

CENTRO PRO UNIONE

A publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

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Centro Pro Unione Bulletin

A semi-annual publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

The Centro Pro Unione in Rome, founded and directed by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, - www.atonementfriars.org - is an ecumenical research and action center.

Its purpose is to give space for dialogue, to be a place for study, research and formation in ecumenism: theological, pastoral, social and spiritual.

The Bulletin has been published since 1968 and is released in Spring and Fall.

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Letter from the Director

The Fall *Bulletin* is particularly rich this year because of a series of lectures that we sponsored at the Centro in 2016.

With the tensions growing in various parts of the world and with religion being used as a sort of "scape goat", it is beneficial to have some reflections on the contribution that religion makes to the resolution of politically charged scenarios. For this reason we invited two scholars and practitioners to open our minds to different ways of seeing realities that are often distorted by the press or other agents in the world.

The first of these presentations is offered by a professor of international law at the Catholic University of America, Prof. Breger. In his conference he lays out for us the situation of the holy places in Jerusalem. He attempts to unravel the complicated historical, political and religious situations attached to the places called "holy" by three religions. The context when seen from the point of view of religion the attempt to resolve the tension in an acceptable way acceptable for all parties is complicated.

Following on Breger's presentation, Daniel Seidemann takes a serious look at the consequences of religious radicalization in Jerusalem today. He is the founder of an organization which seeks to dissipate the tendency to radicalize by identifying those agents which wish to use religion to manipulate the situation and inflame it by emotional means.

In the second part of this issue, we dedicate space to the celebration of the Great Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church.

With co-operation of two of the Ambassadors to the Holy See, the Centro organized an afternoon exploring the hopes and possibilities for the Synod held in Crete from 19-26 June 2016. In spite of the disappointing news that several of the Orthodox churches were not present to take part in the Synod, the fact that the Orthodox churches, all of them, worked toward the celebration of the Synod for several years is an encouraging sign.

Her excellency Tamara Grdzeldze took the lead in presenting the context of the Synod: what was at stake, what was the process of preparation and the unfolding of the Synod as well as hoped for outcomes. His excellency Tataru-Cazaban took up the themes of the diaspora and ecclesiology as well as the period of

preparation for the Synod. He finishes his presentation with the hope that the Synod would be an opportunity for authentic "aggiornamento" for the Orthodox Church.

Dimitrios Keramidas takes up the discussion of the text "The Mission of the Orthodox Church in the Contemporary World". This text was an important theological text of the Synod and Keramidis offers a theological analysis of the principal points. Following this major presentation we present comments on two other texts considered during the Synod. The first concerned the value of fasting and its observation today in the Orthodox Church. The second text is the important text on Orthodox marriage.

This coming year marks the 50th anniversary of the Centro Pro Unione's foundation in 1967. To celebrate we have planned a series of very diverse encounters. We begin with the Paul Wattson/Lurana White lecture which is given by Rabbi Jack Bemporad "Between Past and Future. The Achievement and Challenges since Vatican II". During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Dr. Tom Best will offer reflections on "The Week of Prayer Faithful Witness – and Challenge – to the Ecumenical Movement". The Minister General of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, V. Rev. Brian F. Terry, sa, will preach during the ecumenical prayer vigil jointly organized by the Centro and the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas. The other events will be announced on our web site so please check frequently.

We announce the publication of the 14th volume of the "Corso Breve di Ecumenismo": *Conosciamo i fratelli* (for information see the inside cover). Lastly we gladly announce our Annual Summer course in ecumenism and interreligious dialogue from 26 June to 14 July 2017. You can book on line for the course.

Remember to continue to look at our new website (www.prounione.it) for news and activities of the Centro Pro Unione.

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James F. Puglisi, SA
Director Centro Pro Unione

The Situation at the Holy Places Today¹

Marshall J. Breger - Professor of Law, Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.
Visiting Professor, Angelicum, Rome

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Monday, 9 May 2016



It is an honor for me to join my friend Danny Seidemann in speaking at the Centro Pro Unione on the important subject of the Situation of the Holy Places today. My plan is to review the situation of the Holy Places in Jerusalem. I will largely limit myself to two sites, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. I will also discuss the recent role of Jordan in protecting Palestinian interests in the Holy Places and the increase in Russian pilgrimage to Jerusalem. I will close with some comments on the concept of sovereignty and the Holy Places and the sharing of the Holy Places. Finally, I will comment on the continuing and unfortunate “symbolic war” between UNESCO and Israel.

The So-Called Ottoman *Status Quo*

The *Status Quo* is the term given to the “amorphous body of traditional norms, some unclear and others contested”² that delineate the rights of various Christian denominations regarding the Holy Sites. The *Status Quo* was encompassed in *firmans* or decrees issued by the Ottoman sultans concerning Christian “rights” or “privileges” in the Holy Places (i.e., questions of possession, access, repair, internal administration, etc.). The *Status Quo* concerned six religion denominations. Specifically, in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Armenians were the major players. The Copts, Syrians, and Ethiopians (Amharics) had usage rights to the Church, but not administrative control and were, therefore, not part of the final agreements over property control. These latter groups are deemed to be *yamaklik* or minor, dependent communities.

History

For centuries, the Ottomans oscillated in their preference between the Roman Catholics and the Greek Orthodox depending on the relative importance of their



▶ Marshall J. Breger

European “sponsors” to the Ottoman Porte. As the largest Christian denomination in the Ottoman lands, the Greek Orthodox were well positioned at the Porte and they utilized their influence to achieve a favorable outcome.

In a 1740 decree, the Ottoman government, anxious for French military and political support, conferred preeminent rights at Holy Places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem on the Latin Church. The Greeks were furious. In the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Greek and Franciscan monks attacked each other with candlesticks and crosses. Ottoman officials determined that the internal stability of the empire posed a greater challenge than cultivating relations with Catholic France. Thus, a new decree in 1757 restored preeminent rights to the Greeks.

In 1850, the disappearance of a Silver Star in the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem stirred the ever-boiling pot of intra-Christian resentment, provoking the Crimean War.³ The resulting imbroglio drew all the European powers into the Crimean War, which was ended by the Treaty of Paris in 1856. While the Treaty contains no reference to the *Status Quo*,⁴ Title 9 of the Treaty does

1 Much of my earlier research in this area has been done collaboratively with Leonard Hammer of the University of Arizona. As always, my research in this area has been sustained both fiscally and intellectually by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to which I am grateful.

2 Raymond COHEN, “Israel and the Holy See Negotiate: A Case Study in Diplomacy across Religions”, *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 5 (2010) 213, 214.

3 A. J. P. TAYLOR, *How Wars Begin* (UK: Book Club Associates, 1977) 42-47.

4 Treaty of Paris, March 30, 1856, in Jacob C. HUREWITZ, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record 1835-1914* (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1956) 153-56.

refer to an 1856 *firman*, the *Hatti Humayun*, Paragraph 6 of which reaffirmed earlier *firman*s that encompassed the arrangements that constitute what we now call the *Status Quo*.⁵

Continuing unrest in the Ottoman Empire led Europe's great powers to convene the Congress of Berlin in 1878. The resulting Treaty of Berlin decreed that "no alterations can be made in the *Status Quo* in the Holy Places,"⁶ thus "enshrining" the *Status Quo* principles in international law. The *Status Quo* was affirmed in the Versailles Peace Treaty⁷ and in the British Mandate.⁸ In 1993 Israel recognized the *Status Quo* in the Vatican-Israel Fundamental Agreement.⁹

Authority of Tradition

The essence of the *Status Quo* is the authority of tradition. Every action took on precedential value. Thus, if a chair is inadvertently moved from an area "assigned" to the Roman Church to an area under the authority of the Greeks and there is not an immediate protest, the chair becomes the property of the Greeks. The practical effect is that repairs or renovation to *Status Quo* sites became extremely difficult. In an iconic example, a ladder placed on a ledge was not moved for about 250 years.¹⁰ Further,

5 *Ibid.*, 149-53 (providing the English version of the February 18, 1856 *firman* (styled as *Hatti Humayun*); see also Enrico MOLINARO, *The Holy Places of Jerusalem in Middle East Peace Agreements: The Conflict Between Global and State Identities* (Sussex, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2009) 37-39 (discussing how the *firman* largely focused on religious equality although some paragraphs dealt with religious buildings).

6 The Treaty of Berlin, 1878, Art. LXII, in R. B. MOWAT, *Select Treaties and Documents to Illustrate the Development of the Modern European States-system 1815-1916* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915) 79-83.

7 These principles can be found in The League of Nations Covenant.

8 *Mandate for Palestine, together with a note by the Secretary-General to its Application to the Territory of Trans-Jordan*, art. 95, League of Nations, Cmd. 1785, December 1922, available at <https://goo.gl/1KLTWp> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017)

9 See "Fundamental Agreement Between the Holy See and The State of Israel, Dec. 30, 1993" *International Legal Materials*, 33 (1994) 153; *Acta Apostolica Sedis* 86 [1994] [hereinafter Vatican-Israel Agreement] at art. 5, sec. 2.

10 It has been called "the immovable ladder." See Simon Sebag MONTEFIORE, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011) 519.

under Sharia law, payment for repairs to a building (such as repairs to a roof) creates ownership rights. Thus, Church windows might not be cleaned for years for fear that *Status Quo* rights might be affected.

The paradigm model of the *Status Quo* decision-making is that the parties are autonomous and make decisions insulated from the State. But their decision-making is not completely voluntary. The parties "bargain," as it were, "in the shadow of the law."¹¹ However, if the parties cannot reach a compromise, the State may intervene. During the Mandate, the British did intervene when required, such as to repair broken windows.

The Christian communities focused on the *Status Quo*'s "international character" and viewed them as having the quality of permanent rights. The Christian churches, moreover, viewed change in any precedent (however modest) as a *Status Quo* violation. The Ottomans took a different view. As Karl Marx insightfully noted, they viewed the *firman*s as an extension of privileges granted by a particular Sultan.¹² Thus, a new Sultan could renegotiate the privileges granted in an earlier *firman*.

Voluntary Agreement

Conventional wisdom has it that the priests at the Holy Sites only bicker and fight.¹³ But that is

11 For a good explanation of this phenomenon occurring in the context of divorce law, see Robert MNOOKIN and Lewis KORNHAUSER, "Bargaining in the Shadow of the Law," *The Yale Law Journal* 88 (1979) 950.

12 In a newspaper article on the Crimean War he stated: [i]t is to be understood that possession here does not mean proprietorship, which is denied to the Christians by the Quran, but only the right of usufruct. This right of usufruct excludes by no means the other communities from worshiping in the same place; the possessors having no other privilege besides that of keeping the keys, of repairing and entering the edifices, of kindling the holy lamp, of cleaning the rooms with the broom, and of spreading the carpets, which is an Oriental symbol of possession. In the same manner now, in which Christianity culminates at the Holy Place, the question of the Protectorate is there found to have its highest ascension.

See, Karl MARX, "War Declared - Mussulmen and Christians", *N.Y. Tribune* (April 15, 1854), in Karl MARX, *The Eastern Question: Reprint of Letters Written 1853-1856 Dealing with the Events of the Crimean War* 1st edition 1897(reprint N.Y.: A.M. Kelley, 1968) 314, 319.

13 As but one of many examples, see Motti FRIEDMAN, "Israeli Police Break up Monks' Brawl," *Washington Times*, Nov. 10, 2008, A13.

not necessarily the case. Over the years there have been a number of voluntary agreements between the Franciscans, Armenians, and the Greek Orthodox at the Holy Sepulcher concerning internal matters of restoration and upkeep. These agreements usually are only finalized when the situation becomes in extremis or

- which was in imminent danger of collapse.¹⁶ As Armenian Father Samuel Aghoyan pointed out, "It was pressure from the Israeli government, which threatened to close the Aedicule to the public because of safety concerns that finally forced the Churches to reach an agreement."¹⁷

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher

Two other recent events occurred at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher that are of interest. One is connected to the water bills for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. When Gihon, the Israeli water company, sought payment of a \$2.3 million unpaid water bill for the Church and blocked the Greek Patriarch's bank accounts, Church officials claimed a violation of the *Status Quo* and threatened to notify pilgrims to bring their own bottles of water and, if necessary, to close the churches.¹⁸ In a settlement, "[T]he sides have agreed that the church will pay its own bill backdated to the beginning of 2012. The bills from years 2002 - 2011 will be covered by various government ministries and the Jerusalem Municipality, which the bills previous to that will be cancelled."¹⁹



▶ From the left: 1 Fr. James Puglisi - 2 Bishop Brian Farrell - 3 Daniel Seidemann - 5 Prof. Marshall Breger - 6 Rabbi Jack Bemporad

when the churches fear that the ruling power will "butt in." Examples of agreements between these groups include: (1) an agreement following the 1927 earthquake allowing the Greeks to pay for repairs to the Katholikon dome; however, the Catholics and the Armenians had to be permitted to make repairs to their own areas of the Church; (2) a February 1952 agreement dividing the cost of repairs to the rotunda dome among the Franciscans, Armenians, and the Greeks, allowing the parties to cover the cost of repairs to each communities' respective section of the Church, and granting the government permission to make minor repairs, but only with the consent of all three parties; and (3) a 1977 agreement to repair pillars 10, 11, and 12, which also affected an area of Coptic usage.¹⁴

And recently, in 1997, a U.S. Roman Catholic investment banker provided the funds to repair the roof of the Holy Sepulcher, fostering an agreement acceptable to all the religious parties involved.¹⁵

Most importantly, in May 2016 the major communities agreed to repair the Aedicule - Christ's Tomb

A second issue has been the recently concluded lawsuit between an Arab grocer and the Coptic Patriarch regarding the rights to a basement located adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The Patriarch asserted that the basement was part of the Church itself. As it was thus part of a holy place, it was outside the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem District Court pursuant to the Mandate's 1924 Order in Council that removed jurisdiction of such issues from the courts. Court experts agreed that the area might have been part

16 William BOOTH, "Work Begins to Try to Save Christianity's Holiest Shrine: Jesus' Tomb," *The Washington Post*, June 20, 2016. <https://goo.gl/KiKq7P> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017)

17 Judith SUDILOVSKY, "Putting Aside Historic Differences," *Jerusalem Report*, August 8, 2016, 21-25.

18 Kalman LIEBSKIND, "Dispute Over Holy Sepulcher's Water Bill," *Al-Monitor*, Nov. 9, 2012. <https://goo.gl/igo36Z> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017); Associated Press, "Holy Sepulcher's Bank Account Blocked in Dispute over Water Bill," *Times of Israel*, Nov. 2, 2012. <https://goo.gl/pXVYPm> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017)

19 Stuart WINER, "Church of Holy Sepulcher and Water Authority Settle Financial Tussle," *Times of Israel*, Dec. 9, 2012. <https://goo.gl/pXVYPm> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017)

14 R. COHEN, *op. cit.*, 31-32, 100, 213.

15 See e.g., M. BREGER, Introduction, *supra* note 31, at 19 n. 43.

of the Holy Sepulcher compound, but it was never used for a holy purpose and had been filled with earth for many years. In the end, the Court decided that it was not a holy place and the case could be heard as a standard property dispute. Interestingly, the court could not reach a decision on the matter, finding that neither the private owner nor the Coptic Church had sufficient ground to prove their claims and pushed the parties to arbitrate. The result in February 2016 was an agreement to split the basement and build a wall separating the Copts and the grocer.²⁰

The Western Wall

As we know, the Western Wall is the sole standing physical remains of Solomon's Temple. It was not part of the Temple itself, but was part of the retaining wall built to shore up the Temple Mount Complex. As the closest the Jews could get to the Temple Mount itself, it was a place of intense prayer during the exile, when it was dubbed "The Wailing Wall." After Israel conquered Jerusalem in 1967, buildings around the Wall were destroyed for the creation of a large Western Wall Plaza. Prayer at the Plaza was controlled by an Orthodox Rabbi and the ritual was Orthodox.

Fast forward to the late 1980s, when a feminist group called Women of the Wall (WOW), in contravention of Orthodox Jewish custom (some would say law) began to engage in group prayer at the Western Wall plaza (or *Kotel*) in the women's section, reading from the Torah and wearing the traditional male prayer garb of *tallit*, *tefillin*, and *kippah*. In Orthodox Judaism, only men can form a quorum for prayer (or *minyan*) and wear the traditional prayer garb.

In response, the government issued regulations to expressly "prohibit the conduct of a religious ceremony which is not according to the custom of the place and which injures the sensitivities of the worshiping public towards the place." The ensuing controversy concerning the rights of the WOW group to pray at the *Kotel* led to a number of lawsuits and legislative initiatives.

In April 2003, the Israeli Supreme Court determined that an area next to Robinson's Arch, which is adjacent to the Western Wall, albeit not traditionally seen as part of the prayer area, should be used as an alternative site following renovations (to be completed within 12 months); if that proved to be unsuccessful, then the government

must allow for prayer at the Western Wall.²¹ The court held that Robinson's Arch was a "continuation" of the Western Wall and as such could serve as an alternative WOW prayer site following governmental improvements to the area.²² One might say that the Robinson's Arch alternative was a kind of "separate but equal" solution. The Robinson's Arch site was subsequently completed for public prayer use by October 2003.

The matter did not end there. WOW continued to pray at the Western Wall and the police turned a blind eye to the matter until April 2013, when the police arrested a number of WOW members for disturbing the public order (a criminal violation).²³ The Jerusalem District Court held that the "custom" of the place under the ministerial regulations was to be understood as going beyond merely Orthodox practices at the site, especially as the Supreme Court in all three WOW cases noted the need for a broader, nationalist-pluralist approach to such an important site.²⁴ Thus the district court held that the "custom" of the place includes a broad range of pluralistic approaches.²⁵ Because the right of different religious streams to pray at the Western Wall does not pose the same level of public danger as would, for example, prayer on the Temple Mount - which can have far-reaching consequences - the district court held that WOW cannot be accused of creating a public danger under the criminal law.²⁶

In an effort to fashion a compromise, Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky proposed a plan that would extend the Western Wall Plaza all the way to Robinson's Arch. The proposal met with approval by the Reform and Conservative movements but was rejected by WOW.²⁷ In the interim, WOW agreed ("in principle") to

21 4128/00 *Hoffman et.al. v. Government of Israel and others* 40(iii) PD 283 (2003).

22 *Ibid.*, 318.

23 See 23834/04/13 *State of Israel v. Bonnie Ross and others* Jerusalem District Court decision of 24 Apr. 2013 (unpublished decision on file with authors) (in Hebrew) [hereinafter *Ross case*] at 1.

24 *Ibid.*, 6.

25 *Ibid.*, 7.

26 *Ibid.*, 8.

27 Yair ETTINGER, "Sharansky sees egalitarian section at Western Wall within two years," *Haaretz* online, 7 May 2013, available at <https://goo.gl/13osaa> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017).

20 10897/96 *Bodri v. Coptic Patriarchate Church* (decided 25 December 2011, copy of case on file, in Hebrew); Nir HASSAN, "Bitter Dispute Over Church of Holy Sepulcher Center Resolved After Two Decades," *Haaretz*, Feb. 22, 2016.

pray at the Robinson's Arch area.²⁸ In January, 2016, with much fanfare, a proposal was put forward by the Prime Minister's Office to incorporate the interests of the non-Orthodox streams of Judaism and provide an alternative prayer area near the Western Wall that would impact as well on the WOW situation.²⁹ This agreement seems to be collapsing. The Israeli government (under pressure from the religious parties) has temporized about implementing the agreement. WOW has recently gone to court to force the government's hand.³⁰ Further polarizing the situation, in Fall 2016 scores of eminent non-orthodox rabbis stormed the Western Wall security barrier carrying Torah Scrolls.³¹ This issue will not be easily evaded.

The Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif

There is a potential tension between the right of access and the prohibition of desecration in determining the extent of an individual's ability to pray at a holy place according to his or her personal prayer ritual. This personal devotion might well conflict with Section 1 of the Protection of Holy Places Law, which protects the Holy Places from "desecration" or activities that might upset "feelings... [of members of a religion]...towards such places."³²

28 Judy MALTZ and Yair ETTINGER "Women of the Wall agree in principle to move to new egalitarian space," *Haaretz* online 7 Oct. 2013 available at: <https://goo.gl/YJnzNT> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017).

29 The Advisory Team for the Issue of Prayer Arrangements at the Western Wall, Recommendations, Jerusalem, 2016 available at: <https://goo.gl/sFHxMY> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017). The Prime Minister appointed the Advisory Team in 2013. Included in the Advisory Team's recommendations is a draft regulation to the Holy Places Law to also incorporate the Southern portion of the Western Wall as part of the Holy Place. See also TOI Staff Writers, "After long fight, activists cheer mixed-gender Western Wall plan," *Times of Israel*, 31 January, 2016, available at: <https://goo.gl/Dbe2Fb> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017). Similar to the WOW decision, the Palestinians protested this move to use the southern area. See TOI Staff Writers, "Palestinians cry foul over planned mixed-gender Western Wall section," *Times of Israel*, 1 February, 2016, available at: <https://goo.gl/Dcj3xU> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017)

30 Ynet News, "Haredi Parties Threaten to Control the Western Wall Movement," Oct 7, 2016.

31 Judy MALTZ and Barak RAVID, "Unprecedented Clashes as non-Orthodox Rabbis Bring Torah Scrolls into Western Wall," *Haaretz*, Nov. 2, 2016.

32 The statute can be found at www.mfa.gov.il

After Israel conquered East Jerusalem in 1967, it returned administrative control over the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif to the waqf. While Israel did not allow the waqf to forbid Jews from entering the Mount, it did allow the waqf to forbid Jewish prayer. At first this distinction mattered little because Orthodox Jewish law forbade Jews from entering the "holy" ground of the Temple Mount for various reasons of spiritual and ritual impurity. However, since 1967 more and more Orthodox Rabbis (many connected with the settlement movement) have "bucked" the Chief Rabbi's ruling and promoted ascent to the Mount for both spiritual and nationalistic reasons.

The question of allowing access yet denying the right to pray is obviously problematic. Does the first right encompass the second? In the *Nationalist Circles* case, Justice Simon Agranat attempted to maintain the analytic distinction between the right of access and the right to pray. In his view, the freedom of access promised in the Protection of Holy Places Law extends only to entry onto the Temple Mount, but does not include the right to pray. Access is based on the above-referenced statute which provides that "[t]he Holy Places shall be protected from desecration and any other violation and from anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places." Since the 1967 statute does not include prayer, that "right" must be laid down by the executive, not the courts. In the same case, Justice Alfred Witkin advanced an even more gossamer distinction, suggesting that the right of the Jews to pray on the Temple Mount is certain, but that does not mean that there exists also a right to request police protection to enforce it.

As Justice Izhak Engard suggested, courts have shifted ideologically from rejecting outright an enforceable right to pray on the Temple Mount to the recognition of an abstract right subject to the needs of public order. Thus, in one recent case, *Gershon Solomon v. Yair Yitzchaki*, the Supreme Court wrote, "The petitioner, like any other person in Israel, enjoys the freedom of conscience, belief, religious observance and practice. This framework provides him with the privilege of gaining access to the Temple Mount for purposes of worship." In principle, then, Jews have the right to pray on the Temple Mount, but it is understood as a limited form of right, especially when weighed against the danger to public security.

According to this view, the law would ensure access contingent upon an executive (i.e., police) decision that permitting access would not cause a breakdown in public order. The question is, of course, what constitutes public order. The courts have generally taken a very deferential view of the term, leaving it to the judgment of the police as experts. Thus, public order considerations have included not only exigencies of the moment (for example,

the inability to protect worshipers at the time of the request), but also deference to police priorities regarding the deployment of their forces throughout the city. From the perspective of legal doctrine rather than of public policy, in some respects the law is unstable. Can one say fairly that there is a right to pray if one is never allowed to effectuate it? Can one have the right to pray “in one’s heart” (i.e. to oneself) but make no visible intimation of praying? Apparently so. The Minister of Internal Security recently opined that one can pray on the Temple Mount so long as one does so silently, moving neither the lips nor the body. One must wonder if this legal position can be sustained.

Jordan Redux

When Israel took control of Jerusalem and the West Bank after the 1967 war, Jordan continued to claim sovereignty (keeping in place, as example, MPs from the West Bank in the Jordanian parliament). In 1988, under pressure from the Arab League, Jordan renounced its West Bank claims. But it did retain control of the waqf at the Haram al-Sharif. This was consonant with Jordan’s view that the Hashemites are guardians of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem (they were Custodians of the Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina before being pushed out by the House of Saud). Recognizing this in the 1994 peace today with Jordan, Israel agreed to “respect the prominent role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem” and to “give high priority to the Jordanian leadership role in these shrines” in any final settlement.³³ What Israel meant by this is unclear. In 2013, Jordan upped the ante, signing an agreement by which the Palestinian Authority formally contracted out to Jordan the protection of Palestinian interests in Jerusalem.

On the basis of this agreement and earlier commitments, Jordan has begun to view itself as protector not only of the Muslim Holy Places, but also of the Christian Holy Places as well. King Abdullah restates this whenever he speaks of the Christian Holy Places and complains to the Israeli authorities regarding alleged infractions of the *Status Quo*.

In an effort to tamp down Palestinian violence surrounding the Temple Mount, Prime Minister Netanyahu and King Abdullah of Jordan met secretly in November 2014 and hammered out the so-called “Amman



▶ Attendees of the Conference - Angelicum students

Understandings” to restore calm.³⁴ The Understandings have never been published, but efforts by Secretary of State John Kerry to solidify the Understandings led to press releases in 2015 outlining their basic framework,³⁵ which constitute the following:

- 1) The number of religious Jews ascending the Mount daily was limited. Originally, the number in any one group was five, then ten, then twenty, and, since 2011, fifty at a time. A second group will not go up until the first group descends.
- 2) Netanyahu agrees on the principle that Jews can visit the Mount but that only non-Jews can pray on the Mount.³⁶

34 In November 2015, Secretary of State Kerry sought to have the Amman Understandings written down to “clarify” the arrangements. Ben ARIEL, “Report: Kerry Wants Temple Mount Status Quo Put in Writing,” *Arutz Sheva* (Oct. 20, 2015).

35 U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, “Remarks to the Press with Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh,” (October 24, 2015), <https://goo.gl/1aM2MN> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017); see also “Statement by PM Netanyahu regarding the Temple Mount,” (October 24, 2015), <https://goo.gl/n7RNTM> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017); “Jerusalem Status Quo ‘a paramount concern for us’, King,” *Petra News Agency* (25 October 2015), <https://goo.gl/Ver86y> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017).

36 It remains an open question whether Netanyahu’s restatement of Israeli policy towards preventing prayer on the Temple Mount conflicts with the traditional Israeli Supreme Court position (in principle) that prayer must be subject to police discretion as to security needs.

33 The treaty can be found at 34 I.L.M. 43 (1995).

3) The waqf (controlled by Jordan) was to prevent the entry of Palestinian activists bent on violence. And for its part, Israel was to prevent the entry of Jews seeking to pray or otherwise change the so-called *Status Quo* arrangements. In particular, they feared a “temporal division” of the Temple Mount whereby access is limited to Jews at certain times, and Muslim at other times. This model, of course, is the arrangement imposed at the Temple of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

4) It was agreed that Muslims could pray on the Mount and that non-Muslims could visit, but not pray.

The Amman Understandings succeeded in reducing Temple Mount unrest through the first quarter of 2015. However, thereafter, the situation again began to deteriorate. As a result, in fall 2015, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry had to again intervene with King Abdullah and Prime Minister Netanyahu. The Amman Understandings were reaffirmed. At King Abdullah’s suggestion, the Israelis agreed to place cameras on the Temple Mount to make clear that Israel was not acting to “Judaize” the *haram* (the cameras were never installed due to objections from the Palestinians who feared Israeli “monitoring”). After the Kerry/Abbas/Netanyahu meeting, the Israeli police introduced a ban on Knesset members visiting the Mount to calm the waters.

The Russians Are Coming

In 1882 the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society was formulated as a society focused on education. Witnessing the success of Western schools and missionary endeavors in educating and converting the native Arab Christians of the Levant, the Society proceeded to set up schools in the centers of the Orthodox population. In this project they faced an extraordinary amount of opposition from the entrenched Greeks that saw the Russian social activities as a threat to their spiritual monopoly over the indigenous Orthodox population of Palestine. As a result of the traditional animosity between Russians and Ottomans for influence in the Caucasus, and by extension in the Levant, it behooved the Russians to act with circumspection in their dealings with the Greeks. Thus they were unwilling to provoke any direct confrontation. This was in spite of the fact that the Russians had become the chief financial backers of the Patriarchate in the 19th century. The first director of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, Mr. Vasili Khitrovo, confirmed in 1892 that the situation was something similar to being between the devil and the deep sea.³⁷ After World War I, Russia withdrew from the Middle East. The Imperial Orthodox Society was dissolved (and many of its leaders executed).

37 Samuel J. KURUVILLU, “Church and State Relations in Palestine: Empires, Arab Nationalism and the Indigenous Greek Orthodoxy,” *Holy Land Studies* 10 (2011) 55, 59.

Since 1967 Russia has begun to exert itself in Israel. Some of this came from a concord between the “Red” Communist Russian Church and a majority of adherents of the “White” churches that broke away at the time of the Revolution. A second factor was the return of Sergei’s Courtyard in the Russian Compound to Russian State control in 2011.³⁸ A third factor was the increase in pilgrimages from Russia and the former Soviet Union. In 2008 Israel agreed to waive visa requirements for Russian citizens; a recent survey shows Russian Orthodox are the largest number of “tourists” to Israel.³⁹

The Concept of Sovereignty

One of the most contentious issues in the discussion of Holy Places is the legal concept of sovereignty. The claim is often made that “this plot of land is holy to me and therefore I must have sovereignty.” This phrase is often used with reference to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif.

The notion of sovereignty, or “I’m in charge,” reflects the view that sovereignty means the “exclusion of external actors from domestic authority structures.”⁴⁰ It reflects, perhaps, a rejection of historical restrictions on state power such as the Ottoman capitulations⁴¹ or the limits on state power laid down in international legal arrangements such as the rules of the so-called *Status Quo*.

The notion of “absoluteness” of sovereignty is a unique notion closely associated with nineteenth century nationalism. It does not reflect historical views of the

38 Associated Press, “Israel Returns Disputed Jerusalem Site to Russia in Goodwill Gesture,” *Haaretz*, March 21, 2011. <https://goo.gl/fykxMW> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017)

39 Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Israel and Russia Sign Agreement Cancelling Tourist Visa Requirement,” Sept. 17, 2008; in 2011 a similar agreement was made between Israel and Ukraine: Ben Hartman, “Israel Expects 200,000 Ukrainian Tourists a Year,” *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 10, 2011.

40 Stephen D. KRASNER, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1999). Krasner refers to this as Westphalian or Vattelien sovereignty after the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia and the writings of Jean Vattel. See J. VATTEL, *The Law of Nations; or Principles of the Law of Nature as Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns* (Joseph Chitty, ed., Philadelphia: T. & J.W. Johnson, 1854).

41 Maurits H. van den BOOGERT, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlis in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

nation-state before the Treaty of Westphalia,⁴² or even more importantly, the limits placed on state conduct by theories of universal jurisdiction and human rights law after World War II.⁴³ Today states are more willing to enter into treaty obligations that restrict or “share” sovereignty.⁴⁴ The “functional” regimes to regulate Rhine⁴⁵ and Danube⁴⁶ navigation are but one example. This does not, however, discount the notion of sovereignty as a reflection of power, since it is the states themselves that make the decision to limit their sovereign capacities to project force. Sovereignty is both an organizing process

42 Treaty of Westphalia, adopted Oct. 24, 1648. See full text at <https://goo.gl/8sxwAL> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017)



▶ Rabbi Jack Bemporad, Fr. James Puglisi, Bishop Brian Farrell, Daniel Seidermann

43 Winston NAGAN and Craig HAMMER, “The Changing Nature of Sovereignty in International Law and International Relations,” *Columbia Journal Transitional Law*, 43 (2004) 141-188.

44 See, Stephen D. KRASNER, “The Case for Shared Sovereignty,” *Journal of Democracy* 69 (2005) 16

45 The international legal history of the Rhine is well laid out in J.H.W. VERZIJL, *International Law in Historical Perspective*, Part III (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1970) 126-143.

46 See, as example, “Convention instituting the definitive Statute of the Danube, signed at Paris, July 23, 1921,” in *League of Nations Treaty Series* No. 647, vol. 26, pp. 174-199.

and a critical symbol used by nation states to assert power and control.⁴⁷

Let us apply these concepts in concrete terms to the Holy Places. The Christian communities argue incessantly over their historical “rights and privileges” at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, but these are arguments over use, not ownership.⁴⁸ While Israel claims sovereignty over the Temple Mount/Haram-al-Sharif, day-to-day control rests with the Muslim *waqf*. At one point, Israel is said to have offered the Palestinian Authority the right to fly its flags on the *haram*. On other occasions, King Hussein of Jordan suggested that sovereignty on the *haram* be left to God, with management duties assigned to others. Egyptian diplomats have suggested giving Palestinians diplomatic status on the *haram* akin to that of a foreign mission on Israeli soil. More prosaically, Bill Clinton suggested that the top of the Temple Mount be given to the Palestinians and the land below (including the Western Wall) be given to the Jews. And only recently we have learned that U.S. peace proposals may have included the idea of land reversions to Palestine, with Israel then leasing back some of that land.

The concept of exclusive sovereignty suggests significant issues in the theologies of the Abrahamic religions. Questions such as the following remain to be explored: 1) Does the sacredness of a site to one religion require **exclusion** for members of another religion? 2) Does such sanctity require **ownership**? 3) Does it require **control** (or is that concept confused with **authority**)? 4) Does it require **sovereignty**? 5) Is this true for all or only some sacred sites? 6) Do any of these foundations allow sacred sites to be in any way **shared**? Only if we fully appreciate how the different meanings of sovereignty affect our understanding of the holiness of a sacred site for our own religion can we begin the process of reconciling with the “other.”

Sharing Space

I would be remiss if I did not refer to the thorny problem of sharing sacred space - by sharing I mean the

47 Winston NAGAN and Craig HAMMER, “The Changing Nature of Sovereignty in International Law and International Relations,” *Columbia Journal Transitional Law* 43 (2004) 151-153.

48 Jonathan LIS, “Monastery atop Church of Holy Sepulchre in danger of collapse,” *Haaretz.com*, 10 July, 2008.

same space treated as sacred to two religions. I do not mean sharing in the sense of mixing *kodosh* and *chol* - sacred and ordinary activities - in a sacred space, but rather the existence of two “competing” religious narratives in the same sacred space.

From a theological view, this problem of sacred space turns on one’s theology of the sacred. Put simply, is the sacredness of a physical area diminished or profaned by entry of a different religious narrative? Except perhaps for areas on a holy site that are consigned to special functions, e.g. the high priest and the ‘holy of holies’ on the Temple Mount, it is not immediately clear to me that in the Abrahamic religions, the entry of another religious narrative or persons of another religion defiles the holiness of a place. But this is job for experts and is an urgent task, I believe.

Far more important are psychological and political issues. A recent study of Jewish and Christian pilgrimage activities during the Crusades by Elchanan Reiner makes clear that it is important for each religion to dispute the truth of the “other’s narrative” even when they claim the same place as “holy” for the same reasons. The Crusader Christian pilgrims at the Tomb of Patriarchs placed the tombs of the Patriarchs in a different place at the same site than did the Jews - why? Because if the Jews are incorrect as to the factual veracity of their story about the exact site of the graves of the Patriarchs, they may be wrong as to the religious truth of their narrative as well.

A second argument against sharing is the psychological importance of physical control or domination. Take the case of *Har Habayit* - the Temple Mount. Two scholars have recently written that there are many reasons why Jewish law forbids entry onto the Mount and there are competing views that entry onto the Mount is central to the Messianic process.

“There is one final consideration in making the decision about entering *Har Habayis* that lies on the interface of halacha and politics. This is the issue of demonstrating Jewish control over this crucial area. Since Israel gained sovereignty over the Temple Mount in June of 1967, the actual Jewish presence there has gone from massive to minuscule. In the euphoria after the Six Day War, thousands of Jews entered the Temple Mount, including the chief rabbis and Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook... Shortly after effective religious control of the area was given to the Islamic Wakf, the number of Jews entering dwindled to a trickle.”⁴⁹

We can contrast this with the extraordinary

49 Gedalia MEYER and Henoeh MESSNER, “Entering the Temple Mount in Halacha and Jewish History,” *7 Hakirah: The Flatbush Journal of Jewish Law and Thought*, 29, 71 (2009)

responsum of Rav Chaim Hirschenson, who, in 1918, argued that the International Court of Justice should be moved from The Hague to the Temple Mount so that “out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”⁵⁰

We can see an intimation of the former attitude that exclusivity is required in the recent brouhaha with UNESCO over Holy Places in Israel and Palestine - first regarding Bethlehem, Nablus, Hebron, and lately even the Temple Mount itself.

Let us use Rachel’s Tomb in Bethlehem as an example.

Rachel’s Tomb is the site of the grave of the Biblical matriarch Rachel. It has long been a site of Jewish pilgrimage. In the 1830s, an Ottoman *firman* gave Jews rights of access to the site, stating that “the tomb of esteemed Rachel, the mother of our Lord Joseph...they [the Jews] are accustomed to visit it from ancient days, and no one is permitted to prevent them, or oppose them (from doing this...” In the early 1840s, Sir Moses Montefiore purchased the adjacent land for the Jewish community and a Jewish custodian was placed at the site. Thus it is clear that from a legal point of view there was, in some sense, Jewish control.

As part of his ongoing efforts to highlight the Jewish character of Israel, in 2010 Prime Minister Netanyahu created a National Jewish Heritage List. The List identified sites in Israel proper. Some days later the Cabinet added two sites in the West Bank, Rachel’s Tomb near Bethlehem and Joseph’s Tomb in Nablus. Palestinian reaction was swift. UNESCO passed resolutions placing the sites in Palestine and (while recognizing the Jewish narrative) classified them as Muslim sites. UNESCO declared the site, following the recent Muslim “narrative,” to be the Bilal ibn Rabah mosque and underscored that it was part of the future Palestinian entity.⁵¹ Jewish groups responded angrily, arguing that “Rachel’s Tomb never served as a mosque for Muslims,”⁵² claiming that UNESCO was allied with the Palestinians to erase Jewish history at the site.

50 See the discussion in Eliav TAUB and Aviad Yehiel HOLLANDER, “The place of religious aspirations for sovereignty over the Temple Mount in religious-Zionist rulings” in Marshall BREGER, Yitzhak REITER, and Leonard HAMMER (Eds.), *Sacred Space in Israel and Palestine* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012) 139-167.

51 “Executive Board Adopts Five Decisions Concerning UNESCO’s Work in the Occupied Palestinian and Arab Territories,” Paris: UNESCO Media Services, 21 October 2010.

52 Nadav Shragai, Jerusalem Center, Nov. 9, 2010.

If one actually reads the UNESCO statement, however, one sees something else. Unlike Netanyahu, whose statements ignored the Muslim and Christian history at these sites. UNESCO specifically recognizes the Tomb of Rachel as holy to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It further references it as the grave of Bilal ibn Rabah, but it does not deny its sacredness to Jews. What it does do, however, is conclude that the *keuer*, or grave, is in the territory assigned to Palestine which is correct under the Oslo Agreement.

More recently, UNESCO has substantially raised the ante. In a recent resolution passed on October 13, 2016, the UNESCO Executive Committee condemned Israel's behavior on the Temple Mount/Haram-al-Sharif and the Western Wall **using only the Muslim names for these sites**.⁵³ This disrespect for the Jewish narrative is part of an unfortunate increase in Muslim efforts to deny any Jewish attachment to the Temple Mount or even to Jerusalem. In its previous resolution on Rachel's Tomb and the Cave of Machpelah, UNESCO had referenced both Arab and Jewish names. Irma Bakava, the Director General of UNESCO, criticized the Resolution, underscoring that it prevents UNESCO "from carrying out its mission," one of "dialogue and peace."

Remarkably, to make matters even worse, on October 26, 2016 UNESCO's World Heritage Commission passed a similar resolution further denying historical reality. Ignoring the Jewish connection to Temple Mount

53 UNESCO, Executive Board, Two Hundredth Executive Session, Item 25 (Oct. 12, 2016).

not only denies history but makes peace in any shape or form more difficult. I urge all of you to seek a reversal of these resolutions at future UNESCO meetings.⁵⁴

Conclusion

I close by pointing out that the *wahabi* form of Islam regnant in Saudi Arabia takes an extremely negative view of sacred space. Often *wahabi* Islam suggests that claims of sacrality are a form of idol worship- worship of the person buried in the place or even worship of the land itself. For different reasons, some Talmudic texts take a negative view of visiting graves - holding that graves and cemeteries are the dwelling places of demons and evil spirits. (For that reason, many hold even today that pregnant women should not visit cemeteries.)

History tells us that *Wahabi* raiding parties crossed into Southern Iraq in the 18th and 19th centuries, destroying the burial places of *Shia* holy sages, even invading and burning the holy city of Najaf itself. While I would not myself endorse such violent responses, sometimes after studying the challenge of the holy places, in my more cynical moments, I think that the *Wahabis* had a point in their minimization of the idea of sacrality and physical space. It would certainly make life easier. But the concept of holiness is something we cannot ignore.

54 Itamar SHARAN and Raphael AHRENS, "UNESCO Chief Pans Member States on Anti-Israel Jerusalem Resolution," *Times of Israel*, October 14, 2016.



▶ Attendees of the Conference

The Perils of Religious Radicalization in Contemporary Jerusalem

Daniel Seidemann - Founder and Director of Terrestrial Jerusalem¹

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Monday, 9 May 2016



In its millennia-long history Jerusalem has been the meeting place of conflicting, often incompatible religious narratives. Past experience, both distant and recent, teaches us that Jerusalem is a stable, viable city when allowed to speak in its multiple voices. However, when there is an attempt to exclusively possess Jerusalem in the name of some higher order, the city erupts, often sending shockwaves throughout the region, and beyond

In recent years, Jerusalem has increasingly become the epicenter of inter-religious skirmishing. The religious movements - Jewish, Christian and Muslim - whose faith is both absolute and exclusionary have been on the ascendancy. Faith is being “weaponized”, that is used not only used to establish the hegemony of a specific denominational tie to the city, but to denigrate the faith of others.

The focus of these trends of radicalization are located in the Old City and its environs, particularly in the holy and historical sites with which this small area - 3 sq. miles - is replete. The tension and volatility reach the peak of their intensity in and around the Temple Mount.

The trends of religious radicalization are not limited of course to Jerusalem. But Jerusalem

is particularly vulnerable in this regard, and that vulnerability has been increasingly exacerbated in recent years by policies of an Israeli government that seeks to establish the primacy of a nationalistic Jewish narrative, which works hand in glove with some of the more extreme movements. The visits made by supporters of the once-marginal Temple Mount movement have become larger, more frequent and increasingly provocative, participants not hiding their aspirations to replace the mosques with the Third Temple. The extreme settler movements are, by means of parks, trails and attraction transforming the area surrounding the Old City into a pseudo-Biblical realm. A major move is afoot, led by mainstream rightwing political leaders, to radically change the status quo on and around the Mount.

These policies fan already existing flames in the Arab world. Various forms expression of political Islam are on the ascendancy at and in relation to Haram al Sharif, partially as a reflection of the broader regional trends, and partially in response to a fear of marginalization generated more Israeli policies. Rival fatwas regarding the legitimacy of pilgrimage to Al Quds under occupation has become one of the most contentious fault lines between forces of moderation and the extreme elements within the Muslim world.

Finally, there is increasing influence of the end-of-days (dispensationalists) throughout the area. If, in the past, the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif was hotly contested between Jews and Muslims, today major Christian groups have entered the fray, often

denying Muslim attachments to the site, while celebrating the schemes to rebuild the Temple as part of their eschatological vision. The push to change the status quo in the Temple



▶ Daniel Seidemann

Mount is becoming a domestic political issue in the US. Wealthy dispensationalist elements have been funding the inflammatory pseudo-archeology, as in the attempts to locate the Ark of the Covenant.

These extreme religious factions are by no means representative of the historic religious stakeholders in Jerusalem, and their organizational frameworks. The Holy See, the Orthodox and mainline Protestant denominations, and the heads of the Sharia Courts have all taken an approach whereby it is imperative to allow Jerusalem to speak in its multiple voices. This sometimes derives from a genuine embrace of religious tolerance. However no less often, it derives from

¹ Terrestrial Jerusalem (TJ) is an Israeli non-governmental organization that promotes an Israeli-Palestinian permanent status peace agreement by working to ensure that an agreement is possible on the issue of Jerusalem. By providing decision-makers and opinion-shapers with relevant data, analyses and maps, TJ strives to engage them in preventing developments that are detrimental to (a) the two-state solution, (b) the stability of Jerusalem, and (c) the humanitarian situation.

a millennia of experience that has taught that when any one group has hegemony in Jerusalem, it is not only hell for the others, but the world becomes a more dangerous place.

Regrettably, these forces of religious moderation are losing the high ground to the extremes. The position of the vast majority of rabbinic authority, whereby Jews may not visit, much less pray on the Temple Mount, has been seriously challenged and eroded by the Temple Mount movement and its rabbis. The voices of moderation in the Muslim faith communities have been weakened. The traditional churches of Jerusalem - Latin, Orthodox and Protestant - are being shunted aside by the "end-of-days" churches. The increasing sense of vulnerability and marginalization has contributed to the decimation of the Christian community in Jerusalem.

The ramifications of these developments are dire indeed. The patterns of contempt and mutual denial are already spilling over into the streets, undermining the religious and cultural character of the city. Real or perceived threats to sacred space and to the integrity of holy sites is one of the most potent detonators of regional and global conflict. The recent developments make a potential eruption of violence in the city more likely, one which will have dangerous implications throughout the region.

These recent developments pose real and present threats, of a magnitude unprecedented in modern times, to both the unique character of Jerusalem, and to its stability.

The policy makers who deal with the issues of Jerusalem have not adequately engaged on this issue. Often oblivious to the faith dimension of Jerusalem, they generally suffer from what has been dubbed "secular myopia". The attempts to curb religious extremism have been limited to periodic condemnations and enhanced policing and enforcement regarding religiously motivated hate crimes. As important as these may be, these measures have proven to be grossly inadequate.

The most effective way to combat religious extremism and intolerance is by offering a faith-based alternative to communities of believers. Fortunately, these alternatives need not be invented, because they already exist within the historic religious establishments. For the Holy See, the Orthodox and Protestant churches, the Chief Rabbinate and

the prominent Muslim institutions and theologians it is imperative that Jerusalem be a multi-faith Jerusalem. From their perspective, no group has a monopoly on the sanctity of Jerusalem. No group or individual needs apologize for, or justify his or her deep attachment to the city - nor may anyone deny or denigrate the attachment of anyone else. No faith community should be required to struggle to maintain its identity, or to protect the integrity of its holy sites.

Religious extremism in and in relation to Jerusalem will best be combatted by restoring the high ground to those who invoke a multi-faith Jerusalem, thereby marginalizing the religious extremes and their incendiary abuse of faith.

How to achieve this goal is no simple matter. For now, it will suffice to point out to three recent examples, which are in essence one. No event better expresses this vision of a multi-faith Jerusalem than the three Papal visits in Jerusalem that have taken place in recent years. The visits by Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis by no means compromised the display of the Church's deep attachment to the holy city; but they also displayed deep respect and empathy for the faiths of others, be they Jew or Muslim, Israeli or Palestinian. It was widely recognized by the residents of the city and believers around the world that Jerusalem and its faiths were being treated with the dignity they deserve. If the abuse of faith undermines the stability of Jerusalem, the beliefs embodied in these Papal visits demonstrated precisely the opposite - the healing power of faith.



▶ Question and answers

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches

Dr. Tamara Grdzeldze - Ambassador of Georgia to the Holy See, Orthodox Church of Georgia

Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Wednesday, 15 June 2016



On the Feast of the Pentecost in the Orthodox Church, on Sunday, 19 June, on the Greek island of Crete under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, at the Orthodox Academy, a large and well-equipped venue started the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Autocephalous churches. Four out of fourteen autocephalous churches were absent. The main question under these circumstances is whether the council can be binding for the churches?

Council/Synod

Council and synod here are synonyms, meaning a particular kind of gathering of the church hierarchy in context of the Orthodox Church. Hierarchs are high rank ecclesial figures, in the orthodox case primates, bishops and metropolitans. In theory, conciliarity or synodality is a means of making decisions in an open and balanced way. All members of the synod have equal rights to express their opinions in a process of decision-making.

At the same time, in practice, as it has been demonstrated in the current pre-council period, a synod is not spared from the geo-political influence.

The latest council recognized as a binding instrument of the Orthodox Church took place in 787/ II Nicea.

About participants

Fourteen autocephalous churches, also called local churches were expected to participate. Autocephaly means self-governance. Some churches are the oldest self-governed churches like the pentarchy, according to the 28th canon of the Council of Chalcedon, 451. Five sees were ranked in order of preeminence as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.

Autocephaly is an expression of the highest authority internally/domestically as well as internationally. The concept has been changing throughout centuries, the first autocephalous churches granted autonomy to other national churches. Antioch is considered a mother church for Georgia, for example, and the primate of the church of Antioch retains in his title that memory. Church of Greece presided by the Archbishop of Athens is another



▶ Dr. Tamara Grdzeldze

autocephalous church that was granted it formally in 1850, although potentially it existed after the declaration of Greek independence from Ottoman rule in 1821.

Historically, orthodox jurisdictions were strictly national, defined by the national boundaries. Today there are Orthodox from different local churches all over the world. It is why one of the important topics for the Orthodox today is Diaspora.

Unity in the Orthodox Church

There is a particular understanding of unity of the church claiming to be a full realization of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. The basic ecclesiological claims here are the same as for the Catholic Church but the understanding of unity is different. If the Bishop of Rome and the Holy See provide platform for unity in case of the Catholics, the Orthodox are united through the Eucharistic communion and synodality.

The main question for the Orthodox today, in my opinion, is what is the orthodox unity today? How does the Orthodox Church witness its unity to the world? That should have been in the background of all discussions in Crete because the problem today is not definitions of the Trinitarian or Christological dogmas but their consistent application to life in the Church, to the living practice.

Process

In the beginning of the twentieth century the orthodox church began to realize importance of unity at both levels, universal Christian level, so called ecumenism, and with regard the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches. A good illustration to this is a letter of the Ecumenical patriarch Joachim III in 1902 and of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1920. Attempts of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to summon the Orthodox Churches in 1920s and 1930s were not successful for political reasons. Moscow also summoned autocephalous churches in 1948 to celebrate 500 years of autocephaly but some churches did not participate, again for political reasons.

From the 1960s, under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and personal initiative of Patriarch Athenagoras, one who met Pope Paul VI in 1961, the Orthodox churches began to think in a systematic way on the necessity of a new council as their binding instrument. It continued until 1999 then there was a gap of 10 years (mainly, because of some disputes between the local churches).

A renewed preparatory process with the current composition began in 2008 with a first meeting of the primates. There were two other meetings of the primates, in 2014 and January 2016. The latter adopted all the final decisions for a meeting in Crete in June 2016. There was also a working committee composed of members from various local churches, working on documents in 2014-2015.

Here we come to one of the crucial issues for understanding of the complexity which led to this dramatic situation, I mean four autocephalous churches withdrawing at the very last moment. The renewed process decided to continue preparations initiated in the 1960, to refer to the same topics and documents and thus seek conciliar decisions.

The latest preparatory committee worked on documents and changed considerably six documents selected as final. These are: Relation to the other Christians, Mission of the Orthodox Church in the World today, Fasting, Marriage, Autonomy, Diaspora. Initially the number of topics for discussion was twice as long but for many reasons they were cut down to this number.

For consistency reasons, orthodox churches decided to build on the work that had already been done in the 60-80s. It is to be noted that participation of some churches at that time differed from their participation today, operating in a reality of the Iron Curtain would be a good illustration to imagine the difference.

Decision to go back and use the documents tabled decades ago has been controversial. Situation in churches at that time was radically different from today; most importantly, it was a mistake to think that any preparatory

period would be enough to appoint a council with an ambition of reaching decisions. The significance of the pan-orthodox council would be to come together and talk and discuss and make attempts of decision-making and rely on the irreplaceable factors such as personal encounter and common prayer. Alas, it was decided to discuss concrete texts. On the other hand, it would be unfair to gather local churches just for a discussion.

In addition to this, the preparation process revealed the competitive spirit among the local orthodox churches that proved itself damaging for the church unity.

Document on Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World

It is a document of 4-5 pages, trying to cover the most challenging issue of the Orthodox Church today. The nature of this challenge manifests itself from the beginning. The opening paragraph of the document says: "The Orthodox Church being the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, in her profound ecclesiastical consciousness firmly believes that she (I follow the language of the document, T.G.) occupies a central place in matters relating to the promotion of Christian unity within the contemporary world." When a church in its self-reflection makes such a claim the issue on Christian unity in the contemporary world raises many questions. If the Orthodox Church is the only and unique church, how or in what way it can promote Christian unity?

Possible answers are the following:

Either non-Orthodox Christians are not representing churches, they are only Christian communities or, according to the best possible formulation, the others are not churches in their fullness.

Under these circumstances a responsibility for 'promoting Christian unity' can be understood as a return to the Mother Church/ the Church of the first millennium, to which, the Orthodox (or some Orthodox) believe they belong.

The latter statement on its part raises questions about a possibility of such a thing, returning to the Church of the first millennium. Or, again, do the uninterrupted apostolic succession or the patristic tradition guarantee the unchangeability of the Orthodox Church?

I am grateful to Prof. Paul Ladouceur of the Orthodox School of Theology at Trinity College, Toronto, to point out that this 'famous' formulation - the Orthodox Church is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, which possesses the fullness of grace and truth - originates from an anti-ecumenical community of Mount Athos, formulated in April 1980. Mount Athos is a very complex phenomenon of our reality. It bears a huge authority over the orthodox world, and partly is responsible for the strong anti-ecumenical and isolationist



▶ Dr. Tamara gathering with participants in the Conference

aspirations in the Orthodox Church. I am saying this with a great sadness because Mount Athos played a remarkable role in the life of the Church in Georgia and my major work, I believe, is a translation of the eleventh century texts, lives of the Georgian Athonites, from Georgian into English.

This unfortunate formulation blocks a possibility of equality in a dialogue. Accordingly, ecumenically minded orthodox can claim that the 'fullness and grace of truth' exists only in the Orthodox Church and only partly in other churches that makes a dialogue possible. The Orthodox who are hostile to the idea of ecumenism, anti-ecumenists, find no reason to dialogue because 'fullness and grace of truth' is absent in other churches.

The so-called ecumenically minded orthodox should have been much more alert to this unfortunate formulation, including myself, when we repeat it in 'self-defense', in a rather compromising way. The orthodox discourse on self-identification with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic church results in the belief that only in the Orthodox Church exists a potential for the salvation. (One of the most dangerous outcomes of this ecclesiological radicalism is that in some local churches we face non-recognition of the baptism among non-orthodox.)

The document then speaks about the Orthodox Church unity founded by Christ, reflected in the communion of the Trinity and in the Sacraments that is the internal understanding of the unity in the church.

The document sees the role of the Orthodox Church in transmitting the truth contained in the Holy Scriptures and in the Holy Tradition. This is a very difficult position to argue: the truth of the Scriptures and of the Tradition is a very complex issue and proposed here

without any further qualifications also raises many questions.

The document refers to the ecumenical mission of the Orthodox Church with regard to the unity expressed by the Ecumenical Councils. In the first 800 years of the Christian era, in the period of the Ecumenical Councils, unity was just an internal church matter; how can the Orthodox Church claim today the same responsibility when it is in dialogue with other Christian Churches? The Seven Ecumenical Councils dealt with issues of unity in as much as they were identifying false and wrong teachings, heretics and schismatics. Today participation of the Orthodox Church in the Christian unity cannot be understood as a similar process

to the Christian unity of the first eight hundred years of Christianity.

Then comes a paragraph which does not seem a logical continuation of the previous ones but brings more positive notes: "the Orthodox Church acknowledges the existence in history of other Christian Churches and confessions which are not in communion with her, believes in speedy elucidation of all ecclesiological topics "

The document never mentions what it means under the unity in search; readers can only deduct it from other proposals. Although it says that "the goal of all theological dialogues is the complete restoration of unity in true faith and love". How? What is needed for the complete restoration of love?

Document praises the Orthodox Church for its participation in the Ecumenical Movement in spite of a serious crisis in it. In my view a crisis in the Orthodox Church is much more serious than in the Ecumenical Movement and the Orthodox Church, 'a considerable contributor' to that crisis is not developing a clearer objective on the Christian unity.

Document defines participation of the local churches in Bi- and Multi- lateral conversations.

All local churches carry responsibility for dialogues, it says. If one church is absent, this must be clarified, why this church is absent. Then follows a long explanation regarding the issue - what happens in case if one local church is abstaining from participation. And more procedural details about bi-lateral conversations.

However, some crucial issues are not mentioned, such as what do we want to achieve in short-term through a dialogue? In Long-term? Participation in a dialogue is a double responsibility in front of one's own people and in

front of other churches therefore clarity of positions are a guarantee of a successful dialogue.

My attention was drawn in particular by one passage of the document: “the prospect of conducting theological dialogues between the Orthodox Church and other Christian churches and confessions shall always be derived from the canonical criteria of established church tradition (a quote from canon 7 of the Second Ecumenical Council and canon 95 of the quinisext ecumenical council).” Again, as it was noted before, which one is the established church tradition, only Orthodox? What about the Catholic Church tradition? Or, other well-established church traditions?

On the nature of participation in multilateral dialogues, document refers to the 65 years old ‘Toronto Statement’. It gives a controversial view on the Faith and Order documents, saying that the Orthodox contribution is valuable but they do not always agree with some fundamental issues. In spite of this, the document insists that the Orthodox Church continues to bear witness to the divided Christian world on the basis of the apostolic tradition and faith.

Document under discussion demonstrates inconsistency in exposing its aspiration for Christian unity: amplitude between not accepting others as churches to having a leading role in promoting of Christian unity is too

big. Certainly, document is not adequately developed and raises questions about its credibility therefore it needed to be reflected on in the spirit of brotherly love and common prayer at the Holy and Great Council.

In 2012 there was a conference organized at St. Sergius in Paris on the preparation process of the Pan-Orthodox Council. My contribution was about the ecumenical relations in the process of preparation of the council, what had been done since 1960s, as well as about the orthodox voice at various multilateral gatherings. At that time the theme of relations of the Orthodox to other Christians was not pointed out and I was strongly suggesting to put it on the agenda. According to the analysis provided, at multilateral ecumenical meetings which end with a common statement, very often the Orthodox cannot add their signature to the common statement but need a special clause or chapter to clarify their position. The most urgent move, I thought, was to start an internal conversation, to establish a mode of dialogue within the local churches based on spiritual kinship and love, according to the Gospel, according to the Christian spirituality.

The Holy and Great Council was supposed to facilitate an inter-Orthodox dialogue leading towards binding decisions on challenges in the world.

Le prospettive del Santo e Grande Sinodo della Chiesa Ortodossa
19-26 giugno 2016 Creta

Dr. Bogdan Tataru-Cazaban - Ambasciatore di Romania presso la Santa Sede (210-2016)

Conferenza tenuta al Centro Pro Unione, mercoledì, 15 giugno 2016



Desidero, prima di tutto, ringraziare il Centro Pro Unione per l'iniziativa e per l'organizzazione di questo incontro di riflessione sulle prospettive del Santo e Grande Sinodo della Chiesa Ortodossa, progettato a tenersi a Creta, tra 19 e 26 giugno, secondo la decisione della Sinassi dei Patriarchi e dei Primate delle Chiese Ortodosse del gennaio 2016. L'annuncio di tale decisione ha fatto eco non solo nel mondo ortodosso, bensì a livello internazionale, soprattutto in quanto un simile Concilio non si è più riunito da secoli. Il progetto di un Grande Sinodo della Chiesa Ortodossa, iniziato nel XX secolo, in seguito alla lettera del Patriarca Gioacchino III del 1902, ma soprattutto in seguito all'iniziativa del Patriarca Fozio III di indire una riunione inter-ortodossa preparatoria nel 1930, presso il Monastero di Vatopedi sul Monte Athos, ebbe un carattere unico, che lo distingueva dagli altri sinodi inter-ortodossi tenutisi dopo la caduta del Bisanzio.

L'idea della convocazione di un Concilio dell'intera ortodossia rispecchiava sin dal principio l'urgenza della comunicazione tra le varie Chiese Ortodosse che si trovavano in un contesto storico completamente diverso da quello in cui si erano riuniti i vescovi ortodossi secoli addietro. Urgenza della comunicazione concreta, effettiva, quindi, che implica l'incontro faccia a faccia - urgenza valida ancora oggi - e allo stesso tempo necessità di riflettere insieme sui problemi sopravvenuti nella vita interna delle Chiese lungo il tempo, nonché sulla relazione della Chiesa con il mondo moderno. Il progetto del Grande Sinodo aveva, se

volete, questo doppio orientamento, ad intra e ad extra. La sua preparazione ha dovuto però percorrere un periodo non solo lungo, bensì incredibilmente drammatico per il mondo intero. Ricordiamoci che le Chiese Ortodosse hanno attraversato la Prima Guerra mondiale e hanno dovuto assimilare le sue conseguenze, la terribile instaurazione

del comunismo in Russia, l'estensione della persecuzione comunista dopo la Seconda Guerra mondiale, facendo soprattutto fronte al controllo che lo stato comunista desiderava imporre su di esse, il periodo di ritorno alla democrazia, con tutte le crisi e le tentazioni di una transizione verso il pluralismo, alle quali vanno aggiunti i conflitti e le difficoltà del Vicino e Medio Oriente. Non c'è perciò da meravigliarsi se gli sforzi del Patriarcato Ecumenico per promuovere e coordinare la preparazione del Grande Sinodo hanno avuto a confrontarsi con tanti impacci. D'altronde, ancora oggi stiamo assistendo alle conseguenze di una tale complessità dell'eredità storica e della diversità di contesti in cui si muovono da secoli le Chiese Ortodosse. Ciò che appare, veramente,

come un miracolo è l'unità dogmatico-liturgica che è rimasta, nonostante tutte le vicissitudini e gli isolamenti, l'espressione per eccellenza del mondo ortodosso uscito dal mantello di Bisanzio. Però il peso della storia vale parecchio nei posizionamenti, negli atteggiamenti e nelle decisioni delle Chiese Ortodosse. Personalmente, stimo che il Grande Sinodo aveva la chance di far uscire l'Ortodossia dalla contemplazione di un passato



▶ Dr. Bogdan Tataru-Cazaban

prestigioso, che sembra aver risposto una volta per sempre a tutti i possibili quesiti, e di fare a sua volta storia attraverso il confronto con i grandi temi della propria attualità.

Basta ricordare solo alcuni aspetti del mondo ortodosso odierno per osservare la differenza nei confronti della situazione della prima parte del secolo scorso: l'esistenza di numerose comunità ortodosse in Occidente, della cosiddetta Diaspora ortodossa, che però ha prodotto una teologia del più alto livello e che si sente nella condizione di una ortodossia locale e non solo di un'estensione dell'ortodossia storica; il dialogo ecumenico cominciato con il Patriarca Athenagoras, per essere poi continuato da ogni Chiesa Ortodossa con le altre Chiese e comunità; le immense provocazioni dello sviluppo tecnologico, soprattutto nel campo della bioetica; la migrazione. Sono soltanto alcune realtà che fanno parte della vita di ciascuna Chiesa Ortodossa e che, penso, meritano una riflessione comune, prima di qualsiasi divergenza di giurisdizione o di altra natura.

La prima conferenza preconciliare panortodossa di Chambesy del 1976 ha scelto una serie di 10 grandi temi che da allora hanno cominciato ad essere studiate, decidendo allo stesso tempo le procedure da seguire per ottenere il consenso di tutte le Chiese coinvolte. Successivamente si sono tenute altre quattro Conferenze preparatorie, quella del 2009 adottando il testo riguardante la Diaspora ortodossa, precisamente il modo di organizzazione e funzionamento delle Assemblee diocesane ortodosse distribuite per 12 regioni in tutto il

mondo, mentre quella del 2015 ha stabilito il testo della procedura riguardante il modo di conferire autonomia ad una nuova Chiesa locale. Sempre nel 2015 sono stati approvati i documenti relativi alle relazioni con l'insieme del mondo cristiano e all'importanza del digiuno, mentre il testo riguardante la missione dell'Ortodossia nel mondo contemporaneo non è stato firmato dalle Chiese di Russia e di Georgia. Finalmente, la Sinassi dei Primate del gennaio 2016 ha deciso di non esaminare durante il Grande Sinodo il problema della proclamazione dell'autocefalia e il problema dei dittici, insieme al problema del calendario.

Il testo riguardante la diaspora ortodossa, adottato in seguito alla modifica dei documenti stesi durante le due riunioni preparatorie del 1990 e 1993, ai quali è stato aggiunto un'abbozzo di regolamento circa il funzionamento delle Assemblee diocesane di ogni regione della diaspora, sostiene che tutte le Chiese Ortodosse concordano che l'organizzazione della Diaspora deve essere risolta "in conformità all'ecclesiologia ortodossa, con la pratica e la tradizione canonica": il che significa l'esistenza di un solo vescovo in un solo luogo. D'altra parte, per motivi di carattere storico e pastorale, nelle attuali condizioni si propone la creazione di una situazione transitoria, consistendo nell'istituzione di Assemblee diocesane regionali di cui facciano parte tutti i vescovi presenti, ciascuno restando però sotto la giurisdizione delle Chiese Madri.

Si è discusso, soprattutto in Occidente, del fatto che molte delle comunità ortodosse hanno piuttosto la coscienza di Chiese locali che di diaspore. Tuttavia, il fenomeno della diaspora, con le sue caratteristiche, incluse quelle riguardanti l'identità linguistica ed etnica, esiste in tanti casi, in cui i fedeli ortodossi si riconoscono come appartenenti alla Chiesa Madre e, quindi, a una struttura chiaramente da essa dipendente. Il problema della diaspora comporta dunque un aspetto ecclesiologico, ma anche uno pastorale, e la sua regolamentazione stimo debba essere pensata in un quadro che tratti in ugual modo i due aspetti. Intanto, la soluzione transitoria funziona, a cominciare dal 2010, esprimendo la corresponsabilità che i vescovi hanno nei confronti sia dell'unità ortodossa che della presenza concreta di fedeli provenienti da varie nazioni e culture.



► Claudia Giampietro and Christos Delaportas, students residents at The Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas, attending the Conference and interacting with the Lecturer.

Conclusioni

In seguito alle ultime evoluzioni, che hanno cominciato con la decisione della Chiesa Ortodossa Bulgara di ritirarsi e hanno culminato con la dichiarazione del 13 giugno del Sinodo della Chiesa Ortodossa Russa, ci troviamo davanti ad una situazione che riflette la difficoltà di praticare la sinodalità al più alto livello dopo un lungo periodo di interruzione e, soprattutto, di gestire all'insegna dell'unità di fede contesti locali e regionali dei più diversi. Senz'altro, i documenti proposti potevano e possono essere migliorati, essi essendo, tuttavia, il risultato di una pratica che ha cercato il comune denominatore. Ci sono, dobbiamo riconoscerlo, all'interno delle Chiese Ortodosse, movimenti e correnti d'opinione contrari a qualsiasi riconoscimento di ciò che si trova al di fuori dell'Ortodossia; ci sono timori, paure alimentate con argomenti storici, molte di esse da tempo rivolte in Occidente, fantasmi di un passato polemico e veicoli della diffidenza. Nonostante ciò, penso che una volta decisa al più alto livello dalla Sinassi dei Primate, la riunione del Grande Sinodo debba avere luogo, anche come occasione per esprimere, tramite la co-presenza, un'unità che nella storia è sempre un *work in progress*. Come si sa, il Patriarcato Romano parteciperà e vorrei evocare qui la dichiarazione particolarmente importante del Patriarca della Chiesa Ortodossa Romana, il quale ha affermato che "abbiamo bisogno di esprimere l'unità, ma anche la co-responsabilità". Il Patriarca Daniel ha inoltre sottolineato

che "abbiamo il dovere morale di testimoniare non solo a casa, bensì insieme, a livello panortodosso, l'unità di fede della Chiesa", mettendo in luce il carattere sinodale dell'Ortodossia tanto a livello locale che universale.

Personalmente, stimo che il Grande Sinodo della Chiesa Ortodossa ha come principale significato proprio il rilancio e l'aggiornamento della conciliarità che è e deve rimanere, teologicamente parlando, un'esperienza spirituale, un ascolto reciproco e una consultazione, un dibattito, ma essenzialmente un'apertura allo Spirito, che viene sempre invocato. Quindi, il rilancio della pratica della conciliarità e la convalida di una visione profondamente ortodossa e allo stesso tempo che risponda alle esigenze, alle sfide contemporanee, alla storia recente.

Come si può vedere della maggior parte delle dichiarazioni di ritiro, c'è un disappunto nei confronti della procedura di preparazione del Sinodo. Mentre, quali semplici cristiani, ci possiamo chiedere se la convocazione del Sinodo si riferisce a metodologie e procedure, con tutte le loro imperfezioni, o agli stessi temi, reali, della vita della Chiesa Ortodossa. Senza dubbio, i partecipanti al Sinodo dovranno mantenere un fine e difficile equilibrio tra le varie tendenze e correnti, per cura paterna nei confronti di tutti quelli che si riconoscono quali membri della Chiesa. Stimo però ugualmente importante che essi indichino anche un'apertura verso il futuro, una direzione, un'ispirazione per l'azione degli ortodossi nella loro veste di membri del corpo mistico della Chiesa.

Criteria per una lettura teologica del documento “La missione della Chiesa Ortodossa nel mondo contemporaneo”

Dott. Dimitrios Keramidas - Docente alla Pontificia Università San Tommaso “Angelicum”, Chiesa ortodossa di Grecia

Conferenza tenuta al Centro Pro Unione, mercoledì, 15 giugno 2016



Il Santo e Grande Sinodo della Chiesa Ortodossa (Creta, giugno 2016) è stato un momento decisivo per il mondo ortodosso nel suo cammino verso la formulazione di un nuovo atteggiamento di fronte alle odierne sfide globali. Il Concilio ha voluto aprire l'orizzonte dell'Ortodossia sull'“attuale mondo multiforme” come segno di adattamento alle circostanze e alle opportunità del XXI sec. e per sottolinearne la responsabilità di trasmettere “nello spazio e nel tempo” una visione salvifica che superi il dolore, le angosce e le grida che mettono alla prova l'integrità dell'esistenza umana. Nel suo discorso di apertura, il patriarca ecumenico Bartolomeo ha rammentato che “negli ultimi tempi si affrontano nuovi problemi che richiedono la formazione di una linea e di un atteggiamento comuni da parte delle singole Chiese ortodosse”, indicando tra questi in maniera particolare la sfida della secolarizzazione e la crisi dei valori sociali tradizionali. Dinanzi a ciò, ha esortato, l'Ortodossia “non può rimanere indifferente”. In seno a queste problematiche il concilio ha approvato, all'unanimità, il documento dal titolo “La missione della Chiesa Ortodossia nel mondo contemporaneo.”

Scopo e finalità del testo: La prima domanda che sorge è se l'Ortodossia pensa ad un aggiornamento della testimonianza del Vangelo nei problemi e le angosce esistenziali dell'uomo contemporaneo, oppure se essa deve custodire la propria spiritualità e deposito dottrinale dal pericolo del pluralismo culturale. A questo proposito il Sinodo di Creta ha sottolineato che il mondo cristiano non ha bisogno di una Chiesa “apologetica” che difendi l'“ortodossia” del proprio credo, bensì - e piuttosto - di una Chiesa che riscopri la sua natura missionaria e che evidenzi la necessità di uscire al (e non dal) mondo.

Infatti, il documento ha fatto propria l'idea secondo cui “la Chiesa di Cristo vive “nel mondo”, ma non è “del mondo” (cf. Gv 17, 11 e 14-15). La Chiesa, come Corpo del Logos incarnato di Dio (Giovanni Crisostomo, Omelia prima dell'esilio, 2 PG 52, 429) è la “presenza” vivente, il segno e la immagine del Regno del Dio Trino nella storia, che annuncia “una creatura nuova” (2 Cor 5,17)”.

Qual è il significato di questo principio? Che cosa comporta nell'annuncio del Regno nel mondo pluralistico di oggi? Il concilio panortodosso di Creta ha indicato tre principi ermeneutici di base:

1. La Chiesa vive anticipatamente il Regno (nell'eucaristia e nella vita dei santi).
2. La Chiesa unisce nell'eucaristia i figli dispersi di Dio.
3. La Chiesa riconcilia il mondo nella pace e nell'amore di Dio. La Chiesa non condanna né giudica il mondo, ma gli offre il Vangelo come “guida”.

Tra storia ed escaton: il documento accenna al primato dell'escaton sulla storia (il nuovo modo di esistere e di agire annunciato dalla Chiesa è stato rivelato, non è del mondo presente), senza tuttavia tralasciare l'importanza dell'agire cristiano nella storia. Il non essere/appartenere (= della Chiesa) a questo mondo deriva dalla fede nella Risurrezione di Cristo (sconfitta del male e della morte); l'agire nel mondo, invece, è inerente al cammino storico della Chiesa e scaturisce dall'Incarnazione del Signore (che ha rivelato l'éthos diaconico-sacrificale della comunione divino-umana). È per questo che la Chiesa “va” e “ammaestra” le nazioni, fino agli estremi confini della terra, a “incarnare” gli effetti della Risurrezione.

Apologia o testimonianza? La spiritualità ecclesiale non va contemplata come un sacro oggetto museale né venerata come una reliquia immutabile che appartiene al passato; la fede apostolica, la dottrina patristica, gli



Dott. Dimitrios Keramidas

insegnamenti conciliari, l'éthos monastico, la mistagogia liturgica sono anticipazioni del Regno che verrà, indici di una vita nuova, ma anche risposte tangibili all'invito di "vivere" il Vangelo in ogni epoca e di farlo proprio seppur nei più diversi contesti socio-culturali. Come annota il metropolita di Pergamo Ioannis Zizioulas: "Abbiamo bisogno di un'ermeneutica dei dogmi in termini esistenziali [...] Non esistono dogmi che non siano in grado di dire nulla sui veri problemi dell'uomo".

L'uomo: Il concilio ha anche esaminato il valore della persona umana-immagine di Dio inserito nel disegno salvifico. Nell'economia della salvezza l'uomo ha un ruolo di prim'ordine: Dio ha creato l'uomo perché quest'ultimo custodisca la creazione visibile e partecipi a quella invisibile. La finalità dell'incarnazione di Cristo è stata quella di condurre l'uomo alla théosis: Cristo ha rinnovato in Sé il vecchio uomo, per salvarlo non come un individuo, bensì come genere (da ciò deriva l'idea dell'"unità organica del genere umano"). Ciò significa che in Cristo tutta l'umanità è ricapitolata, perché torni alla propria bellezza originale. La ricapitolazione del genere umano in Cristo fa sì che la presenza santificante di Cristo sia presente e discernibile perfino in contesti non cristiani. Alla luce di ciò, il documento auspica la collaborazione:

- con gli altri cristiani, per la protezione della dignità dell'uomo e il bene della pace;
- con i non cristiani, affinché prevalga la coesistenza pacifica e la coesione sociale dei popoli, senza che ciò induca al sincretismo religioso; e
- con "tutti gli uomini di buona volontà" che "che amano la pace secondo Dio".

Tale azione diaconica è un "comandamento di Dio" e perciò per i cristiani diventa un dovere imprescindibile.

La pace di Cristo: Essa si fonda sulla "ricapitolazione di tutto in Lui", sulla promozione "della dignità e grandezza della persona umana come immagine di Dio", sulla manifestazione "dell'unità organica in Lui del genere umano", sull'"universalità dei principi di pace, di libertà e di giustizia sociale" e sulla "fecondità dell'amore cristiano tra gli uomini e i popoli del mondo". Perciò, la pace cristiana è "il frutto del prevalere sulla terra di tutti questi principi cristiani". La pace di Cristo è la "forza mistica" che emerge "dalla riconciliazione dell'uomo col suo Padre celeste, secondo la provvidenza di Gesù, che porta tutte le cose alla perfezione in Lui". Grazie all'indole universale dei valori cristiani si può comprendere perché la pace evangelica è "più ampia e più essenziale" della pace che promette il mondo. Il dono della riconciliazione, pur essendo di provenienza divina, dipende anche dalla sinergia umana e fiorisce sia laddove i cristiani compiono opere di fede, di amore e di speranza in Gesù Cristo, sia laddove si realizzano la pace e l'amore tra i figli dell'unico Padre celeste e i popoli che compongono l'unica famiglia umana.

Fanatismo religioso: Il paragrafo dedicato a "la pace e la prevenzione della guerra" esplicita le conseguenze

della mancanza della forza di pace sui rapporti tra religioni e popoli: generazione del fanatismo religioso, persecuzioni contro i cristiani e "le altre comunità" in Medio Oriente e altrove, sradicamento dei cristiani dalle proprie patrie, pulizie etniche ecc. Nel Regno di Dio non c'è spazio per inimicizie, ostilità e conflitti. Perciò, le Chiese Ortodosse condannano "fortemente" i conflitti e le guerre generate da cause religiose, che minacciano "le esistenti relazioni interreligiose e internazionali", e "soffrono assieme" ai fratelli cristiani e tutti gli altri che sono perseguitati.

La voce profetica dell'Ortodossia: La Chiesa Ortodossa favorisce la solidarietà e la collaborazione tra popoli e Stati, ma è suo compito profetico annunciare il Regno di Dio, coltivare l'unità del proprio gregge e vivere in maniera esemplare la verità, la spiritualità e l'éthos ascetico cristiani. La conclusione rievoca l'idea focale del testo: "Nel nostro tempo, proprio come sempre, la voce profetica e pastorale della Chiesa, la parola redentrice della Croce e della Resurrezione, si appella al cuore dell'uomo e lo chiama, con l'apostolo Paolo, per abbracciare e vivere "tutto quello che è vero, nobile, giusto, puro, amabile, onorato" (Fil 4, 8). La Chiesa propone l'amore sacrificale del suo Signore Crocifisso, come la sola via per un mondo di pace, di giustizia, di libertà e di solidarietà tra gli uomini e tra i popoli".

Conclusione: Non si può non riconoscere il respiro profetico del documento: lo sguardo aperto verso le altre religioni, il confronto con i problemi mondiali, la sensibilità alle angosce esistenziali dell'uomo, la sollecitazione verso un éthos missionario che agisca nella storia ma che al tempo stesso rammenti che la Chiesa è anzitutto l'evento dell'escaton per eccellenza, che denunci le cause di male e sostenga i promotori della pace, della giustizia e della libertà. La missione ecclesiale appare come un evento carismatico ed esodico piuttosto che un'opera apologetica e introversa; deriva dall'amore kenotico, sacrificale e diaconico di Dio, si ispira alla ricapitolazione di tutte le cose in Cristo e si riconosce nel fare partecipe il prossimo alla vita del Regno.

Perciò:

1. La partecipazione al Regno significa estendere l'esperienza del Regno, che i cristiani vivono già anticipatamente, nella storia. È dovere della Chiesa trasformare la storia in luoghi di salvezza.
2. Vi è, inoltre, il compito di scoprire le tracce dell'escaton oltre le differenze sociali, razziali, religiose e confessionali - insomma vi è l'invito di agire dentro la storia, avendo lo sguardo oltre ad essa.
3. Testimoniare il Vangelo implica una responsabilità pubblica, la denuncia delle ideologie civili e delle credenze religiose che generano il male e l'odio. Spetterà, d'ora in poi, al lavoro postconciliare compiere la, non sempre facile, ricezione e integrazione del documento nella vita e nella missione del pleroma della Chiesa.

Commenti su

“L’importanza del digiuno e la sua osservanza oggi nella Chiesa ortodossa”

Ierodiacono Leonide (B. Ebralidze) - Chiesa ortodossa di Georgia

Conferenza tenuta al Centro Pro Unione, mercoledì, 15 giugno 2016



Fin dall’inizio vorrei sottolineare il fatto che la mia non è la posizione ufficiale della Chiesa Georgiana e che anzi, pur accettando con obbedienza le decisioni del Sinodo Georgiano, personalmente sono molto dispiaciuto degli ultimi eventi negativi avvenuti nella Chiesa di Georgia in questi ultimi giorni.

Commentiamo il documento “L’importanza del digiuno e la sua osservanza oggi”, il quale sembra che sia uno dei documenti meno discussi.

La Chiesa ortodossa nella prassi attuale ha quattro periodi di digiuno nell’anno liturgico. Essi sono:

A. *La Grande Quaresima* (proibizione di mangiare carne, pesce e latticini. Questo periodo penitenziale, aliturgico tranne il sabato e la domenica, che hanno una propria liturgia, contiene 7 settimane, compresa la settimana santa).

B. *Il Digiuno degli Apostoli*. Questo periodo di digiuno inizia il lunedì dopo la Domenica di Tutti i Santi e dura fino al 29 giugno (14 Luglio per il calendario Giuliano) e, per quanto l’inizio di questo digiuno dipenda dalla Pasqua, a volte per le Chiese di calendario Giuliano dura 6-7 settimane. E’ proibito mangiare carne e latticini,

C. *Il Digiuno della Dormizione*. Dura dal primo (14) fino al 15 (28) agosto. Vieta di mangiare carne e latticini.

D. *Il Digiuno della Natività*. Inizia quaranta giorni prima della Festa della Natività, il 15 (28) Novembre e dura fino al 25 dicembre (7 gennaio). Anche questo digiuno proibisce la carne e i latticini.

E. Oltre che in questi periodi si digiuna ogni *mercoledì e venerdì* con qualche eccezione e altri tre giorni corrispondenti alle feste della croce, del Giovanni Battista e del battesimo di Gesù.

Generalmente la spiritualità e la liturgia della chiesa ortodossa sono segnate dal forte influsso monastico, il quale si rispecchia pure nella prassi del digiuno. Dunque non è difficile notare che l’Anno liturgico della Chiesa Ortodossa è pieno di questi lunghi periodi di digiuno e che ad esso servirebbe una riforma, che è stata prevista già con un documento che è apparso per la prima volta nel 1971, durante il lavoro della Commissione



Ierodiacono Leonide (B. Ebralidze)

Inter Ortodossa preparatoria, alla base del rapporto della Chiesa Serba.¹

Il progetto prevedeva alcuni cambiamenti, per esempio per il mercoledì e il giovedì di permettere ai fedeli di mangiare il pesce, così come durante il digiuno della Dormizione e durante la Quaresima, eccetto la prima e ultima settimana; dimezzare il digiuno della Natività; ridurre il digiuno degli Apostoli a 7 giorni. I cambiamenti furono motivati dalla cura pastorale, poiché la gente comune, non potendo seguirli tutti quanti, si sente in colpa e si allontana dalla vita della perché per i laici è difficile seguire tutti i digiuni, i quali piuttosto hanno un’origine monastica e sono riservati ai monaci.

Nel 1982 alla II Conferenza Panortodossa Preconciliare il documento viene riconosciuto come mancante della preparazione e per la III Conferenza Panortodossa Preconciliare viene preparato praticamente un nuovo documento,² che è il documento attuale, con

¹ Cf. Митрополит Волоколамский Иларион, *Межправославное сотрудничество в рамках подготовки к Святому и Великому Собору Православной Церкви*, (12.06.2016) <https://goo.gl/cvHupA> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017).

² *Ibid.*

le ultime modifiche nella V Conferenza Panortodossa Preconciliare a Chambésy del 2015.³

Quest'ultimo viene costituito da nove paragrafi, di cui i primi 5 hanno un carattere spirituale e morale, e sono caratterizzati dalle citazioni scritturistiche e dei Padri, in cui il digiuno viene definito come il tesoro della vita ascetica, come inizio di tutte le virtù, ecc.

I paragrafi del documento non hanno un nome, ma per facilitare la comprensione del documento interno, noi, elencando i paragrafi, diamo loro un nome secondo il contenuto:

1. L'istituzione del digiuno e il suo senso spirituale
2. Il digiuno nella scrittura e nell'antichità (una descrizione generica)
3. Il senso spirituale e morale
4. Il senso spirituale della Quaresima e la sua importanza
5. Il senso morale del digiuno

E gli ultimi quattro paragrafi che hanno un carattere più pratico e generico, i quali meriterebbero dei commenti tematici e delle osservazioni puntuali:

6. La quantità dei digiuni - questo paragrafo menziona tutti digiuni già esistenti e sopracitati della Chiesa Ortodossa, con nessuna eccezione, dunque il paragrafo manifesta una debolezza pastorale del documento. *"I canoni conciliari e la santa tradizione... annunciano la necessità dei tutti digiuni dell'Anno Domini"* - di quali Canoni si tratta? Nei Canoni del *Kavovápiov* (cosiddetto *nomokanon*), che è una raccolta dei sacri canoni conciliari e patristici del primo millennio, si trovano riferimenti soltanto al digiuno dei mercoledì e venerdì e della Quaresima.⁴ In questo modo non troviamo riferimenti canonici nel primo millennio, oltre la Quaresima e il digiuno del venerdì e del mercoledì, benché si trovino fonti storiche, secondo le quali tutti quanti i digiuni esistevano già nel primo millennio, ma essi variavano tra le comunità locali.

7. Riguardo l'*ikonomia* - cioè l'episcopato della Chiesa locale, che ha diritto, per motivi pastorali, di fare alcune eccezioni a seconda delle necessità.

8. Riguardo l'applicazione del digiuno precisa i casi in cui si deve usare *ikonomia*, sia nei casi personali: malattie, il servizio militare, il lavoro speciale; sia nei casi generali: condizioni climatiche, geografiche, economiche e sociali.

9. Il nono paragrafo riguarda gli altri digiuni: il digiuno eucaristico dalla mezzanotte, il digiuno dei catecumeni prima di ricevere il battesimo, prima dell'ordinazione clericale, il digiuno come penitenza e il digiuno durante il pellegrinaggio. Il digiuno eucaristico nelle Chiese Ortodosse attualmente si osserva per 6-8 ore, prima della comunione. Il canone 29 del concilio Trullano menziona la prassi del digiuno eucaristico, ma senza alcuna precisazione, poiché nelle Chiese ortodosse la celebrazione della Divina liturgia di solito ha luogo la mattina, ma a volte durante le veglie notturne o durante la Quaresima, nel periodo aliturgico, la comunione si fa di sera o di notte, e osservare il digiuno eucaristico dalla mezza notte è impossibile. Riguardo il digiuno dei catecumeni prima del battesimo, si può dire che è una regola di cui le radici risalgono al primo secolo, ma siccome il battesimo era strettamente collegato alla pasqua, in pratica i candidati digiunavano la Quaresima con tutta la comunità. Questo documento stacca il battesimo dalla pasqua e il digiuno dei catecumeni dal digiuno di Quaresima che era obbligato ad essere osservato da parte dei catecumeni.⁵

Si noti che il documento non tocca il problema del matrimonio durante il digiuno, poiché il canone 52 del concilio Laodiceo proibisce la celebrazione del matrimonio durante la Quaresima, ma questa regola viene applicata per ogni digiuno, cosicché nelle comunità ortodosse la celebrazione del matrimonio durante il digiuno è un'eccezione.

La debolezza più grande del documento mi pare che sia il suo carattere generico. Esso non affronta problemi contemporanei e l'importanza pastorale di ridurre la severità del digiuno. Ci sono delle citazioni dall'antico e dal nuovo testamento, e citazioni dei padri, che risalgono fino al XIV secolo (unica citazione di Gregorio Palamas) - e tutte le citazioni hanno un carattere spirituale - morale, nessuna di carattere canonico, la cura pastorale sempre viene rinchiusa nella *ikonomia*, che dal punto di vista canonico è sempre un'eccezione e sempre dipende dal superiore.

Dall'inizio abbiamo detto che il documento "L'importanza del digiuno e la sua osservanza oggi" è uno dei documenti meno discussi sia fra le Chiese Ortodosse sia fra i teologi e questo fatto mi fa pensare che o l'intenzione del concilio non è pastorale (che sarebbe tragico), o questo documento è stato un'esca per i o questo documento è stato un'esca per quelli che danno massima importanza alle forme della prassi quali per loro hanno un valore centrale per la fede, poiché tanti di questi sono contro del Santo e Grande Concilio, avendo paura

3 Cf. *The Importance of Fasting and Its Observance Today*, (12.06.2016) <https://goo.gl/M945rF> (URL Retrieved: July 3, 2017).

4 Cf. 69 canone degli apostoli; 49, 50, 51 canoni del concilio Laodiceo; 52, 55, 56 canoni del concilio Trullano.

5 Cf. Canone 45 del concilio Laodiceo.

che quest'ultimo tenta di cambiare la prassi (dunque la fede) dell'Ortodossia.

Nonostante le carenze del documento noi umilmente preghiamo per il Concilio, per i padri conciliari

e per il suo preside, nella speranza che il concilio diventi un movimento verso un rinnovamento della Chiesa Ortodossa. Grazie a tutti per l'attenzione!

► From left:

Msgr. Andrea Palmieri
Dr. Dimitrios Keramidas
Dr. Tamara Grdzeldze
Fr. James Puglisi, SA
Dr. Bogdan Tataru-Cazaban
Mr. Nikos Giorgos Papachristou
Mr. Crisan Alexandru Marius
Diacon Ierodiacono Leonide



Commenti su
"Il matrimonio ortodosso"

Crisan Alexandru Marius - Chiesa ortodossa Romana, Dottorando Pontificio Istituto Orientale

Conferenza tenuta al Centro Pro Unione, mercoledì, 15 giugno 2016



Vorrei cominciare col ringraziare le Loro Eccellenze, gli ambasciatori di Georgia e Romania presso la Santa Sede, non solo per l'invito a parlare, che è per me un grande onore, ma soprattutto per lo sforzo e l'impegno nel lavoro per l'unità ortodossa e cristiana.

della Chiesa Ortodossa sia l'area degli aspetti riguardanti le relazioni con le altre Chiese, per la questione dei matrimoni misti. Possiamo inoltre estenderlo anche all'ambito delle relazioni con il mondo civile a causa dei cosiddetti matrimoni omosessuali, un problema attualissimo nell'odierna Europa.

Cenni storici

La questione del matrimonio apparve come tema sinodale per la prima volta nell'anno 1971, in occasione dell'incontro della Commissione preparatoria inter-ortodossa, e se ne parlò solo in una forma negativa, citando gli ostacoli al matrimonio cristiano. Purtroppo il tema nel testo venne affrontato così, facendo un elenco dei diversi impedimenti e il modo di approcciarsi alla questione in pratica fu: questo si può fare, questo non si può fare. Nel 1971 si discusse anche di cose su cui furono tutti d'accordo, si decise di permettere il matrimonio fra persone imparentate oltre il V grado per quanto riguarda le relazioni parentali di sangue, e di secondo grado per le relazioni parentali di adozione oppure spirituali. La commissione proibisce il matrimonio del clero ordinato benché metta in discussione un possibile matrimonio dei diaconi vedendo che in alcune zone il numero dei chierici è diminuito fortemente e si può tornare ad una pratica più antica. Certamente il matrimonio dei monaci oppure delle persone già sposate è proibito, a meno che non vengano ridotti allo stato laicale o non venga annullato il matrimonio precedente. Si è discusso un problema che è rimasto ancora molto attuale per le relazioni intra-ortodosse; il matrimonio misto fra ortodossi e non ortodossi, ma anche fra ortodossi e non-cristiani.² Lo riprenderò tra poco.

Nel 1982 la Conferenza Panortodossa Preconciliare riprende la discussione sulla questione degli impedimenti al matrimonio misto riducendo la discussione a due situazioni: il matrimonio ortodossa-eterodosso oppure il matrimonio di un ortodosso con un'altra persona non-cristiana o atea.



▶ Crisan Alexandru Marius

Il mio dovere oggi è di parlare del documento riguardante il matrimonio. La prima conferenza panortodossa ha introdotto il tema del matrimonio nella categoria generale degli aspetti che riguardano la vita interna della Chiesa Ortodossa.¹ Il problema del matrimonio, però, riguarda sia l'area degli aspetti interni

1 V. IONITA - R. RUS, *Towards the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church. The Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Meetings since 1923 until 2009*, *Studia Oecumenica Friburgensia*, 62 (Basel: Reinhardt Verlag, 2014) 72.

2 Metropolita ILLARION, Speech in occasion of conferring the Doctor *Honoris Causa*, "Inter-Orthodox Cooperation in the Preparations for a Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church," St. Petersburg Theological Academy.

Il documento di oggi

Prima parte - Il matrimonio ortodosso

Il documento nell'odierna forma, elaborato dalla Commissione preparatoria inter-ortodossa, è formato da due parti. La prima parte, formata da dieci punti, è intitolata *Il matrimonio ortodosso* e tratta la famiglia e il matrimonio in un modo positivo, fondandolo biblicamente (Genesi, la creazione di Adamo ed Eva, il primo miracolo di Gesù Cristo a Cana Galilea ed anche la visione paolina in cui il mistero dell'unione fra un uomo e una donna è immagine del unione mistica fra Cristo e la Sua Chiesa), patristico (Sant'Ignazio di Antiochia sulla necessità assoluta della benedizione del vescovo o del prete tramite una preghiera speciale) ma anche socialmente (il legame con il diritto greco-romano oppure la differenza dal matrimonio civile).

Un apporto tutto speciale di questa prima parte è quello di un'attenzione ai possibili pericoli che minacciano l'unità e la continuità della famiglia oggi e causano la preoccupante crescita del numero dei divorzi, aborti, situazione economica difficile, la pressione che si fa dalla società civile di accettare diverse forme di coabitare in unioni civili o semplicemente il relativismo morale causato dal fenomeno di secolarizzazione.

L'analisi del matrimonio in questa prima parte è profondamente cristiana perché mette al centro non una categoria generale, non una regola, bensì la persona umana, ricordando la libertà reciproca con cui si deve instaurare l'unione fra l'uomo e la donna, l'importanza della comunione sana dei mariti o soprattutto perché quando menziona il rigore canonico necessario subito lo mette in legame con la sensibilità pastorale.³

Seconda parte - Gli impedimenti al matrimonio

La seconda parte parla degli impedimenti al matrimonio ed è formata da 7 punti. In gran parte si riprende il discorso del 1971 approvato nel 1982 in cui si parla dei legami di parentela, confermando il Sinodo cosiddetto Quinisesto con i canoni 53 e 54. Per contrastare la bigamia, vi si afferma che il terzo matrimonio oppure un matrimonio non sciolto ancora, benché primo, costituisce un impedimento totale ad un altro matrimonio. Conformemente ai canoni 16 del V Sinodo Ecumenico e 44 del Sinodo Quinisesto, i voti monastici sono un impedimento al matrimonio. L'ordinazione rimane un impedimento al matrimonio secondo il canone 3 del Sinodo Quinisesto. Arriviamo al problema su cui si è discusso tanto negli ultimi mesi, il problema dei matrimoni misti.



Il quinto punto del documento analizza questa problematica in due categorie. Leggo:

1. Il matrimonio fra ortodossi e non-ortodossi non può essere benedetto secondo l'acribia canonica (cfr. canone 72 del Sinodo quinisesto). Tuttavia, esso potrebbe essere celebrato secondo la condiscendenza e l'amore verso gli uomini, a condizione che i bambini, frutto di questi matrimoni, siano battezzati ed educati nella Chiesa Ortodossa.

2. Il matrimonio fra ortodossi e non-cristiani è assolutamente proibito a causa dell'acribia canonica.⁴

Le critiche al documento

Ho aspettato fino a questo momento a dirvi che, come probabilmente sapete, questo documento è uno di quelli che dividono di più, di quelli che hanno messo in pericolo la presenza di alcune Chiese al Santo Sinodo. La delegazione della Chiesa di Georgia, insieme a quella del Patriarcato di Antiochia non ha firmato questo documento. Se le ragioni della delegazione antiochena le conosciamo e si riferiscono a problemi di giurisdizione su cui non mi soffermo adesso, c'è però bisogno di analizzare le ragioni per cui la Chiesa di Georgia ha messo in dubbio la sua presenza stessa al Sinodo.

Nel comunicato che il Santo Sinodo di Georgia ha fatto il 25 maggio di questo anno si racconta di come, durante l'incontro Sinodale, il metropolita Theodore Tchuadze di Akhaltsikhe e Tao-Klarjeti hanno parlato riguardo i documenti sul matrimonio e quello sulla missione della Chiesa Ortodossa nel mondo contemporaneo. Parlando del documento sul matrimonio menziona il

3 Punto I, 6.

4 Punto II, 5.

paragrafo 5 dagli impedimenti con cui il documento originale conferma che, secondo l'acribia, non si possono benedire matrimoni misti, ma aggiunge che per amore degli uomini potrebbe essere celebrato. Il metropolita chiede di cancellare la seconda parte, introdotta dalle parole: "secondo l'amore degli uomini e condiscendenza". La sua ragione per questo sarebbe che viene a trovarsi in contraddizione con il canone 72 del Concilio quinisesto, e nessun Sinodo non può contraddirne un altro. Si deve dire che il testo originale stesso proposto menziona questo concilio e il canone suddetto.

Vorrei criticare la proposta georgiana da due punti di vista. La Chiesa si è sempre comportata secondo i principi di acribia ed economia, mentre il Metropolita vuole cancellare il principio di economia lasciando al suo posto un'acribia assoluta. In secondo luogo la Chiesa, nel suo modo di pensare, ha sempre messo la persona umana al centro, non una regola: è la regola per l'uomo oppure l'uomo per la regola? *penso che tutti conosciamo la risposta.*

Non è stato sempre così, perciò quello che chiede Sua Eccellenza è in contraddizione con lo spirito canonico con cui si devono comprendere ed applicare i canoni che diventano così una regola infallibile e assoluta. Propongo di tornare di nuovo un istante alla storia della

propone che ogni matrimonio con una persona battezzata *andrebbe* considerato valido. Riguardo i matrimoni misti con un non-cristiano o ateo, le opinioni sono anche più interessanti: la Chiesa Russa, riconosce che i matrimoni misti con un non cristiano sono strettamente proibiti,⁵ ma tuttavia chiede un ritorno alle pratiche antiche dei primi 3 secoli, dove la Chiesa seguiva la teologia paolina in questo senso⁶ e permetteva i matrimoni anche con non-cristiani. La Chiesa Greca pensava in quel tempo che si dovesse applicare il principio di economia; la Chiesa Polacca addirittura proponeva la possibilità di benedire solo uno degli sposi nel caso in cui l'altro fosse non cristiano o ateo.⁷

Sembra impressionante come il discorso si sia ristretto diventando più legalista. Non possiamo non osservare che tutte queste proposte erano infatti mirate a mettere la persona al centro e non una regola. Esse seguivano la tradizione storica, patristica e canonica della Chiesa, cioè di mettere in relazione l'acribia con l'economia, non essendo il canone una porta senza uscita. Voglio dire che chi deve applicare il canone deve sempre avere la possibilità di scegliere tra queste due vie, altrimenti l'applicazione del canone diventa unilaterale. ***Sia nella versione dell'attuale documento sia nelle proposte del 1971 - in cui si usano le espressioni economia, amore per gli uomini o tante altre possibilità - paragonate alla visione georgiana del documento, nella quale si richiede che sia condannata qualsiasi possibilità di benedire un matrimonio fra un ortodosso e un'altra persona di qualsiasi denominazione cristiana, mostra una visione in cui non è più la persona umana messa al centro, ma una regola che deve essere applicata in qualsiasi situazione.*** In questo modo il discorso esce dalla sfera del modo di pensare cristiano autentico che tende a mettere sempre la persona nel centro e a trovare una soluzione per qualsiasi situazione, essendo la filosofia cristiana, nella sua natura più intima, un pensiero estremamente inclusivo. Se nel 1971 le Chiese discutevano su come si dovesse fare per un matrimonio misto con un non cristiano, oggi una Chiesa mette in dubbio la propria presenza al Sinodo perché in un documento si scrive che secondo l'amore per gli uomini e il principio di economia, si potrebbe benedire anche il matrimonio con un cristiano non-ortodosso. È ormai ovvio per tutti l'involuzione della discussione verso una schiavitù alla regola, una degradazione.

Questa è una visione chiusa con cui il cristianesimo al suo inizio non si sarebbe potuto sviluppare. L'altro fatto interessante è che questa proposta viene da un popolo

5 Canone 72 del Concilio Trullano.

6 1 Cor 7, 12-14. 16.

7 Metropolita ILLARION, Speech in occasion..., *op .cit.*.



► Conference participants

preparazione del Concilio, a quella Commissione Inter-ortodossa Preparatoria del 1971 di cui parlavo poco prima per vedere come si discuteva questo problema allora.

Riguardo il matrimonio con un eterodosso, la Chiesa Russa, per esempio, sottolineava che esso si può fare se la parte non-ortodossa accetta l'importanza della benedizione fatta nella Chiesa Ortodossa. La Chiesa Greca propone di cercare di evitare questi matrimoni senza differenza fra diversi culti, ma di permetterli in casi eccezionali. La Chiesa Polacca, invece, in spirito ecumenico,

che ha una diaspora di quasi un milione di persone fuori dal Paese e la stragrande maggioranza di loro vive in paesi non ortodossi e ha quindi una grande possibilità di sposarsi con stranieri che appartengono ad altre denominazioni cristiane. Si deve discutere anche su come applicare la pastorale in questi casi.

La visione georgiana propone di aggiungere al punto 10, nella prima parte, in cui nella versione originale si dice che sono proibite le unioni omosessuali o qualsiasi forma di coabitazione fra omosessuali, il divieto assoluto di relazioni sessuali fra le persone dello stesso sesso. Questa correzione viene a chiarire ed è benvenuta, benché consideriamo che questa cosa si potrebbe facilmente dedurre anche dal testo originale.

Consideriamo essenziale che ci presentiamo nella società odierna con un insegnamento che possa mettere la persona al centro del discorso cristiano e non la regola: si deve poter far sparire l'impressione che il cristianesimo sia nient'altro che un insieme di regole che devono essere imposte a discapito delle persone e delle loro condizioni. Questo non è cristianesimo e non è ortodossia che, con la sua Teologia Trinitaria, con la sua Cristologia e anche antropologia, che è dipendente dalle prime due, mette la Persona al centro.

Rimangono poche ore all'apertura ufficiale del Santo Sinodo: preghiamo per i nostri padri - vescovi Sinodali- di avere coraggio di fare passi avanti nella storia e di mostrare in questi momenti difficili per la cultura europea, che uniti nella fede solo il cristianesimo può dare il posto giusto, cioè centrale, alla persona.

Permettetemi di concludere con le parole del metropolita Nicodemo, pronunciate più di mezzo secolo fa,⁸ in occasione della Prima Conferenza Preparatoria Panortodossa, e che oggi sembrano più attuali che mai: Abbiamo davanti a noi un grande e difficile dovere. Ma non ci spaventeremo, perché la nostra causa è la causa di Dio. Crediamo che Dio rafforzerà e sosterrà le nostre deboli risorse, ci metterà sul cammino verso la verità e ci aiuterà a percorrere il cammino che ci aspetta per il bene e la gloria dell'Una, Santa, Cattolica ed Apostolica Chiesa.

8 During the First Pan-Orthodox Preparatory Conference in 1961 in Rhodes as it remains relevant today, 50 years later: "We have before us a great and difficult task. But we will not be afraid of it, for our cause is the cause of God. We believe that the Lord will strengthen and replenish our weak resources, put us on the path of truth and help us to perform our feat ahead for the good and glory of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church."

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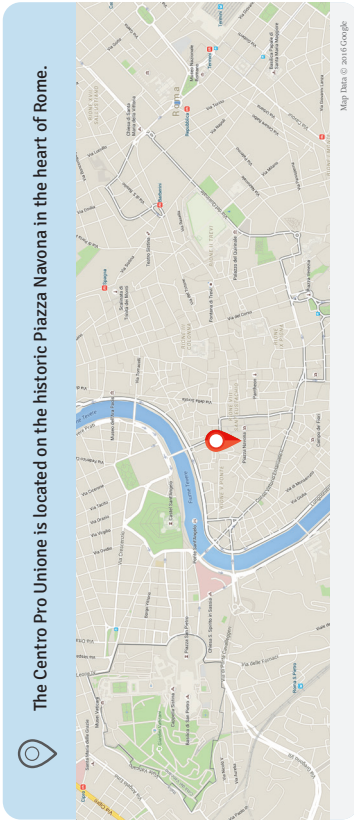
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Week I

Reformation both Protestant & Catholic: A Close Assessment of Their Reality

Biblical foundations; factions and divisions within the Church; an overview of the Reformation and Catholic Reform movements, the modern ecumenical movement; Vatican II and the Catholic principles of ecumenism; World Council of Churches; worldwide ecumenical and interreligious organizations; Eastern Christianity. On June 29, Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, participation in the Papal Mass of the Pallium.

Week II

From Division to Dialogue

Exploration of the various dialogues which exist between the churches, their context and results; ecumenical documents; reading of ecumenical texts; concept of reception in the ecumenical movement; visit to the Pontifical Councils for Promoting Christian Unity and for Interreligious Dialogue.

Week III

Christians & World Faith Traditions

Jewish-Christian relations; Christian responses to people of other faiths; fundamentalism as a worldwide phenomenon; Catholicism and Islam in dialogue; new religious movements; grassroots ecumenism.

24' Documentary about the Summer School

Watch here
www.prounione.it/webtv/doc-ministryedu

Practical Information

The cost of the course is US\$300 (non-refundable) which is payable at the time of application.

Deadline for application is March 31st.

Upon acceptance of application, a list of possible lodgings in Rome will be mailed or faxed. Booking of lodgings is the responsibility of applicant. Housing cannot be guaranteed after application deadline. Transportation (from North America), lodgings and meals will be approximately US\$3,500.

The Centro Pro Unione is located on the historic Piazza Navona in the heart of Rome.

Application can also be filled out on-line:
www.prounione.it



Conosciamo i Fratelli (Getting to know our separated brethren)

Corso Breve Ecumenismo (A Short course in ecumenism)

Dr. Teresa Francesca Rossi, author

Conosciamo i fratelli (Getting to know our separated brethren) Volume XIV of the series *A Short course in ecumenism* (in Italian) takes its inspiration from the invitation in the conciliar document on ecumenism: "Catholics who already have a proper grounding need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and cultural background" (Unitatis Redintegratio, 9).

It is addressed to teachers, ecumenical and pastoral officers and to all who are interested in gaining a greater knowledge of the Italian multi-confessional reality.



Centro Pro Unione

Istituto per consolidare il carisma ecumenico dei Frati Francescani dell'Atonelement è un centro ecumenico di ricerca e di azione, dotato di biblioteca specializzata. Il suo fine è quello di essere luogo di studio, incontri, ricerca e formazione all'ecumenismo teologico, pastorale, sociale e spirituale e di far crescere la sensibilità ecumenica. Inaugurato come Centro ecumenico e ministero dei Frati Francescani dell'Atonelement, nel 1967, vantava un'attività ecumenica fin dalla fine degli anni '50. Durante gli anni del Concilio Vaticano II il Palazzo Doria Pamphij a Piazza Navona, sede del Centro Pro Unione, fu luogo privilegiato degli incontri con e fra gli "Osservatori ecumenici" invitati al Concilio dal Segretario per la Promozione dell'Unità fra i Cristiani, per volere di papa Giovanni XXIII prima e Paolo VI poi. Fedele all'eredità conciliare il Centro Pro Unione oggi continua a promuovere il confronto fra specialisti ed è coinvolto attivamente nei dialoghi ecumenici ufficiali e nella riflessione teologica. Realizza progetti di ricerca scientifica a livello internazionale e locale; organizza iniziative formative a livello pre/para/post universitario in italiano e in inglese (fra cui simposi, cicli annuali di conferenze, giornate di studio, corsi di ecumenismo estivi e per corrispondenza). Il Centro pubblica studi specialistici, oltre ad una collana, composta finora di 14 volumi denominata Corso Breve di Ecumenismo e alla rivista Centro Pro Unione Bulletin (semestrale on line). Il Centro è impegnato anche nella produzione di materiale formativo audiovisivo, multimediale e di format per l'educazione ecumenica dei più giovani. Inoltre, prepara annualmente in collaborazione con altri organismi ecumenici e pubblica (in coedizione con le Paoline Editore Litvi) il materiale per la Settimana di preghiera per l'unità dei cristiani. Pubblicazioni recenti del Centro Pro Unione sono: *Un Fuoco nella Notte: la vita e l'eredità di P. Paolo di Graymoor* e *Manuale di Ecumenismo*.

www.prounione.it
twitter.com/EcumenUnity

Frati Francescani dell'Atonelement

La Società dell'Atonelement, Frati e Suore, fondata dal Servo di Dio Padre Paul Watson S.A. e Madre Lurana White S.A., è una congregazione il cui carisma è la "ricongiunzione" ("At-one-ment"). Padre Paul Watson, ispirandosi alla Lettera ai Romani 5, 11, volle che la sua comunità pregasse e operasse per la riconciliazione delle Chiese Cristiane, ma anche delle famiglie, delle persone, dell'intero creato. La forza profetica dell'impegno per l'unità dei Frati Francescani dell'Atonelement, antesignana rispetto al Vaticano II, si è trasformata, nell'immediato post-Concilio, in un impegno continuativo e efficace a mettere in pratica le direttive del Concilio stesso, mediante la creazione di una fitta rete di relazioni ecumeniche ed interreligiose, l'instaurazione di un dialogo teologico fra specialisti e la sollecitudine per la formazione all'ecumenismo in ogni sua dimensione. I Frati Francescani dell'Atonelement sono attualmente presenti in Italia, Inghilterra, Stati Uniti, Canada e Giappone.

Conosciamo i fratelli - XIV volume della Collana Corso breve di ecumenismo - si ispira all'invito contenuto nel documento conciliare sull'ecumenismo: "I cattolici debitamente preparati devono acquistare una migliore conoscenza della dottrina e della storia, della vita spirituale e liturgica, della psicologia religiosa e della cultura propria dei fratelli" (*Unitatis Redintegratio* n.9); è indirizzato a docenti, operatori ecumenici e pastorali, e a quanti sono interessati ad una maggiore conoscenza della realtà multiconfessionale italiana. Il volume è composto da tre parti: 1. Ristampa integrale del vol. II (1981); 2. Nuovi saggi e studi monografici sulle principali confessioni cristiane (2016); 3. Schede tematiche di approfondimento su personaggi, documenti e temi ecumenici di rilievo. Il volume è arricchito da un prezioso sussidio multimediale contenente video inediti sulle maggiori confessioni cristiane in Italia.

Il volume è curato da Teresa Francesca Rossi, docente di Ecumenismo presso la Pontificia Università San Tommaso d'Aquino in Roma e il Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo e co-direttrice del Centro Pro Unione; delegata cattolica ufficiale in vari dialoghi teologici e consultazioni ecumeniche, è autrice del *Manuale di ecumenismo*, Queriniana, Brescia 2012.

Il DVD contenente gli audiovisivi è realizzato da Esposito Neto, esperto in arti visive digitali e videographer, coordinatore media del Centro Pro Unione.

Volume XIV



FRANCISCAN FRIARS
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 una collana audiovisiva di formazione all'ecumenismo
 Centro Pro Unione

Collana Corso Breve di Ecumenismo e sussidi di formazione

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| <p>Volume I LA CHIESA E IL MOVIMENTO ECUMENICO
 II CONOSCIAMO I FRATELLI
 III IL POPOLO D'ISRAELE E LA CHIESA
 IV LA CHIESA CATTOLICA OGGI NEL DIALOGO (I parte)
 V I NUOVI MOVIMENTI RELIGIOSI, LE SETTE E I NUOVI CULTI
 VI LA SPIRITUALITÀ DELLE ALTRE GRANDI RELIGIONI NEL MONDO
 VII LA SPIRITUALITÀ DELLE CHIESE CRISTIANE ORIENTALI
 VIII IL VESCOVO DI ROMA NELLA CHIESA UNIVERSALE
 IX LA CHIESA CATTOLICA OGGI NEL DIALOGO (II parte)</p> | <p>Volume X LA CHIESA CATTOLICA OGGI NEL DIALOGO (II parte)
 XI LA CONTINUITÀ APOSTOLICA DELLA CHIESA E LA SUCCESIONE APOSTOLICA
 XII PLURALISMO E POSTMODERNISMO
 XIII IL RINNOVAMENTO LITURGICO COME VIA ALL'UNITÀ CRISTIANA
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 UN FUOCO NELLA NOTTE La vita e l'eredità di P. Paolo di Graymoor
 PER UN CAMMINO DI SPIRITUALITÀ ECUMENICA</p> |
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► In honor of Society of the Atonement founders — Servant of God Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White ◀

Historical note Society of the Atonement

In 1898, the Spirit of God inspired Sister Lurana White and Father Paul Wattson to establish a religious community to be called the *Society of the Atonement*.

The Founders had the vision of a religious congregation dedicated to the unity of Christians and to reconciliation in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. Since the Founders were Episcopalians, the roots of the Society were implanted in that ecclesial communion until 1909, the year in which the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. This was the first time that a corporate reunion with Rome took place since the Reformation.

Among the various activities of the Society of the Atonement, special mention needs to be made of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begun by Fr. Paul in 1908 and celebrated today throughout the world.

From the humble beginnings in an abandoned church, St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, in an area called Graymoor (New York), the Society of the Atonement has dedicated its efforts for the unity of the Church and reconciliation in several countries: the United States, Canada, Japan, England, Ireland, Brazil and Italy.

Nearly conferences honoring the memory of Fr. Paul Wattson were begun in 1974 at The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, then, in 1980, at the University of San Francisco. To these were added in 1995, the *Paul Wattson Lectures* at the Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax and in 1996 at the Toronto School of Theology. The *Paul Wattson Lectures* are given by international experts in the field of ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

In 2013 the cause for the canonization of Fr. Paul of Graymoor was introduced in the Archdiocese of New York.

Since 1998, the Centro Pro Unione organizes lectures each year in December to honor Fr. Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White, co-founders of the Society of the Atonement. Earlier lecturers were Enzo Bianchi, Sarah Anne Coakley, Archbishop Bruno Forte, Anna Marie Aagaard, Robert Taft, SJ, Dame Mary Tanner, Angelo Maffei, Msgr. Eleuterio Francesco Fortino, Gillian Kingston, Timothy Radcliff, OP, Dr. Jane Williams, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, M. Afr., Turid Karlson Seim, Kurt Cardinal Koch, Hervé Legrand, OP, William Henn, OFM Cap, Walter Cardinal Kasper and Petros Vassiliadis.

Visit Atonement Friars' Website - www.atonementfriars.org

Conferences 2016



The Centro Pro Unione invites you to the Nineteenth annual conference in honor of the

19th

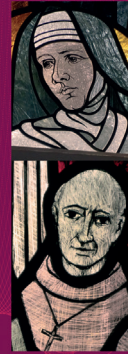
Servant of God
Father
PAUL WATTSON
and
Mother
LURANA WHITE

founders of the Society
of the Atonement

Speaker
Rabbi Jack Bemporad
on the theme
**Between Past and Future:
The Achievements and Challenges
since Vatican II**

Thursday, 15 December 2016
6:00 p.m.

Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30, 1st floor
00186 Rome



XIV Annual Conference Wattson - White
15 December 2016

Speaker Rabbi Jack Bemporad



Rabbi Bemporad is the director of the nonprofit Center for Interreligious Understanding (CIU), which he founded in 1992. Its aim is to bring people of all religious faiths together to promote open dialogue, mutual respect, and theological understanding of the common foundations shared by the world's religions. Concurrently, he is also Director of the John Paul II Center and Professor of Interreligious Studies, both at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), in Rome. He also serves as Senior Rabbinic Scholar at the Chavurah Beth Shalom

synagogue, Alpine, NJ.

Fleeing the fascist takeover in Italy prior to WWII, Bemporad and his family traveled to the U.S. when he was five years old. Thus, having personally suffered as the result of persecution and prejudice, he has dedicated his career to improving relations among Christians, Muslims, and Jews worldwide. He is one of the rare Jewish leaders to have had a personal audience with Pope John XXIII, numerous personal audiences with Pope John Paul II, and was one of three rabbis to have blessed him shortly before his death.

Highlights of Professional and Educational Posts:

From 1966-72, Rabbi Bemporad served as Chairman of the Interreligious Affairs Committee of the Synagogue Council of America, where he represented Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbinical and lay bodies at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, and the national and international branches of the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Baptist churches. In addition, he was chief rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Dallas from 1972-83, and concurrently served as Professor of Philosophy at Southern Methodist University during those years. He taught philosophy at Hebrew Union College in New York as well, from 1960-65; and from 1965-72 was Director of Worship and Adult Education for the Reform Movement, based in New York. He has been teaching as a Professor of Interreligious Studies at the Vatican's Angelicum University in Rome since 1998.

Education:

Rabbi Bemporad received a B.A. Summa Cum Laude in philosophy from Tulane University, his M.A. in philosophy at Hebrew Union College, is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and was the first rabbi ever to receive a Fulbright Scholarship. Ordained as a Rabbi in 1959, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Hebrew Union College in 1984.

Career Highlights:

Among his noteworthy accomplishments, Rabbi Bemporad led a group of Imams and Muslim religious teachers from the Middle East and developing world on a transformative study tour of Dachau and Auschwitz, the second such history making trip the CIU has sponsored. Both this tour as well as the first, (with American Imams and religious leaders) resulted in a landmark public declaration by the Muslim leadership, condemning any attempts to deny the reality of the Holocaust and to "... declare such denials or any justification of this tragedy as against the Islamic code of ethics," as well as decrying any form of anti-Semitism.

Rabbi Bemporad has headed two other groundbreaking initiatives, the first

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of which was the CIU-sponsored Sharia/Halakhah Conference, a highly successful and acclaimed discussion in New York on interpretation of Sharia and Halakhah. Attended by top Imams, Rabbis, and scholars, it is believed to be the first of its kind in modern times. The second, the "Sacred Spaces Conference," examined peaceful ways in which major world religions share access to holy places and shrines. His talk at the European Commission's conference, "Protection of Sacred Places of the Mediterranean," later, in Brussels, was published in their book, *Between Cultural Diversity and Common Heritage*.

Rabbi Bemporad also became the first rabbi in history to address an officially sanctioned Ukrainian event when he spoke at the inauguration of the Libertas Center for Interconfessional and Interreligious Dialogue in Lviv, Ukraine, which was founded by one of his former students, Dr. Taras Dzyubansky. More recently, in the face of the violence and escalating tensions in Ukraine, Rabbi Bemporad and Dr. Dzyubansky hosted a CIU-funded conference in Lviv, exploring pathways for peace.

In addition to heading programs that build bridges among faiths, Rabbi Bemporad continues to speak, both in the U.S. and abroad. Among recent talks he has given, he moderated the panel at a U.S. State Department sponsored discussion in Rome this October, "The Continued Importance of Interreligious Engagement in Combating Intolerance," and in December discussed medieval Jewish philosophy at the University of Rome, with a focus on Maimonides. In addition to discussing various aspects of Vatican II at Providence College, RI, he also gave the Jumah (sermon) at the Masjid Al-Quran (mosque) in Dallas on December 4th. Continuously over the past eleven years, he has been a speaker at the bi-annual think-tank sponsored by PRIO (Peace Research Institute, Oslo).

Awards and Recognition:

For his efforts to foster interreligious understanding, the Dallas based organization, Connecting our Faiths, an umbrella interfaith group, gave a dinner in Rabbi Bemporad's honor on December 5th 2015. He also received the Faith in Action Award from the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), as well as the Luminosa Award of the Focolare Movement and the Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Leadership Award of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. He has been honored with the Pave the Way Foundation's "Inter-Religious Dialogue" Award, Sri Chinmoy's "Lifting Up the World with a Oneness-Heart" Award, (Hindu) and The Peace and Tolerance Award from the (Muslim) Interfaith Dialog Center, now the Peace Islands Institute. He was also honored by the Friends of John Paul II Foundation. In 2012 Rabbi Bemporad was made an honorary monk when he spoke at the inauguration of His Holiness, Master Seonsa, Jinje, Supreme Patriarch of Korean Buddhism, the only rabbi in Korean history ever to speak at such an inauguration.

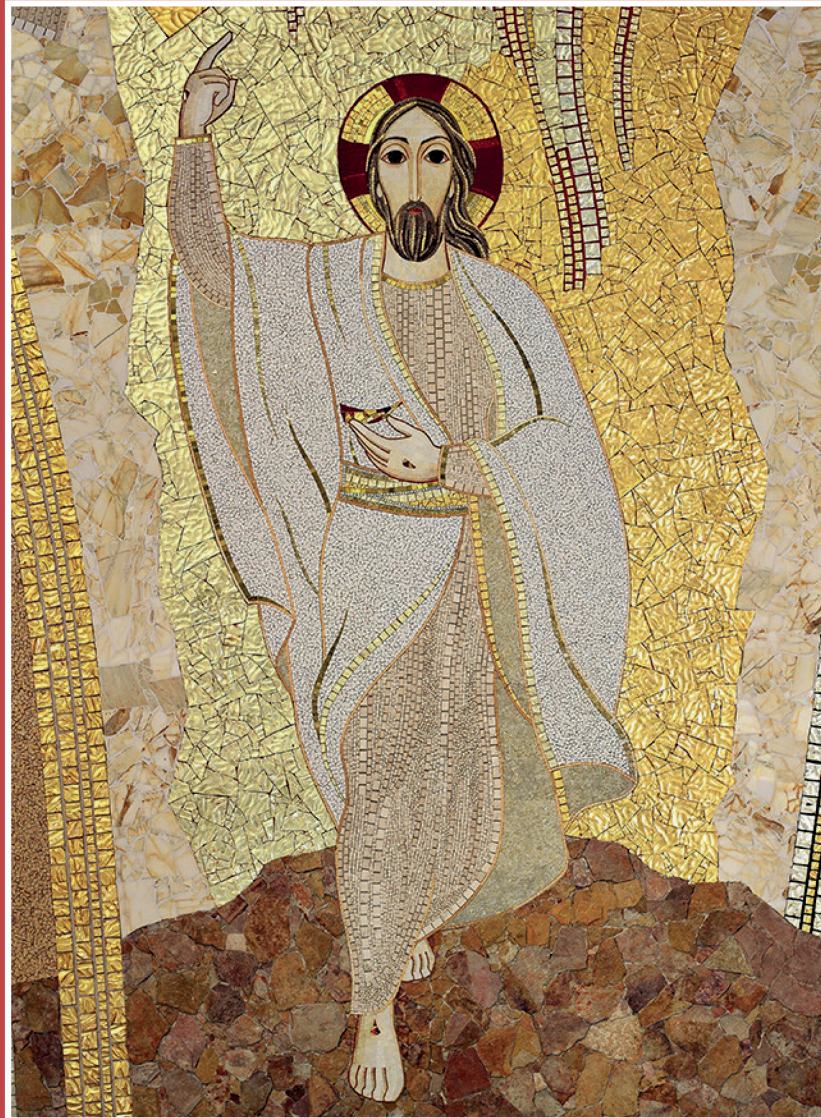
Most Significant Publications:

Rabbi Bemporad is the author and editor of numerous books and over 40 published articles, including *Our Age: The Historic New Era of Christian-Jewish Understanding*, published by New City Press. He also edited *The Inner Journey: Views from the Jewish Tradition* by Morning Light Press, and *Good and Evil After Auschwitz: Ethical Implications for Today*, KTAV Publishing House, and authored the chapter on "Norms of War in Judaism" for *World Religions and Norms of War*, published by the United Nations University Press. Most recently, he contributed a memoir of the philosopher Hans Jonas in *Jacobbe e l'Angele* (Jacob and the Angel), published in Rome in 2012.



L'amore di Cristo ci spinge verso la riconciliazione

(cfr. 2 Cor 5, 14-20)



M. Ripoli - Cristo riconciliatore, Mosaico della nuova Chiesa del Santuario di Champagnat (VI)

**SETTIMANA DI PREGHIERA
PER L'UNITÀ DEI CRISTIANI
18-25 gennaio 2017**



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