

Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church
Orthodox Academy of Crete 18 – 27 June 2016.



MESSAGE
OF THE HOLY AND GREAT COUNCIL
OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

*To the Orthodox people
and to all people of good will*

To God, "the Father of mercies and all comfort," we address a hymn of thanksgiving and praise for having enabled us to gather during the week of Pentecost (18-26 June 2016) on Crete, where the Apostle Paul and his disciple Titus preached the Gospel in the early years of the life of the Church. We give thanks to the Triune God who was well pleased that in one accord we should bring to a conclusion the work of the Holy and Great Council that was convoked by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch. Bartholomew by the common will of their Beatitudes the Primates of the local Orthodox Autocephalous Churches.

Faithfully following the example of the Apostles and our god-bearing Fathers we have once again studied the Gospel of freedom "for which Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5: 1). The foundation of our theological discussions was the certainty that the Church does not live for herself. She transmits the witness of the Gospel of grace and truth and offers to the whole world the gifts of God: love, peace, justice, reconciliation, the power of the Cross and of the Resurrection and the expectation of eternal life.

1) The key priority of the Council was to proclaim **the unity** of the Orthodox Church. Founded on the Eucharist and the Apostolic Succession of her Bishops, the existing unity needs to be strengthened and to bear new fruits. The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is a divine-human communion, a foretaste and experience of the *eschaton* within the Holy Eucharist. As a continuous Pentecost, she is a prophetic voice that cannot be silenced, the presence of and witness to the Kingdom of the God of love. The Orthodox Church, faithful to the unanimous Apostolic Tradition and her sacramental experience, is the authentic continuation of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as confessed in the Creed and confirmed by the teaching of the Church Fathers. Our Church lives out the mystery of the Divine Economy in her sacramental life, with the Holy Eucharist at its center.

for K.S.
to AD of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church.
to K.S. + the Holy and Great Council.
+ Patriarch Bartholomew
Daniel

2) Participating in the Holy Eucharist and praying for the whole world, we must continue the 'liturgy after the Divine Liturgy' and give the witness of faith to those near and those far off, in accordance with the Lord's clear command before His ascension, "And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (Ac. 1: 8). The re-evangelization of God's people in modern, secularized societies and the evangelization of those who have still not come to know Christ remain an unceasing obligation for the Church.

4) The explosions of fundamentalism observed within various religions represent an expression of morbid religiosity. Sober inter-religious dialogue helps significantly to promote mutual trust, peace and reconciliation. The oil of religious experience must be used to heal wounds and not to rekindle the fire of military conflicts. The Orthodox Church unequivocally condemns the extension of military violence, persecutions, the expulsion and murder of members of religious minorities, forced conversions, the trafficking of refugees, the abductions, torture and abhorrent executions. She denounces the destruction of churches, religious symbols and cultural monuments. Very particularly, she expresses her deep concern about the situation of Christians and of all the persecuted minorities in the Middle East. She calls on the governments in the region to protect the indigenous Orthodox and other

situation of Christians and of all the persecuted minorities in the Middle East. She calls on the governments in the region to protect the indigenous Orthodox and other

5) Modern secularisation seeks the autonomy of man (*anthropos*) from Christ and from the spiritual influence of the Church, which it arbitrarily identifies with conservatism. Western civilization, however, bears the indelible mark of the diachronic contribution of Christianity. The Church, moreover, highlights the saving significance of Christ, the God-man, and of His Body, as the place and mode of life in freedom.

The Church has always emphasised the value of **self-restraint**. Christian asceticism, however, differs radically from every dualistic asceticism which severs man from life and from his fellow man. On the contrary, she connects this with the sacramental life of the Church. Self-restraint does not concern only the monastic life. The ascetic *ethos* is a characteristic of Christian life in all its manifestations.

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7) In regard to the matter of the relations between Christian faith and the natural sciences, the Orthodox Church avoids placing scientific investigation under tutelage and does not adopt a position on every scientific question. She thanks God who gives to scientists the gift of uncovering unknown dimensions of divine creation. The modern development of the **natural sciences** and of technology is bringing radical changes to our life. It brings significant benefits, such as the facilitation of everyday life, the treatment of serious diseases, easier communications and space exploration, and so on. In spite of this, however, there are many negative

everyday life, the treatment of serious diseases, family communication, exploration, and so on. In spite of this, however, there are many negative

9) Against the levelling and impersonal standardization that is promoted in so many ways, Orthodoxy proposes respect for the particular characteristics of individuals peoples. It is also opposed the making of the economy into something autonomous from basic human needs and turning it into an end in itself. The progress of mankind is not connected only with an increase in living standards or with economic development at the expense of spiritual values.

and practice, the right to manifest one's religion, as well as the right of religious

communities to religious education and to the full function and exercise of their religious duties, without any form of direct or indirect interference by the state.

11) The Orthodox Church addresses herself to **young people** who seek for a plenitude of life replete with freedom, justice, creativity and also love. She invites them to join themselves consciously with the Church of Him who is Truth and Life. To come, offering to the ecclesial body their vitality, their anxieties, their concerns and their expectations. Young people are not only the future, but also the dynamic and creative present of the Church, both on a local and on a world-wide level.

12) The Holy and Great Council has **opened our horizon** towards the contemporary diverse and multifarious world. It has emphasised our responsibility in place and in time, ever with the perspective of eternity. The Orthodox Church, preserving intact her Sacramental and Soteriological character, is sensitive to the pain, the distress and the cry for justice and peace of the peoples of the world. She "proclaims day after day the good tidings of His salvation, announcing His glory among the nations and His wonders among all peoples" (Psalm 95).

Let us pray that "the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ, will, after we have suffered a little, Himself restore, establish, and strengthen and settle us. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 5.10-11).

† Bartholomew of Constantinople, Chairman

† Theodoros of Alexandria

† Theophilos of Jerusalem

† Irinej of Serbia

† Daniel of Romania

† Chrysostomos of Cyprus

† Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece

† Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland

† Anastasios of Tirana, Durres and All Albania

† Rastislav of Presov, the Czech Lands and Slovakia

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† Leo of Karelia and All Finland

† Stephanos of Tallinn and All Estonia

† Elder Metropolitan John of Pergamon

† Elder Archbishop Demetrios of America

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- † Augustinos of Germany
- † Irenaios of Crete
- † Isaiah of Denver
- † Alexios of Atlanta
- † Iakovos of the Princes' Islands
- † Joseph of Proikonnisos
- † Meliton of Philadelphia
- † Emmanuel of France
- † Nikitas of the Dardanelles
- † Nicholas of Detroit
- † Gerasimos of San Francisco
- † Amphilochios of Kisamos and Selinos
- † Amvrosios of Korea
- † Maximos of Selyvria
- † Amphilochios of Adrianopolis
- † Kallistos of Diokleia
- † Antony of Hierapolis, Head of the Ukrainian Orthodox in the USA
- † Job of Telmessos
- † Jean of Charioupolis, Head of the Patriarchal Exarchate for Orthodox
Parishes of the Russian Tradition in Western Europe
- † Gregory of Nyssa, Head of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox in the USA

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- † Gabriel of Leontopolis
- † Makarios of Nairobi
- † Jonah of Kampala
- † Seraphim of Zimbabwe and Angola
- † Alexandros of Nigeria
- † Theophylaktos of Tripoli
- † Sergios of Good Hope
- † Athanasios of Cyrene
- † Alexios of Carthage

- † Ieronymos of Mwanza
- † George of Guinea
- † Nicholas of Hermopolis
- † Dimitrios of Irinopolis
- † Damaskinos of Johannesburg and Pretoria
- † Narkissos of Accra
- † Emmanouel of Ptolemaidos
- † Gregorios of Cameroon
- † Nicodemos of Memphis
- † Meletios of Katanga
- † Panteleimon of Brazzaville and Gabon
- † Innokentios of Burudi and Rwanda
- † Crysostomos of Mozambique
- † Neofytos of Nyeri and Mount Kenya

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- † Benedict of Philadelphia
- † Aristarchos of Constantine
- † Theophylaktos of Jordan
- † Nektarios of Anthidon
- † Philoumenos of Pella

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- † Jovan of Ohrid and Skopje
- † Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral
- † Porfirije of Zagreb and Ljubljana
- † Vasilije of Sirmium
- † Lukijan of Budim
- † Longin of Nova Gracanica
- † Irinej of Backa
- † Hrizostom of Zvornik and Tuzla
- † Justin of Zica
- † Pahomije of Vranje

- † Jovan of Sumadija
- † Ignatije of Branicevo
- † Fotije of Dalmatia
- † Athanasios of Bihac and Petrovac
- † Joanikije of Niksic and Budimlje
- † Grigorije of Zahumlje and Hercegovina
- † Milutin of Valjevo
- † Maksim in Western America
- † Irinej in Australia and New Zealand
- † David of Krusevac
- † Jovan of Slavonija
- † Andrej in Austria and Switzerland
- † Sergije of Frankfurt and in Germany
- † Ilarion of Timok

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- † Teofan of Iasi, Moldova and Bucovina
- † Laurentiu of Sibiu and Transylvania
- † Andrei of Vad, Feleac, Cluj, Alba, Crisana and Maramures
- † Irineu of Craiova and Oltenia
- † Ioan of Timisoara and Banat
- † Iosif in Western and Southern Europe
- † Serafim in Germany and Central Europe
- † Nifon of Targoviste
- † Irineu of Alba Iulia
- † Ioachim of Roman and Bacau
- † Casian of Lower Danube
- † Timotei of Arad
- † Nicolae in America
- † Sofronie of Oradea
- † Nicodim of Strehaia and Severin
- † Visarion of Tulcea

- † Petroniu of Salaj
- † Siluan in Hungary
- † Siluan in Italy
- † Timotei in Spain and Portugal
- † Macarie in Northern Europe
- † Varlaam Ploiesteanul, Assistant Bishop to the Patriarch
- † Emilian Lovisteanul, Assistant Bishop to the Archdiocese of Ramnic
- † Ioan Casian of Vicina, Assistant Bishop to the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the Americas

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- † Georgios of Paphos
- † Chrysostomos of Kition
- † Chrysostomos of Kyrenia
- † Athanasios of Limassol
- † Neophytos of Morphou
- † Vasileios of Constantia and Ammochostos
- † Nikiphoros of Kykkos and Tillyria
- † Isaias of Tamassos and Oreini
- † Barnabas of Tremithousa and Lefkara
- † Christophoros of Karpas *for Karpas and Kyrenia*
- † Nektarios of Arsinoe
- † Nikolaos of Amathus
- † Epiphanios of Ledra
- † Leontios of Chytron
- † Porphyrios of Neapolis
- † Gregory of Mesaoria

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- † Chrysostomos of Peristerion
- † Germanos of Eleia
- † Alexandros of Mantinea and Kynouria
- † Ignatios of Arta
- † Damaskinos of Didymoteixon, Orestias and Soufli
- † Alexios of Nikaia
- † Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Aghios Vlasios
- † Eusebios of Samos and Ikaria
- † Seraphim of Kastoria
- † Ignatios of Demetrias and Almyros
- † Nicodemos of Kassandreia
- † Ephraim of Hydra, Spetses and Aegina
- † Theologos of Serres and Nigrita
- † Makarios of Sidirokastron
- † Anthimos of Alexandroupolis
- † Barnabas of Neapolis and Stavroupolis
- † Chrysostomos of Messenia
- † Athenagoras of Ilion, Acharnon and Petroupoli
- † Ioannis of Lagkada, Litis and Rentinis
- † Gabriel of New Ionia and Philadelphia
- † Chrysostomos of Nikopolis and Preveza
- † Theoklitos of Ierissos, Mount Athos and Ardameri

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- † Abel of Lublin and Chelm
- † Jacob of Bialystok and Gdansk
- † George of Siemiatycze
- † Paisios of Gorlice

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- † Nikolla of Apollonia and Fier
- † Andon of Elbasan
- † Nathaniel of Amantia
- † Asti of Bylis

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- † Michal of Prague
- † Isaiah of Sumperk

† Jeremy of Switzerland, Chief of the Panorthodox Secretariat of the Holy and Great Council

Jerome of Switzerland, Chief of the Panorthodox Secretariat of the Holy and Great Council

