

Chapter 20

FROM THE EMBRACE OF PETER & PAUL TO THE EMBRACE OF ANDREW & PETER.THE DESIRE FOR UNITY

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Dionysios from Fourni in his Interpretation of the Byzantine Art of painting describes the representation of the embrace of the Leading Apostles Peter and Paul as follows:

"Peter longing with respect his brother disciple, he runs to meet him. Paul watching him, whom also was longing very much, coming, stretches his hand is out, and comes and welcomes Peter". (*Ποθών ο Πέτρος την σεβασμίαν θέαν του συμμαθητού, προς συνάντησιν τρέχει. Ιδών δ' ο Παύλος όνπερ επόθει λίαν, χείρας εκτείνας, δεξιούται τον Πέτρον*).



The Embrace of Peter and Paul. Mural on the lintel of the Holy Temple of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (16th century) in Kastoria

The icon may at first glance presupposes an "apologetic" mood of the hagiographer - we know historically that there was a conflict in the Bible between these two apostles (St. Paul, "when Peter came to Antioch, spoke to him in person, because he was reprehensible. Because before some people came of James, he ate at the communion with the Gentiles, but when Judeo-christians came from Jerusalem, he

withdrew and separated himself because he feared the Jews", Gal. 2:11) - but what reigned then and thereafter was their unity in Christ and their embrace.

This representation is a symbol of ecumenical peace and reconciliation, a symbol of faith and unity of the Church, and at the same time presents us the equally important role of the two figures in our Church, a fact that is strengthened by their common celebration on June 29 of each year.

In the history of art there is the view that the embrace of Peter and Paul, as well as the representation of the two apostles holding a temple, is a consequence of the friendly tendencies of the 15th century. and the Ferrara-Florence summit. The image of embrace, which appears as an iconographic type in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, undoubtedly promotes unity.

Around that time, El Greco suggested not only a hug, but a dialogue of hands, obviously in the same spirit, that of unity.



Saint Andrew and Saint Francis (1595) - Oil painting by Domenikos Theotokopoulos. The painting (167x113 cm) is in the collection of the Museo del Prado in Madrid.

Saint Andrew and Saint Francis (1595) is an oil-painted icon (167x113 cm) by Domenikos Theotokopoulos, exhibited in the collection of the Museum del Prado in Madrid.

From the time of the Burial of Count Orgath (1588), El Greco began to create his own images of different Saints. He cultivated this pattern properly. The combination of the Saints - the confrontation of two separate personalities, with their different spiritual significance - emphasizes the individual characters. Thus, he brought together incredible characters as in the painting we are examining: the Apostle and Martyr of the time of Christ with the ecstatic and "gentle" Saint of the Middle Ages. He did the same in another painting where the Apostle and Evangelist John is with St. Francis of Assisi.

Under a sky full of gray clouds that foretell a storm, St. Andrew and St. Francis of Assisi stand next to each other in conversation. Both barefoot with the cross between them. The apostle appears to the left of the spectator, wearing clothes in shades of blue, green and purple with gray reflections. He stands almost in front of the viewer and leans on his characteristic X-shaped cross, turning his head to his left, where St. Francis stands. The latter is presented in profile, facing St. Andrew. He wears the traditional attire of the Franciscan order, with a long hairy belt tied in knots in the middle and a monk's cocoon covering his head. The dialogue of the two Saints is imprinted in their hands, in an expressionist way. Reverence, condescension, but also seriousness.

The figures stand in front of an irregular, rocky surface characterized by their strong and unrealistic shadows. A landscape is proposed as a background, on a low horizon, which emphasizes the monumentality of the two figures. A schematic illustration of part of Toledo appears on the left, behind the Apostle. El Greco now lives in Toledo and the place follows him. On the right, the view behind St. Francis is closed, so to speak, by a bright, snow-capped mountain. At his feet, the artist's signature appears on a four-leaf cartel mounted on a seal stone.

The dialogue of the two Saints, who lived in completely different times, foretells, we can imagine, the ecumenical dialogue of our time. St. Andrew the Apostle is a Saint of the first millennium united Church, but Francis is a holy man after the separation. Theotokopoulos presents them in dialogue, while he lives in a time when there is no contact between East and West on a theological level. But there is also art that goes far beyond...

However, both Saints were the "poor" of God and his martyrs. And Domenikos Theotokopoulos, a great artist who united East and West.

Let us, however, stop for a minute on two separate icons from Zakynthos, with the brothers Apostles Peter and Andrew. The first one is from the church of St. Andrew of Avouris (late 18th - early 19th century, oil on wood) and is exhibited at the Museum of Zakynthos.

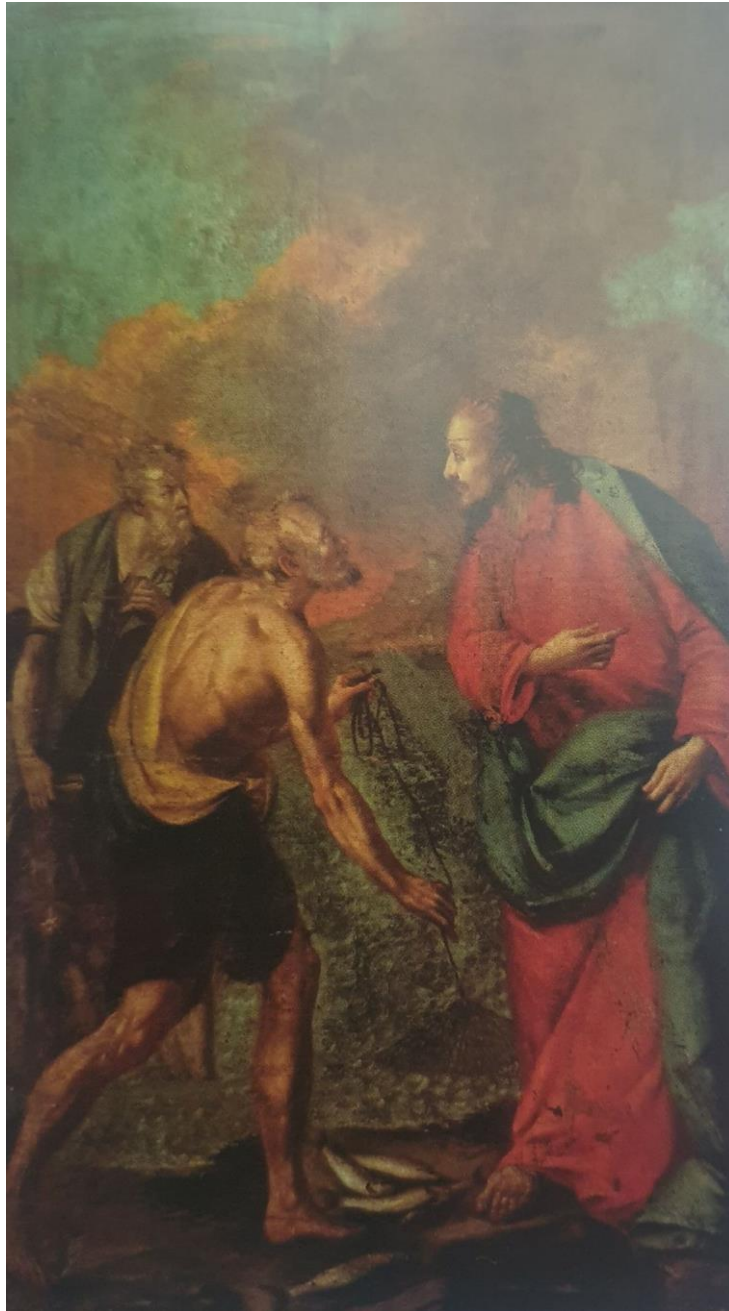


The Apostles Peter and Andreas, from the Church of Agios Andreas of Avouris (late 18th - early 19th century, oil on wood). Museum of Zakynthos. Work attributed to Nikolaos Koutouzis (1741-1813).

The late Curator of Antiquities, Zoe Mylonas, who published a book for the Museum, writes about this particular image: "The two Apostles are depicted in full body, standing, with white beards, in postures and gestures that suggest conversation. "Peter holds the keys in his left hand."

Zoe Mylona considers that the image is the work of the painter, hagiographer, poet and priest Nikolaos Koutouzis (1741-1813), judging by individual characteristics (shaping of the naked parts, rendering of the edges, color scale, etc.), but also by the general synthetic concept.

To Koutouzis, or to a student of his, *The Call of the Apostles Peter and Andrew* is also credited with " which is located in the Museum of Ecclesiastical Art of the Holy Monastery of Strofades and Agios Dionysios.



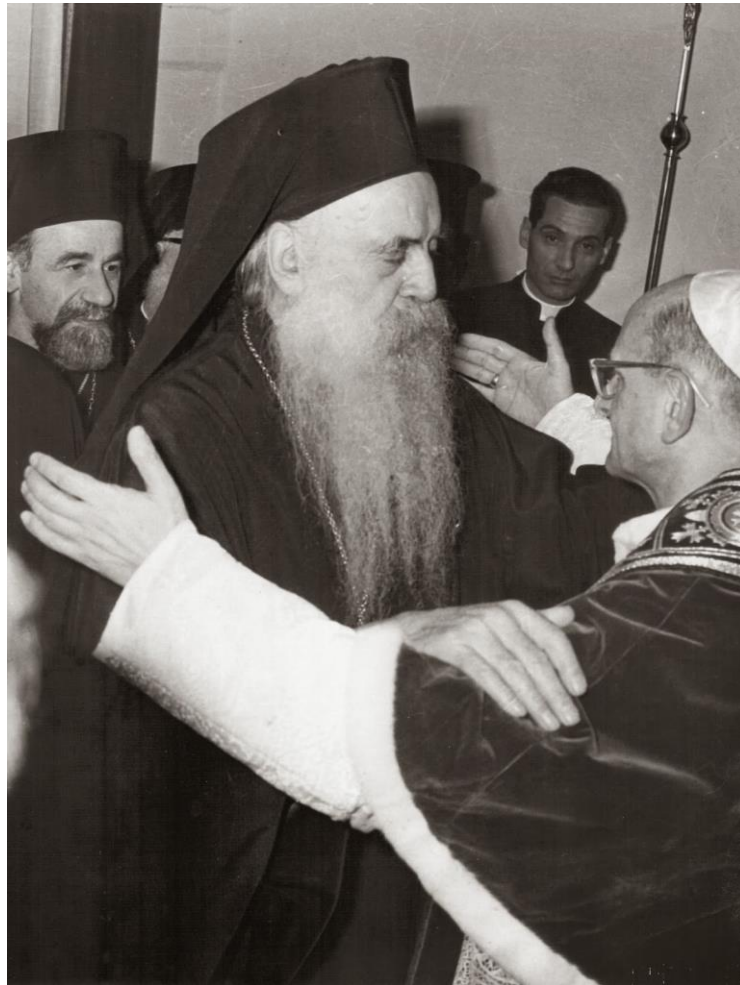
"The call of the Apostles Peter and Andrew". Museum of Ecclesiastical Art of the Holy Monastery of Strofades and Agios Dionysios Zakynthos. Attributed to Nikolaos Koutouzis (1741-1813) or to a student of his.

The show is dominated by the imposing figure of Christ. Beneath the blue sky in the thick of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus addresses Simon and his brother Andrew, who were fishing, and invited them to follow him. The two disciples express with their attitude their devotion and obedience to their master.

Peter and Andrew are often depicted together, not only as brothers, but also as the first-called by Jesus.

The very deep estrangement caused within Christianity after 1054, was attempted to be bridged after nine centuries by the great Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras.

The initiatives of Patriarch Athenagoras aimed at easing the contradictions between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church by building a climate of mutual understanding, trust and cooperation, in order to start a theological dialogue.



From the first meeting of Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem on January 5 and 6, 1964 (Aristides Panotis Archive).

Thus, on January 5, 1964, the Primates of the two Churches, the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI, met at the Mount of Olives, in Jerusalem, and exchanged the kiss of love and peace.

A new chapter began in Christianity in the 20th century, with events that marked both Churches.

At that meeting, the Ecumenical Patriarch offered to the Pope, in remembrance of those events, a portable image of the fellow holy apostles Peter and Andrew embracing each other under the gaze and blessings of the archpastor Christ. The image also shows the symbols of each martyrdom.



The Embrace of the Apostles Peter and Andrew.

The icon donated by the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras to Pope Paul VI.

Pope Francis, the present Pope, sent as a gift to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew a reliquary in which Pope Pius XII had placed fragments of the holy relic of the Apostle Peter that was found after excavations in St. Peter's Basilica of the Vatican in the 19th century. In his covering letter he remarked, that pondering the icon of the brothers, Peter and Andrew, embracing each other, united in faith and love for their common Lord, he sees it as a prophetic sign of the restoration of the visible union between the Churches, for which they both aspire and for which they pray fervently and struggle.

The first fruit of that historic meeting in January 1964 came a few months later, on September 26 of the same year. The Roman Catholic Church responded to a request from Patras and returned the Cara of the patron saint of Patras, St. Andrew the Apostle and First-Called, which was kept in Rome since it was transferred (1462) by the ruler Thomas Palaiologos to avoid falling into the hands of the Turks.

Rome, therefore, which has as its founder St. Peter the Apostle, embraces Patras, the city of the First-Called (*Protoklitos*), the brother of the first in rank (*Protokorifaios*).

It has been preceded by the embrace of the two Primates, Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI, which is the first kiss of the two Apostles, as Pope and Patriarch have their seats where these fellow Apostles martyred, where their apostolic succession originates. The Pope in St. Peter's Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople of St. Andrew.

Patras, as the city of the martyrdom of the First Called, receives the refreshing aura of this apostolic embrace.

Until then Christianity knew the embrace of Peter and Paul, who after all are celebrated together on June 29, the day of the thronal feast of Rome. Christians now have the embrace of the two brothers in flesh, Peter and Andrew, who embody the new reality of dialogue and sharing the path to the unity of the two Churches

After the embrace of Patriarch and Pope, Patras receives its treasure, the Cross of the Apostle Andrew from Rome, which marks the new era in the relations between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church.



The delivery (26-4-1964) of the Holy Cross of the Apostle Andrew to the Metropolitan of Patras Constantine by Cardinal Bea, Archbishop Willebrans and Fr. Piere Dypres.

Despite the fact that the Metropolis of Patras and the local community do not listen, in fact, to the importance of the event at an inter-Christian level, the Roman Catholic Church makes yet another embrace.

On January 19, 1980, he returned to Patras the Cross of the Martyrdom of the First-Called, which was kept in the Holy Church of St. Victor in Marseilles. The Apostle Andrew, as an ecumenical Apostle, illuminates again the relations between the West and the East.



From the return of the Cross of the Martyrdom of the Apostle Andrew in Patras, from Marseilles (19-1-1980), during the reign of the Metropolitan of Patras Nikodimos Vallindras.

The return of the Cross was accompanied by two delegations: the Orthodox Church, under the Metropolitan of France Meletios, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the Roman Catholic Church, under the Cardinal - Archbishop of Marseilles Rozer Etchegaray.



The Metropolitan of Patras Nikodimos welcomes the Metropolitan of France Meletios during the return of the Cross of the Martyrdom of the First-Called in Patras.

But the embrace of Rome and Patras continues in 2002, when from the Hautecombe Monastery of France, on October 5, the Cara of St. Irene is returned, and placed in the Holy Temple of St. Irene in Riganokampos, Patras.



The Cara of St. Irene was handed over to the Metropolitan of Patras Nicodemus by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Chambery, to whose spiritual jurisdiction the monastery HAUTECOMBE belongs, where the holy relic was kept until its return to Patras.

Thus, Patras becomes the UNIQUE CITY of Greece, to which three ecclesiastical relics are returned from the Ancient Rome, during almost forty years, which are now the spiritual Treasure of the city: The Cross of the FirstCalled, the Cross of his martyrdom and the Cara of St. Irene.

Unfortunately, Patras was indifferent to this spiritual embrace by Rome, which of course also passes through the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Diocese and the city did not promote inter-Christian relations, despite the fact that there is a historical Catholic Community in Patras, with a church also of St. Andrew.

There was no opening to Western Christianity. A convenient introversion was preferred by all, which is contrary to the universality of the Gospel and the times.

Pope Francis came to Greece on December 4-6, 2021. He visited Athens and Lesvos. However, it would be perfectly reasonable and imperative, under other circumstances, to visit the city of the First-Called Apostle, to which the Roman Catholic Church has returned three relics and the relationship between Patras and Rome is historically strong and unquestionable, even if contemporaries turn a blind eye to her.

The embrace of the brothers in flesh, Apostles Andrew and Peter, Rome and Constantinople, Rome and Patras, exist as a spiritual reality. All that remains is to open our eyes to understand it as a new Resurrection.

Of course, in America, during the recent visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the embrace of the fellow Apostles, became an occasion for establishing a University Chair!

The family of the businessman and Archon of the Ecumenical Throne, Michael Psaros, established a Chair in honor of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the famous Georgetown University.



The Embrace of the brothers in flesh at Georgetown University. Work of George Filippakis, on the initiative of the Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Michalis Psaros.

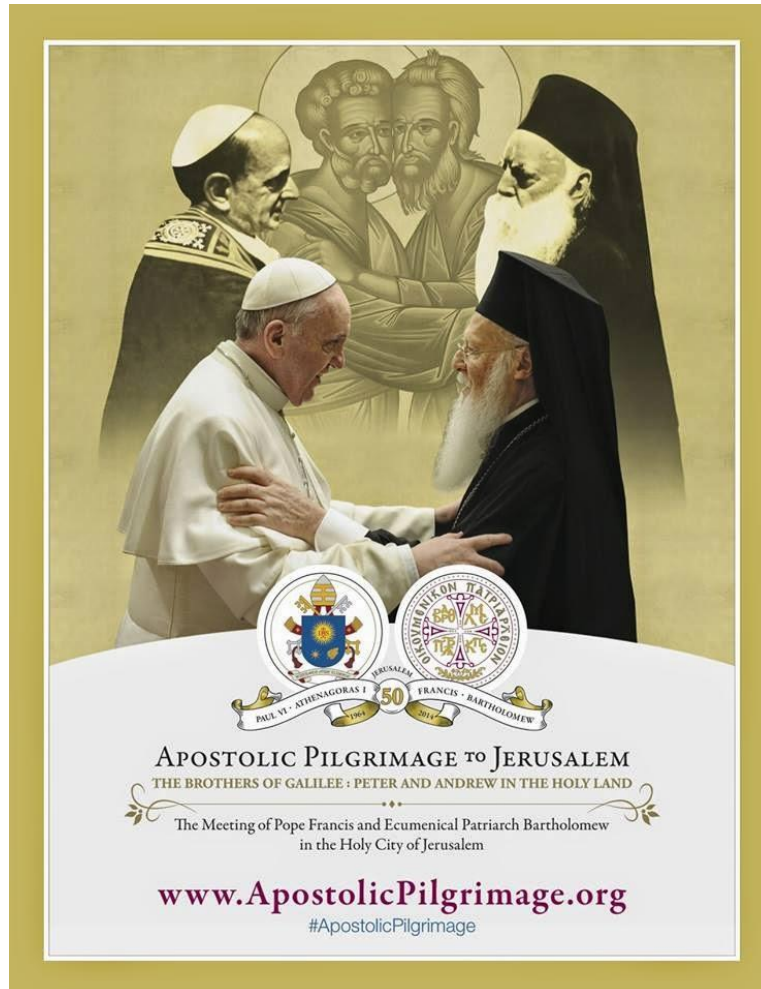
In an interview with "Ethnikos Kirikas" and to Theodoros Kalmoukos, answering the question how he thought of creating the Chair in honor of Patriarch Bartholomew, Mr. Psaros said that "five years ago Georgetown University, the oldest and most prominent Roman Catholic University in the United States, asked me to bear the cost of setting up an iconostasis with the new icons at the Crypt sanctuary in the Copley building. The Healy and Copley buildings were created before the creation of the District of Columbia.

Mr. Psaros added: "I was moved by the ecumenical proposal of the University to the Orthodox Community and consequently this symbolic ecumenical approach from the Church of the West to the Church of the East. I cried when I received the phone call, but it did not surprise me, because this is Georgetown University, one of the first world and international universities in the United States and the first University to have a School of Foreign Diplomacy, the first to have an International School of Business and most importantly is a University in the Capital of our Nation".

The icons were made by the hagiographer Georgios Filippakis who was introduced to me by my mentor and friend Fr. Alexandros Karloutsos. The most symbolic image is of the Apostle Andrew the First-Called embracing his brother in flesh Peter. I was inspired by this image because I was blessed to be a member of the escort of His All-Holiness's 'Great Meeting' with Pope Francis in Jerusalem. The Ecumenical Patriarch and the Pope greeted each other with 'My Brother Andrew, My

Brother Peter'. This image symbolizes at that moment both their brotherly love and respect".

He also said that "this Chair will continue the presence of the Orthodox witness eternally. Georgetown University is almost 300 years old and this Chair will be the constant testimony of our Holy Orthodoxy for the next three and more centuries".



The embrace of the Apostles Andrew and Peter is the bright signpost on the way to the Unity of the Churches.

The blessed Patriarch Athenagoras, when informed of the decision of the return the Holy Cross of St. Andrew to Patras, wrote:

"The entire Orthodoxy rejoices. We personally express brotherly thanks and we pray to the Lord, that through the mediation of his Apostles Peter and Andrew, bless our sister churches wishing their reunion".

During the handover of the relics of St. Andrew, Cardinal Bea, conveying the message of His Holiness Pope Paul VI and addressing the Saint, asked for his mediation to the Lord to increase the mutual love of Christians East and West: "Saint Andrew, the Most High an apostolic office, and Simon, the comrade-in-arms, called the disciple of the Lord and Peter, a fellow-citizen, a fellow-apostle and a martyr, begging Christ of our God, and reverence, and mutual love. And now, repatriating your homeland,

glorified under your martyrdom, and enjoying the same honor, found in the city of Peter, may the bond of love be forged ".

Thus, the message of the image of the embrace of the brothers is the sincere recognition of the gifts and position of each other, the eternal fellowship, the sacrificial retreat, the loving mutual embrace and the death defense of the ally brother, the members of the Churches of Christ. they are brothers in common blood, the blood of Christ.

Dialogue for Churches today is one way.

Until we become part of the common Cup, the embrace of the universe is the non-negotiable fact and at the same time the blessing for the path to union.

During the handover of the relics of St. Andrew, Cardinal Bea, conveying the message of Pope Paul VI, addressing the Saint, requested his mediation to the Lord to increase the mutual love of Christians in East and West with the following words:

"Saint Andrew, First-called, and holding the Most High apostolic office, and Simon, your co-disciple inviting to the Lord, and Peter's brother, a fellow-apostle and a martyr, beg Christ our God that this priceless relic returned and found refuge to the tomb of your brother, become symbol of demand of brotherhood in one faith, reverence, and mutual love. And now, repatriating in your homeland, which was glorified by your martyrdom, and enjoying the same honor, found in the city of Peter, may be a bond of love".

Άγιε Ανδρέα Πρωτόκλητε, ο εις το υψηλότατον αποστολικόν αξίωμα αναδειχθείς και Σίμωνα τον συναίμονα καλέσας, του Κυρίου μαθητά και Πέτρου σύγγονε, συναπόστολε και συμμάρτυς, ικέτευε Χριστώ τω Θεώ ημών, όπως το πολύτιμον τούτο λείψανον το παρά τον τάφον του αδελφού καταφυγήν ευρόν, αποβή σύμβολον και προτροπή αδελφοσύνης εν μια εν Χριστώ πίστει και ευλαβεία, και αμοιβαία αγάπη. Νυν δε, επαναπατριζόμενος τη πατρίδι σου, τη υπό του μαρτυρίου σου λαμπρυνθείση, και της αυτής απολαύων τιμής, ης εν τη πόλει του Πέτρου εύρες, είθε τον της αγάπης δεσμόν να σφυρηλατή».

Thus, the message of the icon of the embrace of the brothers is a sincere recognition of the gifts and position of each other, the eternal fellowship, the sacrificial retreat, the loving mutual perichoresis, and the brotherly alliance and defense till death of the brothes of the Church of Christ, the members of which. they are real brothers in common blood, the blood of Christ.

Dialogue for our Churches is today a one-way journey.

Until we share the common Cup, the embrace of the universe is the non-negotiable fact and at the same time the blessing for the path to union.