

LIGHT OF THE EAST

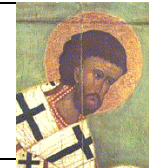
"GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS."

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, YOUNGSTOWN-WARREN OHIO CHAPTER

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 3, MAY-JUNE, 2014

VITO R. CARCHEDI, EDITOR, 35 SCHENLEY AVE. STRUTHERS, OH 44471

TELEPHONE: 330-755-5635 E-MAIL: vcarchedi@hotmail.com WEBSITE: www.byzcath.org/stjohnchrysostom/



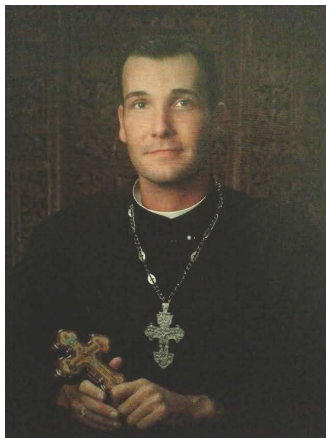
FROM THE EDITOR...

Dear Members and Friends, the next regular Chapter meeting will be **Tuesday, July 1, 7pm at St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church, Logan Way, Liberty Twp 44505, Ohio**. Our speaker will be "The Very Rev. Canon Ignatius Kury is currently serving as Pastor of St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church in Austintown, Ohio, as well as works part-time in his Eparchial Chancery in Parma, Ohio. A native of Akron, Ohio, Fr. Kury attended Borromeo Seminary and John Carroll University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and Philosophy. After spending almost three years as a Benedictine monk of St. Vincent Archabbey, Fr. Kury spent three years teaching Science at a parochial grade school. Returning to his theological studies, Fr. Ignatius attended St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Seminary and graduated from the Catholic University of America with an S.T.B. Fr. Kury was ordained on December 23, 2006 and appointed assistant pastor of Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church in Akron, only to be named Pastor in March 2007. Father Kury served as the Director of Vocations as well as on the Bishop's Counsel of Consultors. He was elevated to be a Canon of the Cathedral of St. Josaphat on February 9, 2009 by the Most Rev. Robert M. Moskal. On November 1, 2012, Fr. Ignatius was named Pastor of St. Anne Church."

Father will speak on "*Lex orandi, lex credendi: The Divine Liturgy as an Expression of Our Faith.*"

Chapter Paid dues 2014

These have paid: Gilbert, Billcheck, Democko, Limbert, Sarantopoulos, Jim & Esther Dershaw, Fr. Witmer, Beri & Christopher Berardi, Carchedi, Fr. Gage, Fr. Manning, Fr. Rick, Msgr. Siffrin, Chiu, Mattiussi, Tavolario, Nakley & Katz, Fr. Schmidt, Chorbishop Kail, Msgr. Spinosa, Benedictine Sisters, Hudak, Rev. Mr. Ettinger, Fr. Bonnot, Joan & Jenna Binsley, Fr. Hilinski, Mike & Terri Aquilina, Peter & Norma Kopko, Vasilchek, Deckant, Stanislaw, Kolitsos, Very Rev. Canon Kury.



If you aren't on list send check for \$20 (25 family 15 student) made out to the Society in care of the name and address at top of this page. Thank you!

WHO ARE WE?

The Society of St John Chrysostom promotes greater appreciation of the spiritual, theological and liturgical traditions of Eastern Christendom, works and prays for the unity of the Churches of East and West, and encourages support for the Eastern Churches :

- the Byzantine and Oriental Catholic Churches
- the Orthodox Church
- the Oriental Orthodox Churches and
- the Church of the East.

In the United Kingdom and Europe the Society was founded in 1926

In 1998 the Society was also founded in the United States, where it runs the annual North American and international Orientale Lumen conferences

Following some exploratory and preparatory meetings in 1998 and early 1999, the first regular meeting of the Youngstown-Warren Chapter took place May 4, 1999.

*****PLEASE NOTE THAT IN THE INTEREST OF INQUIRY, OUR NEWSLETTER SOMETIMES PRESENTS ARTICLES WITH POINTS OF VIEW WITH WHICH WE DON'T NECESSARILY AGREE.*****

A Daily Prayer for Christian Unity

By your power Lord,
gather together your scattered flock
under the one authority of your Son:
that the design of your love may be accomplished
and that the world may know, the one true God,
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Amen.
Prayer by Fr Paul Couturier

BRING A FRIEND TO OUR MEETING!

» 05/29/2014 13:27

ORTHODOX-VATICAN

Bartholomew: With Francis, we invite all Christians to celebrate the first synod of Nicaea in 2025

by NAT da Polis

In an interview with *AsiaNews*, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople reveals the future steps to strengthen unity between Catholics and Orthodox. In addition to the appointment of Nicaea, the first truly ecumenical council, in the autumn the next meeting of the Catholic-Orthodox Joint Commission will be held in Jerusalem, where everyone "must commit themselves without hypocrisy".



Istanbul (*AsiaNews*) - On his return from Jerusalem, where he met with Pope Francis at the Holy Sepulchre, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople,

Bartholomew I, has revealed an important appointment for unity between Catholics and Orthodox: a gathering at Nicaea in 2025, where the first real ecumenical council of the undivided Church was celebrated.

Speaking exclusively with *AsiaNews*, Bartholomew says that together with Pope Francis "we agreed to leave as a legacy to ourselves and our successors a gathering in Nicaea in 2025, to celebrate together, after 17 centuries, the first truly ecumenical synod, where the Creed was first promulgated". The Council of Nicaea (now Iznik, 130 km south-east of Istanbul), brought together more than 300 bishops from East and West in 325 and is considered the first true ecumenical council. It was there that the formula of the Creed was decided, similar to the one recited during the liturgy today, saying that Jesus "is co-substantial to the Father," to counter the Aryan ideology.

Francis and Bartholomew met to mark 50 years since the embrace between Paul VI and Athenagoras. The 1964 meeting broke a centuries old silence between the Christian East and the West, with all the socio-political consequences that have arisen, and from which Europe still suffers.

The meeting at the Holy Sepulchre has revitalized dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox, two Christian visions that despite their differences, have a common vision of the sacraments and apostolic tradition.

"The dialogue for unity between Catholics and Orthodox - Bartholomew tells *AsiaNews* - will start again from

Jerusalem. In this city, in the autumn, a meeting of the Catholic-Orthodox Joint Commission will be held hosted by the Greek -Orthodox patriarch Theophilus III. It is a long journey in which we all must be committed without hypocrisy".

"Jerusalem - continues Bartholomew - is the place, the land of the dialogue between God and man, the place where the Logos of God was incarnated. Our predecessors Paul VI and Athenagoras have chosen this place to break a silence that lasted centuries between the two sister Churches".

"I walked with my brother Francis in the Holy Land not with the fears of Luke and Cleopas on their way to Emmaus (cf. Luke 24: 13-35), but inspired by a living hope which we learn from our Lord"

Pope Francis Remarks in Holy Land (An Excerpt)

"Clearly we cannot deny the divisions which continue to exist among us, the disciples of Jesus", he observed.

"This sacred place makes us even more painfully aware of how tragic they are. And yet, fifty years after the embrace of those two venerable Fathers, we realise with gratitude and renewed amazement how it was possible, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, to take truly significant steps towards unity. We know that much distance still needs to be travelled before we attain that fullness of communion which can also be expressed by sharing the same Eucharistic table, something we ardently desire; yet our disagreements must not frighten us and paralyse our progress. We need to believe that, just as the stone before the tomb was cast aside, so too every obstacle to our full communion will also be removed. This will be a grace of resurrection, of which we can have a foretaste even today. Every time we ask forgiveness of one another for our sins against other Christians and every time we find the courage to grant and receive such forgiveness, we experience the resurrection! Every time we put behind us our long-standing prejudices and find the courage to build new fraternal relationships, we confess that Christ is truly risen! Every time we reflect on the future of the Church in the light of her vocation to unity, the dawn of Easter breaks forth! Here I reiterate the **hope already expressed by my predecessors for a continued dialogue with all our brothers and sisters in Christ, aimed at finding a means of exercising the specific ministry of the Bishop of Rome which, in fidelity to his mission, can be open to a new situation and can be, in the present context, a service of love and of communion acknowledged by all**".

The Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church: What Has Changed in Fifty Years

by Fr. Thomas FitzGerald

When Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew meet in Jerusalem on May 25-26, 2014, they will recall the meeting of their predecessors Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in the same city in 1964. In the midst of prayer and recollection in the Holy Places, the leaders of the Catholic Church and Orthodox Church will give thanks to God for the dramatic change in the relationship between their churches in the past fifty years. They will recall the prayer of the Lord for his disciples 'that they all be one' (John 17:21). Within five decades, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church formally have moved from isolation to engagement, from monologue to dialogue, and from misunderstanding to mutual enrichment. These developments can only have taken place with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and with the commitment of devoted clergy and laity to the process of reconciliation.

While the relationship between the churches may differ from place to place, these are some of the significant developments in the past fifty years: The Ecumenical Patriarchate has the special responsibility of guiding the Orthodox dialogue with the Catholic Church. This Orthodox dialogue with the Church of Rome has the approval of the Fourteen Autocephalous Orthodox Churches. The Catholic Church recognizes the preeminent leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarch among all the Orthodox.

After centuries of alienation, both the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church have formally committed themselves to the restoration of full communion through an agreed understanding of the Apostolic Faith. Both Churches now see themselves as 'Sister Churches' with the responsibility of maintaining the Apostolic Faith and healing their division.

For the Catholics, this commitment to reconciliation was expressed at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and in subsequent statements. For the Orthodox, this commitment was expressed in the decisions of the Pan-

Orthodox-Conferences (1961-1968) and in subsequent statements.

Both churches recognize a state of schism exists. This schism resulted primarily from different understandings of authority in the Church and specifically the role of the Bishop of Rome. The division developed over centuries and reached a point of schism in the fifteenth century (1484). Theological differences were compounded by linguistic, political and cultural factors. Both churches recognize that the restoration of unity requires prayer for reconciliation, the resolution of differences in teachings and practices, and a common witness to the Gospel in the society. As the schism occurred over time, so also the process of reconciliation will take place over time.

Orthodox and Catholic look to the day when they can heal the schism and share in the Holy Eucharist. Both Orthodox and Catholics recognize the Eucharist to be the center of church life and personal piety. However, the schism prevents the faithful in both churches from joining together in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Anathemas of 1054 were removed by the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople in 1965. The original acts of excommunication were directed against particular persons, not against the churches as a whole. Although some later historians set 1054 as the date of the schism, in fact this was only one of a number of events that weakened the bonds between the churches. Indeed, the relationships continued after this, until at least the fifteenth century.

Popes and Ecumenical Patriarchs have met frequently since 1964. These meetings symbolize the new relationship between the churches. They also provide opportunities for the senior hierarchs to pray together and to discuss issues of church life.

Every year, the Ecumenical Patriarchate sends a delegation to Rome to observe the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul in Rome on June 29. Likewise, the Church of Rome sends a formal delegation to Constantinople to observe the feast of St Andrew on November 30.

Theologians from both churches meet regularly to discuss issues of division and points of agreement. The North American Consultation began in 1965. The Joint Committee of Orthodox and Catholic Bishops (Continue next page)

in the United States began in 1981. The Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue was established in 1989.

The issues that have divided the churches are being examined in depths. These include different understandings of primacy and conciliarity as well as different understandings of the relationship of the persons of the Holy Trinity. At the same time, the theologians of both churches have affirmed a common understanding of the Holy Trinity and the Church as well as Baptism and the Eucharist. In looking to the future, they have recognized that the early church affirmed a diversity of practices and theological emphasis provided that the unity of the faith was preserved. These official theological dialogues have been enriched by the recent studies by Orthodox and Catholic scholars who have examined the theological, historical, cultural and linguistic factors that contributed to the schism.

Catholic theologians are studying the Orthodox practice of synodality, of a married priesthood and of the process of recognizing the dissolution of a marriage.

Theological students and seminarians from each church have studied with those from the other tradition.

Orthodox and Catholic Bishops have addressed together critical social and moral issues in the American society.

Led by their bishops, many Orthodox and Catholic clergy and laity have participated in pilgrimages to Rome and Constantinople.

At the local level, many Orthodox and Catholics have come together for special prayer services, retreats and conferences.

Members of both churches recognize that they honor Mary, the Mother of God, as well as the saints and martyrs. They have come to appreciate the saints which are honored in both traditions. These saints serve as an unbroken bond between the Orthodox and Catholic churches.

The relics of many saints have been returned by the Catholic Church to the Orthodox. In 2004, for example, the relics of St Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom were returned to Constantinople by Pope John Paul II.

Orthodox and Catholic read the spiritual and theological writings of teachers from each other's church. They have been enriched by the studies of the Scriptures and Fathers of the Church.

Many Catholics have deepened their appreciation of the meaning of icons, and their place in worship and teaching.

Marriages of Orthodox and Catholic have dramatically increased. The Catholic Church recognizes marriages of an Orthodox and Catholic in good standing blessed by an Orthodox priest. With the blessing of their pastor, Orthodox young people are free to attend Catholic schools. And, Catholic young people are free to attend Orthodox schools. The differences in church practices are recognized. There can be no attempt to proselytize.

Orthodox and Catholic humanitarian agencies frequently cooperate in providing aid at disasters. Many Catholic and Orthodox parishes join together in sponsoring food pantries and meals for the needy. In this way, they express a common commitment in the name of Christ to the well being of the society.

Speaking of the quest for unity, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew says:

We know that the process of reconciliation is not always easy. The division between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church has persisted for centuries. Yet, we firmly believe that, with the guidance of the Risen Lord, our differences are not beyond resolution. Moreover, we believe that we have a solemn obligation to our Lord to heal our painful divisions. For this reason, we must be persistent in our prayer. We must increase our expressions of love and mutual respect. We must strengthen our theological dialogue.

Rev. Dr. Thomas FitzGerald, Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, is Professor of Church History and Historical Theology, and former Dean at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Boston, MA. He is the Orthodox Executive Secretary of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Bilateral Consultation in North America.

PRAYER OF SOUFANIEH



Unity of Hearts! Unity of Christians! Unity of the Feast of Easter!

The Pope, The Patriarch, and True Ecumenism

May 23, 2014

Seven things that true ecumenism, which is rooted in the prayer and desire of Jesus Christ, is *not*.

Dr. Adam A. J. DeVille



Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras attend a

prayer service in Jerusalem in January 1964. Pope Francis will meet Patriarch Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew May 25 during his three-day visit to the Holy Land. The ecumenical session will mark the 50th anniversary of a 1964 meeting between Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. (CNS photo/Giancarlo Giuliani, Catholic Press Photo)

With the pope of Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople going to Jerusalem this weekend, there is naturally a great deal of conversation and consideration of where Orthodox and Catholic Christians have been and where we might be going. I have discussed some of this elsewhere. Here, however, I want to do something different, following a theological method beloved of many in the Christian East, as well as many Western mystics (St. John of the Cross comes to mind), namely the apophatic or “negative” way. I wish, in other words, to explain what true ecumenism is *not*.

Let us thus proceed by ruling out seven false forms, or understandings, of Christian unity.

1) Ecumenism is *not* a Pan-Heresy: Some ignorant and hostile Orthodox bloggers are endlessly recycling the fact-free fantasy of “ecumenism as a pan-heresy.” This ludicrous notion—for which nobody anywhere has ever provided the slightest shred of logical and credible evidence—is used to stir up fear that if Catholics and Orthodox draw closer to one another, it can only mean that one side has destroyed all its truth-claims and given in to the other side. Ecumenism is presented as a zero-sum game; in the words of certain economists: you win, I lose.

If this were, indeed, what the ecumenical task involved, then we could have accomplished it generations, even

many centuries, ago: I set a list of demands, and you simply give in to every one completely while, perhaps, scrupling in the mildest possible way about one or two of the least significant—just as the (largely Orthodox) Serbs did before the (largely Catholic) Habsburgs in July 1914.

But the fact that we are *still* divided should give the lie to this notion: no Catholic or Orthodox hierarch (or theologian) wants to see the other surrendered and lying prostrate before its own side, which is precisely why the search for unity takes so long and is so utterly painstaking. We do not seek the capitulation of the other and the diminution of the truth (the way of the world) but the *conversion* of *ourselves* to Christ (the *kenotic* way), and in so doing we shall discover the unity he demands (about which see #7 below).

2) Ecumenism is *not* the Pope and Patriarch

alone: The last time East and West met in a council of union was in northern Italy in 1438. At Florence, the hierarchs signed agreements and went home thinking that Christian unity had been achieved. Then the people, largely in the East, revolted, and the whole thing collapsed. That should give pause to anyone who believes that those closet Masons, Francis and Bartholomew, will secretly stitch up some sordid scheme to unite Catholicism and Orthodoxy by tea-time on Tuesday. No Christian leader in today's age of Twitter and Facebook is going to attempt such machinations. Popes and patriarchs may still, as my 2011 book *Orthodoxy and the Roman Papacy* demonstrates, have a good deal of power but today they cannot command Christians to believe by appealing only to the authority of their office: they must show good and compelling reasons to be united (about which see #7 below).

3) Ecumenism is *not* the truth alone but the truth-in-charity:

Who among us, convinced of our own self-righteousness, has not (especially in online “discussions”), reacted with swift sarcasm and sneering about the speck in our opponent's eye while ignoring the massive log in our own? Whom does this convince? Whom does this help? If I insist that my Church alone has the fullness of truth, while yours is but a sect of self-deluded heretics and papists, all equally without grace and all equally damned to hell, can I realistically expect that any human being on the planet will respond by exclaiming, “Of course! I see at once the errors of my ways, and will repent and convert before sunset, so moved am I by your graciously Christ-like countenance and charity.”

You may well have all the (Continue next page)

arguments on your side, and be utterly convinced of the truth you are defending, but would it kill you to defend it with even a modicum of humility, mercy, charity? A failure to do so guarantees your failure. Put another way, why do you think the Westboro Baptists have a whopping membership of six inter-bred members?

4) Ecumenism is *not* hectoring and hostile: Every semester I begin my classes with the same story about my maternal grandfather growing up in a small “gospel tabernacle” in inter-war Scotland. Each Sunday evening (for everyone went to church *both* morning *and* evening!) on his way out of divine service, a crotchety old man accosted my grandfather by the lapels and snarled, “Ay, sonny, 'ave you been saved?” My grandfather, very young at the time, tolerated this for about two weeks and then turned to his father and told him in no uncertain terms that if this man ever accosted him again, he would get a punch in the face and my grandfather would never again set foot in church. My great-grandfather evidently had a word with the “old bugger” (as my grandfather called him in recounting this to me) and the accosting ended.

I recount this to my students to say that my task is not to hector them with hostility and demand, on peril of failing the course, to think exactly like I do. Hostile hectoring and disdainful demands for sycophantic discipleship ultimately convince nobody, and in fact, to paraphrase C. S. Lewis, act like an inoculation against the real truth. Instead, we must all be gentle, tranquil, and charitable: as the beloved Russian Saint Seraphim of Sarov reportedly said, “Acquire the Spirit of peace, and thousands around you will be saved.”

5) Ecumenism is *not* primarily universal but local: Though, understandably, in a globalized age, the media is fixated on the visit of the pope and patriarch to Jerusalem, it is not there—nor primarily among popes and patriarchs, nor even among local bishops—that the search for Christian unity will bear fruit. The most important people in this search are not bishops or theologians but *you and me*. If we do not seek out our Christian neighbors in every hamlet, village, town, and city where we live, then unity will never happen. This need not be complicated or “professional.” It may be something as simple as visiting a church’s ethnic food festival or Christmas bazaar, or special anniversary liturgy, and getting to know people there, having coffee with them, chatting about the weather, or something that seems equally “mundane.” As my very gracious friend, the Russian Orthodox historian Antoine Arjakovsky, has put it, if the search for unity is not based on an “ecumenism of friendship”, it will falter. Build up local

contacts and local communities, and the universal will take care of itself.

6) Ecumenism is *not* mainly structural but sacramental: In the search for unity, we are not concerned with making sure that there is one global Toilet Paper Purchaser (to negotiate the best discounts, naturally) for every parish in the world. We are not seeking complete structural unity and the “downsizing” of all apparently “duplicate” employees. What is sought, rather, is sacramental unity: the recognition of everyone’s baptism in the name of the Trinity; the ability to go to confession, or get married in front of, this priest or that; and, most important, the ability to celebrate fully in the Eucharist together, giving communion to everybody who, having fasted, confessed, and sought a holy life, approaches the chalice. We want—we must have—unity around the one table of the Lord.

7) Ecumenism is *not* optional but dominical: It was, I think, St. Robert Bellarmine of counter-Reformation Catholicism who quipped that the reason the number of sacraments was fixed at seven in the West by the Council of Trent was that no man could possibly remember a list with more than seven items in it. Let us, in that spirit, conclude on the seventh and most important note: *ecumenism is not optional but commanded by the Lord Himself*. A failure to be one as Christians makes it unjustifiably difficult for the world to believe in one God. A failure of ecumenical witness is a failure of theological witness in the strict sense: God is one, and so must we be. Ecumenism, in other words, *is evangelism*, bringing the world to the good news of the God who is one and who ardently desires that every person be one with and in Him.

I was interviewed last week by a reporter from the *Catholic Herald* of London last week, and he asked me perhaps the most important question. It is a question which I always love getting from my students in any course, even when expressed flippantly: “So *what?* Who cares about this stuff?” Is there any more important question? My answer always remains the same since I first encountered the question of ecumenism as a high school geek in 1988: *it is a dominical imperative—the Lord gives us no choice*.

If you have ever bestirred yourself to read John 17, you will find no wiggle room there. In that great high-priestly prayer, Jesus—knowing He is leaving the world and leaving to His disciples the task of bringing the world to the Father—asks *four* times for His followers to be one:

Holy Father, keep them in (Continue next page)

thy name, which thou hast given me, *that they may be one*, even as we are one. ... Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, (Continue next page) so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, *that they may all be one*; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that *they may be one even as we are one*, I in them and thou in me, that *they may become perfectly one*, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me (Jn 17:11b-23; emphasis added).

Dr. Adam A. J. DeVille is Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of Theology-Philosophy, University of Saint Francis (Fort Wayne, IN) and author of *Orthodoxy and the Roman Papacy* (University of Notre Dame, 2011).

Coptic leader writes Pope, suggests single date for Catholic, Orthodox Easter celebration

[Catholic World News](#) - May 07, 2014

The head of the Coptic Orthodox Church has written to Pope Francis, proposing that Catholics and Orthodox agree on a date for the celebration of Easter, the Fides news service reports.

Coptic Pope Tawadros II sent his message to Pope Francis on the anniversary of their first meeting in Rome. In return, the Roman Pontiff asked the Egyptian prelate to send a representative to attend the October meeting of the Synod of Bishops.

A shared date for Easter celebrations would be a boon to Christians in the Middle East, where Catholic and Orthodox communities often live side by side in predominantly Muslim countries.

Coptic Catholic cleric named as Pope's 2nd priest-secretary

[Catholic World News](#) - April 17, 2014 Pope Francis has appointed a Coptic Catholic priest, Father Yoannis Lahzi Gaid, to work as his 2nd personal secretary, Andrea Torielli of La Stampa reports.

Father Lahzi Gaid has been working in the Secretariat of State, where his duties have included reading the Arabic-language summary of the Pope's remarks at weekly public audiences. He has been assisting Pope Francis since shortly after his election.

MAY 21, 2014

The Pope and the Patriarch in Jerusalem

by Gabriel S. Sanchez



This coming Sunday, May 25, Pope Francis is scheduled to meet the Eastern Orthodox Church's Ecumenical Patriarch (EP) Bartholomew at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in order to commemorate the golden jubilee of the historic meeting between their respective predecessors, Paul VI and Athenagoras. According to the EP's [official website](#) for the event, the occasion is "expected to be a strong symbolic confirmation of the commitment and determination to continue the path which the two great Church leaders inaugurated half a century ago." Whether it will amount to anything more than that remains to be seen. In the interim, Orthodox Christians, including its minority contingent in America, are eyeing the event nervously.

Patrick Barnes, an Orthodox convert, author, and maintainer of the polemical website [The Orthodox Information Center](#) has come out swinging against the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America for promoting the meeting. Additionally, Barnes is directing his readers to a series of links condemning "false union" with Rome despite the fact Francis and Bartholomew's get together won't do anything of the sort. Don't tell that to certain pockets of the online Orthodox community, however. A cursory Google or Bing search quickly reveals panicked blog and message board comments, many of which assume that "Black Bart" (the reactionaries' uncharitable name for their spiritual leader) is going to "sellout" world Orthodoxy with a stroke of his pen. If only. More likely than not this Sunday will be the occasion for the issuing of some hortatory statements by both leaders about their shared patrimony; the crisis facing Christians worldwide; the need for peace; and so on, and so forth. In other words, it will be the same old positive claptrap that typically emanates from official Catholic/Orthodox engagements which, for better (Continue next page)

or worse, leads nowhere on the practical front. The Great Schism, much to the delight of many in the East, isn't at risk of being mended anytime soon.

Of course, one can—and should—hope and pray that both Francis and Bartholomew might have some strong words for Western powers—including the United States—which have failed to properly support the Middle East's historic Christian populations while sitting on the sidelines as the region descends into further turmoil. Then there is also the messy matter of Ukraine and the future of its four Apostolic churches—one Catholic and three Orthodox—which currently find themselves caught up in a showdown between a resurgent Russia and an understandably nervous Europe. The Moscow Patriarchate (MP) of the Russian Orthodox Church, which controls the largest body of Ukrainian Orthodox believers, has not been shy about blaming the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) for Ukraine's woes. In a [recent interview](#), the MP's Chairman for External Relations and potential heir apparent to the Patriarchal throne, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfayev, had this to say:

The main problem that remains in our bilateral relations is the situation in Western Ukraine, relations between the Orthodox and Greek Catholics. These relations soured at the end of the 1980s, when Greek Catholics seized Orthodox churches. I do not want to get into the history now: views of history always differ between conflicting parties. But the conflict has not been overcome: in Western Ukraine there are many places where the Orthodox, as before, have been deprived of their churches, as we regularly remind our partners in the Roman Catholic Church.

What Alfayev omits from his narrative is any mention of the Soviet-backed MP's seizure of UGCC properties in the 1940s and the fact that "good relations" with Ukrainian Catholics ended in the late 1980s only after Gorbachev, [following a meeting](#) with Pope St. John Paul II, agreed to let Catholics practice their faith without fear of violent persecution. In an [earlier interview](#), Alfayev blasted the UGCC ("Uniates") for being "people who wear Orthodox clothes, observe Orthodox rites while remaining Catholic," as if holding fast to the Slavo-Byzantine Rite and the East's spiritual and theological patrimony is somehow the exclusive province of the Orthodox, specifically the Russian Orthodox. These statements were issued against the backdrop of [Catholics being persecuted](#) in the recently annexed Crimea. Will Francis or, more importantly, Bartholomew have anything to say about the MP's ethno-nationalistic outlook concerning Ukrainian Catholics? Although he didn't identify the MP by name, Bartholomew has recently [gone on record](#) criticizing what he sees as

nationalist and racist tendencies in some segments of the Orthodox Church. It's important to bear in mind that the MP's uncharitable attitude toward the UGCC—a body which has existed for more than 400 years—is not dissimilar to its negative appraisal of Ukraine's two independent Orthodox churches, neither of which wants to find itself under the thumb of the Russian Orthodox Church nor part of a geographical-political "buffer zone" between Russia and the West. It is for the sake of both Catholics and Orthodox then that Francis and Bartholomew should consider speaking out against the aggression of the Russian state and its vassal church. Beyond present political difficulties, it is hard to see what else might come out of the Jerusalem meeting. With the Orthodox in the midst of planning for a "Great and Holy Council" scheduled to take place in 2016, the EP knows that it cannot appear to draw too close to Rome without compromising its stature among the more insular regions of the Orthodox ecclesial confederacy. At the same time, Rome should be leery of taking any action, or issuing any statement, which would appear to "play favorites" among the Orthodox. The last time that happened, which occurred during the run-up to the Second Vatican Council when certain Catholic prelates wanted to secure limited participation from representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, the EP and other local Orthodox churches refused to participate. As Roberto de Mattei recounts in his *The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story*, it was only the 1964 Paul VI/Athenagoras Jerusalem summit which ultimately smoothed the matter over.

At some point, of course, Rome will have to reach a decision about how it wishes to proceed in its relations with the Orthodox. Ever since the 1993 Balamand Declaration, the Catholic Church has steered clear of "Uniatism," the often pejorative term used to describe the localized reunification efforts which began at the Union of Brest in 1596—the agreement which established both the UGCC and the Belarusian Greek Catholic Church. The Balamand Declaration was aspirational, not binding, and the present realities of world Orthodoxy ought to give even the most ecumenically minded Catholic pause concerning the prospects of "big bang" reunification. If the East/West rift is to be corrected, it will more likely than not have to be done stitch by stitch. We just shouldn't expect the sewing to begin this Sunday.

By [Gabriel S. Sanchez](#) Gabriel S. Sanchez is an author and independent researcher living with his family in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

THAT ALL MAY BE ONE...

The Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Sean O'Malley, reads the Easter Gospel following Metropolitan Methodios of Boston at the Paschal Liturgy in the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of New England



Minsk to host Orthodox-Catholic forum on 2-6 June

VITEBSK, 7 April (BelTA) – The fourth Orthodox-Catholic forum will be held in Minsk on 2-6 June 2014, Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus told media in Vitebsk on 7 April, BelTA has learnt.

Speaking about the relations between Catholic and Orthodox believers, Metropolitan Pavel noted that joint services even during big feasts such as Easter (Catholics and Orthodox Christians celebrate this holiday on the same day this year) is still impossible. “There are commissions that work out a system or a scheme of possible communication of the kind. But it is still too early to talk about joint services in the church,” Metropolitan Pavel said.

In his words, today other formats of communication exist today and it is very important that Catholic and Orthodox believers do not have conflicts. “It is important to find areas of common interest where the parties are able to create. This year Minsk will host an important international event – the Orthodox-Catholic forum which is due on 2-6 June. We will discuss spiritual and moral issues which are of interest for both Orthodox and Catholic representatives. We will talk on the themes which unite us,” the Metropolitan said. Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus is in Vitebsk on a three-day visit. On 6 April he held a service in the Church of the Holy Dormition, visited the oblast local history museum, the Church of the resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit Convent, the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos and held a vigil at the Cathedral of the patronage of the Mother of God. On 7 April apart from the divine service at the Church of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary Metropolitan Pavel met with the Vitebsk Governor and visited the Repin Museum-Estate Zdravnevo. On 8 April Metropolitan Pavel will visit the Masharov Vitebsk State University, meet the clergy, talk to students and professors of the seminary.

SSPX Confirms Bishop Fellay Met Briefly With Pope

Short Exchange Took Place in Casa Santa Marta Refectory

Rome, May 12, 2014 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org))

The superior general of the Society of St. Pius X briefly met Pope Francis in December last year, the breakaway Society has confirmed. (Continue next page)

Bishop Bernard Fellay met the Holy Father at his St. Martha residence, but the SSPX said the encounter was lasted just a few seconds and was unplanned.

In a May 12 statement on its website DIC1, the SSPX said that on 13 December 2013, Bishop Fellay and his assistants went to Rome at the request of the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei for an informal meeting. The commission is charged with the task of reconciling the traditionalist priestly fraternity with the Church after it broke from Rome over differences concerning the Second Vatican Council.

Following the commission's meeting with the SSPX, the statement said Msgr. Guido Pozzo, Secretary of the Commission, "invited his counterparts to lunch in the dining room of St. Martha House where they were joined by Archbishop Augustine Di Noia, adjunct-secretary of the Congregation [for the Doctrine] of the Faith. It is in this large refectory that the Pope takes his daily meals, away from other guests."

The statement added that Msgr. Pozzo took the opportunity to present Bishop Fellay to the Pope as he was leaving the room.

"There was a brief exchange in which Francis told Bishop Fellay, according to the usual formula of politeness, 'I am delighted to make your acquaintance' to which Bishop Fellay said he prayed a lot, and the Pope asked him to pray for him. Such was the "meeting" that lasted a few seconds."

The statement also denied reports that two of Bishop Fellay's assistants attended a Mass celebrated by the Pope.

"Abbots Niklaus Pfluger and Alain-Marc Nély have never attended a private Mass of the Pope," the statement said.

In a recent interview, Bishop Fellay said Rome made an unofficial approach to get back in touch with the Society, "but nothing more and I did not request an audience."

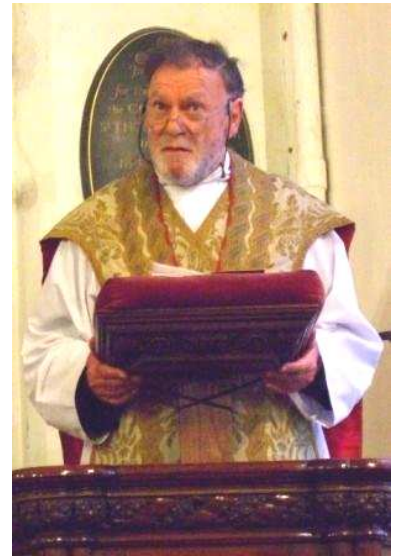
He said that for him right now, "things are very simple: we remain as we are ... Conservation of the faith and our traditional Catholic identity is paramount and remains our first principle."

Fr John Hunwicke

His blog: <http://liturgicalnotes.blogspot.com/>
Father was for nearly three decades at Lancing College; where he taught Latin and Greek language and literature, was Head of Theology, and Assistant Chaplain. He has served three curacies, been a Parish Priest, and Senior Research Fellow at Pusey House in Oxford. He is now incardinated into the Personal Ordinariate of our Lady of Walsingham. The opinions expressed on this Blog are not

asserted as being those of the Magisterium of the Church, but as the writer's opinions as a private individual. Nevertheless, the writer strives, hopes, and prays that the views he expresses are conformable with and supportive of the Magisterium. Nothing on this site is to be taken as representing the views of the Ordinariate of our Lady of Walsingham, or of any part of it.

A quote from Father: However celebrated, the Novus Ordo Mass contains ALL the requirements for a valid Mass. You DO receive the Body of the Incarnate Word. AND: there is no such thing as "more valid" and "less valid". A sacrament is valid or invalid, period. There is nothing in between. You may find the Novus Mass very greatly less helpful to you than the Vetus [Extraordinary form] Mass. So might I. But both forms are equally valid. GOD, the significant actor, does exactly the same in each.



» 05/14/2014 19:24
IRAN

Iran's Shia Islam open to dialogue with modernity and other religions

[Bernardo Cervellera](#)

In the holy city of Qom, the shrine dedicated to the sister of the eighth imam is within distance of least 50 theological schools, teeming with tens of thousands of students, seminarians and lay people, and not all Iranian. All schools have well-equipped libraries where works in science, history, philosophy, psychology, and other religions are studied and translated. One example is the University of Religions and Denominations. Here is the second part of the report on Iran.

Qom (AsiaNews) - Finding a version of Islam that studies carefully other religions, that is open to contacts with other universities in the world, to discuss history, philosophy, and the sciences of modernity, was the unexpected and amazing discovery I made during my visit to Iran, especially in the holy city of Qom, home to the best theological schools of Shia Islam.

Given the fact that so much news coverage from the Middle East is often full of stories about anti-Christian violence, anti-religious (Continue next page)

persecution, hatred of atheists and the secular world, it would be easy to conclude that Islam is totally closed off to discussion or in a defensive posture vis-à-vis modernity.

Hence, imagine my wonder when I found Iranian theological schools and universities where people are actually reading the texts of other religions, studying history in a scientific manner, debating about modern philosophies and theologies, mathematical science and social sciences like sociology and psychology.

Seen from afar, Qom looks a bit like Makkah, but smaller. Everything is centred around the shrine-mosque with the golden dome, which holds the remains of Fatima Masumeh, the sister of Imam Ali al-Ridha, the eighth imam of Twelver Shia Islam.

People of every age, men and women together, enter the shrine from the four cardinal points. Taking off their shoes, they walk through large rooms around the inner sanctum, the blue and yellow majolica, colourful rugs and solemn chandeliers giving the halls a bright and colourful shine

Here and there, groups of people pray, or mediate on the Qur'an. Others stop in front of the graves of the dead. A young man cries disconsolately as he leans against the wall near a tomb, others standing in prayerful silence.

In one room braille Qur'ans are available to anyone as a group of blind believers prays aloud, their fingers moving over the embossed pages.

In the holiest of holy, Masumeh's tomb is a niche with silver-covered walls and a golden roof. In separate lines, men and women move towards it. As crowd walk by the partitions, they stop to look at the sarcophagus through the slits, many touching, kissing, leaning their forehead; some whispering and calling.

In the hour I spent at the shrine, I saw perhaps 3,000 people (*pictured*) come through. In itself this expression of religiosity shows the distance between Sunni and Shia Islam.

Under the shadow cast by Allah's absoluteness, man virtually disappears in Sunni Islam. I remember a year ago, when Saudi King Abdullah died, Arab newspapers quickly noted that his grave would be unmarked - no name, no picture. Everything had to be erased to honour Allah.

Here, alongside other notable burials, Masumeh's tomb can be easily recognised, and honoured, the object of the gratitude and the grief of the living.

Perhaps under the influence of Sufism (mystical Islam), Shia Islam and the traditions connected with Ali and his sons Hassan and Hussein, who were killed by the first caliphs, have always needed an intermediary between man and God.

Unlike Shia Islam, which extols the spiritual teacher who explains, interprets, and re-reads the Qur'an, Sunni Islam has become ossified around the law, its enforcement, and a literal reading of the Qur'an.

A great Islam scholar, Fr Samir Khalil Samir, has confirmed me in my thoughts. "My experiences with the Shia," he told me, "have always been deep and open, much more than with Sunnis. Shias admit an open reading of the Qur'an, whereas the Sunni interpretation is always literal, bolted."

"Last night, an Iraqi Shia student came to me and we talked for almost two hours on spiritual matters," Fr Samir said. "It was a deep and enriching exchange. He was well-read about Christianity. This morning I have been waiting for four Shia professors from the University of Kufa in Iraq who want to meet me. I have always had the impression that the Shias are very open, both dogmatically and spiritually, and that they want to know us."

The city of Qom has a population of more than a million people. Some 50,000 of them are students, Shia and non-Shia, seminarians and lay people, attending some 50 theological schools or universities. Each school is well-equipped in terms of educational facilities and libraries, with books in different languages on science and religion.

Among them, it is worth mentioning the University of Religions and Denominations (URD), which is located just outside Qom. I visited it accompanied by Prof Mahdi Salehi, editor of the university's journal.

Married with a four-year-old daughter, Prof Salehi, 34, told me that the university began as a research centre 15 years ago. Chaired by Chancellor Hojatoleslam Navab, it has about 2,000 students, mostly Iranians. Students must have a good knowledge of English to take courses.

AN ARCHBISHOP OF DESTINY

BY GEORGE WEIGEL

When we first met in April 2011, what initially impressed me about Sviatoslav Shevchuk was his almost preternatural calm: which was striking, in that, less than a month before and still a few weeks shy of his forty-first birthday, Shevchuk had been elected Major-Archbishop of Kyiv-Halych and head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church—the largest of the Eastern Catholic Churches, Byzantine in liturgy and governance while in full communion with the Bishop of Rome.



Shevchuk had been snatched out of Buenos Aires, where he was bishop to the Ukrainian diaspora there (and a friend of the city's Latin-rite archbishop, Jorge Mario Bergoglio), and thrust into the position previously filled by some of the most formidable figures in modern Catholic history: Andrey Sheptytsky, the Ukrainian Catholic leader who did more than perhaps anyone else to shape Ukrainian cultural self-awareness in the first four decades of the twentieth century; Josyf Slipyj, Sheptytsky's successor and the model for the "pope from the steppes" in *The Shoes of the Fisherman*, who spent more than a decade in Gulag camps; Lubomyr Husar, who became the most widely respected figure in independent Ukraine after the Soviet crack-up in 1991. In 2011, when we had a wide-ranging conversation in Rome, Major-Archbishop Shevchuk might have looked forward to three and a half decades of work building his Church in Ukraine and strengthening the links between the motherland and Ukrainian emigres around the world. (He might also have expected, not unreasonably, to become the youngest cardinal in a century.)

Then events took over, as they have a tendency to do. For the past six months, Major-Archbishop Shevchuk has been a key figure in the Maidan revolution of dignity that first demanded a return to the elementary decencies of public life in Ukraine, and then set about building a new Ukrainian political order. After the Russian invasion of his country, Major-Archbishop Shevchuk has worked tirelessly to inform the world of the truth of Ukraine's plight and to maintain, under extreme pressure, the new Ukraine's commitment to the civic virtues that inspired the Maidan movement in the first place.

So I was all the more impressed that Major-Archbishop Shevchuk was as calm as ever when he called me in Rome on the evening of April 30. We were both in the city for the canonizations of John XXIII and John Paul II, and while our schedules hadn't permitted another meeting, the archbishop wanted to talk over his country's dire situation—and to send a message to Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church.

The message to Russia was simple:

We in Ukraine wish to be good neighbors. Do not attack us. We are not your enemies, and we have no aggressive intentions.

The message to the Russian Orthodox Church, whose leaders had too often been tacit or

explicit mouthpieces for the Putin government's propaganda and lies, was similar:

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is not an enemy of the Russian Orthodox Church. We are your brothers; we have been born from the same spiritual womb. From the holy city of Kyiv, where our peoples were baptized, we are sending you a message of peace. Do not let politicians provoke hatred and bloodshed among us.

Major-Archbishop Shevchuk is no naïf. He understands that the Putin propaganda machine aims at nothing less than deconstructing the very idea of "Ukraine" as an independent nation, expressive of a distinctive culture and worthy of independent statehood. Thus while crisply describing the Russian "psychological" attack that aimed to "divine and disintegrate" his country, his bottom line was that "Ukraine does exist and will exist," and is "prepared" spiritually to resist whatever may come. That spiritual resistance is, of course, made possible by leadership. And both leadership and resistance are strengthened by intercession; as Major-Archbishop Shevchuk put it, "St. John Paul II will protect us and protect the world from new iron curtains and new Berlin Walls."

All of which is deeply moving, even as it throws into sharp relief the fecklessness of Washington, Brussels, London, Paris, and Berlin in addressing Vladimir Putin's mendacity, aggression, and brutality.

Welcome to our newest Chapter member, the Very Rev. Canon Ignatius Joseph Kury II of St. Anne Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Church, Austintown.

Handover of the Neulerchendorf church in 16th Vienna's district

30. May 2014 - 14:30



His Grace Bishop Irinej of Backa, Administrator of the Diocese of Austria-Switzerland, received on 27 May keys of the Neulerchendorf church in 16th Vienna's district, from Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn

With this solemn act the forementioned church became also the formal property of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Lots of guests from both sides, not only from ecclesial, but also from social life, attended this ceremony. Along with His Grace Bishop Irinej there were also: Bishop Ignatije of Pozarevac and Branicevo, David of Krusevac and newly elected Bishop Andrej of the Diocese of Austria-Switzerland. The ceremony was held also in attendance of His Eminence Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria (Ecumenical Patriarchate), President of the Orthodox Bishops' Conference in Austria. His Excellency Cardinal was accompanied by his vicar Dariusz Schutzky.

In his homily Cardinal Christoph Schönborn emphasized that in some parts of the city of Vienna number of Catholics was quite small, and that the number of the Orthodox had raised and that for the Roman Catholic Church it was crucial to preserve Christianity; according to him, his Church gladly helps the Orthodox while performing their pastoral mission.

Bishop Irinej thanked with words of gratitude and said that the received gift was priceless and that it would serve for the glory of God and salvation of the many who would pray in it, as it had been before. After receiving the keys of the church, which Bishop Irinej handed over to Episcopal Dean for Austria, protopresbyter-stavrophor Krstan Knezevic, gifts were handed in: Bishop Irinej presented an icon of the Mother

of God and an icon of the White Angel of Milesheva to Cardinal Cristoph Schönborn.

Source: Diocese of Backa

PLEASE LEAVE THE HAGIA SOPHIA ALONE: MUSEUM OR MOSQUE?

by Wesley J. Smith

<http://www.firstthings.com/current-edition> 5-19-14

In November 2012, my wife and I visited Hagia Sophia, the great former Eastern Orthodox basilica. For me, it was an emotional pilgrimage. I converted to Eastern Orthodoxy in 2007, and Hagia Sophia is to us what St. Peter's is to Roman Catholics, and to a far lesser degree I suppose, what Mecca is to Muslims.

But Hagia Sophia, completed in 537 and in continuous use ever since, isn't just important to Eastern Christians. The cathedral has tremendous general historical significance for Christians and Muslims alike. It was instrumental in sparking the Christianization of the Slavic East. In 987, observers sent by Prince (St.) Vladimir the Great of Kiev to observe Eastern Christian religious practice reported ecstatically to him of attending a Great Liturgy at Hagia Sophia: "We no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth nor such beauty," a report that helped persuade the prince to be baptized, resulting in mass conversions and the eventual emergence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Several decades later, Hagia Sophia was also the site of the first overtly antagonistic act of the Great Schism. The dispute between the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople came to a head in 1054 when the Pope's representative, Cardinal Humbert, laid a Bull of Excommunication against the Patriarch on the altar of the Hagia Sophia during a Liturgy. Things went downhill from there.

After Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, it was converted into the Ottoman Empire's imperial mosque. And so it remained until 1935, when Ataturk transformed the great edifice into a museum as part of his secularization of Turkey.

Entering the museum was an emotional moment for me. I had kidded my wife that I planned to yell, "Give it back!" I didn't do that, of course. Still, as we entered the great edifice: I crossed myself and said a quiet prayer. (Continue next page)

But what a place! The inside is unbelievably vast, its magnificent mosaic icons—covered by plaster for centuries—still in remarkable condition. At first I was disheartened, like a French patriot might feel touring Waterloo. But I was also moved by the spiritual glory that once was, and which I sensed remains beneath the trampling of tourist feet.

In contrast to my mixed feelings, the Muslim visitors around me looked delighted as they wandered around the gigantic edifice. And who can blame them? A large Mihrab (the focal point of every mosque, being a prayer niche pointing toward Mecca) now stands where the Christian altar once was the locus of Christian worship. On either side of what used to be the altar area are hung huge medallions with Arabic writing—one translates, “Mohammad,” and the other “Allah”—clear confirmation of the past, and perhaps future, power of Islam.

As a museum, the Hagia Sophia represents the high hope that we can peacefully coexist and delight in human achievement regardless of religious differences. Indeed, during my visit I was pleased by the mutual respect Muslim and non-Muslim visitors showed toward each other.

But now, Turkey’s Islamist government threatens to destroy Hagia Sophia’s crucial “neutral” status. ANSAm reports that the government plans to turn the former basilica into a mosque in the afternoon and evening, while allowing it to remain a museum during morning hours.

What in the world for? There is no lack of worship space in Istanbul. There are so many mosques, in fact, that the daily calls to prayer echo hauntingly throughout the city. Nor is there a shortage in the old part of town where the cathedral is located. Indeed, the impressively large and world famous Blue Mosque is in the same general complex, a mere three-minute walk across a beautiful park from Hagia Sophia.

Not only is the change unnecessary logistically, but making Hagia Sophia more difficult to access could materially hinder Istanbul’s thriving tourist industry. Non-Muslims might be especially reluctant to visit as they would have to be careful not to insult Islam in the way they acted and dressed. For example, since it would be a mosque, visitors would have to remove their shoes and women might not be allowed into the designated prayer area.

So why do it? I can only think of one reason: As a shout of Islamic triumphalism. What a mistake that would be. Christians would rightly consider it an intentional insult. The international community would see it as an open rejection of its diversity agenda. Moreover, I think that a relatively secular Turkey acting so radically would demonstrate to the world that despite moderate Muslims’ many assurances to the contrary, contemporary Islam is intolerant in outlook, belligerent toward non-believers, and dangerously hegemonist in its intentions.

As an historical and architectural treasure, Hagia Sophia belongs to all of us. In this regard, it is worth noting that the basilica/imperial mosque anchors Istanbul’s Historical Area, listed by UNESCO as a “World Heritage Site of Outstanding Universal Value.” That being so, the international community should make it unequivocally clear that Turkey’s government should leave well enough alone.

Wesley J. Smith is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute’s Center on Human Exceptionalism. He is a sub-deacon in the Orthodox Church in America.

ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION URGES CHURCH TO LIFT BAN ON ORDINATION OF MARRIED PRIESTS IN EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN NORTH AMERICA

June 6, 2014

**Action would affirm Eastern Rite tradition
Would encourage restoration of unity between Catholic,
Orthodox Christians
Would enhance spiritual lives of Eastern Catholics**

WASHINGTON—The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation voted in early June to encourage the “lifting of the restrictions regarding the ordination of married men to the priesthood in the Eastern Catholic Churches of North America.”

“This action would affirm the ancient and legitimate Eastern Christian tradition, and would assure the Orthodox that, in the event of the restoration of full communion between the two Churches, the traditions of the Orthodox Church would not be questioned,” the consultation said in a statement released June 6.

“We are convinced that this action would enhance the spiritual lives of Eastern Catholics and would encourage the restoration of unity between Catholic and Orthodox Christians,” the statement said.

The Theological Consultation (Continue next page)

agreed to the statement at its 86th meeting, June 2-4, at the Saint Methodios Faith and Heritage Center in Contoocook, New Hampshire. The meeting was hosted by the Orthodox co-chair, Metropolitan Methodios of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston; the Catholic co-chair is Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin of Indianapolis. The Theological Consultation issued the statement on the occasion of the 85th anniversary of the promulgation of the 1929 decree *Cum data fuerit* from the Vatican Oriental Congregation, which oversees the Eastern Catholic churches.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Eastern Catholic immigrants to North America from Eastern Europe and the Middle East brought with them the tradition of a married priesthood. This Oriental Congregation decree effectively limited future ordinations to celibates, and resulted in divisions in Eastern Catholic communities and even families over this issue.

The agreed statement cites two documents of the Second Vatican Council which call for Eastern Catholics to return to their authentic ancestral traditions, and exhorts those men who have received both the sacraments of priestly ordination and marriage “to persevere in their holy vocation.” Consequently, the Consultation “encourages the lifting of the restrictions regarding the ordination of married men to the priesthood in the Eastern Catholic Churches of North America.

At this meeting the Consultation also continued its study of the relationship between the clergy and laity in the two Churches. The members also examined the December 2013 statement by the Patriarchate of Moscow on primacy in the Church and the response by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Consultation also reviewed the recent meeting between Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Jerusalem.

The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation was founded in 1965 and is sponsored by the Committee for Ecumenical Relations of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, the USCCB Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Its agreed statements are available on at www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/dialogue-with-others/ecumenical/orthodox/orthodox-dialogue-documents.cfm and <http://assemblyofbishops.org/about/scobaresources/orthodox-catholic/>

The full statement follows.

**Statement of the North American Orthodox/Catholic Theological Consultation
On the Occasion of the Eighty-fifth Anniversary of the Promulgation of the decree *Cum data fuerit***

The year 2014 marks the eighty-fifth anniversary of the promulgation of the decree *Cum data fuerit*. In 1929, the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental [Eastern Catholic] Churches issued this document, which stated that “priests of the Greek-Ruthenian Rite who wish to go to the United States of North America [sic] and stay there must be celibates” (Article 12). This statement led to a general prohibition of the ordination of married Eastern Catholics to the priesthood in North America. This resulted in divisions in Eastern Catholic communities and even in families.

The Second Vatican Council spoke of the importance of preserving the legitimate traditions of the Eastern Churches. In the decree, *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, the Council emphasized the need to preserve the “legitimate liturgical rite and . . . established way of life” of Eastern Catholics. The Council continued, stating that Eastern Catholics “should attain to an even greater knowledge and a more exact use of [this rite and way of life] and if in their regard they have fallen short owing to contingencies of times and persons, they should take steps to return to their ancestral traditions” (par. 6). Furthermore, the decree *Presbyterorum ordinis* states, “This holy synod, while it commends ecclesiastical celibacy, in no way intends to alter that different discipline which legitimately flourishes in the Eastern Churches. It permanently exhorts all those who have received the priesthood and marriage to persevere in their holy vocation” (sec. 16). Nevertheless, until recently, very few married Eastern Catholic men have been allowed to be ordained to the priesthood in North America.

With these things in mind, the North American Orthodox/Catholic Theological Consultation encourages the lifting of the restrictions regarding the ordination of married men to the priesthood in the Eastern Catholic Churches of North America. This action would affirm the ancient and legitimate Eastern Christian tradition, and would assure the Orthodox that, in the event of the restoration of full communion between the two Churches, the traditions of the Orthodox Church would not be questioned. We are convinced that this action would enhance the spiritual lives of Eastern Catholics and would encourage the restoration of unity between Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

**CONGRATULATIONS FATHER JOHN!
(John Ettinger of Warren, a member of our Chapter on Saturday, June 21, 2014, was ordained to the Holy Priesthood for the Diocese of Youngstown. Ordained by Bishop George Murry , 10:30 am at St. Columba Cathedral.**

Pope Francis sends message to Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill: I am ready to meet

by Marta Allevato

AsiaNews sources say the message was brought to Kirill personally by the director of the Sistine Chapel Choir, who performed in the Russian capital while the Pope met with Bartholomew in the Holy Land.

Moscow (AsiaNews) - While on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he embraced the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, the Pope also sent a "personal message" to the Russian Orthodox Patriarch, Kirill, saying that "he is willing to meet at any place". This is according to *AsiaNews* sources in Moscow's Synodal Department for External Relations, who say the message was delivered by



Msgr. Massimo Palombella, director of the Pontifical Sistine Chapel Choir, which performed in Moscow on 27 May, to mark the fifth anniversary of the Patriarch's enthronement.

The Pontiff's words were relayed in private, "in front of very few people" on the margins of the concert held in conjunction with the Synodal Choir of the Moscow Patriarchate. The same sources say that Kirill limited his response to "thanks" for the "precious gift" made to him by "friends in Rome". **Several attempts to contact the director of the Sistine Chapel choir for a comment have failed.** According to sources in the Catholic community in Moscow, the timing of the message was not random: during the days when he was meeting with Bartholomew- **who the Moscow Patriarchate sees as a rival within the Orthodox world**- the Argentinian Pope wanted to reiterate his interest in also having good relations with the Russian Orthodox Church. It is not clear whether the offer was met with appreciation by Moscow. On May 28, Kirill spoke of a "cooling" in relations with the Vatican, linked to Greek - Ukrainian Catholics involvement in the Maidan Square protests in Kiev and their - in his opinion - "Russia-phobic" positions. The primate has warned that the situation in the former Soviet Republic casts "very sad shadow" over relations between the Patriarchate and the Holy See. According to sources in the Orthodox community, the Patriarch's words "were not addressed directly to the Pope, whose work he continues to appreciate, but in general to those in the Catholic Church who have no interest in ecumenical dialogue". This position is reflected in recent statements by

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Synodal Department for External Church Relations. "There is a part of the Catholic Church that is investing energy, talent and resources to strengthen the interaction between Catholics and Orthodox, while another is doing everything possible to create distrust and enmity", denounced the metropolitan during a June 3 address to a Congress in Minsk.

Theotokos Institute for Catholic Studies
Cardiff University Catholic Chaplaincy
Cardiff University Eastern Christian Chaplaincy

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

PRESENT

Eastern Christian
Thought and Practice
for 21st Century Europe

A conference for academics, clergy, and lay people

26–28 November 2014

Featuring:

Professor Andrew Louth
Professor Emeritus, Patristic & Byzantine Studies
Durham University

Dr Roman Zaviyskyy
Dean of Theology
Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv, Ukraine

Bishop Vahan Hovhannessian
Primate of the Armenian Orthodox Church in UK
Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Cardiff University

For more information, visit:
www.tics.org.uk

St. Nimatullah Al-Hardini (1808-1858), whose baptismal name was Joseph, was a Maronite priest and religious, and lived a life of heroic virtue in Lebanon where he passed most of his years in monastic solitude. Although shouldering heavy duties of administration, teaching and manual labor (St. Nimatullah practiced his craft of bookbinding even while serving as Assistant General of the Lebanese Maronite Order), the saint maintained an intense spiritual and devotional life including heavy bodily mortifications. He taught at various schools of the Lebanese Maronite Order and among his students was Brother Sharbel Makhlof—the illustrious St. Sharbel Feast is Dec. 14.