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ST. VLADIMIR'S THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

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EDITORIAL

To the Orthodox Churches the most sensitive area of ecumenical relations is not with Protestants or Roman Catholics as such, but with the so-called "Uniate" Churches composed of "Catholics of the Eastern Rite." Born of the divided—and divisive—council held at Brest-Litovsk in 1596, and based upon the decisions reached at the "reunion council" of Florence (1438-39), the Uniate movement from its beginnings has been caught, as it were, between two very different ecclesiologies, Orthodox and Roman Catholic. While political and cultural factors have played their part, the historical disagreement between East and West over the Uniate Churches has always been grounded in a theological question concerning the nature of the Church and the matter of authority.

One of the most important Uniate communions is the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of the Near East, centered in Antioch with parishes in many countries including the United States. The Rev Dr Philip A. Khairallah is a Melkite priest in charge of the St Cyril of Alexandria Mission in Cleveland, Ohio. Active in ecumenical relations for many years, he has written an illuminating and perceptive study of the mission the Melkite Church is called to assume in the post-Vatican II era. Lamenting the fact that his ecclesial tradition has "become a rite," and even within its own ranks is seldom accepted as a truly autonomous body, he defines the ecumenical vocation of the Melkite Church to be that of witnessing to authentic Orthodoxy within the framework of the Catholic tradition. On the basis of a detailed review of statements made by hierarchs and other leaders of his own and the Roman communions, he suggests a number of concrete steps which he feels could reestablish a proper relationship between the See

of Rome and the Melkite communities, while enabling Melkite Christians to witness to the Latin West by living "the fullness of life in Orthodoxy."

We are very pleased to be able to publish Dr Khairallah's study in this issue of the *Quarterly*, and to accompany it with a response by Fr John Meyendorff, Dean of St Vladimir's Seminary. These two articles represent an important contribution to ecumenical dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, and we hope they will serve to stimulate further discussion that might contribute, constructively and irenically, to the quest for authentic union between all those who profess and live the Orthodox Catholic Faith.

Popular piety often tends to inflate various traditions surrounding the lives of saints. Occasionally the reverse occurs: an authentic witness to holiness becomes the victim of popular indifference or even slander. Such, it seems, has been the case with Hieromonk Juvenaly, recently canonized for the extraordinary missionary work he accomplished in Alaska at the end of the eighteenth century. Controversy over the life and activity of Father Juvenaly has focused on the reasons for his murder by a group of Yup'ik Eskimos. Fr Michael Oleksa has done extensive research on the question of Juvenaly's mission and martyrdom. In his article published here, he offers new and convincing evidence from the oral tradition of Alaskan Native peoples to confirm the fact that the "Diary" of Fr Juvenaly, upon which the widespread account of the reasons for his death are based, is indeed a forgery, and that the often disparaged Hieromonk was in fact murdered in the course of evangelizing inhabitants of Quinhagak on the Kuskokwim River.

Fr Oleksa renders an important service, both to the memory of Hieromonk Juvenaly and to the Orthodox Church as a whole, by demonstrating on the basis of solid historical evidence both the effectiveness of Juvenaly's ministry and the holiness of his life. Orthodox Christians, spiritual children of St Herman and St Innocent, can also rejoice and give thanks for the protection and intercession of the Holy Martyr Juvenaly of Alaska.

THE ECUMENICAL VOCATION OF THE MELKITE CHURCH

Philip A. Khairallah

On the 25th of January 1959, the newly elected and enthroned John XXIII, bishop of Old Rome, Patriarch of the West, and Universal Pontiff, made the unexpected announcement of his plan to convoke a Council, now known as Vatican II. Among other things, the Council was to "open a window upon the Church," "to lead to its renewal," "a bringing up to date, or *aggiornamento*," and to speak to the problem of Christian Unity. "The entire Christian family has not yet fully attained the visible unity in truth desired by Christ, and the Catholic Church therefore considers it her duty to work actively so that there may be fulfilled the great mystery of that unity." These words were spoken by Pope John in a homily given at the Liturgy opening the Council.

Soon after the Council was convoked, a Preparatory Commission was created under the presidency of Cardinal Tardini, who a few weeks later wrote to all the Bishops asking them "for advice, suggestions and wishes . . . in all frankness and freedom . . . relating to questions that should be considered by the future Council." Instead of replying individually, the Melkite hierarchy preferred to send a collective response. A special Synod was called from the 24th to the 29th of August 1959, and a response was sent to Cardinal Tardini in the form of two letters, the first dealing with certain dogmatic, liturgical and disciplinary questions, and the second dealing with relations with the Orthodox Churches. This note stated, "Our Melkite Greek Catholic Church believes that our most im-

portant mission is to work for Christian Unity, particularly in drawing together the Holy See of Rome with our Orthodox brothers." This theme was constantly repeated throughout the next six years, which led the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople (New Rome) to tell the late Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV that he not only spoke in the Council in the name of his own Melkite community, but that he also spoke in the name of all the East.

Thus, for at least the past twenty-five years, the Melkite Greek Catholic Church has placed at the center of its existence its ecumenical vocation, the unity of the Churches of the East and of the West, the making known of Orthodoxy to the Roman Catholic Church, and the task of ensuring that Catholicism and Latinism are distinct and separate. However, before looking into details of the above, we will have to understand how the Melkite see themselves; what role they can play in the ecumenical activities between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches, now considered to be "sister" Churches; what relations to espouse with the Roman Catholic as well as with the Orthodox Churches; and finally, what the ultimate goal of the Melkites should be once "the unity of the Holy Churches of God" has been reestablished.

I. *How do Melkites see themselves, and how do others see them?*

Over the past twenty years since the end of Vatican II, there has been a profound change in the self-awareness of the Melkites. Before Vatican II, the Christians living in the Near East, as well as their brothers living in the Western world, were known as *Catheolics* of the Melkite Rite, or even Roman Catholics of the Melkite Rite, or even as Catholics who make the sign of the cross backwards. Our Churches in this country especially, were known as St (so and so) Roman Catholic Church, Melkite or Byzantine Rite. Although the formal definition of the word "Rite" includes the manner of organization, proper canon law, customs, etc., pertaining to each particular body of Christians, yet the average person on the street under-

stood it to mean "quaint ways of doing things, just a little different from the rest of us." The Melkite Rite became a museum piece, something you took second grade students to, and then asked them to write a one page report on their field trip. As Donald Attwater says in his introduction to *The Christian Churches of the East. I. Churches in Communion with Rome*, "All these differences, striking as they are, are less important than the likenesses which underlie them. In its faith, its religious dogma and canons of conduct, there is complete oneness in all parts of the Catholic Church; there is no room for either likeness or dissimilarity; there is simply identity. But even in accidental matters, of worship, discipline, usage and mental habits they are still Catholic." Thus, from this framework of understanding, the ethos and the *raison d'être* of the Melkites is accidental. Compare this to a definition given by Patriarch Maximos IV of blessed memory, when asked by a reporter what the Melkites are. "The Melkite Greek Catholic Church is the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, in communion with Rome." Or as Archbishop Joseph Tawil, the Melkite Bishop of the United States, stated: "I prefer to comment about the Eastern Churches and not the Eastern Rite Churches. To speak otherwise would make the Eastern Churches mere appendices of the Latin Church, a kind of concession of no importance. Furthermore, it would be a distortion of the equality between the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches, as proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council." Somehow, the first definition conflicts with the other two, and yet their implications are very broad.

If the Melkites are the Greek Orthodox Church... in communion with Rome, then they must, as a Church, have their own ecclesiology, spirituality, traditions, history, canon law, theology and self-awareness. The Melkites are in communion with the Church of Rome, therefore the basic tenets of their faith must be the same, because if the faith were not the same, there would be no communion. However, as a Church, the way they express their faith in its totality must be specifically theirs, and but for exceptional circumstances, there should be no interference by another Church in what they do. The Melkites are the local Church of Antioch, united around their

Bishop, celebrating the Eucharist. They are the Catholic Church, as one of their early Bishops, St Ignatios of Antioch told us.

This developing self-awareness of the Melkite Church is evolving slowly. They have had to overcome a Latinizing trend for over 250 years, and this is due to some of their hierarchs, together with their Patriarch, and some of the clergy and faithful, who have been in the forefront of a search for their "roots." The path is long and tortuous, but when listening to the prophetic words of the late Patriarch Maximos IV spoken at Vatican II, more and more are convinced that the way he outlined is the only way to ensure Melchite survival into the twenty-first century.

II. *Is the Melkite Church a bridge between Catholicism and Orthodoxy?*

The split in the Church of Antioch in 1724 has often been recounted. The causes of the split were numerous, none of which, however, related to theological problems or theological issues. In brief, social and political issues played the predominant role. There was the issue of Antioch versus Constantinople, Greek versus Arabic speaking, protection of the Christians in the Near East by various Western powers, the role of the king of France in economic and trade relations between Syria and the other Mediterranean countries. There was the problem of schools, mainly erected and staffed by French missionaries, and the problem of printing liturgical books and the Bible in Arabic. The only two presses that could print Arabic were in Rome and Holland. Some of the problems were not new, and could be traced to the Crusaders: the capture of Antioch, the exile of the Melkite Patriarch and the appointment of a Latin Patriarch. There were internal problems, such as the rivalry between Damascus and Aleppo, and the role of the French Consul in Sidon. Finally there was the problem of educating the clergy. With the opening of the Greek College in Rome, many of the future influential laymen and future hierarchs studied in Rome and were influenced by

western theological patterns of thinking. Many of these issues became acute in the one hundred years preceding the separation. At the death of Patriarch Athanasios IV Dabbas in Aleppo in 1724, some of the bishops elected Cyril IV Tanas, while the rest elected Sylvester. From that time on there has been a separate line of Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch. After a stormy beginning, Patriarch Cyril was confirmed by Rome, and Patriarch Sylvester by Constantinople. The confirmation from Rome did not come until 1729, and only after Pope Urban VIII insisted that Patriarch Cyril take an oath to change nothing of the usages of the Greek rite. However, alas, Latinization had progressed very rapidly, sometimes enforced from the outside, but more often brought on by the Latinized hierarchs, usually acting mistakenly but in good conscience. As E. Lanne stated: "Whenever a part of the Church unites itself to Rome, the other part of this same Church, usually the majority, stays away from this Roman communion. Thus, the Orthodox part reaffirms its character as a Church in opposition to Roman communion, while, because of its union to Rome, the Uniate body loses this ecclesial consciousness and becomes a 'rite.'" (E. Lanne, "The post-tridentine conception of primacy and the origin of the Uniate Churches." *Irenikon*, vol. 52, No 1, 1979, pp. 5-33.)

The further growth of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church again depended upon social, economic and political measures. An added factor, however, was proselytism. With needed support coming in from the West, the Catholic portion of the Church of Antioch grew and flourished, and in many instances the less educated Orthodox, wanting the same benefits as their Catholic brothers, saw no harm in joining. In other instances, a parish not liking its priest would approach the other Bishop and be accepted into communion. So over the years, from at least 1724 through the mid twentieth century, the Melkite Greek Catholic Church grew at the expense of the Orthodox Church. As the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch said in a conference given at the *Pro Oriente* Foundation in Vienna in 1978: "The Catholic Church has not recognized how these last three centuries have deeply wounded the soul of the Orthodox Churches. We were and still are culturally and eco-

nominally weakened Churches. Our sister Church in Rome sent us legions of missionaries, often the most qualified. However, the confidence with which we received them was betrayed. Instead of helping us renew ourselves, the powerful Churches of the West attempted to 'convert' us, and have founded at our expense, Uniate, Latin and Protestant Churches. Is it by division that one helps a Church, a sister Church as we are called today, to renew itself?" Thank God, this latter activity has ceased. Both Patriarchs, Maximos IV and Maximos V, have specifically stated that there will be no proselytism, and that if an Orthodox faithful approaches a Melkite priest or Bishop, he will first be referred back to his hierarch. Only in extreme cases, will a change be approved, and this will be after consultation, and at least the tacit agreement of the other side. This agreement, in general, has been abided by on both sides, although a few years ago its fragility was demonstrated when one of the Orthodox priests was accepted into the Basilian Salvatorian Order, without consulting the Bishop.

In view of this stormy history, it is difficult to see how the Melkite Greek Catholic Church could ever have been designated as a bridge between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. It is difficult to see how any rational Orthodox could believe that they could join the Catholic Church and retain all of their "traditions." It is difficult to see how the Melkite Church could be set up as an example of what the Orthodox Church would be after they returned to the Church of Rome. As every architect knows, a bridge needs two pedestals to support the arch. There may be one ecumenical pedestal in Rome, but the other one is missing. Thus, the image of a bridge is seriously defective and has been deficient since it was first proposed after Vatican I. Another newer problem with the bridge image is that one should ask why bridge Churches are necessary, if the Orthodox Churches are called "sister Churches." Bridges are not necessary within a family. This terminology of sister Church was first used at Vatican II, and was in sharp contrast to the label of schismatic or dissident Churches given to the Orthodox before Vatican II. If sister Churches, why a bridge?

Thus it has become necessary to rethink the ecumenical role of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church.

III. *What, then, is the ecumenical role of the Melkite Church?*

If the Melkite Church cannot be the bridge Church between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, what role can it play to specifically answer Our Lord, "That they may be one even as we are one" (John 17:11). Directly, probably nothing—or only very little. In the few areas of ecumenical involvement, such as occasionally in the Bilateral Catholic-Orthodox dialogue in the United States and the International Orthodox Roman Catholic Theological Dialogue, the Melkite participants have sat with the Roman Catholics, and on the rare occasions that they spoke, they essentially presented a Roman Catholic position. The Orthodox, in general, do not recognize the Uniate Eastern Catholic Churches as independent Churches. It is only very recently that the Melkites have appeared as Melkites, and this was at the meeting of the Near East Council of Churches that met on Cyprus in February, 1985. At other times, when the Melkites have wanted to participate at National or World Council of Churches meetings, they have been told not to. Instead, they were instructed to wait and follow what Rome wanted them to do. Thus the question again: what ecumenical role can the Melkite Church play, and more specifically, what role can it play in the United States, far from the social and political environment of the Middle East?

There is one, and only one major role the Melkite Church can play, and that is to witness to Orthodoxy within Roman Catholicism. In other words, the Melkites have to live the fullness of Orthodoxy, to be true to its roots, and to live it in communion with Rome. The true Orthodox Christian is not only he who thinks in an Orthodox manner, but he who also feels according to Orthodoxy and lives Orthodoxy, who strives to embody the true Orthodox teachings of Christ in his life. First of all, the Melkites have to live as a Church, the local Church of Antioch and its daughter Church in the United States, in communion with the local Church of Rome, and the local Churches of the Roman communion in the United States. The Melkites have to demonstrate by their whole existence the

reality of Eastern Christianity. Since they already are in communion with Rome, some of the Roman Catholics will listen to them, possibly a little more attentively than they will listen to the Orthodox Churches, who in the mind of the average Catholic are still an unknown. There is a greater awareness among the Roman Catholics in this country that Eastern Catholic Churches exist, and that somehow they are legitimate. On the other hand, the Orthodox Churches are not quite acceptable, and for some people they may even have something to do with Protestants. Thus the ecumenical mission of the Melkite Church is to make the Roman Catholics know, understand and love the East, and this can only be done when they live the fullness of Orthodoxy, not only as a quaint "Rite" but as a Church. The Melkites have to constantly correct their Catholic brothers, in insisting that they are a Church, that they are not *under* Rome, but are in communion with Rome. The Melkites must insist that their bishops act like bishops, and that servility to Rome in the guise of obedience cannot be considered a virtue, but is a sign of weakness, leading to a creeping Latinization of the Church. Finally, the Melkites must show maturity in all of their actions, so that they do not always go to the Roman Catholics for help. Although there are many areas which need to be developed in demonstrating their Orthodox way of life, this review will focus on only a few examples.

IV. *Concrete ecumenical examples.*

Three examples among many will be discussed in demonstrating how the Melkites can act as an Orthodox Church in communion with Rome. These are (1) the role of the Patriarch and his Synod in relation to the Bishops, and the role of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches; (2) the ordination of married men to the priesthood; and (3) the Melkite Church's identity as a Church which can preach the Word of God to all, irrespective of ethnic background or liturgical usage; in other words, the question of "rite" and the "change of rite."

- (1) Since their establishment in this country, and espe-

cially since 1958, when the Melkites gathered together for their first annual convention in Cleveland, their desire has been the establishment of a diocese, ruled by their own Bishop. This yearning was an heir to a long tradition, since just under one thousand nine hundred years ago, one of the early Bishops of Antioch, Ignatios the God-bearer, wrote to the Smyrnaeans on his way to martyrdom in Rome: "Only that Eucharist may be regarded as legitimate which is celebrated with the Bishop or his delegate presiding. Where the Bishop is, there let the community be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. Without the Bishop you are allowed neither to baptize nor to hold an agape celebration. Whatever he approves is fine in God's sight so that all that is done may be legitimized and certain."

When the first missionaries arrived in this country, they were received by the Roman Catholic Bishops and aided in establishing Churches of their own "rite," while remaining under the authority of the local hierarch, and attached to the local Roman "Rite" diocese. This led to fragmentation, since the different parishes scattered from New Hampshire to California had nothing in common. This yearning for a Bishop was greatly reinforced with the Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite in 1964, which stated that, "The Sacred Council . . . solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, as much as those of the West, have a full right and are duty bound to rule themselves, each in accordance with its own established disciplines. . . ."

By 1965, after a letter sent to His Beatitude Patriarch Maximos IV on behalf of some of the Melkite clergy and prominent laymen, the Holy Synod together with the Patriarch responded immediately by proceeding to elect a Bishop for the United States according to its time-honored rules and traditions. The candidate originally selected by the Synod was not accepted by the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches. Therefore it intervened against the wishes of the Patriarch and the Holy Synod, and through the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, it appointed the late Father Justin Najmy as Apostolic Exarch, responsible only to Rome. The Synod together with the Patriarch protested this appointment, primarily because

this action further separated the American Melkite Church from the Patriarchate. This was against the apparent wishes of the Fathers at Vatican II, who stated in the same Decree on the Eastern Churches that "The patriarchs with their synods are the highest authority for all business of the patriarchate, including the right of establishing new eparchies and of nominating Bishops of their own rite within the territorial bounds of the Patriarchate. . . ." The Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches stated that the new Bishop was to have only liturgical ties with his Mother Church, and that his jurisdiction was to be shared with Roman Catholic Bishops. The exarchate was to be governed by Roman Rite practices and policies. Somehow, the appointment of Bishop Najmy was not a shining example of ecumenism in relation to the day when Orthodox and Catholics would share the same chalice.

The term of the first Exarch was tragically brief. He served the Melkite Church for two years before succumbing to a heart attack. While presiding over the funeral services, Patriarch Maximos V notified Rome that he had appointed an administrator for the Diocese. He based his decision on the belief that the appointment was a matter fully within the jurisdiction of the Patriarch according to the most ancient practice and customs of the Melkite Church, as stated in the Decree on the Eastern Churches quoted above. The Patriarch stated that the documents of Vatican II abrogated and superseded the 1958 Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches. He added that he felt an obligation in conscience to intervene immediately in the appointment of an administrator, since a failure to act would give scandal to the faithful of the Melkite Church in the United States, and would confirm the decisions of *Cleri Sanctitatis* (the code of canon law for the Eastern Churches) over the decisions of Vatican II. For him to have ceded his authority to a Roman Congregation in this important matter would have had severe ecumenical repercussions, for it would have called into question the sincerity with which the Church intended to implement the decisions of the Council.

Within twenty-four hours, Cardinal de Furstenburg, prefect for the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches, told the Patriarch to suspend any activity contrary to *Cleri*

Sanctitati under the sanction of nullity. He informed the Patriarch that further instructions would be forthcoming through the Apostolic Delegate in Washington. Nevertheless, the Patriarch went ahead and appointed Father John Jadaa to be administrator until a new Bishop could be elected.

The fundamental question in this case was whether the decisions of Vatican II were to prevail, or whether the Roman Congregation and Canon Law took priority. Was the Patriarch and his Synod to be the highest authority for the business of the patriarchate, or was a Roman Congregation to serve as a super patriarchate, reducing the Patriarch to a functionary dependent upon a group in Rome, somewhat corresponding to the civil service in government? Although the Pope was president of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches, the working members were priests and bishops. Unless immediate actions were taken, the ecumenical consequences would be drastic, and the example shown to the Orthodox Churches would clearly indicate that "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose," and that although the decrees of Vatican II were full of good words, nothing had changed in Rome.

A few months later, the matter remained unresolved. The advice of eminent canonists, theologians and ecumenists was sought, and their recommendations were studied. What was at issue was ecumenism, first in relations of the Roman Catholic Church to Orthodoxy, but also with the Churches issued from the Reformation. The way the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches dealt with the Eastern Catholic Churches could be considered a gauge of future relations between Rome and Orthodoxy. Only a year before, Patriarch Athenagoras of New Rome (Constantinople) had told Patriarch Maximos IV: "By your interventions, you represented us at the Second Vatican Council." Would Rome accept to deal with other Churches as equals, both Churches being of Apostolic origin and both possessing the fullness of catholicity and holiness? Finally, would statements made by a gathering of Bishops from all over the *ecumene*, approved by an overwhelming majority, and promulgated for the glory of God by Pope Paul VI, take precedence over a set of rules of law, put together mainly by theologians of the Latin "rite," during a time when the Church

of Rome was against ecumenism, and was still insisting that the dissident Eastern Churches return to Roman communion under the authority of the Vicar of Christ?

In October 1968, Patriarch Maximos V said the following at a press conference: "In 1966 the Holy See appointed Bishop Najmy as an Apostolic Exarch to head the Melkite Church in the United States. The title 'apostolic exarch' meant that, as a temporary measure, the guidance of the Melkite community would be in the hands of a representative of the Pope. In fact, the expression used among Latin Catholics is 'Vicar Apostolic' to indicate that the Bishop does not govern a true diocese, but is only a vicar to the Pope. My predecessor of blessed memory [Patriarch Maximos IV], in a detailed statement addressed to the Holy Father, made it clear that it was most unfortunate that this arrangement, which is entirely foreign to Melkite canon law, was introduced especially two years after the Second Vatican Council, and solemnly reasserted that our traditions were to be respected. Our recent Synod meeting studied this whole question carefully and agreed that the establishment of the American exarchate directly dependent upon Rome, rather than an eparchy united to the Melkite hierarchy, was contrary to the very eastern laws recognized and affirmed by the Council. The Melkite tradition, the mentality of our Christian heritage, the needs of developing a strong Melkite Church in the United States, the example we give to the Orthodox of our fidelity to the Eastern traditions, all reject the continuance of such an arrangement . . . It is not our desire to embarrass the Holy See of Rome, and thus we have accepted temporary arrangements, and are confident that His Holiness will agree that the problem should be resolved in accord with the explicit decrees of Vatican II. The Roman Pontiff is Patriarch of the West and as such plays a direct part in the choice of Bishops in the Latin Church. In the Eastern Churches, the same right is exercised by the respective Patriarchs and their Synods. We are confident that Pope Paul will acknowledge this, and that it will be possible to provide the American Melkites with a Bishop of their own, who will be a full member of the Melkite hierarchy."

A year later, the issue was still not resolved. The Holy

Synod met in an extraordinary session in May 1969, to respond to the unacceptable terms of the directives received from the Oriental Congregation. A summary of decisions taken by the Synod included the following:

“At the request of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches (March 27, 1969), His Beatitude, Maximos V convoked the Melkite Bishops in order to consider candidates to be submitted to His Holiness Pope Paul VI, to fill the vacant exarchate of the United States.

“The Fathers became fully aware of the historic and ecclesial importance of the position to be taken, of the problem at stake in their deliberations and its repercussions, not only for the future of the Melkite Church in the Near East and in the lands where it has migrated, but also for the ecumenical movement in general and the reunion of the Orthodox Churches with the Roman Church in particular. In addition, the Fathers became conscious of the gravity of the decisions adopted by the Synod and its far reaching consequences for our relations with the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches and with the clergy who have the care of our faithful in the diaspora.”

They first insisted on a vigorous assertion of their deeply rooted Catholic sentiments, their filial devotion towards the august person of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, their joyful attachment to his primacy, and their total submission to his authority.

After this sincere declaration of their Catholic belief, which applies to the whole as well as to each part of the following, they deemed it necessary to bring to the attention of His Holiness the following points: the facts of the matter in question; the basic principles, juridical, psychological and ecclesial, in opposing the Sacred Congregation; and the unacceptable solution proposed by the Congregation and the resulting problems created.

After reviewing the situation, all the documentation collected so far was submitted to His Holiness. In a letter dated November 12, 1968, the Congregation for the Eastern Churches assured the Patriarch that His Holiness had charged the Pontifical Commission for the Codification of the Canon Law “in matters concerning the relations of the Patriarchate with the

faithful and bishops located outside the patriarchal territory. . . .” In this letter, however, the Sacred Congregation indicated that it will maintain, until the above mentioned commission gives its decision, the right, based upon *Cleri Sanctitate* to proceed directly to the nomination of the exarch. Because of this position taken by the Congregation, the Synod was forced to look for a temporary solution which would respect both views. It suggested that, until the Commission for the Redaction of the Canon Law gives its decision, the Apostolic See of Antioch send to the United States one of its bishops as apostolic administrator.

Since then, however, the winds have changed decisively against the Holy Synod. A letter from the Congregation on December 16, 1968, froze the debate on the essential points until the ruling of the Canonical Commission, dismissed the suggestion of an apostolic administrator, and attempted to oblige the Synod to accept the limitation of the issue for the choice of qualified candidates for the vacant position. The problem was to be decided by a “plenary congregation” which the Patriarch could attend as a member *de jure*. The Patriarch went to Rome to participate. The meeting was held on February 20, 1969. Having realized that a question of such importance to us had been treated in a routine manner, and that the Cardinal members of the Congregation did not seem to appreciate the gravity of the issue, the Patriarch was forced to make recourse to His Holiness, as arbiter between us and the Congregation. The meeting was held on February 22, at which time Patriarch Maximos made two suggestions:

1. That the Synod be charged by His Holiness to submit to him three names of candidates, from which His Holiness would select the Exarch, and

2. That he designate Archbishop Neophytos Edelby to examine the entire situation; he would be in charge of studying once more the candidates to be submitted and the whole course of action to be taken until the Commission for the Revision of the Canon Law gave its decision.

An answer to these suggestions reached the Patriarch on the 20th of March. The disproportion and inconsistency between the promise and the fact was that, even though the Synod

would choose three candidates and submit their names, the Holy See would not be bound by the selection of the Patriarch and the Synod. It was simply not anticipated that the Eastern Churches would be abused in such a manner during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI, especially as everyone was thankful to His Holiness for having officially reconciled the Western Church with her sister Orthodox Church, and for having implicitly denounced through his visit to Constantinople and to the Hagia Sophia, the haughty and inconsiderate attitude of the Roman legates towards the Oriental Churches.

It was not anyone's wish to cast doubt on the intentions of the officials of the Congregation, but we realized once more the chasm which separates us: two different mentalities, two different ways of looking at the same problem, and in particular, two divergent initial positions concerning the canonical legislation to be followed.

After citing the pertinent sections of the Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, the Synod statement continued:

"It is in the light of these texts that we have claimed and defended our rights.

"1. The Patriarch with his Synod is supreme in his Church. Why then should he not enjoy this same authority with respect to his subjects transplanted outside the East, especially when they themselves wish to remain faithful to their Rite and to their Patriarchate? The Orthodox Patriarchs exercise the same jurisdiction over their subjects who have migrated to other lands. In its past history, even before the time of the separation, the Patriarchate of Antioch has known cases of Melkite Exarchates and Catholicates established far beyond its territory. The Latin jurisdiction is exercised in the heart of the Eastern territories, for example, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Why should this right be denied to our Patriarch? Why separate these Churches of the diaspora from their Father and Patriarch in order to subject them to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches?

"2. The least we can say after Vatican II is that *Cleri Sanctitate* has been superseded by the conciliar decrees, at least

on the sensitive and constitutional points which restore the authentic physiognomy of the Patriarchate. What would remain of this physiognomy if the Patriarchate were dismembered and its historical and natural rights over more than half of its people denied?

"3. The extension of the Patriarchal jurisdiction to the Melkites of the diaspora implies at most a personal jurisdiction that is subject to precise regulation by law, approved by His Holiness. Such legislation will take into account all the aspects of the problem. This patriarchal power would not encroach on the universal, territorial and personal jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff. On the contrary, the Roman primacy will be more evident when it defends the traditional prerogatives of the Patriarchs.

"4. The term *aggregatus* which defines the relations of the hierarchy of the diaspora with the Patriarchate of origin and which, for this reason, constitutes the core of this canonical debate, should be construed according to the innovative and reformatory sense of the whole decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches. Any other interpretation, which would take advantage of the fact that this term is a new one in canonical language, in order to restrict its meaning and its application, or to reduce it to a mere repetition of the prescriptions of canon 380 of *Cleri Sanctitate*, would betray the spirit and the scope of the conciliar decree and would obstruct the salutary work initiated by Vatican II.

"5. We are in a better position to evaluate the disastrous consequences of this obstruction. It means, in the case of the separation of the Church of the diaspora from its Mother Church, that the consequences would be disastrous for the future of Christianity in the Near East, in the Church of the diaspora itself, and for the future of ecumenism and the union of the Churches as well. These same considerations were cited in detail in repeated letters sent to His Holiness. These same considerations were in the mind of the Fathers of the Council when they adopted the decrees mentioned above."

In spite of everything, still nothing had been accomplished by the summer of 1970. At that time, the Patriarch wrote a letter that was published in the Annual Convention book of

the Melkites in the United States. Among other things, he said the following:

“This has been a period of controversy and confusion, and the future of the Melkite community in the United States remains in doubt. It has a great and blessed future if it maintains and develops its distinctive traditions of faith and doctrine, of discipline and piety. It may seem small in numbers, but it has a potential impact of ideas and example upon the Latin Church in this country. If, however, the Melkite Church in the United States or elsewhere is assimilated to, or imitative of the Latin Church, it has no further reason for continued existence.

“During the controversy over a successor to Bishop Najmy, it may have seemed that silencing of the debate was a part of peace and charity. Now it is clear that the discussion should have been even more widespread and open; we must never fear the truth. Silence, evasion, concealment of genuine differences do not serve either love or truth; in this case they have multiplied confusion.

“Prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Eastern Catholic Churches had been obliged, as a condition for communion with the Holy Roman See and contrary to their rights and traditions, to seek Roman confirmation for the election of Bishops. The Council corrected this . . . The law and tradition of the Latin Church, at least in modern times, is that the Pope should name the bishops. The right of others to elect bishops, although nominally recognized in the Latin Code of Canon Law, has gradually disappeared. This has been a source of confusion for Eastern Catholics living among the Latins, but it cannot be too strongly insisted that Eastern bishops should not be named by the Pope, even though he retains the right to intervene in particular cases by way of exception.

“Since the Council so often tells us Eastern Catholics to observe our traditional disciplines, many have validly insisted that the Patriarch and the Synod should move unilaterally, establish an Eparchy for the United States, and designate its bishop in accord with canon law. This is, in all cases, to be preferred to the Latin canon law, which, as the Council reminds us, should not be followed to the disadvantage of our own usages. This is a strong argument, especially because we

must honestly and candidly state that the Roman Curia has taken no steps at all and has not encouraged us to take any steps, to implement the 1964 Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches. It is nothing less than scandalous that this decree, alone among the decisions of the Council, has remained without implementation over these several years. How can we expect our Orthodox brethren to look upon us with respect if the clear intention of the Second Vatican Council is ignored, as so many other papal promises to Eastern Churches have been in the past . . .

“Thus the Patriarch and his Synod have entered into negotiations with representatives of the Pope over many months. A *compromise* was reached, to the effect that *for this time only* the choice of the Bishop would be made by the Roman See from among three names designated after consultation with the clergy and the people. In the future, it was agreed that the canonical norms affecting the Eastern Churches would be acknowledged and respected.”

The choice of the Holy See and the Patriarch was Archbishop Joseph Tawil, Eparch of the Diocese of Newton for the Melkites in the United States. Archbishop Joseph has been ruling his Church for the past fifteen years, according to the precepts of St Ignatius the God-bearer of Antioch, and has proven to be a worthy Eparch for the diocese. A few years ago, it was felt both by the growing size of the diocese, as well as the vast geographical areas of the diocese (the territorial extent of the United States), that an auxiliary Bishop be elected, to assist Archbishop Joseph in the multitudinous details of watching over his dispersed flock. A very similar scenario has occurred, with different understandings of the canon laws, the jurisdiction of the Patriarch, patriarchal territories, and the relationship of the Melkite Bishops in this country with the Latin Bishops as well as with the Synod and Patriarch. At a meeting with the Melkite clergy in July 1984, Patriarch Maximos told them that once again Rome is insisting on appointing the auxiliary Bishop, while the Synod is insisting on electing one. The Patriarch wrote and presented his case in person to the Roman officials of the Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches. He was told that the temporary settlement reached

in 1970, with the Synod submitting three names to Rome, with Rome picking one of the three, or anyone else they so desired, was the only acceptable way. When the Patriarch told them that the settlement reached was to be only a temporary one, he was told that this temporary solution was now to become the rule and that until the revision of the Oriental Canon laws were complete, and promulgated by the Pope, no other actions could be considered.

On April 3, 1986, the following news release was issued by the Office of Communications of the Melkite Diocese of Newton: "Pope John Paul II has named Father John A. Elya as auxiliary bishop to Archbishop Joseph E. Tawil of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton. The announcement was made in Washington by Archbishop Pio Laghi, apostolic pro-nuncio to the United States." There was no mention of the Patriarch or the Holy Synod, no mention of the solemn declarations of Vatican II, such as: "The Churches of the East, as much as those of the West, have a full right and are duty bound to rule themselves . . ." (Paragraph 5 of the *Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite*). "The patriarchs with their synods are the highest authority for all business of the patriarchate . . ." (Paragraph 9). "By the name Eastern patriarch, is meant the bishop to whom belongs jurisdiction over all bishops, not excepting metropolitans, clergy and people of his own territory or rite, in accordance with canon law . . ." (Paragraph 7). The ecumenical implications of this announcement have not yet been analyzed, but it would appear that fifteen years of dialogue between the Melkites and Rome have been wasted.

The discussion of the election of a Bishop for the Melkites in the United States has been described in some detail. Unless the traditional rights of the Patriarch and his Synod are fully recognized and implemented, the ecumenical role of the Melkite Church in the reunion of Christendom will be totally useless. Either the Melkite Church will have to buckle down to Rome and take a Roman position in all instances of ecumenical dialogue, or else it will have to prove that it is a Church in communion with the Roman Church, but not under it. To do so the Melkite Church must show its independence from Rome

in all actions not related to the essential faith and morals they all share. Ecclesial independence, without outside interference, is the only way the Melkite Church can survive, if it wants to be true to its ethos and its roots.

(2) Another example of living the life of Orthodoxy in communion with Rome concerns a married priesthood. It has been the continuous tradition of all the Eastern Churches to ordain married men to the priesthood, and to keep a sharp distinction between monks, who are always celibate, and the diocesan priests, who are usually married. This hallowed tradition was abrogated only at the end of the last century, and only for those Eastern Catholics who came to this country to seek a better way of life. A letter from the then Secretary of the Sacred Oriental Congregation in 1934, Cardinal Sincero, typifies the thinking of that era: "This regulation (an enforced celibate clergy) arose, not new, but anew, from the peculiar conditions of the Ruthenian population in the U.S. There it represents an immigrant element and a minority, and it could not, therefore, pretend to maintain there its own customs and traditions which are in contrast with those which are the legitimate customs and traditions of Catholicism in the United States, and much less to have there a clergy which could be the source of painful perplexity or scandal to the majority of American Catholics." That the situation has not change can be seen in a letter written by Pope Paul VI to His Beatitude Patriarch Maximos V, dated October 31, 1977. "We wish to assure the Melkite Pastors that questions concerning the life and progress of their Church are felt by the common Father as his own. There is no doubt that among these questions there is that of the preservation of the spiritual, liturgical and canonical traditions of the Melkites in the communities which are outside the patriarchal territory itself. . . . Specifically in the matter of the married clergy, we know that it touches on an extremely delicate point, one of the current practices of the Latin Church. It appeared to us—to Ourselves and to the Holy See in general—that the discipline of the celibate priesthood must remain unchanged in the Latin Church. This is because we are convinced of its deep meaning

and its usefulness for the Church—without, on the other hand, prejudicing the different tradition of the Eastern Church. In those areas where the Latin Church has been established for centuries, it is understandable that the presence of married Eastern priests, constituting a rather unusual and new fact, poses some delicate problems for the Latin Rite communities. This is why the Holy See, as Your Beatitude has been informed from time to time, has decided on this particular point to suspend the application of the general principle of the preservation of the traditions proper to the Eastern communities outside their patriarchal territories. This has been decided not for the Melkite Church only, but also for other communities which would have liked to apply it in all its extent even in territories not comprised within their patriarchate. Thus the Melkite hierarchy might as well make its own these concerns which, for the good of all the Church, have been those of the Holy See.”

Although the Melkite Church had three married priests serving in the United States, the matter was brought to a head when a married man was ordained to the priesthood by His Beatitude, Patriarch Maximos V in May, 1977. An unnamed Vatican spokesman charged: “Having been ordained in the Middle East, as a few others have who continue to reside and operate in the Middle East, it was thought that these reverend gentlemen would not be assigned to serve in the Eparchy of Newton. In so far as they were to be assigned to service in this Eparchy, their ordination was illicit.” The Patriarch was moved to respond. “Ordinarily, it would have been preferable to ignore such abusive, erroneous, and confused comments,” said a spokesman for the Patriarch. He continued, “They suggest, however, that His Beatitude has celebrated the sacrament of Holy Orders illicitly on three occasions. Thus they are of the gravest affront to the person of the Patriarch of Antioch, to Archbishop Tawil, in whose Eparchy the priests exercise their sacred ministry, and worst of all, to the priests themselves and their families.” Patriarch Maximos V further added, “The Patriarch wishes to make the following points clear, as he reaffirms that the Melkite Church of Antioch acts and has acted in full communion with the Church of Rome. First, no agree-

ment, undertaking, or condition was accepted by the Patriarch and his Synod, or by the Eparchy of Newton, as a requirement for the recent establishment of the Eparchy by which the ordination of married men to the order of presbyters in or for the United States could be considered unlawful or illicit in any way. Such a condition would have been a grave violation of the traditions of the Church and of the solemn affirmations of the Second Vatican Council. . . . Second, the repetitious assertion that the ministry of Eastern married priests is somehow pastorally undesirable in the United States or in North America is completely unfounded. There are hundreds upon hundreds of married Orthodox and other Eastern priests in North America. They are rightly held in the highest esteem for their ministry and for their family life, not only by their own faithful but also by the Latin Catholics who know them. . . . It is unbelievable that nameless minor officials of the Roman Curia should publicly harass this ancient Church of Antioch, which venerates St Peter as its first bishop and where the Apostle Paul installed presbyters (Acts 14: 21-23). But our principle concern, and one which weighs heavily on our conscience, is that the subversion of the Eastern discipline of a married presbyterate will deprive us of priests and lead to a lessening of the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of the Holy Mysteries."

This question has still not been resolved. The five married priests now serving in the Eparchy are held in limbo. They have not officially been given pastoral assignments. Whenever the question has been raised, the answer has been that (1) the Patriarch and his Synod are still dialoguing with Rome, and are waiting a resolution to the problem, or (2) they have to wait until the new Canon Law for the Oriental Churches is promulgated. In ecumenical meetings with the Orthodox, one question is always asked: Why has Rome forbidden the Melkites to live according to their traditions, and if this is what is meant by being in communion with the Church of Rome, then will all the other Orthodox traditions go the same way? Can the Eastern Churches' tradition of married clergy have any influence on the Latin Church's handling of their married deacons? A deacon is a cleric, having received the sacred order

of ordination to the diaconate by the laying on of the Bishop's hands. Are their wives to be excluded from parish activities, and their children made fun of, or even excluded from the local parochial school? This has happened to the few married Eastern presbyters serving in the United States. Thus, to re-emphasize, the major ecumenical role of the Melkites is to live the fullness of Orthodoxy in communion with Rome, to set an example to the Roman Church of what it means to live in communion with their sister Churches, the Orthodox. Accepting different traditions such as married priests is only one such step.

(3) The third example to be discussed, and in which the Melkite Church must play an essential ecumenical role, is the openness of the Church to all who want to express their faith the way they do. Up until Vatican II, those who entered into full communion with the Catholic Church could only be accepted into the Roman Catholic Church if they came from one of the Protestant denominations or were non-Christian. Those from the Eastern Orthodox Churches had a choice of retaining their own rite or of joining the Roman rite. This ruling affected Melkites in this country: they could not go out and preach the Gospel and their vision of Christianity, because if they did stir up the soul of the "catechumen," they could not accept him unless he happened to be an Antiochian Orthodox. All others had to be turned over to the nearest Roman Catholic Church. Since Vatican II, this situation has eased with the Decree on the Eastern Churches, paragraph #4: "Finally each and every Catholic, as also the baptized member of every non-Catholic Church or community who enters into the fullness of Catholic communion, should everywhere retain his proper rite, cherish it, and observe it to the best of his ability. This rule does not deny the right whereby persons, communities, or areas may in special cases have recourse to the Apostolic See, which, as the supreme judge of interchurch relations, will directly or through other authorities, meet the needs of the occasion in an ecumenical spirit and issue opportune directives, decrees or prescripts."

In general, since Vatican II, converts can be received by the Melkite Churches, and a number have already joined the faith community. However, this does not fully apply to Roman Catholics who feel at home in the spirituality of the Melkite Church, since they require a "transfer of rite." This is a process whereby an individual changes his status as a member of one of the particular Churches which constitute the Catholic Church, to join another of the particular Churches. The major problem with this results when Roman Catholics want to serve as presbyters in the Melkite Church. The Holy See has in the past been accustomed to grant an indult of "change of rite" to those who desired it for reasonable causes. However, in 1977 a ruling was issued from Rome entitled "Guidelines for the Transfer of Rite Cases." It states that the Holy See is not accustomed to grant a change of rite, but only an indult which allows a candidate to receive sacred ordination and to exercise his ministry as though he belonged to the Latin rite.

This ruling can only be considered as against ecumenism. For the past twelve years, fourteen candidates have been ordained to the sacred priesthood by Archbishop Joseph, all of whom were originally Roman Catholic. The above ruling indicates none of these priests are authentically Melkite priests, but are Latin Rite priests, serving in the Melkite Eparchy at the continued will of the local Latin Rite hierarch, and that they could be pulled away at any time if the local Latin Rite hierarch so desires. This seems to be an extreme example of Roman paternalism. Just as the Roman Church sends missionaries to Latin American countries for a few years to help out the local hierarchs and diocese, so they also graciously lend us their priests. This simply means that priests in this situation are not really full members of the Eparchy, and if the Holy Spirit moves the Melkite Synod one day to elect one of these dedicated priests to be a Bishop, such an election would be unacceptable, since the priest is not a Melkite. These men have made a total commitment to serve the Church as Melkites, and they have no desire to serve as Roman Catholic clergy. If they were forced to return to the Roman Catholic diocese, it would be to the detriment of the spiritual life of the

priest, to his prayer life and to his conscience. In a study entitled "Transfer of Rite: Some Theological Reflections," published by the Damascene Society in 1984, the Rev Aidan J. Kavanagh, O.S.B., traces the origin of transfer of rite to the developing concept in Latin canonical legislation concerning the Eastern Catholic Churches of a confusion between Church and 'rite' and between 'rite' and Church. He states that this confusion amounts to a fatal equivocation on what the Church is—an equivocation which affects everything such a Church is obliged by the Gospel to do. The question is whether the Church Catholic is a single Church containing a variety of 'rites,' or whether the Church Catholic is a Communion of Churches. Roman polity, at least since the Middle Ages, has supported the first formulation of the question, Eastern polity the second. Fr Kavanagh continues by stating that if those Eastern Churches in communion with Rome connive in this polity by submitting to the requirements of obtaining "transfer of rite" dispensations from an office of the Roman synodal government, those same Churches must necessarily fail in their ecumenical ministry both to the Roman Church and the Orthodox Churches. He goes on to state that St Ignatios of Antioch's classical doctrine, "... where the Bishop is, there is the Church Catholic," is thereby fatally qualified. How can the Church through its bishop call presbyters and deacons to its service under doubt that such persons will be permitted by some office of another Church, of another Rite, to accept the Orders they are called to? Fr Kavanagh concludes that such a situation cannot be allowed to continue. Every recourse open in Latin canon law seems to have been taken, but to no effect. Extraordinary means therefore seem to be necessary in order (1) to preserve the Church of Antioch in its Eparchy of Newton from slipping into a mere ethnic curiosity, and (2) to foster that Church's healthy communion with the Roman See. What is proposed is that relations between the two Apostolic Sees be normalized as follows:

1. The See of Antioch must in the future conceive and refer to itself as a Church rather than a "rite."
2. The Patriarch and his Synod, together with the Eparchy of Newton, should declare its policy on the way by

which the Church of Antioch will proceed in accepting into itself persons from other Churches within its *ecumene*. This policy should be worked out and then presented with ecumenical firmness and courtesy to the Roman pontiff and his Holy Synod at the highest level, i.e., patriarch to patriarch, for the preservation of the tranquility of the Churches of God.

3. On the basis of this policy, the Church of Antioch should then proceed to ordain its clergy according to its own canons and traditions, and to place those clergy throughout its eparchies and exarchates, as the Church itself sees fit.

4. "Transfer of rite" cases should be handled not as legal processes but as matters of ecumenical courtesy between Churches. The phrase itself should never be used.

5. No one should be ordained for the Church of Antioch without being in communion with it and under its jurisdiction.

Finally, it cannot be stressed sufficiently that the ecclesiological principles upon which the above recommendations rest, lie in the common tradition shared equally among those Churches which rejoice in catholic orthodoxy, both east and west. It is in the face of this tradition that current Roman legislation and practice concerning "transfer of rite" are discovered to be untraditional, abnormal, and productive of severe irregularities in the *ecumene* obtaining between the Roman Church and its sister Churches of the East. In such a situation, tactical adjustments cannot succeed unless a strategic restoration of normalcy in the relations between the Churches is first accomplished.

One final ecumenical point should be mentioned. There are a number of Roman Catholics who have asked for and received ordination to the presbyterate from Eastern Orthodox Bishops. In the God appointed time, when the two Churches are back together in full communion, will these individuals still have to ask for "transfer of rite" before they can serve the Orthodox Church?

V. *What then is the ultimate goal, the final vision of Melkite ecumenism?*

In a book written by the Melkite Archbishop of Raalbeck, Elias Zoghby (which is little known in this country since it has not yet been translated into English), the author makes the point that "the Eastern Catholic or Uniate Churches suffer from being the result of a double schism. They were involved in the Great Schism of the eleventh century that led to the separation of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and then again they were the result of a schism that separated them from their mother Church, the Orthodox. This latter schism has condemned them to live and to die outside the Church that has given them their faith in Jesus Christ, and that has suffered martyrdom for many centuries, in order to transmit this faith intact from generation to generation. This Orthodox Church, our Mother Church, has given us Eastern Catholics our theological, liturgical, ascetical and monastic patrimony, a patrimony lived and developed by it throughout the centuries, and whose treasures are still being called upon by the East as well as by the West. This Orthodox Church, our Mother Church, is poor according to world standards and carries its treasure in a clay vessel, just as its founder Jesus Christ carried His divinity in fragile human flesh. This same Orthodox Church, our Mother Church, has taught us to be indulgent and human, just as Jesus Christ was. It has taught us to be less juridical and more attuned to the weaknesses of the human flesh, how always to seek a human solution to their weaknesses, by the principle of *Economia*."

This is the cornerstone of Melkite ecumenism: to relive the fullness of our faith; to act as Orthodox as the Orthodox, if not more so; to do this in its totality, while remaining in communion with the Roman Church. The only way we can justify our existence is to live the full authenticity of Orthodox traditions so as to be able to set an example for the reunion of the Churches, East and West. Looking at our existential situa-

tion today, however, as briefly reviewed above, we seem to have lost the only reason we had to justify our continued existence since we seem to have been forced gradually, and step by step, to give up what has identified us as a Church. Whether we like it or not, we have become a "rite." The Ukrainian Major Archbishop, Patriarch Slypyj, had reason to state at the end of one of the sessions of Vatican II: "Have pity on us, my brothers, we who are easterners in the Catholic Church." One of our major difficulties is that some of our Church leaders do not feel the pain of our separation, and see no reason to change the *status quo*. They are not bothered by being subject to the Oriental Congregation. Their sacerdotal formation was primarily Latin, many of them continued their education in Rome, and gradually they have become spiritually and intellectually Latinized, integrated into the Roman mentality and follow Roman Canon Law. Most importantly, they no longer feel the pain of being separated from the Orthodox Church. Until this situation can be reversed, there can be no future for the Uniate Churches. Only when we totally accept that we are Orthodox, and spiritually and intellectually live the life of Orthodoxy, only then can we witness to Roman Catholicism what living with Orthodoxy means. Only then can we prepare the way for the day when "all may be one." At present, we are like John the Baptist, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord." If, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we can accomplish our own renewal and a return to our roots, to live the fulness of life in Orthodoxy and thus to prepare the way for reunion, then and only then can we pray like Simeon: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word. . . ." Then we must disappear, returning to our Mother Church, asking their pardon for having offended them and left them when their needs were great. We ask this in Jesus Christ, Our Lord, to whom belongs all glory, honor and worship, together with the Father who is without beginning, and His all Holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE MELKITE PATRIARCHATE:
PARADOXES OF A VOCATION
An initial response to Father Khairallah

John Meyendorff

The North American continent today serves as home for the largest number of "Eastern Catholics" anywhere. The largest body is the Ukrainian Catholic Church, but there are also several "Ruthenian" (or Carpatho-Russian) dioceses, as well as Maronites and "Melkites." The latter two groups have their roots in the Middle East, and, due to immigration from these war-torn regions, are increasing in numbers. It is important for the Orthodox Church to take their presence seriously and to reflect upon the exact role they play—or might play—in our dialogue with Rome and, indeed, in the overall issue of Christian unity in the contemporary world, particularly in America, where theological and ecclesiological questions are often compounded with peculiar sociological, ethnic and political factors, unknown, or irrelevant in the Old World.

For understandable historical reasons—which are rather clearly spelled-out in the article by Fr Khairallah, published in this issue of the *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*—fear and defensiveness are present, more often than not, in relations between the Orthodox and those whom they call the "Uniates." There were objections voiced, particularly by Greek churchmen, against the very presence of any "Uniate" in Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogues. Whether Uniates belong or not in such dialogues (Fr Khairallah himself seems to doubt it, p. 195), it is quite unfortunate that in this free country, where neither

the king of Poland, nor the Austrian emperor, nor the French Jesuits, nor the Tsar, nor the Soviet Government, nor anyone else is attempting to force their hand in one way or another, as they did do in the Old World, the Orthodox and the Eastern Catholics remain so much estranged from each other.

Among the "Eastern Catholics," the Melkites¹ occupy a particular position, primarily for historical reasons. Their existence as a group united with Rome is relatively recent and is the result of a series of conflicts within the patriarchate of Antioch following the death of the Arab-speaking Patriarch Macarius III Zaim (1647-72). In addition to personal and political enmities and several "double," competing elections, the issue of whether the patriarch should be Greek-speaking or Arab-speaking began to play a major role. In 1724, Constantinople recognized the election of the Greek Patriarch Silvester I, while his Arab competitor Athanasius IV—with support from French Government agents and the Latin clergy (also French)—accepted union with Rome.² This recent and primarily, "political" schism, involving little theological or doctrinal convictions, did not prevent the "Melkite" patriarchate from preserving the Orthodox liturgy and ethos practically intact, although its clergy was generally receiving a thoroughly Latin education. At present—and particularly since Vatican II—many circles within the Melkite Church are eager to reestablish their "Eastern" identity, and, as Fr Khairallah writes, "to witness to Orthodoxy within Roman Catholicism . . . to live the fullness of Orthodoxy . . . in communion with Rome" (p. 195). Such is the essential background.

It is, indeed, wonderful that Fr Khairallah sends his comments for publication in an Orthodox periodical. The point

¹One can guess that the term "Melkites," or "the emperor's people," needs an explanation for the benefit of some of our readers. It comes from *Melek*, which in Semitic languages stands for "king" or "emperor." It began to be used in a derogatory fashion by the opponents of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.), to designate the Orthodox supporters of the Council because they were associated with the unpopular imperial government of Constantinople. It is adopted today as a convenient way of distinguishing Arab-speaking Christians in union with Rome and using the Byzantine ("imperial") liturgy, from other "Uniate" groups: Maronites, Chaldeans, etc.

²The Orthodox patriarchate of Antioch was henceforth occupied by Greeks until the election of an Arab, Meletios IV Dumani in 1898.

of view which he expresses has repeatedly appeared in Melkite publications, and was endorsed by some Melkite prelates, including the late Patriarch Maximus IV and Archbishop Tawil. It obviously provokes reservations both within the Melkite patriarchate and in Rome. But the Orthodox have hardly heard of the debate. They must become aware of it, because it involves brothers and sisters in Christ, whose aspirations, convictions and spiritual life are so close to their own, and also because the issues under discussion—particularly ecclesiology—focus on the main points of the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue in general, and on some internal problems of Orthodox ecclesiastical structure as well.

But the publication of the article in the *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* also implies the author's desire to obtain direct comments from the Orthodox side. The article itself and the comments which follow must, therefore, serve as an introduction to further exchanges on the *major* issues involved—issues which are not of local or "Antiochian" interest only,³ but concern the faith and the polity of the universal Church. The dialogue must continue further not only on the theological level, or the level of ecclesiastical and ecumenical diplomacy, but also, and primarily, on the level of the faith itself, its pastoral and practical applications.

Of course, from the very start, the dialogue must be frank and candid. In any case, this is the spirit in which the present author has written the comments below. He might have misunderstood Fr Khairallah on certain points, and would welcome response and correction. All the questions raised, are fundamental to a true understanding between the Orthodox and the Melkites. If satisfactory answers can be found, real ecumenical progress would be made.

I.

The first question arises from Fr Khairallah's claim that the one major role to be played by the Melkite Church is "to

³In the past few years, a local dialogue involving the Melkites and the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America has been held in Massachusetts, with solid ground work being laid for further discussion.

witness to Orthodoxy within Roman Catholicism" (p. 195), and the statement of Patriarch Maximus IV: "The Melkite Greek Catholic Church is the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, in communion with Rome" (p. 191). Fr Khairallah does not see any contradiction between such statements by himself and Patriarch Maximus on the one hand, and the "sincere declaration of Catholic belief" by the Melkite synod, "their joyful attachment" to the primacy of the pope, and "their total submission to his authority" (p. 201) on the other. It does appear that, in his understanding, the issue is really not one of faith, but concerns only the policies of the Roman Congregation of the Eastern Churches, which, since Vatican I (cf. p. 194), infringes upon the legitimate rights of the Melkite patriarchate.

Is this position tenable?

All Eastern Christians in union with Rome follow basically (at least this is our understanding) the faith and the ecclesiastical model accepted at the Council of Florence (1438-39). Although that council did not challenge the liturgical and disciplinary traditions of the East (thus giving them tacit recognition), it required the Easterner's consent to four doctrinal points, anathematizing opponents. The four points, contained in the decree *Laetentur Caeli* (July 6, 1439) are the following:

(1) The least controversial issue of all, concerning the eucharistic bread: both "leavened" and "unleavened" bread are suitable for sacramental use.

(2) A formal endorsement of the Latin theology of the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son "as from one principle" (*tanquam ab uno principio*); there is no requirement for the Easterners to add *Filioque* to the creed, but the Latin addition is declared to have been made "legitimately and reasonably" (*licite ac rationabiliter*), which implies that it was doctrinally and canonically justified.

(3) A detailed definition of Purgatory, in strict accordance with the dominant medieval Latin legalistic conception of salvation, and with the addition that the souls of the unbaptized "descend immediately to hell" (*mox in infernum descendere*).

(4) A statement about the Roman Primacy, drafted specifically to placate not only the Greeks, but also contemporary

Western "conciliarism" (i.e., the idea that the pope *shares his power* with the ecumenical council); the decree proclaims that the Roman Pontiff is "the head of the whole Church, the Father and Teacher of all Christians," and that to him "was given full power (*plena potestas*) to feed, to rule and to govern the universal Church."

It is true that in order to alleviate the reluctance shown by the Greek delegates at Florence, the decree also prescribes that the papal power be exercised "in accordance with the acts of the ecumenical councils and the holy canons." This reservation is, indeed, a possible foundation for the relative autonomy enjoyed by the "Uniate" Eastern Churches. However, one wonders whether it continues to have any real significance in the light of the decrees of Vatican I on the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff and, particularly, on the "immediate jurisdiction" of the pope over *all* the members of the Universal Church. These decrees were, of course, qualified by Vatican II, in its affirmations on conciliarity and episcopal collegiality; but they were also formally reaffirmed (and signed) by the representatives of the Eastern Churches united with Rome.

In this context, one can also question the importance attributed by Fr Khairallah to the title "patriarch of the West," occasionally used by the Roman Pontiff (cf. p. 200). This title—which would imply a certain geographic and cultural limitation of the papal jurisdiction—never corresponded to any historical reality. There was indeed, from the fifth to the eleventh centuries, a "Roman patriarchate" in the sense in which the term "patriarchate" was used in the East. This patriarchate comprised not the entire West but a restricted area, where the pope consecrated regional metropolitans, following their election by their local churches. This area included the so-called "suburbicarian" dioceses of Central and Southern Italy, and the three islands of Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia. Never during that period did the pope act as a "patriarch," confirming episcopal elections in Northern Italy, Gaul, Spain, or Northern Africa. Regional "patriarchates" (Milan, Arles, Toledo, Carthage) were in the making in those regions, although they later disappeared. The gradual extension and strengthening of Roman authority and jurisdictional power, as it began to be promoted, for instance,

by the see of Canterbury in England (seventh century), or the mission of St Boniface in Germany (early eighth century), was clearly based not on a "regional," "Latin" or "patriarchal" conception of the papacy, but on the idea of *universal* primacy. It is that conception which Pope Nicholas I (858-867) tried (and failed) to impose upon Byzantium, and which was formally put into effect by the German "reformed" papacy of Gregory VII. Some western resistance to it—under the form known as "conciliarism," and later "Gallicanism"—did not subside until the nineteenth century.

The above remarks are simply meant to explain the reactions of both the Roman authorities and the Orthodox to the type of claims expressed by some Melkite churchmen today and described by Fr Khairallah:

(1) There exists a Roman ecclesiology, going back to much earlier times than the Council of Trent.⁴ It affirms the divine establishment of a Petrine See with a universal mission, implies doctrinal and disciplinary centralization as a *norm*, whereas the existing "autonomies" are only concessions to local needs; today's reactions of the Curia are in full conformity with that conception.

(2) The Orthodox find it hard to understand that the "Orthodox faith" can be maintained by patriarchs and bishops accepting and signing the Councils of Florence and Vatican II (as well as Vatican I, since it was formally reaffirmed by Vatican II).

II.

The major issue which Fr Khairallah sees in respect to the Melkites in America, is that Rome refuses to allow the Melkite patriarch and his synod to administer American communities as a part of his patriarchate, but instead appoints an "Apostolic exarch," answering only to Rome and coordinating

⁴It is true, however, that this ecclesiology was greatly strengthened by the Counterreformation, so that the "Uniates" were more and more seen only as a "rite." Cf. E. Lanne, quoted by Khairallah, p. 193.

his activities and disciplinary practices with the other Roman Catholic bishops in America (pp. 197-198). The author sees Rome's insistence on this matter as an infringement on the rights of an "Eastern" church, and he directly refers to the "Orthodox patriarchs" who "exercise jurisdiction over their subjects who have migrated to other lands" (p. 203). He sees the (Uniate) See of Antioch as a "Church," distinct from Roman Catholicism, even claiming its particular *ecumene*, with universal jurisdiction over all its members and accepting new members everywhere (p. 214). Relations with Rome would be relations of "communion," as "between two Apostolic Sees."

There is no doubt that this scheme is offered *bona fide*, and that it presents the established Roman ecclesiology with a challenge, which directly involves the possibility of Union with Orthodoxy (provided the other doctrinal issues are solved). Indeed, what Fr Khairallah proposes is that Rome accept an interpretation of its primacy in terms of moral authority and renounce the notion of "universal jurisdiction" sanctioned by Vatican I. One cannot doubt that such a step, if ever it was taken by Rome, would mean immediate progress towards unity.

But there is another aspect of Fr Khairallah's scheme which is hardly acceptable in terms of *Orthodox* ecclesiology. It is true indeed that today most Orthodox autocephalous churches *de facto* administer their respective "diasporas," acting as if they were distinct churches "in communion" with each other, but otherwise totally independent. America is the best example of this. However, no one in Orthodoxy (to my knowledge) considers this situation to be normal. The present state of affairs originated in 1921, when the then existing Orthodox canonical unity in America under a single hierarchy was broken apart, largely as a result of the chaos following the Russian Revolution. Today, fortunately, the Orthodox Church—through the voices and actions of its highest authorities (unfortunately not as effective as they should be!)—struggles to restore canonical norms. Already in 1872, the Council of Constantinople labelled with the term "phyletism"—a new heresy!—the system according to which ethnic groups constitute distinct church jurisdictions on the same territory. The Patriarchate of Moscow, in the preamble to the *Tomos* granting autocephaly to the Ortho-

dox Church in America, specifically proclaimed its action to be a step in the direction of *normal* canonical unity. More recently, the Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius IV, in a letter to Metropolitan Theodosius of America, also proclaimed the commitment of the See of Antioch to work for united Orthodoxy in America, under *one episcopate*.⁵ Examples could be easily multiplied. The Orthodox churches are sometimes at odds concerning the *means* and procedures by which canonical unity should be restored, after it was broken in the unprecedented and unforeseen circumstances of American immigration history and peculiar religious sociology, but they do not disagree on the principle that there should be one church in each place.

What is particularly controversial is Fr Khairallah's use of quotations from St Ignatius of Antioch, as if the above principle were not self-evident to St Ignatius himself and the Church of his time: *one church* and one eucharistic assembly in each place, presided by the *local* bishop. This was also the point in St Paul's concern with the situation of the Church in Corinth, where Jewish and Gentile converts intended to hold separate church assemblies, eager to preserve "their own" respective traditions (I Cor 1:10-17)!

This does not mean, of course, that all pluralism should disappear; that different liturgies, different languages and a variety of equally legitimate traditions should not be preserved—and even institutionally guaranteed. But the local reality and local witness of *One Church* must have priority over these concerns for legitimate variety. There is real danger—and even ecclesiological heresy—when concerns for particularity create structures of "dis-unity."⁶ The present author must confess that he understands the position of Rome, wanting to maintain in America the image of a united Roman Catholic witness and discipline—including, of course, the Melkites—in the face of a confused and relativistic society. Actually, the problem is not this Roman concern for unity *per se*, but also the content and the truth of what is being maintained and witnessed to—for instance, celibate priesthood.

⁵Text in *The Orthodox Church*, Febr. 1986.

⁶Cf. John Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church*, Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1984.

III.

Indeed, one cannot but welcome the Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite (Vatican II, 1964) when it states that those churches "have a full right and are duty bound to rule themselves, each in accordance with its own established discipline." However, the whole context of the Council still implies that *all* disciplines and customs of local or regional churches, are to be envisaged in the light of the One Catholic Tradition, which alone can give them legitimacy. The Roman Catholics and the Orthodox do not disagree on this principle, although they do disagree as to the *locus* of that One Catholic Tradition, as to its exact content, and as to the authority which maintains it.

It is clear that the issue of priestly celibacy is seen by the Roman Church as related to that One Tradition, i.e., ontologically, to Christian spirituality and faith. This was already evident in the decretals of the popes of the *fourth century*. It was a belief which the popes, already then, held as true, and which, in the West, was greatly strengthened later on by the theology of St Augustine, becoming a *motto* of most reformist movements (e.g., the Cluniacs of the tenth and eleventh centuries). Because the Roman See has maintained this position for so many centuries—not, simply, as a "local" discipline, but claiming it to be a universal Christian norm, and using its primatial "full power" to impose it—it is unlikely that it will be able to adopt the "other," i.e., the Eastern tradition, as equally normative. The statements of the present pope, John Paul II, are there to enlighten us on this matter. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that only a radical and fundamental change of attitude could allow for the coexistence, within a society as important and influential as American society, of both married and unmarried Catholic priests in the same Roman Catholic communion, some exceptions (e.g., for converts from Protestantism) notwithstanding.

The problem once again is not one of "local" tradition, but of truth vs. error. The "error" I am speaking about is not of course celibate priesthood as such—which has always existed as a blessed personal option—but the legalistic disciplinary im-

position of celibacy as a norm. The acceptance of married Melkite priests in America would inevitably make celibacy *de facto* optional, with no long term possibility of closing that option to priests of the Latin rite. The age-long Roman Catholic attitude involving not only Roman authority, but indeed the psychological attitude of the laity as well, is involved here. In the light of all this, again I understand the Roman reluctance to yield before the demands of a small group of Melkites; although, of course, I believe that the discipline of the Orthodox Church in this matter is the right one (i.e., ordination to the priesthood of men married once, without possibility of remarriage even for widowers). If Rome is ever to yield on this point, it will not be because the Melkite will defend "their own" Tradition, but because it will discover that the Orthodox discipline is truly that of the Catholic Church.

Can the Melkite Church play the role of a "bridge" between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy? It certainly can—by raising the right questions and presenting clear challenges. Much less feasible would be for an entire "church" or an individual to pretend to be really "Orthodox in communion with Rome." Recourse to mythology—e.g., the idea of Rome being a "Western Patriarchate," which has never been a reality in the past and would hardly be an acceptable and realistic concept for today—does not really help. Contemporary Orthodox "autocephalism" is hardly normality either. There is a clear difference between the ancient systems of church polity (either the system of "provincial" independence, sanctioned by the Council of Nicaea, or the greater centralization around a few major centers, frequently referred to as "patriarchates," which developed later) and the system of self-sufficient "autocephalies," which unfortunately, and only *de facto*, prevails in contemporary Orthodoxy, with each autocephalous church establishing "jurisdictions" anywhere in the world. This latter model is precisely what the Orthodox today are attempting to overcome by returning (indeed!) to St Ignatius of Antioch and his insistence on eucharistic and episcopal unity *in each place*; and also, eventually, by recovering an authentic concept of "primacy," which would be a *service* to all without in any way diminishing the "catholic

fullness present in each local church and excluding any notion of 'universal jurisdiction.'"⁷

Actually, in the case of the Melkites in America, Rome claims to be providing precisely such a "service." It does so, however, in its own peculiar way which would be unacceptable to the Orthodox, not only because it is based on the Vatican I doctrine of Roman "immediate jurisdiction" everywhere, but because it also implies the acceptance of unacceptable doctrines (including not only the above-mentioned decrees of Florence, but also the decree on the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and others). If Roman "jurisdiction" did not have such major doctrinal implications, it would be quite an attractive alternative to the internal conflicts and "phyletism" so characteristic of contemporary historic Orthodoxy. Fr Khairallah's proposals to import such historic weaknesses into the Roman Catholic communion are not a viable way of making the Melkite Church a "bridge" between Rome and Orthodoxy.

Rather paradoxically, the Roman system is, in a sense, more tolerant than the Orthodox Church in admitting the existence of parallel jurisdictions in the same territory: it allows it throughout the Middle East, even if it tries to put a limit to it in North America. This is possible precisely *because* of Roman bureaucratic centralization. The unity of the Church is seen as embodied in Roman authority. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, sees unity in a common confession of the One Faith, realized in the Eucharist, which unites all believers *in each place*. The universal primacy can only be *at the service* of this local unity: it never should become its origin or cause.

It is certainly not up to us, the Orthodox, to teach the Melkites how they can maintain their "Orthodox faith." But since they like to think of themselves as a bridge between Rome and Orthodoxy, we should warn them to be careful to place the Orthodox leg of the bridge in the right place. And we should also—in a brotherly fashion—continually inform them that for the Orthodox *faith comes before institutions*. Truth gives all institutions their validity and their legitimacy, whereas no institution can, by itself, legitimize the faith.

⁷Probably the most relevant contemporary discussion of such issues can be found in J. Zizioulas, *Being, as Communion*, Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1985; also J. Meyendorff, *Orthodoxy and Catholicity*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965.

Of course, bridges should be built. In this century many were. Much of contemporary theology—within both Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy—has been based on such links and mutual dependence. Would Jean Daniélou or Karl Rahner have said and written what they did without having first discovered the tradition of the East? But also, would Florovsky or Lossky have become the theologians they were without the patristic editions and research done by (Latin) Roman Catholics? Would the new awareness of the Liturgy, as the true source of theological thought and inspiration within Orthodoxy, have taken the shape that it did without the research and publications of French, Belgian and German Benedictines, and of Louis Bouyer? And also—however regrettable may be the turn towards secularism in contemporary post-Vatican II Roman Catholic theology—the Roman Church remains today the most audible Christian voice in contemporary society, defending basic Christian moral principles. This too is an important bridge, standing on both Roman and Orthodox foundations.

These remarks are intended as comments, not as criticism of Fr Khairallah's paper. I am sure he will agree that if the Orthodox faith is to be maintained, it should be confessed in its integrity and in a spirit of authentic catholicity within the One Church, recognizing whatever is true and beautiful everywhere. In our own twentieth century, and particularly in America, as the geography of World Christendom changes radically, the categories of "East" and "West" are losing their meaning. Of course, the Orthodox Church identifies the true Christian Tradition with the continuity maintained by the East; but it is called today to proclaim it and to live it in a world which has been shaped by Western civilization. This is not an easy task; and we hope that the living experience of Orthodoxy, which is shared by so many of our Melkite brothers—in spite of the paradoxical vagaries of history—will be fulfilled in the ecclesial Oneness for which the Lord prayed before His Passion.

As I finished writing my remarks on P. Khairallah's article, I received a new publication in French by Serge Descy which illustrates in much greater detail several of the points made

by Khairallah.⁸ The new book would be indispensable for anyone desiring to contribute further to the dialogue. It contains a well-documented and objective historical description of the events leading to the establishment of the "Melkite" patriarchate, in communion with Rome, in 1724, and seeks to define Melkite ecclesiology in terms different from what is usually called "Uniatism" (the establishment of Eastern-rite churches dependent on Rome). The Melkite alternative, according to Descy (and Khairallah), should be an "ecclesiology of communion" between sister-churches. The Melkite patriarchate should claim to be a "sister-church" of Rome, and thus provide a scheme of church unity acceptable to the Orthodox, particularly within the "Antiochian" family. It should reject the Roman centralized ecclesiology, whose development and application to Eastern "uniate" groups is attributed to post-Tridentine Latin mentality.⁹

Although many aspects of this conception remain unclear, an "ecclesiology of communion" certainly corresponds to the Orthodox view of the universal church (provided that local churches remain faithful to the crucial canonical and ecclesiological principle of "unity in each place"), but two issues remain, which must be further discussed both with our Melkite brothers and in a wider circle of representative theologians:

1. An Orthodox reader, who takes for granted that ecclesial communion is based upon unity of *faith*, i.e., a commitment to a common understanding of the Christian Tradition, has difficulty in accepting the proposition that no substantial doctrinal issue really exists between Rome and Orthodoxy, and that one can realistically be truly "Orthodox" and "in communion with Rome." The cases of *de facto* intercommunion in Syria, before 1724, emphasized as positive precedents by the Melkite authors, should rather be ascribed to—mildly speaking—"non-theological factors." . . . Can such issues as Papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction, the *Filioque*, the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, etc. cease to be a concern, once they are consciously understood?

⁸*Introduction à l'histoire et l'ecclésiologie de l'Eglise Melkite* (Histoire de l'Eglise en Orient. Etudes et matériaux. II. Antioche). Editions Saint Paul, Beyrouth-Jounieh (Liban), 1986, 126 pp.

⁹On the basis of a suggestive article by E. Lanne, "La conception post-Tridentine de la Primauté," *Irénikon* 52 (1979) 5-33.

2. Is Rome ready to marginalize the issue of papal jurisdiction? Can it even envisage moving in that direction (beyond what was done by Vatican II) without compromising its position within Latin Christendom, where its authority is also being challenged—not in the name of an “ecclesiology of communion,” but in the name of secularism and modernism?

It is our feeling that the issue of ecclesiology is a *global*, or “catholic” issue, and that it is rather unrealistic to believe that it can be approached, or solved regionally, e.g., within a reunified “Antiochian” family only. Be that as it may, the questions raised by the Melkites certainly deserve more attention from the Orthodox than they are getting now. The real, global issue of Christian unity—in Truth and in Love—might become clearer from the resulting debate.