

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC BILATERAL DIALOGUE

TOWARDS THE FUTURE DIALOGUE OF THE CHURCHES

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There is a consensus among many theologians of the Christian Churches to consider the present situation of Christianity as abnormal. The splintering of the Body of Christ into denominations is being characterized as a contradiction to the fundamental principles of Church nature. The situation will become even more peculiar in the future when pluralism of beliefs and cultures will challenge the beliefs of the Christian faith. The fragmentation of Churches will also have an effect on the Orthodox Church and her approach to religious pluralism¹ in the global context and its effect on contemporary society. In order to respond to the cultural and religious pluralism of globalization from a Christian perspective, we have to be prepared to respond not only from particular Christian traditions, but to also articulate our faith in the context of the common value of humanity represented by the united Christian Church. The universal quest for answers does not allow a particular Christian Church to stand alone where the unified voice of the Christian Church could profess the choice between being part of this process or to be indifferent to the life of humanity.²

It is with particular importance and renewed optimism that the Orthodox and Catholic Churches entered the twenty first century in bilateral dialogue. To a certain degree, the Second Vatican Council and Pan-Orthodox Conferences acted as catalysts, giving the dialogue a new impetus in response to Patriarch Athenagoras' call to "look into each other's eyes". Because of the affirmation of the same fundamental doctrinal teachings, the Churches were able to renew their interest to enter into bilateral dialogue. The international theological bilateral discussions turned the historical polemics into progressive dialogue and self-understanding. It is our hope that theologians of both Churches will not consider the dialogue as an academic luxury or a mental theological scientism that will have a negative impact on any future discussion.³ We also have to be careful not to consider the contemporary renewal of the dialogue as simplistic triumphalism, which would be even worse than scholastic stagnation. The political and philosophical developments in the contemporary world are too important for both Churches not to delay in answering Christ's call for one unified Church.

After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the bilateral dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches entered into an impasse, as the new political developments in Eastern Europe changed in

¹ The aspect of pluralism in the ecumenical movement becomes one of the more important elements of contemporary discussion, look in: Roger Height, *The Future of Ecumenism: The Need of Leadership in the Churches*, in: GOTR 41(1996)2-3.

² According to some contemporary theologians, Christian ecumenism is no longer a choice, but a necessity that allows us to enter into a dialogue with other world religions, look in: Lloyd G. Patterson, *The Future of Ecumenism" Going Somewhere*, in: GOTR 41(1996)2-3, p. 261. From an Orthodox perspective, the writings of Bishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) of Androussa are the most known to the international community. As an example: Bishop Anastasios (Yannoulatos) of Androussa, *Towards World Community. Resources and responsibilities for living together*, in: *Ecumenical Review* 26(1974).

³ According to some contemporary theologians, the present ecumenical dialogue is at "some kind of crossroad". Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis, a long-standing member of the ecumenical movement, calls the present ecumenical discussion an "ecumenical fatigue", look in: Stanley Samule Harakas, *The Future of Ecumenism: Tending the Effort*, in: GOTR 41(1996)2-3, p. 254.

character. It was the emergence of the Eastern Catholic Churches, mainly in Western Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Serbia, and Rumania that redirected the attention of the theologians to look at the situation from a new perspective. As the situation had become more volatile⁴, the Orthodox Churches requested the International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church⁵ to address and give immediate attention to the question of “uniatism”. The Orthodox Church was mainly concerned with a pragmatic solution that could be used as a tool to resolve the thorny issue of Church divisiveness. As a result, the International Commission, after the VIIth Plenary Session in Balamand School of Theology (Lebanon) on 17-24 of June 1993, following the agreement in Freising-Munich (June 1990)⁶ and Ariccia (June 1991), issued a very interesting statement called: “Uniatism. Method of Union of the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion”.⁷

The importance of the document for the dialogue of the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox Churches is immense.⁸ In its content, the statement addressed various theological, pastoral, and practical issues that could be used as a platform for a peaceful resolution of the problem. As our attention is not directed to pastoral issues, the theological content of the statement is very aberrant, as it addresses certain aspects of ecclesiology of the Eastern Catholic Churches, among whom the Ukrainian Catholic Church is the most significant.⁹ We have to be quite clear, that it was one of the first ecclesiological documents, after Vienna, Freising, and Ariccia on the international ecumenical arena that specifically addressed the issue of the Eastern Churches in union with Rome. The presence of various Orthodox Church representatives and eventual signatures of the delegations validating the statement, including the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Moscow, could also be understood as an acknowledgement of the fact that the Eastern Catholic Churches, including the Ukrainian Catholic Church, exist and have the right for peaceful coexistence. According to this document, the Eastern Catholic Churches have to be regarded as ecclesiastical entities within the Catholic Communion.¹⁰ Following the publication of the Statement, the Ecumenical Patriarch

⁴ According to Metropolitan Bartholomios of Chalcedon, the escalation of tensions in Eastern Europe led the convention of the Mixed Committee on the Theological Dialogue to the brink of disaster, look in: *Address to His Holiness Pope John Paul the Second by His Reverence Metropolitan Bartholomaios of Chalcedon, Head of the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate During the Feastday of Saint Peter in Rome (June 29, 1990)*, in: GOTR 35(1990)4, p. 285. John Erickson characterizes this development as an Orthodox retreat from ecumenical movement, in: John Erickson, *A Retreat from Ecumenism in Post-Communist Russia and Eastern Europe?* in: www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org.

⁵ It is only correct to state that the Commission was formally established by both Churches only in 1979. For the membership and mandate of the Commission look in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, in: GOTR 42(1997)1, p. 26.

⁶ For the text look in: Information Service 73(1990)II, pp. 52-53 and Sourozh 43(1991), pp. 24-27

⁷ The complete text of the Balamand Statement was published in: Eastern Churches Journal 1(1993)1, pp. 17-27 and in: *The Quest for Unity: Orthodox and Catholics in Dialogue*, ed. by J. Borelli and J.H. Erickson, Crestwood, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996, pp. 175-183.

⁸ It would be an interesting endeavour to analyse, based on this document, the reaction of the Ukrainian Catholic theologians. Some of them only touched on the subject while analysing other related themes in ecclesiology. One of them is: Andriy Chirovsky, *“Sister Churches”: Ecumenical Terminology in Search of Content*, in: Logos 34(1993).

⁹ A very strong negative reaction towards this document still persists within some Orthodox theological circles even to the present day, look in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., pp. 25-26, 35-43.

¹⁰ It is important to emphasize, that the statement was approved by the majority of the Orthodox Churches in the world excluding the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Churches of Georgia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Czechoslovakia. According to John H. Erickson, the absence of the representatives of those Orthodox Churches in

Bartholomew presented the subject more forcefully with Pope John Paul II, when he addressed the tolerance of the situation by Rome based on the ecclesiastical economy.¹¹

Based on the facts presented in the Balamand Statement, and the discussions that followed in Orthodox theological circles, it is imperative at the present time for the theologians of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to elaborate on the subject of their own ecclesiology. For the progression of future dialogue, the clarification of the ecclesiological foundations of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is practically unavoidable. We must emphasize the fact, that the Commission, in its statement, rejected “uniatism” as a method of achieving unity between the Churches.¹² It is significant to underline that the Commission rejected “uniatism” as the “method” while the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches is “tolerated”.¹³ The document distinctly recognizes and emphasizes the existence of these Churches as a “part of the Catholic Communion”.¹⁴ In order to safeguard this emphasis, the statement defines the right to exist for those Churches and to “act in response to the spiritual needs of their faithful”. We may presume that the Orthodox theologians agreed to respect and ratify the statement, although there are still some ecclesiological questions that need be resolved between the Churches.

As we continue the analysis of the document, we have to emphasize the fact that based on the recognition of the presence of the Eastern Catholic Churches with their ecclesiological particularities; these ecclesiastical entities are called to take an active part in the dialogue towards the re-establishment of full communion between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.¹⁵ Despite a sensitivity of the Orthodox Church to the subject, the statement calls for mutual respect and reciprocal trust between the Churches: “*passing beyond the outdated ecclesiology of return to the Catholic Church*”.¹⁶ As we look carefully at this particular phrase, we can only be amazed by the great need for definition of new ecclesiological parameters for the dialogue between the Churches. The words of Pope John Paul II echo the quest for unity between the Churches: “...the search for new routes again, which lead to the target we are hoping for”.¹⁷

This particular phrase poses a series of questions that could be vital for ecclesial self-understanding of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and her role in future dialogue. One of the major ecclesiological questions

the work of the Joint commission could be explained based on various reasons, look in : John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

¹¹ Look in: *Eastern Churches Journal* 2(1995)3, pp. 29-31.

¹² Paragraph 2. According to Kondothra M. George, this statement had been already initiated by the consultation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches in Vienna in 1978, look in: Kondothra M. George, *Local and Universal: Uniatism as an Ecclesiological Issue*, in: *Gennadios Limouris (compiled), Orthodox Vision of Ecumenism; Statements, Messages, and Reports on the Ecumenical Movement 1902-1992*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1994, p. 231. We have to underline the fact that the recognition of “uniatism” would also mean the recognition of the preservation of the primacy of Rome. It is on this basis that the Orthodox Church rejects this claim, look in: Theodore Zisis, *Uniatism: A Problem in the Dialogue Between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics*, in: *GOTR* 35(1990)1, p. 228.

¹³ Look in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., p. 33. This phrase is taken from the address of Patriarch Bartholomew to Pope John Paul II.

¹⁴ Paragraph 3.

¹⁵ Paragraph 34.

¹⁶ Paragraph 30.

¹⁷ *Address to His Holiness Pope John Paul the Second by His Reverence Metropolitan Bartholomaïos of Chalcedon, Head of the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate During the Feastday of Saint Peter in Rome (June 29, 1990)*, op. cit., p. 286.

for the Ukrainian Catholic Church is the significance of her ecclesiastical entity within the Roman Catholic universal ecclesiology.¹⁸ Can we assume, according to the document, that by defining the universal ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church as outdated, there is a “seismic”¹⁹ shift within the Roman Catholic Church towards the recognition of the locality of a particular Church within the Eucharistic ecclesiology or is it a stylistic ecclesiological ambiguity?²⁰ This question is not without significance when we recall the words of Roman Catholic Cardinal Y. Congar who called the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches a “caricature and ecclesiological contradiction”.²¹ On the other hand, is there anything left off the Eucharistic ecclesiology of the Local Church in the present ecclesiology of the Ukrainian Catholic Church? If the locality of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is indeed presupposed by the statement within the context of the Eucharistic ecclesiology, how much ecclesial independence exists in the life of the Church from the Roman Pontiff? The struggle of Cardinal Slipyj in the seventies of the last century for the creation of the Ukrainian Catholic Patriarchate, based on the Kyiv-Halych Metropolis, is the most expressive of the presence of the Eucharistic ecclesiology within the self-understanding of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.²² Is it possible to consider this statement as a serious divergence of Roman Catholic ecclesiology towards the Eastern Churches? If the Ukrainian Catholic Church defines herself in communion with the Roman Church, how do we understand the rejection on March 22, 1990 by the episcopacy of the Ukrainian Catholics of the document of the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church known as: “Recommendations for the Normalization of Relations between Orthodox and Catholics of the Eastern Rite in the Western Ukraine”.²³ This last question is extremely important in

¹⁸ It is important to recall a letter from Cardinal Lubachivsky to Cardinal Cassidy, where he expresses his unhappiness over specific points of the documents and a failure to “ascribe even partial responsibility to the Russian Orthodox Church for complicity in the suppression of the uniates in 1946”, in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁹ This particular phrase is used by John H. Erickson in his analysis of the ecclesiology of St. Cyprian, look in: John H. Erickson, *The Formation of Orthodox Ecclesial Identity*, in: SVTQ 42(1998)3-4, p. 310.

²⁰ One of the contemporary Orthodox theologians Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis echoes the same predicament of ambiguity of Roman Catholic ecclesiology in regards to the relation between the bishop of Rome and the Episcopal College, look in: Emmanuel Clapsis, *The Roman Catholic Church and Orthodoxy: Twenty-Five Years after Vatican II*, in: GOTR 35(1990)3, pp. 227-229.

²¹ Y. Congar, “1054-1954. *Eglise et les eglises. Neut siecles de douloureuse separation entre L’orient et l’occident*”, in: *Irenikon* I(1962), p. 42.

²² This question has immense importance in the perspective of the decision of the episcopate of the Ukrainian Catholic Church for the creation of the Ukrainian Catholic Patriarchate based on the Kyiv-Halych Metropolis, as this was expressed by Cardinal Lubachivsky: “Your Eminence can think as he wishes. We have clarified the position of our Church. In fact, a great gap between the clergy and the people has been closed. The Church has been fortified in the face of danger from within and without... I must say that it is not a matter of defending my modest person, the galley-slave archbishop, but of defending the thousand-year rights of our Kiev-Halych Metropolia...”, look in: Ralph Hyde, *The Ukrainian Patriarchate Crisis*, in: *Eastern Churches Review* III(1971)3, p. 309; о. Ярослав Буцьора, *Гене́за ілю́зійного Українського Католицького патріярхату: еклєзіологічно-канонічний аналіз*, в: *Вісник* LXXX(2003)15-16, p. 12. We have to recall the words of Maximos IV Sayegh who strongly objects to the lack of theological thinking within the framework of Roman Catholic ecclesiology, look in: Maximos IV Sayegh, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*, New York, 1963, p. 61.

²³ Look in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., p. 28. For our interest, it is very important to recall words of Bishop Georges Gutiu of the Romanian Catholic Church who, discussing the Balamand Statement, strongly asserted that: “... no one can oblige us to accept all the points of the document in question because this is not a dogmatic issue expressed by the Holy father or by a Vatican Council which would demand our acceptance”, in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., p. 34. This statement is also important in light of the aspiration of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to establish a Ukrainian Catholic Patriarchate on the territory of Ukraine. For the ecclesiological content of this Patriarchate in the context of the Code of

the light of the Ariccia draft mentioned earlier, where the Oriental Catholic Churches have rights and obligations to comply with decisions of Rome.²⁴ Lastly, how should we understand the present meeting of this Assembly of bishops in light of both ecclesiologies? Would your respectable body of the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops recognize itself as a separate entity from the universal ecclesiology and continue the discussion in the context of the Local Eucharistic ecclesiology, or would you consider yourself as speaking on behalf of the universal ecclesiology of Rome? This last question is fundamental in the context of a letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to the Bishops of the Catholic Church entitled: “On Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion” signed by then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.²⁵ These questions are fundamental for the ecclesiological foundation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and for further discussion between our Churches at the present time.²⁶

It is almost twenty years after the Balamand Statement that the Assembly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops beyond the borders of Ukraine and Ukrainian Catholic Bishops are addressing those timely questions. The fact that the Balamand Statement of June 1993 established the parameters of dialogue is without precedence in the history of official contacts between the East and West of Christianity even though the dialogue was based only on ecclesiastical economy. It is also fundamental to state that, according to the Balamand Statement, the Ukrainian Catholic Church, as “part of the Catholic Communion”, is also called the “Sister Church”.²⁷ Despite the years of oppression and persecution, the document calls for a progression in the relationship between the Churches in order to meet each other in love. It is not without significance that Cardinal Lubachivsky, in support of the progression of dialogue,

Canons of the Eastern Churches look in: о. Ярослав Буцьора, *Гене́за ілю́зійного Українського Католицького патріярхату: еклєзіологічно-канонічний аналіз*, op. cit. The original version of this paper was published in: “Український Католицький Патріярхат в перспективі берестейської унії: еклєзіологічно-канонічний аналіз” в: Православний Вісник, No. 1-2, 1997. The words of Bishop Georges Gutiu create a very interesting paradox for Orthodox ecclesiology. According to the Orthodox Church, the ecclesiological practice that is expressed in the Canons of the Church has to be based on the doctrinal teaching of the Church. The Canons are in fact the expressions of the nature of the Church. If there exists a separation between the expressions of the Church and the doctrine, there is a sort of ecclesiological crisis that is characteristic for this case, look in: L. Patsavos, “Unity and Autocephaly: Reality or Illusion?”, Festschrift for Metropolitan Bamabas of Kitros, Athens, 1980, p. 3; J. Meyendorff, “Catholicity of the Church, An Introduction”, in: SVTQ 17(1973)1-2, p. 3.

²⁴ Look in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁵ *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, in: www.Vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc

²⁶ This line of question was presented already by Bishop Vsevolod of Scopelos at the end of the nineties of the last century who wrote: “...In discussion with the relevant representatives at various levels are sometimes surprised to be told that the Holy See lacks effective authority to require the local Catholic judicatories to conform to these rules. To the Orthodox, such a claim seems remarkably cynical, especially when one may still observe strong exercise of papal authority in other matters”, in: Bishop Vsevolod of Scopelos, *Reflections on Balamand*, in: GOTR, vol. 42(1997)3-4, p. 226.

²⁷ Paragraph 12. There is a great discussion among theologians regarding the term “sister Church”, as this was developed in the period of history in different Christian traditions. For more discussion look in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., pp. 37-38. From the Ukrainian Catholic perspective, the theme of “Sister Churches” was analysed by Fr. Andriy Chirovsky, “Sister Churches”: *Ecumenical Terminology in Search of Content*, op. cit. A very interesting comment is made by John Zizioulas who reminds us that among some of the conservative Orthodox theologians there is still confusion to the application of the term “Church” to the groups outside the Orthodox Church, look in: Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Self-understanding of the Orthodox and their Participation in the Ecumenical Movement*, in: <http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org>. A very similar observation is made by John Erickson, *A Retreat from Ecumenism in Post-Communist Russia and Eastern Europe?*, op. cit.

recognized the validity of the sacraments of the Moscow Patriarchate, even though there were some strong allegations of collaboration of the Patriarchate with the Communist.²⁸

It is of great significance on the part of the Eastern Catholic Churches to be recognized as ecclesiological entities, although from the perspective of the Orthodox Church, the Eastern Catholic Churches present certain “difficulties” that need to be resolved.²⁹ The ecclesiological, historical, social, and other complexities of the problem indicate the scale of the multifaceted difficulties that lie ahead. This analysis will hopefully be one of many in the future in the process of overcoming those challenges. Let us look first at the difficulties we face and then let us build an ecclesiological foundation for the progression of our dialogue. We will present very briefly only two of the difficulties in the hope that they will eventually lead to a deeper level of discussion and understanding.

The first problem we face is that of prejudice among Orthodox theologians towards the Eastern Catholic Churches.³⁰ This prejudice has many human faces and is based on various historical, political, and ideological perspectives. There exists a tendency among the theologians to regard the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches as an ecclesiological anomaly³¹ that has no value in the future of bilateral dialogue. The existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches is considered to be an unacceptable ecclesiological “difficulty” and major obstacle to the progress of the dialogue.³² From one side, we seriously approach the dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, but on the other side, we disregard the presence and even existence of all those ecclesiastical communities of the Eastern Catholic Churches in Communion with Rome. From another perspective, we insist on the abolishment and absorption of the Uniate Churches without giving enough thought to the motives of the establishment of those Churches in history.³³ We have to be encouraged by the shift of attention by some contemporary Orthodox theologians towards the holistic approach to the analysis.³⁴ Perhaps it would

²⁸ Look in: John H. Erickson, *Concerning the Balamand Statement*, op. cit., p. 42.

²⁹ Paragraph 17. According to Kondothra M. George, the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches on the same territory with the Local Orthodox Churches has to also be understood as a source of constant embarrassment and a root of the controversy, look in: Kondothra M. George, *Local and Universal: Uniatism as an Ecclesiological Issue*, in: *Gennadios Limouris (compiled), Orthodox Vision of Ecumenism; Statements, Messages, and Reports on the Ecumenical Movement 1902-1992*, op. cit., pp. 230-231; Theodore Zissis, *Uniatism: A Problem in the Dialogue Between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics*, op. cit., p. 22.

³⁰ There are many theologians who strongly object and criticise the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches: Thomas Hopko, “Reflection on Uniatism”, in: *Diakonia* vol. 3, No. 3, p. 3000; Theodore Zissis, *Uniatism: A Problem in the Dialogue Between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics*, op. cit.; J. Kallarangatt, “Theology of Sister Churches or Uniate Churches”, in: *Nirdaus* 2(1986), pp. 296-297; G. Gallaro, “*Orientalium Ecclesiarum Deserves More Attention*”, in: *Nirdaus* 2(1986), pp. 296-297; George Florovsky, *Ecumenism; A Historical Approach*, vol. XVI in the *Collected Works*, Vadus, Buchenvertriebsanstalt, 1982, p. 69.

³¹ The term “ecclesiological anomaly” was also used by Patriarch Dimitrios I in his greeting to the Pan-Orthodox Delegation to the Theological Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, look in: *Greeting of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I to the Pan-Orthodox Delegation to the Theological Dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church*, in: *GOTR* 35(1990)4, p. 283.

³² Theodore Zissis, *Uniatism: A Problem in the Dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics*, op. cit., p. 21.

³³ Emmanuel J. Gratsias, *Orthodox Comment to the 20th Century Ecumenical Movement: Some Results and Challenges*, in: *GOTR* 41(1996)2-3, p. 202; John Erickson, *A Retreat from Ecumenism in Post-Communist Russia and Eastern Europe?* op. cit.

³⁴ The shift is directed more towards the historical self-understanding of the particular Churches, look in: John H. Erickson, *The Formation of Orthodox Ecclesial Identity*, op. cit., p. 311. The change towards the holistic approach to the subject is also possible thanks to the contribution of the Roman Catholic theologians like Robert Taft and

be beneficial and constructive to address these issues with the Roman See, and if we could discuss the official documents of the Second Vatican Council from the perspective of embodiment of the missionary activity of the Roman Catholic Church. The reluctance on behalf of Rome to admit the ambiguity of the official policy might be a main problem for the progression of the dialogue.³⁵

The Orthodox Church is not exempt from this observation. We can't forget the historical and ideological tendencies of the Moscow Empire that would use all possible means to enslave and subjugate the entire territory of Ukraine. It was this Moscow ecclesiastical entity, disregarding the territorial canonical territory of the Ecumenical Patriarchate that absorbed and crucified the Orthodox Church in Ukraine for three centuries. The progressive annexation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church by the Moscow entity and forceful oppression of the Ukrainian Orthodox population by Muscovy created an atmosphere of intense hatred towards any ideology or thought of the Northern neighbour until now.³⁶ We can't forget, that the freedom of every human being to express his or her will, as is addressed in Orthodox anthropology, is integral for the identity of every individual who is created in the image and likeness of God.³⁷ Without free will, we cease to be authentic creations of God. Ukrainians of that time robbed of their freedom turned to those who would defend them and allow them to worship God in their own unique way. The consequences of the process, with additional complexities of that time, are being felt even now, where the families are divided by the borders of faith.³⁸ It is appropriate to recall the prophetic words of Patriarch Athenagoras who declared: *"The Christian world has lived in the dark night of separation. The Christian's eyes are tired of having their vision plunged in darkness"*.³⁹ The simplification of the complexity of the process by some contemporary Orthodox theologians doesn't do justice to all those who are struggling to find their own ecclesiastical identity. This dialogue could become not only monumental in international ecumenical discussions, but could change the theological perception among theologians regarding the contemporary developments in Ukraine. The difficulties are not only immediate, but are also far reaching into the future.

A second issue is the lack of participation of Ukrainian theologians in the international official bilateral dialogue. Because of the complexity of the religious life of the Ukrainian nation, we created among ourselves a tendency of unworthiness or "isolating provincialism" on all levels of human life.⁴⁰ We are used to the fact that there are others who would talk on behalf of our own Churches. This assembly of Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic Bishops has the potential to become a catalyst for the resurgence of our own religious identity, imperative at the present time. The issue of Uniatism is basically our own

Michael Fahey and their contribution to the history and meaning of Eastern liturgical and ecclesial traditions. The best example is the work of Robert Taft, *The Great Entrance*, Roma Pont Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1978.

³⁵ For more on the subject look in: Methodios G. Fouyas, *Bilateral Theological Dialogues: An Orthodox Assessment*, in: GOTR 41(1996)2-3, p. 190-192.

³⁶ Similar situation characterized the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania, look in: Nicholas K. Apostola, *The Reemergence of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania Following the December 1989 Revolution*, in: GOTR 35(1990)4, p. 300.

³⁷ We also have a responsibility to point out, according to Fr. D. Staniloae, that even freedom is not an ultimate good as it can degenerate itself into egoistic libertarianism, look in: Nicholas K. Apostola, *The Reemergence of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania Following the December 1989 Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

³⁸ Thomas FitzGerald suggests that theological differences could always be resolved if there were no intrusion of politics and lack of mutual respect, look in: Thomas FitzGerald, *Local Ecumenism: The Challenge and Opportunity*, in: GOTR 41(1996)2-3, p. 244.

³⁹ Paul N. Evdokimov, *Communicatio in Sacris: A Possibility*, in: *Diakonia* 2(1967)4, p. 358.

⁴⁰ This phrase is used by Evdokimov, look in: Paul N. Evdokimov, *Communicatio in Sacris: A Possibility*, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

theological challenge. It affects our own identity, it splits small villages apart, and it does not allow us to “own our own”. The conflict within our Churches has created a division within the nation, which can be healed through open and honest discussions. This assembly of bishops may provide the voice for the millions who are not able to express their views openly or who are forced to believe that the present situation is normal. The will of the representatives of both Churches suggests looking towards the possibility of dialogue and discussion.

In order to prepare the foundations for present and future dialogue, a common ground needs to be found. If we look carefully at the ecclesiological foundation of possible future dialogue, we may be quite amazed by the ecclesiological commonalities between our Churches, as revealed by the bilateral dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches.⁴¹ We shouldn't forget that some of the ecclesiological elements and their expressions are already based on our history and the present identity of the Ukrainian nation. We also share the same ethos and Tradition. It is not an ecclesiological fascination, but a reality that can give us strength in the future.⁴² It is enough for us to recall the ecumenical rapprochement of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and the Syriac Orthodox Church (so-called Oriental Orthodox or pre-Chalcedonian Churches).⁴³ In order to build a solid ecclesiological foundation for future dialogue, it is imperative for us to analyse what we have at the present in order to build for the future. We have to realize that Orthodoxy “possesses a charisma of openness” that leads to a new field of theological discovery.⁴⁴ Because of this openness, we are brought to a new ecclesiological reality that has to be addressed. It will be our humble task to find those commonalities and bring them to the table for discussion.

We cannot consider the next chapter as a full presentation of the Eastern Orthodox ecclesiology, as this has to be done in a separate analysis. We will bring forth those ecclesiological elements of Church nature that are shared by both Traditions. We have to be assured that the short ecclesiological foundation as presented is identical for the East and the West as it is based on the Dogma of the Holy Trinity, essential for the existence of our Churches. The expressions of these ecclesiological foundations will lead us to the common roots that we share in our daily life as the Church.

⁴¹ According to John Erickson, we have to be strong enough to ask ourselves if we are that different from each other as was insisted in the past, look in: John H. Erickson, *The Formation of Orthodox Ecclesial Identity*, op. cit., p. 312.

⁴² Archbishop Anthony also warns us before theological sentimentalism and cheap reunion at the cost of those things which were fundamental for generations of Christians, look in: Archbishop Anthony, *Vatican II and the Eastern Churches*, in: *Eastern Churches Review* I(1966-7), p. 19.

⁴³ Official documents called: “*On the Unity of the Eastern and Syriac Orthodox Churches*” are found in: *The Word* (April 1992): 5-9.

⁴⁴ This statement allows us to participate in the ecumenical dialogue without being accused of syncretism, look in: Paul Evdokimov, *Communicatio in Sacris: A Possibility*, op. cit., p. 355. According to Constantine Scouteris, there might also be an artificial openness as a kind of “modern, abstract, religious speculation”, look in: Constantine Scouteris, *Doxology, the Language of Orthodoxy*, in: *GOTR* 38(1993)1-4, p. 153.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

According to contemporary Orthodox ecclesiology, there is no official definition of the nature of the Church.⁴⁵ The Church is a mystery of Christ.⁴⁶ The reality of the Church is the experience of the people of God in the Holy Eucharist. Because of this specific characteristic, Church, in its foundation, is Eucharistic and indefinite.⁴⁷ This is one reason why the authentic ecclesiology of the church is the ecclesiology experienced by the community (koinonia) in the body of Christ as “life context of all theology”.⁴⁸

The foundation of the entire theology is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which includes the fields of both Eastern and Western ecclesiologies.⁴⁹ Orthodox ecclesiology is exclusively Trinitarian⁵⁰ and continually oriented towards the Triune God.⁵¹ As a consequence, the Church has a Trinitarian character and expression.⁵² In essence, the Church becomes the living icon of the Holy Trinity.

⁴⁵ Nicholas Afanassieff, *The Church Which Presides in Love*, in: John Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1992, p. 92; George Florovsky, *The Church: New Nature and Task in Man's Disorder and God's Design*, The Amsterdam Assembly Series, Amsterdam, 1948, p. 44; George Florovsky, *Ecumenism II: A Historical Approach*, vol. XIV in the Collective Works of George Florovsky, Buchervertriebsanstalt, Vaduz, 1989, p. 29; Metropolitan Emilianos Timiadis, *Lectures on Orthodox Ecclesiology*, vol. 1, University of Joensuu, Joensuu, 1992, p.60; N. Nissiotis, “*Ecclesiology at Vatican II: An Orthodox Comment*”, in: Herder Correspondence 2(1965), p. 302; A. Schmemmann, “*Ecclesiological Notes*”, in: SVSQ 11(1967), p. 37.

⁴⁶ According to Paul N. Evdokimov, the Church is a mystery that cannot never be fully grasped, look in: Paul N. Evdokimov, *Communicatio in Sacris: A Possibility*, in: Diakonia 2(1967)4, p. 352. The same idea is expressed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, look in: *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, op. cit.

⁴⁷ Kallistos Ware, *Patterns of Episcopacy in the Early Church and Today; An Orthodox View*, in: Peter Moore (ed.), *Bishop but what kind: Reflection on Episcopacy*, SPCK, 1971, p. 2; Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Panquin Books, Middlesex, 1963, p. 242; Kallistos Ware, *Intercommunion. The Decision of the Vatican II and the Orthodox Standpoint*, in: Sobornost 5(1966)4, p. 258. One of the contemporary Orthodox theologians Nikos A. Nissiotis suggested the following: “A true ecumenism in our days should request all Churches to stop preoccupation with formulating definition in official confessional statements, not because definitions and clear statements are impossible in the realm of ecclesiology, but condemned to be used as wrong and unnecessary apologetics, not only in presenting the position of one's own Church, but also in refuting those of other churches”, in: Nikos A. Nissiotis, *Is the Vatican Council Really Ecumenical*, in: The Ecumenical Review XVI(1964)4, p. 362.

⁴⁸ J. Meyendorff, *The Catholicity of the Church*, in: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1983, p. 5; George Florovsky, *Ecumenism II*, op. cit., p. 29; Kallistos Ware, *Intercommunion. The Decisions of Vatican II and the Orthodox Standpoint*, op. cit., p. 258.

⁴⁹ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, Cambridge, James Clarke, 1957, p. 158.

⁵⁰ John Zizioulas, *The Ministry of the Church in Orthodox Tradition*, in: One in Christ XXIV(1981)1, p. 295; Stylianos Harakianakis, *Can a Petrine Office be Meaningful in the Church. A Greek Orthodox Reply*, in: Concilium 4(1971)7, p. 118.

⁵¹ John Zizioulas, *Suggestions for a Plan Study on Ecclesiology*, in: *Faith Order 1985-1989; Faith and Order paper No. 148*, WCC Publications, Geneva, p. 211; J.D. Zizioulas, *The Doctrine of God the Holy Trinity Today: Suggestions for an Ecumenical Study*, in: A.I.C. Heron (ed.), *The Forgotten Trinity*, BCC/CCBI, London, 1991, p. 28; George Dion Dragas, *Orthodox Ecclesiology in Outline*, in: www.myriobiblos.org

⁵² Nicholas Koulomzine, *Images of the Church in Saint Paul's Epistles*, in: SVTQ 14(1970)1-2, p. 5.

Orthodox ecclesiology also has Christological, Pneumatological, eschatological, and cosmic dimensions.⁵³ Orthodox ecclesiology is also sacramental and mystical. Church is being actualized sacramentally in the mystical presence of the “Body of Christ”.⁵⁴ The same foundation is characteristic of Roman Catholic ecclesiology.⁵⁵ According to contemporary Orthodox thought, the only ecclesiology that fully expresses the mystical presence in the “Body of Christ” is the Eucharistic ecclesiology.⁵⁶ According to St. Ignatius of Antioch, the Church is Eucharistic and Eucharist creates the Church.⁵⁷ At this point, there are a variety of understandings of the importance of the Eucharistic ecclesiology in the life of the Eastern and Western Churches. The debate will continue to exist as long as we continue to approach this subject from two different ecclesiological perspectives. For Orthodox ecclesiology, the importance of the Eucharistic ecclesiology is primary as it is based on the concept of the Local Church and includes the essential presence of the local bishop.⁵⁸

The main purpose of the existence of the Church is the vision of the Kingdom of God.⁵⁹ Because of this eschatological presupposition, in her existence the Church strives to model itself on the pattern of the Kingdom of God and should never cease to do so. Any compromise with the powers of the fallen world

⁵³ Emmanuel Clapsis, *The Holy Spirit in the Church*, in: *The Ecumenical Review* 41(1989)3, p. 339; Waclaw Hryniewicz, *Eklesiologia prawosławna i protestancka w zarysie*, in: W. Grant, *Ku człowiekowi i Bogu w Chrystusie, Zarys Teologii Katolickiej*, tom. 2, Lublin, 1974, p. 376 & 379.

⁵⁴ S. Harakas, “*The Local Church*”, in: *The Ecumenical Review* 29(1977); Alexander Schmemmann, *The Idea of Primacy in the Orthodox Ecclesiology*, in: *SVSQ* 4(1960)2-3, p. 56.

⁵⁵ *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, op. cit.

⁵⁶ One of the best known Orthodox theologians, who elaborated greatly on the subject of this ecclesiology, is Metropolitan John Zizioulas, look in: John Zizioulas, “*The Eucharistic Community and the Catholicity of the Church*”, in: *One in Christ* 6(1970), pp. 314-337; also in: Thomas Fitzgerald, *Conciliarity, Primacy and the Episcopacy*, in: *SVTQ* 38(1994)1, pp. 17-18; Ks. Waclaw Hryniewicz, *Pneumatologia a eklesiologia; Prawosławny wkład do współczesnej dyskusii ekumenicznej*, in: *Collectanea Theologica* 47(1977), p. 45; Olivier Clement, *Orthodox Ecclesiology as an Ecclesiology of Communion*, in: *One in Christ* V(1970)2, p. 110. According to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Eucharist is the “creative force and source of communion among the members of the Church”, look in: *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, op. cit., paragraph 5.

⁵⁷ Kallistos Ware, *Pattern of Episcopacy*, op. cit., p. 2; John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, in: *Sobornost* 16(1994)1, p. 15; Прот. Н. Афанасьевъ, *Кафолическая Мисль*, in: *Православная Мисль*, выпуск XI; Reverend Jerome J. Holtzman, *Eucharistic Ecclesiology of the Orthodox Theologians*, in: *Diakonia*, vol. VIII(1973)1, p. 11.

⁵⁸ The aspect of the Eucharistic ecclesiology is a centre of discussion in the bilateral consultation of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. For us, the cited document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is the best example of this discussion, in: *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, op. cit., paragraph 11. Another short critical analysis of the Eucharistic ecclesiology from the perspective of the Roman Catholic theology could be found in the writings of Michael A. Fahey, look in: Michael A. Fahey, *The Present and Future of Ecumenism and the Christian East in North America*, in: *Diakonia* 27(1994)2-3, p. 106. Some interesting points of the Eucharistic ecclesiology for the Roman Catholic ecclesiology are presented by: M. Edmund Hussey, *Nicholas Afanassiev's Eucharistic Ecclesiology: A Roman Catholic Viewpoint*, in: *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 12(1975)1.

⁵⁹ John Zizioulas, *Episkope and Episkopos in the Early Church. A Brief Survey of the Evidence*, in: *Episcopate and Episcopate in Ecumenical Perspective*, Faith and Order paper 102, Geneva, p. 40; Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Church As Communion*, in: *SVTQ* 38(1994)1, p. 8; Alexander Schmemmann, *The Problem of the Church's Presence in the World in Orthodox Consciousness*, in: *SVTQ* 21(1977)1, p. 13; John Meyendorff, *The Vision of Unity*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1987, p. 156; Ioannes N. Karmiris, *Nationalism in the Orthodox Church*, in: *GOTR* 26(1981)3; Emanuel Clapsis, *Politics and Christian Faith*, in: *GOTR* 37(1992)1-2, p. 101.

would be detrimental to her identity.⁶⁰ To put this in a different context, the main purpose of the Orthodox Church is the nourishment and cultivation of the Orthodox Christian “life style” for all people at any time under any conditions or difficulties.⁶¹ The Church is not an idea or philosophical, political, or ideological thought which can be put under discussion and classification as any other human concept. The Church is life in God and “...not of this world” (John 18:36). If the Church is the “living icon of the Holy Trinity” in the world then the entire world, with all its complexity, is the domain of the Church. According to St. Maximos the Confessor: “the Church is the print and image of the whole world, which consists of visible and invisible substances”.⁶² In this context, the problems of humanity are the Church’s problems.⁶³ This belief is one of the main reasons why contextual theology has such an important role to play in Orthodox theology. All the daily dilemmas of human beings, including the political, economic, cultural, and social problems are being transferred to the Church, where they are being sanctified and overcome in the Holy Eucharist. The Orthodox Church is the life of the world and by participating in the struggle of humanity for man’s theosis, the Church transforms the world. Although the Church has a distinctive identity with a specific mission in the world, actions for justice, peace, and stability in the world are constitutive dimensions of the Church’s mission.⁶⁴ The Church should never be associated with the indifference or excessive detachments that are integral parts of the horror of the world.⁶⁵ Indifference and apathy bring life to death, while participation and action change and transform the world. If the local church associates itself with indifference, it is not a church.⁶⁶ One of the reasons there is such a strong call for unity of the Christian Churches is to encounter indifference and to transform the world. Unified Christianity would not only be faithful to the nature of the Church, but would be a strong power for the stability of peace among people. From another perspective, although the problems of the world are brought to the Church, they are never identified with the Church.⁶⁷ The Church, because of her ontological nature expressed in an apophatic theology, cannot identify herself with either national or social ideologies of society.⁶⁸ It has to be emphasized that the

⁶⁰ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Church as Communion*, op. cit., p. 8; Emmanuel Clapsis, *Politics and Christian Faith*, op. cit., p. 210.

⁶¹ Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Theological Approach to Modern Trend*, in: SVTQ 13(1969)4, p. 210.

⁶² Look in: John Karmiris, *Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism*, in: Proces-Verbaux de Deuxieme Congres de Theologie Orthodoxe a Athenes 19-29 Aout 1976, Publies par les soins du Professeur Savas Chr. Agourides, Athens, 1978, p. 466; Alexander Schmemmann, *Problems of Orthodoxy in America*, in: SVSQ 9(1965)4, p. 177.

⁶³ J.D. Zizioulas, *Informal Groups in the Church: An Orthodox Viewpoint*, in: *Informal Groups in the Church. Papers of the Second Cerdic Colloquium Strasbourg, May 13-15, 1971*, Rene Metz and Jean Schlick (eds.), The Pickwick Press, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 1975, p. 287.

⁶⁴ Emmanuel Clapsis, *Politics and Christian Faith*, op. cit., p. 100.

⁶⁵ Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Theological Approach to Modern Trends*, in: *St. Vladimir’s Theological Approach to Modern Trends*, op. cit., p. 204; Thomas Hopko, *The Narrow Way of Orthodoxy*, in: SVTQ 40(1996)7; Emmanuel Clapsis, *Politics and Christian Faith*, op. cit., p. 101.

⁶⁶ John Zizioulas, *The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective – An Orthodox Contribution*, in: *In Each Place: Toward a Fellowship of Local Churches Truly United*, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1977, p. 59; George Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, vol. II, Nordland Publishing Company, Belmont, 1974, p. 99.

⁶⁷ Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Theological Approach to Modern Trends*, op. cit., p. 205; Stanley S. Harakas, *Orthodox Church-State Theory and American Democracy*, in: GOTR XXI(1971)4, p.418; Thomas Hopko, *The Narrow Way of Orthodoxy*, op. cit., p. 7.

⁶⁸ Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1984, p. 215; Stanley S. Harakas, *Must God Remain Greek? Orthodox Reflections on Christian Faith and Culture*, in: GOTR 36(1991)3-4, p. 355; John Meyendorff, *The Vision of Unity*, op. cit., p. 156; Kallistos Ware, *Authority in the Orthodox Church*, in: *Ekklesia kai Theologia* 3(1982), p. 942; Jean Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Prayer and Life*, in: Emmanuel 85(1979)4, p. 201; Vladimir Lossky, *Catholic Consciousness. The Anthropological Implications of the Dogma of the Church*, in: SVTQ 14(1970)4, pp. 187-188.

Church incarnates people refusing to accept any ideas or beliefs.⁶⁹ Although the Church is not identified with any of those concepts, she is incarnated into various cultures in order to anticipate the Kingdom of God.

The Church is in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity and as such the Holy Trinity constitutes her being in the world. The Church reflects God's unity in Trinity.⁷⁰ In other words, the Church mirrors the communion and otherness that exists in the Holy Trinity. The Three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one in nature⁷¹, but the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are absolutely different.⁷² Because the Church is the mirror of the Triune God, the Church, in parallel, also represents a multiplicity of persons in unity of life and being. There is an absolute interdependence among the members of the Church, which also testifies that together with unity there is diversity. Each member of the Church is different and because of this difference, church members need each other.⁷³ The unity of the Church is identified in the diversity of its members, which involves the natural, social, and spiritual differences.⁷⁴ In other words, the difference of the members of the Church are being transfigured as characteristics and make-up of life and thought of all those who create the Church. All differences are transfigured and existentially transcended to the upper and only idea of unity of Church: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Slave nor free: but Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:11, Gal. 3:28, Eph. 2:14).⁷⁵ The unity of the Church, which is being actualized in Eucharist, overcomes any division of any time and any aspect: "Jesus Christ yesterday and today the same, and through the centuries" (Hebr. 13:8). The implications of this Eucharistic ecclesiology for the social consciousness of the Church are far reaching and, because of its content, should be constantly emphasized.⁷⁶ The Eucharist does not only unify diversity but also sanctifies otherness.⁷⁷

According to Orthodox theological tradition, the unity of the Church, in its proper context, was never harmed by a variety of national identities, languages, and cultures.⁷⁸ The development of personal

⁶⁹ John Zizioulas, *The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective*, op. cit., p. 61; Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Church as Communion*, op. cit., p. 8; Ioannes N. Karmiris, *Nationalism in the Orthodox Church*, op. cit., p. 178 & 182; John Meyendorff, *Who Holds the Church Together*, in: *The Ecumenical Review* XII(1960)3, p. 297; John Meyendorff, *Vision of Unity*, op. cit., p. 156.

⁷⁰ Georges Dragas, *Orthodox Ecclesiology in Outline*, in: *GOTR* XXVI(1981)3, p.185.

⁷¹ Op. cit., p. 185

⁷² Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Communion and Otherness*, op. cit., p. 12

⁷³ John Karmiris, *Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 458.

⁷⁴ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Church as Communion*, op. cit., p.9; John Zizioulas, *The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective*, op. cit., p. 56.

⁷⁵ Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, op. cit., pp. 217-218; John Zizioulas, *The Local Church in a Eucharistic Perspective*, op. cit., pp. 56-57; John Karmiris, *Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 467. An identical idea is expressed by the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism: "Where discrimination by race, sex or class is a danger for the community, the Eucharist enables people of all sorts to partake of the one food and to be made one people", in: *Your Kingdom Come –Report on the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism 1980*, Geneva, 1980, p. 206; John Zizioulas, *Ecumenism and the Need for Vision*, in: *Sobornost* 10(1988)2, p. 42; T.L. Frazer, *A Second Look at the Second Coming*, Conciliar Press, Ben Lomond, 1999, p. 123.

⁷⁶ J.D. Zizioulas, *1st Comment*, in: *Proces – Verbaux Du Deuxieme Congres De Theologie Orthodoxe, Athens 19-29 Aost 1976*, Professor Savas Chr. Agourides, Athens, 1978, p. 144.

⁷⁷ Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *The Church as Communion*, op. cit., p. 15; John D. Zizioulas, *The Early Christian Community*, in: *Christian Spirituality; Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff (eds.), Crossroad, 1985, p. 30.

⁷⁸ Bishop Anastasios Yannoulatos of Androussa, *Discovering the Orthodox Missionary Ethos*, in: *Martyria/Mission: The Witness of the Orthodox Church Today*, Ion Bria (ed.), World Council of Churches, 1980, p. 22.

identities of people, which is being presented through nation, language, culture, philosophy, is in fact part of Orthodox mentality. All these factors, including ethnic, national and cultural identity, are given a high priority in the missionary field of the Orthodox Church.⁷⁹ These cultural identities might be carriers of very valuable social, religious, and ethical values. A member of the ecclesial community is born as a member of a particular religion, people, culture, or nation, which create his identity.⁸⁰ The personal identity of every member of the Church is shaped by those factors. From this perspective, it must also be said that because the national identity and culture belong to the personal identity of specific people, the cosmopolitan idea of culture or “universal Christian culture” is not acceptable. No culture is final and definitive.⁸¹ If the Orthodox Church embraces otherness, it is also respectful of the tremendous riches of human diversity of culture. Christianity does not suppress cultures of national identities, but assumes them into the unified diversity of catholic tradition.⁸² There is no “pure Orthodoxy” that is not untainted by culture.⁸³ From the Orthodox perspective, the development of personal identity and integrity is a constant process that can be preserved and continued only by constant spiritual effort.⁸⁴ The culture of human beings together with national identity is constantly being transfigured by the mystical life in the Church. Orthodoxy sees a particular culture as a source of redemptive revelation of God.

As we continue our analysis we also have to state that Christianity, and especially Orthodoxy, is by its nature incarnational. This belief is based on the fact that the second person of the Holy Trinity – Jesus Christ came into the world in a specific time, culture, and nation (Jn. 1.14).⁸⁵ Because of the incarnational aspect, the Orthodox Church recognizes that the theological context of the Church is inevitably culturally conditioned. It must be recognized that a “core of Christian truth” is to be identified in the shell of a culture of various national identities.⁸⁶ Because of the incarnational factor of the

⁷⁹ Stanley S. Harakas, *Living the Faith. The Praxis of Eastern Orthodox Ethics*, Light and Life Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1992, p. 280; *Mission: The Witness of the Orthodox Churches Today*, Ion Bria (ed.), World Council of Churches, 1980, p. 232; A.C. Calivas, *Orthodox Theology and Theologians: Reflections on the Nature, Task, and Mission of the Orthodox Enterprise*, in: GOTR 37(1992)3-4, p. 290.

⁸⁰ Alexander Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith, Sermons* vol. I, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, 1991, p. 121; Stanley Harakas, *Living the Orthodox Christian faith in America*, in: *Martyria/Mission*, Ion Bria (ed.), World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1980, p. 155.

⁸¹ John Zizioulas, *The local church in a Eucharistic perspective*, op. cit., p. 60; A. Calivas, *Orthodox Worship in the American Context*, in: GOTR 38(1993)1-4, p. 68; Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 13.

⁸² John Meyendorff, *The Catholicity of the Church*, op. cit., p. 15; John D. Zizioulas, *Ecclesiological Issues Inherited in the Relations between Eastern Chalcedonian and Oriental Non-Chalcedonian Churches*, in: *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology*, Parlos Gregorios, H. Lazareth and Nikos A. Nissiotis (eds.), World Council of Churches, p. 149.

⁸³ Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers*, Light and Life Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1987, p. 24; Kallistos Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 12.

⁸⁴ George Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture*, op. cit., p. 26; Ion Bria, *The Liturgy After the Liturgy, Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective*, WCC Publications, Geneva, p. 44; John Zizioulas, *The local church in a Eucharistic perspective – an Orthodox contribution*, op. cit., p. 56.

⁸⁵ Stanley S. Harakas, *Must God Remain Greek?*, op. cit., p. 357; Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers*, op. cit., p. 241.

⁸⁶ Alexander Schmemmann, *The Problem of the Church’s Presence in the World in Orthodox Consciousness*, op. cit., p. 6; Stanley S. Harakas, *Must God Remain Greek*, op. cit., p. 360; Ion Bria, *The Liturgy After the Liturgy*, op. cit., p. 4.

Gospel, there should be room for expression of faith in a variety of cultural forms and identities.⁸⁷ Our Ukrainian identity, which is foundational for our cultural tradition of our two Churches, might be a unifying link that can bring us together in the other dimensions for our further discussions. Because theology is contextual, it incarnates all the discussed elements into our dialogue.⁸⁸ It is one of the greatest achievements of Orthodoxy to emphasize the sanctification of cultures of national identities and the readiness to respond to the authentic needs of people.⁸⁹ Orthodoxy is, at the same time, a human culture and a divine manifestation, which transfigures the human into the heavenly.

Orthodox Christianity from the very beginning followed a policy of embracing the culture and traditions of those who were evangelized.⁹⁰ It was one of the main tasks of the Orthodox missionaries to look for the possibility to facilitate the integration of Orthodox faith with the cultural and ethnic values of the specific evangelized territory and people. The Orthodox East always encouraged the assumption by the Church of the elements of national culture and identity, which could contribute to the well – being of the Orthodox Church and to our bilateral discussion.⁹¹

Another very important element in our discussion is the subject of “healthy patriotism”. While the Orthodox Church condemns excessive nationalism, she does not reject well-intended and healthy nationalism, which can be defined and embraced by the concept of catholicity.⁹² Within the concept of Eucharistic ecclesiology, there is room for love and respect for the nation-state expressed as patriotism. Patriotism for the well being of the state should be distinguished from fanatical patriotism, known as chauvinism. If the concept of true patriotism should be guided by the principle of relationship with God, the fanatical principles of patriotism place nation and state on the top of hierarchy of values.⁹³ The concept of positive nationalism, which is embraced and limited to the catholicity of the Church, becomes a positive force, which can unite people for the transformation of the world in the light of the

⁸⁷ John D. Zizioulas, *The Theological Problem of “Reception”*, in: *One in Christ XXI(1985)3*, p. 192; J.D. Zizioulas, *Conciliarity and the Way to Unity, in: Churches in Conciliar Fellowship? – a Discussion amongst European Churches and Unity and Cooperation*, Conference of European Churches Occasional paper No. 10, p. 25.

⁸⁸ Emmanuel Clapsis, *The Challenge of Contextual Theologies*, in: *GOTR 38(1993)1-4*, p. 72; Christos Yannaras, *Elements of faith; An Introduction to Orthodox Theology*, T7T Clark, Edinburgh, 1991, p. 154. Stanley S. Harakas gives the parameters for the contextual theology: “What is the criterion for distinguishing what can be assimilated into the faith (all that is good in culture) and what can’t (all that is sinful and evil)? It is the core faith of Orthodox Christianity: The Holy Trinity – the goodness of Creation – humanity as God’s image and likeness – our fallen condition – the divine – human person of Jesus Christ and His saving work in His life, death and resurrection – the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in the Church – the expectation of the end of this world, the establishment of the eternal Kingdom, with Christ’s return. If culture patterns don’t fit this pattern, then the Church works either to transform them or to reject them”, in: Stanley S. Harakas, *The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers*, op. cit., p. 241.

⁸⁹ John Meyendorff, *2nd Comment*, in: *Proces – Verbaux du Deuxieme Congres de Theologie Orthodoxe a Athens*, Savas Chr. Agourvides (pub.), Athens 1978, p. 291; Myroslaw Tataryn, *Orthodox ecclesiology and cultural Pluralism*, in: *Sobornost 19(1997)1*, p. 64.

⁹⁰ Stanley S. Harakas, Ligonier, *Nationalism and Ethnicity*, in: *OPT News: Orthodox People Together 5(1995)2*, p. 6.

⁹¹ John Meyendorff, *The Catholicity of the Church: An Introduction*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁹² John N. Karmiris, *Nationalism in the Orthodox Church*, op. cit., p. 180; John Karmiris, *Catholicity of the Church and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 473; Kallisots Ware, *Catholicity and Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 15.

⁹³ Stanley S. Harakas, *Living the Faith*, op. cit., p. 281.

Holy Spirit.⁹⁴ On anthropological grounds, there is no doubt, that positive (healthy) nationalism has an important role to play in religion, and possesses a certain inherited authority.⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

As we enter into a dialogue with one another we have to be ready to open ourselves in order to love one another. We have to be ready to respond to the words of St. Maximos the Confessor who claimed: “believe me, my children, nothing else has caused schism and heresies in the church but the fact that we do not love God and our neighbour”.⁹⁶ It is an ecclesial condition of our Churches that requires openness, honesty, and genuineness.⁹⁷ It also requires forgiveness and vision that is fundamental to respond to the call of unity. In order to achieve those requirements we have to be able to know each other not only on the social and ideological levels, but we have to be ready to respond to the question of ecclesiological identities. This is one of the reasons why we posed some of the ecclesiological questions for further analysis. We also have presented, in a much-abbreviated form, the essential foundations of the Church as they are being understood in contemporary theological thought. As we have observed in our discussions, the essential doctrinal elements of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Churches are almost identical, although their expressions in the life of the Churches are different. The discussed Eucharistic ecclesiology might be the best example here. But we cannot forget that if the fundamental doctrine of the Churches is the same and is essential in our discussion, then the expressions of the foundations have to be understood as secondary. Even though we might understand these differences as secondary they cannot be viewed as unrelated to the doctrinal foundations.

Forthcoming dialogue will only show the direction we have to take in our deliberations. We have to be ready to assist each other in order to find the right ecclesiological tools that are necessary for the progression of further discussion. We must also recognize that honest and sincere discussion cannot be based on sentimental stimulus or cheap foundations. In our theological dialogue we have to avoid complacency and compromises of any sort at any cost as such complacency leads to certain ecclesiological death or progressive stagnation. In order to be authentic to our call for unity, we must meet each other on grounds of trust, open honest communication, and mutual respect. The path toward future dialogue and unity might be “costly and painful”⁹⁸ but it is the only way to look and step into the future. We have to be quite frank; there may be many obstacles along the way, which are deeply rooted in our prejudice and way of thinking established in the history of the last three hundred years. The difficulties may also be compounded by the internal obstacles in our Churches, as well as by those who see these discussions as treason.

In dialogue, we must avoid any form of exclusiveness that may be deterrent from the true foundations of theological dialogue. These challenges should not deter us from our quest of finding each other in

⁹⁴ Deacon Vladimir Tsurikov, *Nationalism*, in: *Orthodox Life* 43(1993)4, p. 46.

⁹⁵ The Most Rev. J.W.C. Wand, *The Place of Nationalism in Religion*, Sudbury – Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, 1940, pp. 5-6.

⁹⁶ Quoted by: Thomas FitzGerald, *Local Ecumenism: The Challenge and Opportunity*, op. cit., p. 244.

⁹⁷ As the historical analysis shows, the ecumenism was not always based on those characteristics, look in: Emmanuel J. Gratsias, *Orthodox Comment to the 20th Century Ecumenical Movement: Some Results and Challenges*, op. cit., pp. 197-198.

⁹⁸ Gennadios Limouris, “*Understanding of the Church Emerging in the Bilateral Dialogues*”, in: *GOTR* 36(1991)1, p. 19.

our quest for unity. There may also be other issues or ideologies that will do everything possible to cut off this process at its roots. The history of the Ukrainian nation is too fresh in order to forget about this immediate danger.

From another perspective, if we want to be truthful to ourselves and progressive in our deliberations, we have to be consistent and theologically mature in our quest for unity. In order to be authentic to our witness and successful in our quest we must not only speak and argue, but we must also listen to each other in order to make our dialogue real and tangible. As we listen to each other, we may learn from the shared experiences of others, thereby giving us more authenticity and helping us realize where we stand and what we represent. We may also experience moments of silence permeated by the presence of the other. This otherness may lead us into dimensions never discussed before. With patience we will be able to bring to the table our ecclesiastical experiences of the past, even those that may have been overwhelmed by pain, sorrow, and suffering. In order to be faithful to ourselves and to God, we must not be afraid to look into each other's eyes with love, where we will once again see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.