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FOR THE VISIBLE UNITY OF THE ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

- CH. 1: 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: 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: J. **Getcha**: In anticipation of the 1.700<sup>th</sup> 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: 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 theologially 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. 3: Th. **Kyriakidis**: There were always tensions between Pome and Constantinople throughout the second millennium, which however, did not always start from theological and ecclesiastical differences, or only from them. Political, economic, cultural, psychological and social factors influenced or shaped their relations. Of course, there have been attempts at reconciliation, but they have not been successful, either because they were overwhelmed by a mutual suspicion of the authenticity of their intentions.
- CH. 4: 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 "heresy" and "schism", avoid them and resolve the still existing theological differences in a honest dialogue.
- CH. 5: 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. 6: 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. 7: 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. 8: G. **Kochetkov**: “Personality”, Catholicity”, and “Sobornost” according to the New Testament revelation of human being, is the new language in Orthodox-Catholic relations.
- CH. 9: 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. 10: 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. 11: 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. 12: 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: D. **Salachas**: The problem of "Uniatism," considered by the Orthodox as a serious obstacle to unity, , ecumenically speaking is not a solution, but rather a theological and canonical problem to which the Churches committed themselves to address in a dialogue of charity and truth. The fact that they have not yet reached an agreement on it, does not mean an interruption of their official theological dialogue.
- CH. 13: S. **Yangazoglou**: 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. 14: 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. 15: 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. 16: 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. 17: 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 Lesbos Island, in April 2016, is a clear example.
- 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. 18: 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. 19: 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. 20: 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: P. **Vasileiadis**: These were efforts in Bible translations that have succeeded to be read across various Christian denominations. Despite fierce opposition and various impediments, there were inspiring examples that promoted the need of preparing and revising Bible translations with high scholarly standards for the benefit of the Christian Churches both for private and liturgical use.
- CH 21: 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: 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: 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. 22: 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. 22: I. Z. **Dimitrov**: There are Orthodox Churches like the Bulgarian one, where any ecumenical contact at a local level is seen “so unpopular” if not “discrediting for the practicing persons. Despite that, there is still a hope, which never die – the hope that does not disappoint (Rom. 5:5). And this hope for Christian reconciliation lies firstly in Christ and secondly in the young generation, that they almost do not have any positive examples to follow, because the old ecumenical figures are all gone and a new ecumenical generation should be created from scratch.
- CH. 22: A. **Mainardi**: Synodality within the Catholic Church may be judged insufficient, they are, however, underscoring the growing importance of synodal processes in the Catholic communion. This will probably not be without positive consequences in the developments of Catholic-Orthodox relations. These developments meet exactly the issue under discussion in Orthodox-Catholic theological dialogue.
- CH. 22: 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. 23: L. **Puhalo**: The heretical doctrine of "Russkii Mir," conceives of the Russian state as having a messianic calling to invade and purify other countries, beginning with Ukraine. The roots of this new doctrine are found in previous manifestations in Russian mysticism and religious thought, going back to two older concepts of "Holy Rus'" and the idea of Moscow as the "Third Rome." These two phyletistic heretical doctrines blend the Church with the State in a way that actually identifies the Church and the state as one. The theological endorsement for the monstrous invasion of Ukraine by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow using a minuscule LGBT community as a "scapegoat" in order to justify the gross immorality and criminality of the mass



murder and the destruction of the cities of the Ukrainian people, makes even the demons tremble.

- CH. 24: Abbott **Bartholomew** "Love one another." This commandment of love by our Lord Jesus Christ was brutally trampled on by the spiritual leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill. What love does he show for his supposed spiritual children in Ukraine? What love does he speak of when he blesses the weapons that kill civilians and invade a foreign independent state illegally? This attitude of the Russian Patriarch fully justifies their divisive role in world Orthodoxy.
- CH. 24: C. **Hovorun**: Putin's spirituality is Manichaeism and mythical. The original version of the "Russian world" produced by the Russian Orthodox Church is also quite dualistic and mythical. In Putin's interpretation, however, this doctrine seems to have evolved to a more radical form, reflecting the Manichaeism nature of the spirituality, which substituted atheism after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many then converted not so much to Orthodoxy, but various forms of quasi-Christianity: magical and mythical. From this perspective, Putin is a typical product of such late-Soviet cheap and superstitious spirituality.
- CH. 25: 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
- CH, 26: Ch. **Arvanitis**: The communion between the Greek and the Roman churches is the most important ecclesiological goal. I would recommend to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to proceed to the canonization of St. Francis of Assisi, also for the Orthodox Church. I think that such a gesture will make a great contribution after about sixty years of dialogue, for the unity of the Christian world, moving from theoretical discussions to a concrete action of love.
- CH. 27: 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 evidence of the correctness of the effort of the Churches (Catholic and Orthodox) to restore the traditional order of deaconesses.