

FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The book FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST, edited by Archbishop Lazar Puhalo, P. Vassiliadis, N. Dimitriadis and K. Drosia, consists of the CEMES open public lectures of the CEMES Master Program in “Orthodox Ecumenical Theology”, dedicated this academic year to the Unity of the One Church of Christ.

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CENTER OF ECUMENICAL, MISSIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
“METROPOLITAN PANTELEIMON PAPAGEORGIOU”

38

**ARCHBISHOP LAZAR PUHALO -PETROS VASSILIADIS-
NIKOLAOS DIMITRIADIS-KATERINA DROSIA (eds.)**

FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΩΝ, ΙΕΡΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝΤΙΚΩΝ ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ
«ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ ΠΑΝΤΕΛΕΗΜΩΝ ΠΑΠΑΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ»

38

ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΛΑΖΑΡΟΣ ΡΥΗΛΟ-ΠΕΤΡΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΔΗΣ–
ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΑΔΗΣ-ΚΑΤΕΡΙΝΑ ΔΡΟΣΙΑ (εκδ.)

ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΕΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΤΗΣ ΜΙΑΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ CEMES
Θεσσαλονίκη 2022
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PREFACE

FOR THE VISIBLE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Center for Ecumenical, Missiological and Environmental Studies "Metropolitan Panteleimon Papageorgiou" (CEMES) has launched the 2021-22 academic year a series of ecumenical activities, the most important of which was the Open Public Lectures of its Master program in "Orthodox Ecumenical Theology" (MOET), dedicated to the "The Visible Unity of the One Church of Christ". More precisely to the "Eastern/Oriental Orthodox-Latin/Greek Catholic relations," which will hopefully lead to the visible unity of the Church of Christ.

And it decided to start these lectures on a historic date: the very day of the thronal Feast of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the 30th anniversary of H.A.H. Patriarch Bartholomew's elevation to the throne of New Rome. But also, the year of H.H. Pope Francis' courageous initiative to start a conciliar process that will pave the way to an authentic synodality of the entire Church of Christ.

The English program of the Open Publish Lectures of MOET was jointly organized by CEMES (and the Scientific Committee and Teaching Staff of MOET), and the Ecumenical Institute of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas (Angelicum), as well as by scholars of the Ecumenical Monastery of Bose, and the Oriental Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches.

Parallel to these English lectures, this academic year CEMES has also planned a series of Open Public Lectures in Greek for the Greek-speaking public around the globe. In both the English and the Greek series of lectures, in addition to the main speaker and the coordinator, other scholars have joined them for an in-depth discussion in an as much as possible balanced selection.

Let us remind ourselves what the famous papal encyclical "Ut Unum Sint" said: "To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ's prayer: "Ut unum sint" (INA ΠΑΝΤΕΣ ΕΝ ΩΣΙΝ)."

Despite the successful outcome of many official theological dialogues, no significant steps have yet been taken towards full Eucharistic unity, due to certain preoccupations and prejudices, which this series of lectures intends to analyze in order to overcome, as far as possible, any obstacle, canonical, historical, ecclesiological, theological etc, standing to this very day against the command of our Lord 'that we may all be one' ".

Because of the tragic events of the Russian military invasion to Ukraine, and especially the attempt by the ecclesiastical leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church to theologically justify the murderous war, as well as their uncanonical invasion to the canonical territory of other autocephalous orthodox Churches, first by establishing - with a synodical decision - an exarchate in Africa, and also threatening to establish similar uncanonical ecclesiastical structures in those Orthodox Churches that recognized the Ukrainian autocephaly, extraordinary workshops were held, both in English and in Greek.

All the over-40 presentations and discussions, from 15 countries and 4 continents by academic theologians, clergy and lay people, of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, and Greek Catholic, Churches are posted on the CEMES website, being also available at the CEMES YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VBKY2maTKI&t=104s>)

Dormition of the Theotokos Feast 2022

The Editors

*Dedicated to His All-Holiness
Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
On his 30 years on the Throne of the New Rome*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF SOME PROPOSALS TO THE BISHOPS OF THE OLD AND THE NEW ROME

CAT=Catholic – **ORO**=Oriental Orthodox - **ORT**=Orthodox – **GCA**=Greek Catholic

- CH. 1: **CAT** H. **Destivelle**: When the Catholic Church speaks of 'imperfect communion', it means an ontological and spiritual communion in faith, sacraments, and ministries which is real, but incomplete, as it is not yet manifested in the canonical and the Eucharistic communion.
- CH. 1: **ORO** M. George **Kondothra**: I attach great importance to an evolutionary view of our past conflicts and divisions with a view to experience the healing and unity of the Church as the one Body of Christ in true faith, forgiveness, and love.
- CH. 2: **ORT** J. **Getcha**: In anticipation of the 1.700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council, that Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch are planning to celebrate in 2025 in Nicea, the common celebration of Pascha is an urgent need. Easter should be celebrated on the Sunday after the first full moon of spring, using for calculating the date the astronomical data (spring equinox and full moon). And to develop the most accurate scientific data, using as a basis for calculation the meridian of Jerusalem, place of death and resurrection of Christ.
- CH. 3: **ORT** Gr. **Larentzakis**: There is no "normal" or "ecclesiological" schism between Old and New Rome. I consider the use of the term "Church" for the Catholic Church, but also that of "sister Church", to be absolutely justified; and it is necessary and possible to reconsider the use of the terms "heresis" and "schism", avoid them and resolve the still existing theological differences in a honest dialogue.
- CH. 4: **ORT** D. **Moschos**: It is very problematic to set aside or even degrade the complex political and socio-economic background of the ecclesiastical developments, and to constantly absolutize theological, ecclesiological or liturgical differences ignoring history through a kind of "cryptotheology". Above all, however, it is necessary to theologically assess the dominical commandment for the unity of Christians, which is of great importance for the ministry to the world as a whole as an expression of the commandment of love.
- CH. 5: **ORT** D. **Keramidas**: The reasons for the break of communion between the Catholic and the Orthodox Church were of political, cultural, linguistic, and theological nature. The term "estrangement" describes the interaction between these factors, that lead to the episode of 1054 and eventually to the division between the Greek and the Latin church. But if separation is first lived and then declared, also unity will be first lived and then formally declared.
- CH. 6: **CAT** I. **Spiteris**: We cannot ignore the very ancient institution of synodality, as experienced in the form of pentarchy in the first millennium, during which Rome occupied the first place. Therefore, it would not be meaningless for our Christian brothers in the East, if Pope Francis - accustomed to prophetic gestures - restores to the Pontifical Yearbook his ancient title of "Patriarch of the West".

- CH. 7: **ORT G. Kochetkov:** “Personality”, Catholicity”, and “Sobornost” according to the New Testament revelation of human being, is the new language in Orthodox-Catholic relations.
- CH. 8: **ORT A. Arjakovsky:** Ecumenical Metaphysics means to adopt real discourses of truth and justice. We should relaunch Orthodox conciliarity in order to condemn the heresy of the so-called “Russian world and to judge the perpetrators of the war against the Ukrainian nation. Truth is not only hurting, it is also a saving strength. The unity of the Churches will occur, or rather will be discovered, when ecumenical metaphysics will have sufficiently penetrated consciences for such a discourse to be grasped by all Christians as authentically orthodox and life giving.
- CH. 9: **ORT G. Martzelos:** The unity of the Church is not behind us but is a constant task that lays ahead. Jesus’ prayer to the Father (‘I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one’, Joh 17:20-21), is an intercession for the unity of the Church, pointing at its pneumatological and eschatological dimensions. The unity of the Church has a dynamic character, it results from the constant work of renewal of the Holy Spirit
- CH. 10: **GCA A. Krawchuk:** Since its origins in the undivided Christianity of the “Old” Rome, Ukraine’s religious dynamics have been determined by centrifugal factors of geography (1054) and power (1589), and by centripetal forces of reconciliation (1445, 1596). In the present war independent Ukraine is demonstrating agency and the will to restore unity in communion with the “New” Rome.
- CH. 11: **GCA I. Shaban:** No one knows what the future of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue will be like. Nevertheless, we know in what direction this dialogue should develop. Its goal was and remains to restore full and visible unity between the Western (Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) Churches. We know as Uniates that this old model of unity cannot be applied today in the ecumenical era. And we are very delighted by Pope Francis conciliar process that is now going on in the Catholic Church.
- CH. 12: **ORT S. Yagazoglou:** The theological issues that divide the Christian Churches cannot be resolved through sterile discussions in the style of traditional conflicts. They can only be solved if theologians concentrate on the present and the future and seek to rethink and preach the traditional gospel message about God, Jesus Christ, and His grace, in such a way that it can be heard and received. by the pagan world of today. Until we reach Eucharistic communion, the embrace all people of the universe is a non-negotiable fact and at the same time a blessing on the journey to reunion.
- CH. 13: **ORT A. Bairactaris:** The unity of Christianity is like a marathon with a lot of phases and miles to run. The *ecclesiology of Sister Churches* and Chiara Lubich’s notions of *Jesus Forsaken* and the *Spirituality of Unity*, as well as the vision of the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras on Christian Unity, are examples to be imitated today for our Churches’ journey towards Eucharistic union.

- CH. 14: **ORT C. Sonea**: The creative gnoseology of Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, expressed in two different ways, in addition to the theological one, i.e. from the field of neuroscience and that of linguistics, reveals how the mystery of self-knowledge is related with the mystery of God and with the mystery of human existence. Something that will greatly promote Orthodox-Catholic relations.
- CH. 15: **ORT G. Basioudis**: Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's contribution towards Church unity is enormous. The message to the Orthodox is not strictness, but joy for everybody - Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (Lk 2,10)". His books, especially his "For the Life of the World" is thoroughly ecumenical.
- CH. 16: **ORT S. Tsompanidis**: Pope Francis Apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" and the decisions of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, summarized by its message that "the Church exists not for herself, but for the world", underline that Christians are called to accept their call to go forth outside their institutional boundaries and abandon their denominational egocentrism
- CH. 17: **ORT M. Sereti**: The ecumenical consensus on the issue of "inclusive ecology" between Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew is a flame of hope that something is beginning to change. The Churches, and more and more believers in general, are becoming aware of the example and vision of these two ecclesiastical leaders and move away from the globalization of indifference, realizing that they must move faster towards reconciliation and Eucharistic communion.
- CH. 18: **ORT S. Muksuris**: Commemorating non-Orthodox names in the Eucharistic service of Proskomede brings us face to face with the problem of the boundaries of the Church and sacramental grace in a new perspective. If exclusion implies suspicion and rejection, would this not contribute to our own prideful self-justification and thus impede our own salvation? One cannot embrace the world in theory and simultaneously remain xenophobic, not acknowledging our common humanity and refusing to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who, although different from us, still share our imperfections and struggles but also our aspirations.
- CH. 19: **ORT M. Konstantinou**: There is no real concern of cooperation between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in matters of translation of the Bible, the reason being that the Bible is never considered as the basis of the Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue. In the last phase of the dialogue on the primacy of the bishop of Rome, biblical arguments were ignored, as biblical theologians were absent from the committee.
- CH 20: **ORT P. Andriopoulos**: The message of the embracing of the apostles Andrew and Peter is a recognition of the gifts and position of each other, of the eternal fellowship, and that they are members of the one Church of Christ. Dialogue of our Churches today is one way. Until we partake of the common Cup, the embrace of the universe is the non-negotiable fact and at the same time the blessing for the journey towards union.

- CH. 21: **ORT P. Yfantis**: The martyrdom, the spiritual witness (martyria) and the ecumenical example of 6 Catholic clergy and monks in the countries of the Orthodox East, confirm the sStauro-centric and Christ-centric content of Christian witness, which in this case combines the demand for peace and unity of the whole world with an ecumenism tangible and of everyday life.
- CH. 22: **CAT A. Kateusz**: The continued restoration of the order of women deacons has popular support not only among the laity in both Eastern Orthodox and western Catholic church communities, but in recent years also by Pope Francis' institution of two commissions to consider their restoration. This initiative, as well as similar ones in the East, quite likely will not only lead the way for the West, but also, would help unify East and West in the desire to return to the practices of the unified early Church, practices seen in art in both East and West.
- CH. 23: **ORT Th-E. Adamtziloglou**: The extensive references in the Epitaphs of St. Gregory the Theologian for the diaconal witness of his mother, St. Nonna, who *died at the Holy Table*, and was left empty by the toil offered there with her own hands (67), is an evidence of the correctness of the effort of the Churches (Catholic and Orthodox) to restore the traditional order of deaconesses.
- CH. 24: **ORT P. Panagiotopoulos**: The Church exists to remind the world of the unknown or "forgotten" vision of the Kingdom of Heaven. In a world of uncertainty and insecurity, her witness must be given to the ministry of the few brothers and sisters who are outcast and suffering. The joint visit by the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Pope and the Archbishop of Athens to the Refugees at the Lesvos Island, in April 2016, is a clear example.
- CH. 25: **CAT G. Puglisi**: Pope Francis has provided new regulations enforcing stronger implications, including removal from office, for those in leadership. The accountability of leadership within the local church is very much "vertically" understood. Yet, if the church is moving from a hierarchical to a more synodal understanding the question needs to be raised as to what this may imply for being held accountable.
- CH. 25: **ORT P. Vassiliadis**: For many centuries, especially in the second half of the second millennium, we Orthodox have unconsciously developed a "negative" Orthodox identity: we are not what the Bible and our Tradition have left us as a legacy, but what the others, mainly the Catholics, are not, *i.e.*, without a primacy, the visible expression of the Church's unity, accompanied of course by conciliarity. The New Rome must unilaterally heal the non-existing schism with the Old Rome the way of our Churches lifted the anathemas in the past.
- CH. 26: **ORT J. N. Njoroge**: Inculturation must be brought into account, and especially from a missiological point of view, in the Orthodox faith as understood and practiced in the Eastern Orthodox Churches under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. To have an African Orthodox Church means having Orthodox faith imbued within the African worldview and lifestyle.

- CH. 27: **ORT L. Puhalo**: The theological endorsement for the monstrous invasion of Ukraine is certainly peculiar. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk have both used the presence of a minuscule LGBT community and the possibility of a "pride parade" in Ukraine as a "scapegoat justification" for the invasion in this sovereign nation. The idea of using a remote "moral" issue in order to justify the gross immorality and criminality of the mass murder and the destruction of the cities of the Ukrainian people must make the demons tremble.
- CH. 28: **ORT C. Hovorun**: The schism between the East and the West was in making for centuries. I would argue that it started with the Acacian schism towards the end of the fifth century and was accomplished only in the eighteenth century. Then the Churches of both Old and New Rome officially refused to recognize all sacraments of each other. This schism is being undone approximately ten times faster than it was done. This gives us hope that we could restore our unity sooner than later.
- CH. 29: **ORT N. Dimitriadis**: The importance of a theology of leadership in a religious diverse world underlines the responsibility that all faith-based leaders, clergy and laity, men and women, should have towards all people on earth and in a more holistic approach towards all creation. Such praxis that is expressed by serving and sacrificing for others, it is not identified by a moral improvement, but is an ontological change of man to the life in Christ. And this is something that will enhance the possibilities of a Christian reconciliation and lead to the Eucharistic communion between Old and New Rome

LIST OF AUTHORS

EDITORS & AUTHORS

*His Eminence Lazar **Puhalo**, retired Archbishop of Ottawa of the OCA and Abbott of the All-Saints Monastery. Co-editor of the present volume.*

*Emer. Prof. Petros **Vassiliadis**, Honorary President of WOCATI, President of Honor of CEMES and Director of the “Orthodox Ecumenical Theology” post-Graduate Program of USK. Co-editor of the present volume.*

*Prof. Nikolaos **Dimitriadis**, Graduate Studies of the Anatolia College of Thessaloniki, of the “Orthodox Ecumenical Theology” post-Graduate Program of USK, and President of CEMES. Co-editor of the present volume.*

*Dr. Aikaterini **Drosia**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Co-editor of the present volume.*

AUTHORS

*Sister Dr. Theologia (Evanthia) **Adamtziloglou**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Panagiotis **Andriopoulos**, theologian, researcher and musician, administrator of the semi-official site of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Greece).*

*Prof. Antoine **Arjakovsky**, Collège des Bernardins (France), Emer. Director of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies of Lviv (Ukraine).*

*Prof. Christoph **Arvanitis**, Higher Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete (Greece).*

*Dr. Spyridoula **Athanasopoulou-Kypriou**, University of Manchester (UK)*

*Rev. Prof. Augustinos **Bairactarism**, Higher Ecclesiastical Academy of Crete (Greece).*

*Archimantrite **Bartholomew**, Abbott of the Esphigmenou Monastery (Mount Athos).*

*Rev. Dr. Georgios **Basioudis**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and priest at Manheim (Germany).*

*Rev. Prof. Hyacinthe **Destivelle**, Pontifical University of St. Thomas, Rome (Italy).*

*Emer. Prof. Ivan Zhelev **Dimitrov**, University of Sofia (Bulgaria)*

*His Eminence Prof. Job **Getcha**, Archbishop of Thelmessos, Dean of the Institute of Graduate Studies of Orthodox Theology in Chambésy (Switzerland).*

*Rev. Prof. Cyril **Hovorun**, The Loyola Marymount of Los Angeles (USA).*

*Dr. Ally **Kateusz**, Wijngaards Institute of Catholic Research (USA)*

*Prof. Dimitrios **Keramidas**, Pontifical University of St. Thomas, Rome (Italy).*

*Rev. Georgy **Kochetkov**, former Rector of St. Philaret Christian Orthodox Institute of Moscow, and spiritual Father of the Brotherhood of Transfiguration (Russia).*

*Emer. Prof. Rev. M. George **Kondothra.**, Former Rector of the Malankara Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala (India).*

*Emer. Prof. Miltiadis **Konstantinou**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Emer. Prof. Andrii **Krawchuk**, University of Sudbury, Canada. President of ICCEES (Canada).*

*Dr. Theodosios **Kyriakidis**, researcher at the Chair of Pontic Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Emer. Prof. Grigorios **Larentzakis**, University of Graz (Austria).*

*Rev. Dr. Adalberto **Mainardi**, Bose Monastic Community (Italy).*

*Emer. Prof. Georgios **Martzelos**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Prof. Dimitrios **Moschos**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece).*

*Rev. Prof. Stylianos **Muksuris**, Professor of Liturgical Theology and Languages and Chair in Department of Liturgy, Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (USA).*

*Rev. Dr. John Ngige **Njoroge**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and Methodist University of Nairobi (Kenya).*

*Prof. Petros **Panagiotopoulos**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Prof. Niki **Papageorgiou**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Rev. Dr. Giacomo **Puglisi**, Director of Pro Unione, Rome (Italy).*

*Dr. Maria **Sereti**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Rev. Dr. Ihor **Shaban**, Chairman of the Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (Ukraine).*

*Rev. Prof. Cristian **Sonea**, Prof. of Missiology of the University of Cluj Napoca (Romania).*

*His Eminence Ioannis **Spiteris**, Former Archbishop of the Catholics in Corfu and nuncio of Thessaloniki of the Holy See (Greece).*

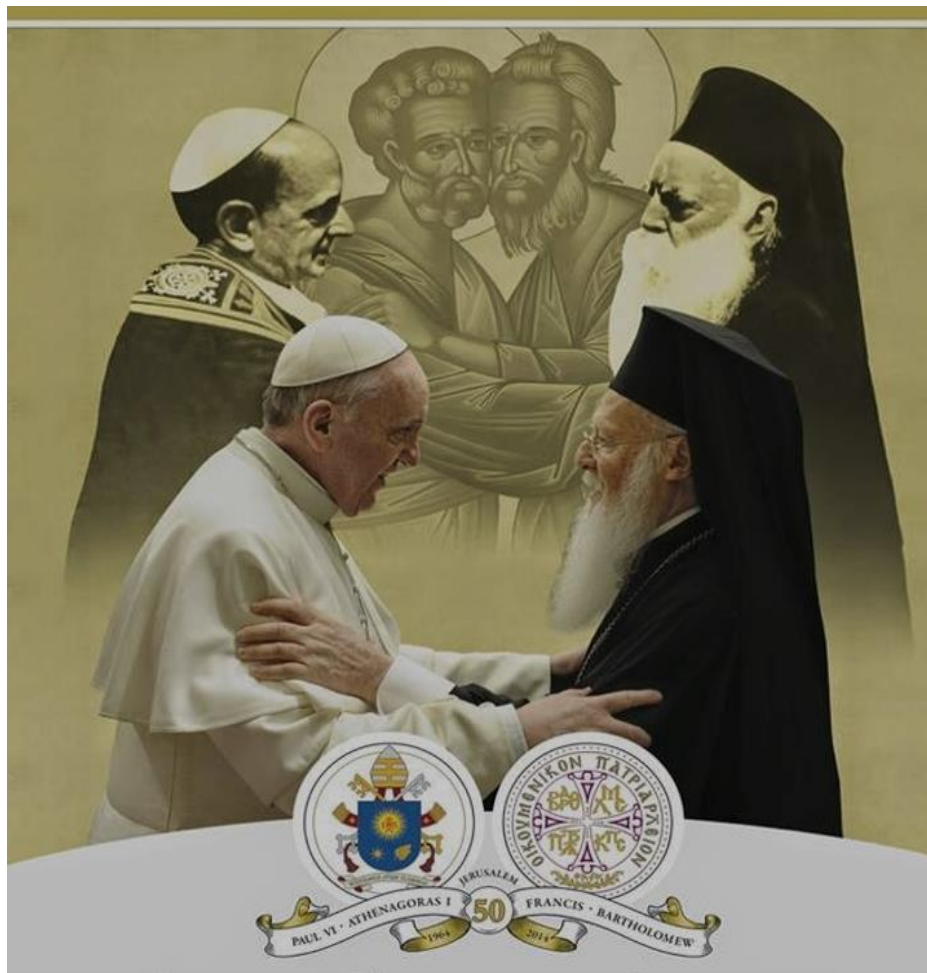
*Prof. Dimitrios **Stamatopoulos**, of Balkan and Late Ottoman History, Macedonian University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Prof. Stylianos **Tsompanidis**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Dr. Pavlos **Vasileiadis**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*

*Prof. Stavros **Yagazoglou**, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece).*

*Prof. Panagiotis **Yfantis**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).*



FOR THE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

CEMES devoted the 2021-22 Open Public Lectures of its Master program in "Orthodox Ecumenical Theology" (MOET) to "The Visible Unity of the One Church of Christ». This book contains their proceedings and is dedicated to Patriarch Bartholomew for the 30th anniversary of his elevation to the throne of New Rome.

Despite the successful outcome of many official theological dialogues, no significant steps have been taken as yet towards full Eucharistic communion, due to certain preoccupations and prejudices, which the pages of this book analyze, in order to overcome, as far as possible, any obstacle, canonical, historical, ecclesiological, theological etc, standing to this very day against the command of our Lord 'that we may all be one' ''.

(From the Preface of the book)

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