusion of the Baltimore proceedings, which would be sufficient to inform the English speaking members of your Synod and Hierarchy – with the exception of course of Mr Farandos(!) – concerning all that Christians of East and West heard first hand via the television networks in America.
6. It would be superfluous to remind you of the unacceptable conduct of your Holy Synod over a long period of time *vis-à-vis* my humble person and task, which – I am embarrassed to write – were known to all of you. As an example, I mention the completely deafening silence and inaction after I brought to your attention the slanderous comments against me by Fr Dimitri Kloutsos, a Clergyman of the Archdiocese of Athens who is *still* in active service, as well as your continual attempts to restore the *unrepentant* lay theologian Mr N. Sotiropoulos who was excommunicated by the Great and Supreme Synod in

Constantinople – in which your Church played a leading role in that very same excommunication – although he is a well-known trouble-maker for the people of God both inside and outside Greece. I therefore leave it to your sober judgement to determine the degree to which it is worthwhile to further test my longsuffering in all that has preceded.

7. Not excluding the possibility – since it pertains to accusations concerning the *Faith* – of making use of all ecclesial and secular legal means, for my own protection, but also so as not to scandalise the uninformed faithful, I must remind you that the discussion table of international Theological Dialogues is, as we know, also protected by international treaties and relevant tribunals, to which every modern citizen who feels unfairly treated can resort, in order to counteract unacceptable machinations of even spiritual institutions.

I therefore look forward to your dealing responsibly with this important ethical and theological issue and to your relevant actions as a consequence, for I will not of course allow this to pass by as some trifling matter.

A copy of this letter – at least for the time being – is to be sent to my Church authority, namely His All Holiness and the Holy Synod. We shall then see how to proceed.

In expectation of a relevant response, which will redress with fear of God all that has been mentioned above, I remain

In Sydney, 5th March 2001

The least among brothers

Archbishop STYLIANOS

cc. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy Synod'

As the above letter received no reply, I revisited the matter with indignation via another letter (dated January 24, 2002), in which I mentioned among other things that: 'I must raise this matter once again with greater harshness – as I am entitled to do under the circumstances – not only to remind you of the unprecedented delay of your response for an entire year but also to pose new implacable questions regarding the relentless slanderer from among your two representatives, Mr M. Farandos, especially in relation to his dishonorable authorship of the book titled *Enateniseis – Tomes gia mia axiokratiki koinonia* [in Greek], published by Eptalofos, Athens 2000. By the end of 2002 when this article was prepared, there

was not the slightest response to the issues raised, from either Athens or the Phanar! Hence my irrevocable resignation from the Dialogue, without any further comment.



Archbishop Stylianos (Harkianakis) is Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and Dean of St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College.

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