# Eastern Catholic Theology

## Slow Rebirth after a Long and Difficult Gestation

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## I. PRELIMINARIES: WHAT IS EASTERN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY?

Despite the optimism of my lecture's title, is there really an "Eastern Catholic Theology"? And if so, what is it? These are the questions I would like to address today. But first, let me define my terms.

It is not possible to define in any definitive way what Eastern Catholic theology is or might be, except to say what it is not. First, it is not Eastern/Oriental Orthodox theology, since to claim that would be simply to beg the question, and would also run the risk of co-opting someone else's intellectual and theological tradition. This does not mean that Eastern Catholic theology stands in opposition to Orthodox theology. On the contrary, both claim to derive from the patristic and liturgical sources of a common tradition. And besides, Eastern Catholics have been strongly influenced by modern Orthodox writers, an influence they unashamedly welcome and gratefully acknowledge. Secondly, Eastern Catholic theology is not Western Catholic theology, though it has obviously undergone strong Western Catholic influence, more so than has Orthodox theology, though Orthodox theology has

also absorbed much from modern Western thought,[1] even if it is reluctant to acknowledge it.

Does that mean Eastern Catholic theology is any theology done by theologians who happen to be Eastern Catholics? Not at all. Just as the Orthodox reject Orthodox thinkers whom they judge too "Western" or "scholastic" to be representative Orthodox theologians, the same is true of Eastern Catholic theology. There are Eastern Catholic writers who just parrot Latin manual-theology of the pre-World War II period, before the effects of the scriptural, patristic, and liturgical renewal that led up to Vatican II had filtered down to the Catholic East. I would in no way call such writings Eastern Catholic theology.[2]

So perhaps it would be better to speak of "Catholic Eastern theology," meaning by that *a style of Catholic theological thinking in which "Eastern" is not an ecclesial or ethnic attribute of those doing this theology, but an epithet specifying the nature and quality of the theology itself.*[3]

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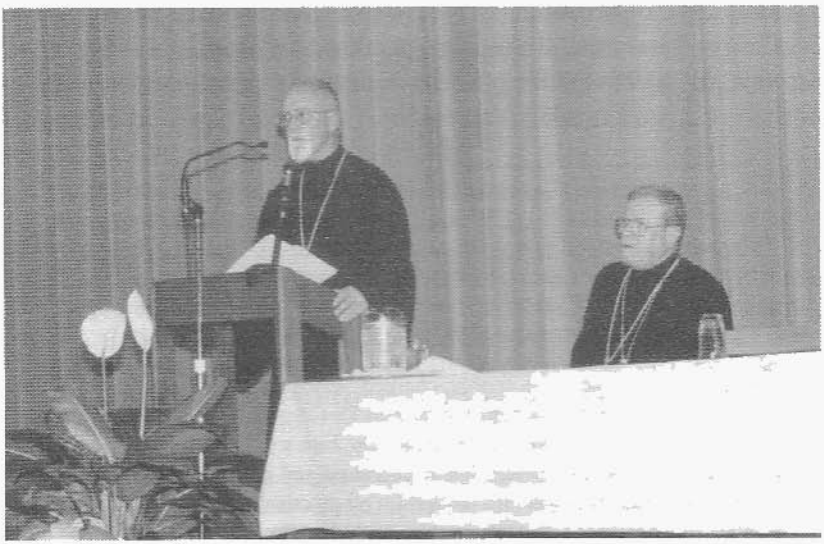
[1] See, for instance, the sources referred to in A. Schmemann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (The Library of Orthodox Theology 4, London: Faith Press/Portland Maine: The American Orthodox Press 1966, reissued since by St. Vladimir Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY).

[2] Furthermore, there are Catholic theologians not belonging canonically to any Eastern Catholic Church whom I would consider to be doing an "Eastern" type of theology. That is also the view of some Romanian Orthodox, who, on granting an honorary doctorate to Tomáš Špidlík, S.J., professor-emeritus of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, referred to him as "one of ours." Other Romanian Orthodox theologians have called him "a starets from Rome," and "the best Orthodox theologian writing today."

[3] Other Catholic theologians, while decidedly "Western" in the scientific rigour, philosophic-speculative quality, systematic order, and universally inclusive scope of their thought, never neglected the Eastern sources and remained fully open to having Western theological thought enriched and even corrected by the insights of the East. I am thinking of my late teacher and colleague Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. (1923-1994), professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome.

With regard to such categorizing, however, it is good to recall what the US courts once said in rendering a decision concerning pornography: it is difficult to define it, but we all recognize it when we see it. That is true, I think, of Eastern Catholic theology. One cannot deny its similarities with Western Catholic theology and with Orthodox theology, from both of which far older, fuller, and richer theological traditions it obviously derives so much. Yet Eastern Catholic theology does exist despite problems in defining its distinctiveness, and like any other cultural reality, it deserves to be dealt with in its own right.

So you already have the answer to my initial question: there is indeed an Eastern Catholic theology, embryonic, not widespread, still struggling to define itself, often embattled, even beseiged, but by no means in retreat or about to surrender. How can one define this theology? Can one define any theology? Should one even try? I would describe it as *the theology of Catholic practitioners with a knowledge and love for the traditions of the Christian East, a Catholic theology that seeks to breathe with both lungs, nourishing a sometimes anemic Catholic thought with oxygen from both sides of the East-West Christian divide.*



*Archpriest John Petro, Rector of Saints Cyril & Methodius Seminary, introduces Archimandrite Robert Taft*

## II. HISTORY

Before entering into greater detail on the nature and characteristics of this theology, a brief overview of its origins is in order.[4] Nothing whatever can be understood apart from its history, and that is doubly true here.

### 1. Vatican I

Paradoxically, I would place at the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), that most narrow, most ultramontane, least "Eastern" of all councils, the remote beginnings of the renewal of Eastern Catholicism that would eventually spill over into liturgy, theology, and indeed, all areas of church life.[5] Appalled by Pius IX's and the Council's lack of understanding or respect for the distinctness of the Catholic East, its age-old traditions, and the peculiar dignity of its supreme hierarchs – suffice it to note that the Eastern Catholic patriarchs were assimilated to the titular Latin pseudo-patriarchs and ranked with them at the Council – Eastern Catholic bishops at Vatican I rose up in protest. On January 25, 1870, at the 16th General Session of the Council, the Chaldean Patriarch Joseph Audo took the floor in an historic speech insisting that the particular discipine of the Christian East be respected. Two days later the Romanian Catholic bishop of Nagyvárad (Grosswardein), Joseph Papp-Szilágyi, expressed his support of Audo's views.[6]

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[4] J. Hajjar, *Les chrétiens uniates du Proche-Orient* (Paris: Seuil 1962) 301-9.

[5] On Vatican I and the Eastern Catholic bishops, see C.G. Patelos, *Vatican I et les évêques uniates. Une étape éclairante de la politique romaine à l'égard des orientaux (1867-1980)* (Bibliothèque de la *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 65, Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts 1981).

[6] Anyone familiar with the highly charged atmosphere of Vatican I and the suffocatingly authoritarian papalism of Pius IX (1846-1878) could guess that the reaction would not be long in coming. On January 29, the pope summoned Patriarch Audo to his quarters like a miscreant and made him subscribe to the dispositions of the bull *Reversurus* that for all practical purposes turned Catholic bishops into altar-boys, to be treated as Audo had just been. On "Pio Nono," as he is called, the fundamental work is the 3 vol. biography of Giacomo Martina, S.J., vol. 1: *Pio IX (1846-1850)* (Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae 38, Rome:

The Melkite patriarch and hierarchy also played at Vatican I a role that presaged their crucial importance at Vatican II (on which more later). At the 54th General Session on May 19, Melkite Patriarch Gregory II Youssef Sayyour created a sensation with his intervention in defense of the patriarchal system of government traditional in the Christian East. Attacked on all sides, not least by the Armenian Catholic patriarch Peter IX Hassoun and the Syrian archbishop of Mosul Cyril Behnam Benni, and deeply offended by the way the pope had manifested his displeasure, Patriarch Gregory took the floor again on June 14 to defend himself from the accusation of having "schismatic tendencies," and to reaffirm his views.

These profound divisions in the Catholic East, manifested with utmost clarity at Vatican I, remain with us today. There are Eastern Catholic Churches that have set out resolutely on the path to recover their heritage, and others that are so latinized they do not even understand the nature of the problematic, or are too small and weak or disinterested to do anything about it even if they did.

## 2. Leo XIII and the 1893 Eucharistic Congress of Jerusalem

Another key event was the election of Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), soon to become known as "the pope of the Christian East," whose pontificate marked the beginnings of the emancipation of the Eastern Catholic Churches.[7] The story has been told and retold many times, and

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Università Gregoriana Editrice 1974), vol. 2: *Pio IX (1851-1866)* (Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae 51. Rome: Università Gregoriana Editrice 1986), vol. 3: *Pio IX (1867-1878)* (Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae 58. Rome: Università Gregoriana Editrice 1990). On Pius IX and the Eastern Catholic churches, see esp. vol. 3, chap. 2, though the matter is handled more fully by Patelos, cited in the previous note. On Pius IX's treatment of the Melkite patriarch, see also C. Snider, *Pio IX nella luce dei processi canonici* (Studi Piani 8. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1992) 192-233.

[7] C. Soetens, *Le Congrès Eucharistique international de Jérusalem (1893) dans le cadre de la politique orientale du pape Léon XIII* (Recueil de travaux d'histore et de philologie, série 6, fasc. 12. Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts 1977); R.F. Esposito, *Leone XIII e l'Oriente cristiano: Studio storico-sistematico* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline 1960) 367-384; Hajjar (note 4 above) 309-311; further

does need repeating here, beyond a few highlights especially pertinent to our topic. The April 11, 1883 report of Vanutelli, the Apostolic Delegate at Constantinople and later cardinal, outlined Latin failures in dealing adequately with the East, and insisted on the teaching in Catholic seminaries of special courses in Oriental theology, liturgy, and history. This of course implied the recognition of what some had been trying to say at Vatican I: that the East has a peculiar patrimony even in theology, and is not just Western Catholicism in different vestments.

Preparations for the 1893 Eucharistic Congress of Jerusalem brought things to a head, showing the weakness of the Catholic East confronted with the assault of Latin missionaries. Cardinal Langénieux, archbishop of Rheims, was Pope Leo's Cardinal-legate for relations with the Eastern hierarchies in view of the upcoming Congress. His courageous and far-seeing report of July 2, 1893, informed the pope in undisguised terms of the problems caused by the Latin assault on the East, and of the need for a radically new policy. Leo XIII took swift and decisive action. The encyclical *Praeclara gratulationis* of June 20, 1894, was followed in the fall by frank discussions at the Vatican during which the Eastern Catholic patriarchs could express their griefs freely, without the fear of reprisals that reigned under the repressive regime of Pius IX. Swiftly thereafter came the historic encyclical *Orientalium dignitas*,[8] dated November 30, 1894, but promulgated on December 6, the feast of St. Nicholas so dear to the Byzantine East. This document has been called the "Magna Carta" of Eastern Catholicism.[9]

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bibliography on Leo's policies regarding the East in G. Croce, *La Badia Greca di Grottaferrata e la rivista "Roma e l'Oriente." Cattolicesimo e ortodossia fra unionismo e ecumenismo (1799-1923)*, 2 vols. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1990) I, 126-26 note 48.

[8] English translation in *The Vatican and the Eastern Churches*, Volume I (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications 1996), pp 179-188.

[9] The fact that recent histories of the papacy do not even consider this aspect of Leo XIII's pontificate worth mentioning (e.g., R.P. McBrien, *Lives of the Popes. The Pontiffs from St. Peter to John Paul II*, Harper, SanFrancisco 1997, 347-51) is symptomatic of the modest place Eastern Catholicism still occupies in the minds

## 3. Further Developments Intellectual and Institutional

These may seem to be purely formal, constitutional matters, but they soon had their effect on the intellectual level that is our interest here. The work of the Assumptionists; the foundation in Germany of the still existing review *Oriens Christianus;* the celebrations surrounding the 15th centenary of the death of St. John Chrysostom in 1907, and the commemorative volume of still irreplaceable studies on the Eastern traditions, especially liturgy, published for the occasion;[10] Benedict XV's (1914-1922) foundation on May 1, 1917, of the Sacra Congregazione per la Chiesa Orientale,[11] and of the Pontificio Istituto di Studi Orientali the following October 15;[12] would lead, ultimately to a whole new status for the Catholic East, and, more important for our theme, a new seriousness in the intellectual approach to its traditions.[13]

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of Catholic academia, if indeed it can be said to be present there at all.

[10] *XPYCOCTOMIKA. Studi e ricerche intorno a S. Giovanni Crisostomo*, a cura del comitato per il XV° centenario della sua morte, 407-1907 (Rome: Pustet 1908).

[11] See M. Brogi, "La Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali," in P.A. Bonnet, C. Gullo (eds.), *La Curia Romana nella Cost. Ap. «Pastor Bonus»* (Studi giuridici 23, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1990).

[12] See various studies in E.G. Farrugia (ed.), *The Pontifical Oriental Institute: The First Seventy-Five Years, (1917-1992* (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana 1993); R.F. Taft & J.L. Dugan (eds.), *Il 75° anniversario del Pontificio Istituto Orientale. Atti delle celebrazioni giubilari, 15-17 ottobre 1992* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 244, Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale 1994); R.F. Taft (ed.), *The Christian East. Its Institutions & its Thought. A Critical Reflection*. Papers of the International Scholarly Congress for the 75th Anniversary of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 30 May – 5 June 1993 (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 251, Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale 1996); V. Poggi, *Per la storia del Pontificio Istituto Orientale. Saggi sull'istituzione, i suoi uomini e l'Oriente Cristiano* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 263, Rome: Pontficio Istituto Orientae 2000).

[13] We must skip over many other steps in this long and slow trek, e.g., the reform of the Badia Greca di Grottaferrata, magisterially detailed in the fascinating study of G. Croce (note 7 above). Also the saga of Prince Max of Saxony and the review *Roma e l'Oriente* in ibid. 64-140, 283-96. On Max, see also Iso Baumer, *Max von Sachsen, Prinz und Prophet* (Freiburg: Universität Verlag 1992); *Priester und Professor* (1990); *Primat des anderen. Texte und Kommentare* (1996). In this

## 4. Lambert Beauduin and Amay/Chevetogne, Cyril Korolevsky, Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky

It is at this point that several key figures in our saga appear on the stage: Lambert Beauduin, O.S.B. (1873-1960), and his monks of Amay/Chevetogne (1925)[14] with their seminal periodical *Irénikon* (1926-), Cyril Korolevsky (1878-1959), and Andrew Sheptytsky (1865-1944).

Jean-François-Joseph Charon, now better known by his adopted name Cyril Korolevsky, was born in Caen, France, on December 16, 1878, and died in Rome on April 19, 1959.[15]

What interests us especially here, among Korolevsky's indefatigable work for the restoration of Eastern Catholicism and its litur-

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period, progress was not without numerous detours and contretemps, especially under Pius X, whose disastrously unenlightened pontificate set back for generations the renewal of Catholic intellectual life and nascent ecumenism timidly fostered by Leo XIII (1878-1903).

[14] On the foundation of this monastery at Amay, Belgium, in 1925 (it moved to Chevetogne, also in Belgium, in 1939), see the biographies of its founder: Sonya A. Quitslund, *Beauduin. A Prophet Vindicated* (New York/Paramus NJ/Toronto: Newman 1973), esp. chapters 5ff; and, most recently, the definitive study: R. Loonbeek and J. Mortiau, *Un pionnnier Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960). Liturgie et Unité de chrétiens*, 2 vols. (Université de Louvain, Receuil de travaux d'histoire et de philologie, 7e Série, Fascicules 12-13, Louvain-la-Neuve: Collège Érasme/Éditions de Chevetogne 2001) esp. I, 589ff. This work also contains much information on the other two figures to which this section is devoted, Cyril Korolevsky and Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky.

[15] On Korolevsky, see Eugène Tisserant, "Father Cyril Korolevsky. A Biographical Note," in Cyril Korolevsky, *Metropolitan Andrew (1865-1944)*, translated and revised by Serge Keleher (L'viv: Stauropegion 1993) 17-36; also Croce (note 7 above) II, 32-54, 283-296, and the further references there, 33-35 note 71. How so interesting a character has not yet found his definitive Swift, especially in the light of all this century's human detritus that continues to be dissected if not lionized in endless biographies, must remain a source of wonder. Perhaps prospective biographers are daunted by Korolevsky's own huge, unpublished autobiography in three typewritten volumes languishing in the Vatican Archives, on which see Croce (note 7 above) II, 33-35 note 71.

gical traditions to their pristine integrity, is his bombshell essay of 1924, *L'uniatisme*.[16] In a way never done before nor superceded since, this essay set the parameters of the problem and its solution in the most trenchant and convincing terms. It remains to this day the fundamental statement of the entire problematic of Eastern Catholicism.

While Korolevsky, as consultor for liturgy of the Oriental Congregation and a key member of its commissions for the reform of the Eastern Catholic liturgical books,[17] was able to implement his ideas in that concrete realm, his friend Andrew Sheptytsky (1865-1944), Archbishop of L'viv, Metropolitan of Halych, and primate of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, helped to implement and diffuse the same vision throughout his Church and the whole Catholic world,[18] again not without opposition even at home among his fellow bishops.

The collaboration of Korolevsky and Sheptytsky in this enterprise, carried out with the unflagging support of Eugène Cardinal Tisserant, orientalist, defender of Eastern Catholicism, and one of the greatest Prefects in the short history of the Vatican Oriental Congregation, is a story that deserves a treatise to itself.[19]

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[16] *L'uniatisme* (Irénikon collection 5-6. Amay, Belgium, 1927), not to be confused with the review of the same name. This essay is at long last available in English translation in Korolevsky, *Metropolitan Andrew* (note 15 above) Appendix II, pp. 543-598, and as a separate monograph from Eastern Christian Publications in Fairfax, Virginia, USA. To the translation is appended Serge Keleher, "Sixty Years After. Some Comments on Cyril Korolevsky's *Uniatism*," pp. 599-602.

[17] Some relevant bibliography on the Vatican reform of Eastern liturgical books is cited in Brogi, "La Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali" (note 11 above) 239-267, here 263-64. This topic is another PhD thesis waiting to be written.

[18] On Metropolitan Andrew and the various aspects of his struggle for Eastern Catholic authenticity and renewal, see Korolevsky, *Metropolitan Andrew* (note 15 above); P.R. Magosci (ed.), *Morality and Reality. The Life and Times of Andrei Sheptyts'kyi* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies 1989).

[19] Korolevsky himself has told part of it in a lengthy and wide-ranging Vatican "votum" that has never been published for a larger audience, though it certainly deserves to be. The Votum is entitled: Sacra Congregazione per la Chiesa

Another of Andrew Sheptytsky's prophetic projects was his founding of the L'viv Theological Academy (LTA) in 1928. Interrupted for over fifty years by the Soviets, who forcibly closed the LTA in 1944, it resumed its activities on September 1, 1994. This flourishing institution under the vigorous and imaginative leadership of young Ukrainian Catholic clergy and laity, some of them educated in the best institutions of the diaspora and fully imbued with the spirit of their Ukrainian Catholic Eastern heritage, is but one concrete sign that the vision and labors of the pioneers of renewal have not been in vain. Commissioned by the Holy See to make an official visitation of the LTA from September 27-October 3, 1995, a visitation repeated April 10-21, 2001, I can testify to this first hand.[20]

## 5. Ex Occidente Lux

Before moving on, let me draw attention to an essential element of our story: thus far the early pioneers of the intellectual and theological

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Orientale, Prot. N. 1219/28, *La liturgia ed il rito praticati dai ruteni.* Voto del P. Cirillo Korolevsky (Vatican City: Tipografia. Poliglotta Vaticana 1937) 292 pp. In those pre-computer days, the Vatican press did private, limited-edition printings of such briefs or "vota," as they are still called, in which consultors, when requested, express their opinions in writing to the respective Congregations of the Holy See. Other key publications of Korolevsky that also merit being dusted off and rendered into English would include: C. Korolevsky, "Le clergé occidentale et l'apostolat dans l'Orient asiatique et greco-slave," *Revue apologetique* 35 (1922-1923) 204-223, 273-286, 365-373, 470-476, 524-529, 610-628.; idem, "Le passage et l'adaptation des occidentaux au rite oriental," *Irénikon* 6 (1929) 457-487; 7 (1930) 136-166, 257-275, 402-419, 538-551; 8 (1931) 282-322 (to my knowledge, this article was never completed).

[20] Details of the 1995 visitation were reported officially in Robert F. Taft, S.J., *Report to the Synod of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church on a Visitation to the Lviv Theological Academy, 27 September - 3 October 1995* (October 24, 1995); and in my December 4, 1995 final report to the Holy See: *Visitation of the Lviv Theological Academy of the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, Lviv (Leopoli), Ukraine, 27 September - 3 October 1995.* My report on the latest visitation carried out on April 10-21, 2001: *Congregation for Catholic Education – Prot. N. 422/96, Visitation of the Lviv Theological Academy of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church Lviv (Leopoli), Ukraine, 10-21 April 2001*, pp. 27 + Appendices I-X, was submitted to the Holy see on June 14, 2001.

renewal of Eastern Catholicism were to a man products of the West. Korolevsky was a French Latin Catholic who had heard the call of the East. Even Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky, though ethnically Ukrainian, came from one of the many noble Ukrainian families that had long been latinized and polonized. His decision to return to his own ancestral Church and people and serve them as an Eastern-rite Basilian monk was unheard of, and provoked scandal and strong opposition.[21] At that time most native Eastern Catholics, mired in their latinization and defensive about it, suffering from an inferiority-complex vis-à-vis a Catholic West that neither recognized nor respected them, were in no position socially, culturally or intellectually to recognize, analyze, and do anything about the impasse in which they found themselves. The rebellion of the Eastern Catholic hierarchs at Vatican I was largely a gut-reaction against the imposition of foreign canonical and hierarchical structures and procedures, not a declaration of intellectual independence and renewal, of which they were then by and large incapable.

## 6. Enter the Melkites

All this changes radically when the Melkites hear the wakeup call and enter the fray. In the years immediately preceding Vatican II, early signs of an enormous shift in mentality can be observed among the more enlightened Melkite clergy, previously reputed to be highly latinized. Here, too, we enter a realm deserving a doctoral dissertation to itself.

Two names spring to mind as those who first drew my attention to this phenomenon: Archimandrite Orestes Kerame (1895-1983),[22] and Patriarch Maximos IV Saïgh (1878-1967).[23] Maximos, of course, achieved instant world-wide recognition for himself and his Melkite

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[21] See A.S. Ziba, "Szeptycki/Sheptyts'kyi Genealogy," in Magosci, *Morality and Reality* (note 18 above) 437-439; Korolevsky, *Metropolitan Andrew* (note 15 above) 43-73.

[22] On Kerame, see Archbishop Joseph Tawil, "In memoriam: l'archimandrite Oreste Kéramé," *Le Lien. Revue du Patriarcat grec-melkite-catholique* 48 no. 2 (Beyrouth, mars-avril 1983) 32-35.

[23] See Emilios Inglessis, *Maximos IV. L'Orient conteste l'Occident* (Paris: Cerf

Greek-Catholic Church because of his interventions at Vatican II.[24] But he had provided an unmistakable prelude of what was to come then in a talk given in Düsseldorf, Germany, on August 9, 1960.[25] Like a shot heard round the world, this talk, swiftly translated into English, French, and Italian, received wide diffusion as the Catholic Church geared up for the opening of Vatican II, announced the year before by Pope John XXIII on January 25, 1959. The now defunct *Jubilee* magazine published this talk in English in January 1962.[26] and the impact it had on me then is fresh in my mind still today.

Kerame, though not a bishop or Council Father, was another major source of Melkite Catholic thought at Vatican II. I had the privilege of knowing Kerame personally. In long talks, this former Jesuit explained to me why he had felt obliged to leave in 1941 the order he obviously still loved.[27] At that time there was no real room in a Latin

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1969).

[24] See the next section below.

[25] Inglessis, *Maximos IV* (note 23 above) 99-100.

[26] Vol. 9 no. 9 (Jan. 1962) 26-31, reprinted as "The Eastern Rôle in Christian Reunion." in Maximus IV Saygh (ed.), *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity* (New York: Herder & Herder 1963) 46-61.

[27] The remarks of Archbishop Joseph Tawil on this separation from the Jesuits, despite their discretion, are sufficient commentary on how thing were at that time: "Sa sortie de la Compagnie (1941) pour douloureuse qu'elle fut, était providentielle car il n'aurait jamais pu y accomplir ce qu'il était appelé à réaliser." (Tawil, "In memoriam." note 22 above, 33). That Kerame could not have accomplished what he did had he remained a Jesuit is far more a judgment on the Jesuits of that day than on Kerame. Long before meeting Kerame, I had myself formulated the principle that has guided my life as an Eastern Catholic priest: the traditions of the Byzantine rite in which I was ordained and to which I have tried to remain faithful in spirit and action, are an ecclesial reality superior to the contingent customs of any monastery, religious order or congregation, including my own. When there is a conflict, it is the usages of the order that must cede. My conversations with Kerame in his later years only confirmed the absolute rightness of my chosen route, and what had always been a guiding principle of my own double vocation as an Eastern rite member of a Latin religious order: whenever there is a conflict, real or apparent (i.e., so perceived by superiors), between the

religious order for one who wished to remain fully faithful to his Eastern heritage, and Kerame chose the higher loyalty, unlike so many others who were prepared to abandon the ecclesial heritage of their birth for the traditions of a religious congregation, an ecclesial reality far more limited and less important in every way. Kerame's literary output was extremely slim, but his thought was extraordinarily visionary, and his influence great and lasting.[28]

## 7. The Melkite Catholic Church at Vatican II (1962-1965)

This brings us to Vatican II. *L'Eglise Grecque Melkite au Concile (The Melkite Greek Church at the Council)* was the title of a book first published in French in 1967.[29] Then as now, thirty-four years later, it would be difficult to imagine a book of this title about the role

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demands of my rite and those of the order, the rite must always take precedence. Fortunately, the problem has never arisen for me in any substantive way, for times have changed since the early 1940's. The December 25, 1950, letter and decree of the Jesuit General John Baptist Janssens. *Pro ramo orientali Societatis Iesu* (*Acta Romana Societatis Iesu* XI, 887-891) can be considered the "Magna Carta" of Eastern-rite Jesuits. It legislates explicitly that they are to live their rite in its integrity, and elements of the Jesuit Institute that by nature pertain to the Latin Rite do not apply to them. Kerame, whose love for the Society of Jesus never lessened in spite of the painful choice he was forced to make, not only lived long enough to witness this greater openness in the Catholic Church and the Jesuit order; his life and thought prepared for it.

[28] Among his writings one can cite: *Notre vocation et notre âme de chrétiens d'Orient* (Cairo: al-Maaref Press 1954); *Constantinople et le Grand Schisme chrétien* (Cairo 1954); *Unionisme, uniatisme, arabisme chrétien* (Bulletin d'orientations œcuméniques. Beyrouth 1957); *Le prochain Concile œcumenique. Catholiques et Orthodoxes bientôt réunit?* (Bulletin d'orientations œcuméniques 23-24, Beyrouth 1959), translated as "The Ecumenical Council: are Catholics and Orthodox soon to be reunited?", in P. Sherwood (ed.), *The Unity of the Churches of God* (Baltimore/Dublin: Helicon 1963) 34-83.

[29] *L'Eglise Grecque Melkite au Concile. Discours et notes du Patriarche Maximos IV et des Prélats de son Eglise au concile œcuménique Vatican II* (Beyrouth: Dar Al-Kalima 1967). An English translation, in preparation in the USA for over a decade, has yet to appear. The most recent study on the Melkites at Vatican II is Gaby Hachem "Primauté et œcuménisme chez les Melkites catholiques à Vatican II," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 93 (1998) 398-441.

played by any other Eastern Catholic Church at Vatican II. At that time no other Eastern Church in communion with Rome had as yet played any significantly "Eastern" leadership role in the wider Catholic Church. In the case of the Ukrainian and Romanian Greek-Catholic Churches, this was prevented by Communist persecution. In the case of other Churches, their insignificant numbers, the vagaries of their history, or the mediocrity of their leadership, rendered any such corporate role unlikely, though outstanding individual bishops from these Churches, such as Ignatius Ziade, Maronite Archbishop of Beirut, and Isaac Ghattas, Coptic Catholic Bishop of Luxor-Thebes, gave eloquent voice, and in a fully Eastern spirit, to the aspirations of these Churches too. But if size, persecution, or other factors explain why other Churches played no notable corporate role at Vatican II, this does not explain why the Melkite Church did.

To what, then, can one attribute the remarkable *essor* of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church at the Council? In his "Preface" to the 1967 French edition of the above-mentioned volume, *L'Eglise Grecque Melkite au Concile,* Patriarch Maximos IV attributes it, first, to the fact that the Catholic Melkites had never lost contact with their Orthodox roots and thus never became closed in on themselves. This allowed them to discern what is essential (i.e., *Catholic*) from what is contingent (i.e., *Latin*) in Catholicism, enabling them at Vatican II to witness to a *pensée complémentaire*, another, complementary way of seeing things, as a counterbalance to Latin Catholic unilateralism. Maximos IV also offers a second reason, the synodal cohesion of the Melkite hierarchy – at that time the patriarch with sixteen bishops and four general religious superiors – in its preconciliar discussions preparatory to Vatican II, and the consequent unity of its voice at the Council. We see this exemplary Eastern conciliarity from the start, in the letter of August 29, 1959, accompanying the first Melkite response to the Preparatory Commission of the Council: "We have believed it more useful to give our proposals together, in common..."[30] This was collegiality *ante factum*,

[30] Cited in "Vatican II: 25 ans après." *Le Lien* 55 nos. 1-2 (janvier-avril 1990) 37.

long before the later work of the Council had made this ecclesiology common coin.

With the advantages of hindsight, I would suggest three further qualities that facilitated Melkite leadership at Vatican II: 1) *education*; 2) *courageous, intelligent, innovative leadership*; 3) *imaginative and universal vision*. None of these can be considered traditional clerical virtues. By training and tradition, the clergy are more inclined to conservatism, obedience, regularity, stability, the attributes of any social organization where too much imagination is a liability, and routine is prized above initiative.

First, *education*. Eastern Catholicism is often criticized, sometimes exaggeratedly, for its "Westernization," an accusation, every honest person must admit, that contains some truth. This Westernization has brought with it obvious disadvantages, specifically a certain erosion of the Eastern heritage.

But every coin has two sides, and contact with the "West" has also had decided advantages. It is "Western" culture that invented "modernity" with its traditional values of pluralism, civility, respect for individuals and their rights, and an intellectual, artistic and cultural life that strives to be free of outside restraint or manipulation, and seeks to be objective, even-handed, and fair. These ideals of intellectual honesty, coherence, consistency, self-criticism, objectivity, fairness, dialogue; moderation and courtesy of tone and language even when in disagreement; and a reciprocity which, eschewing all "double-standard" criticism, applies the same criteria and standards of judgment to one's interlocutor's thought and actions that one applies to one's own; lead to cultural openness, and the desire to know the other.

So if a dose of the East can be good medicine for the West, something that the Catholic West has long accepted without demur, the West can also be good medicine indeed for the East, and the Melkite bishops at Vatican II, imbued with what was best in the superb postwar French Catholic intellectual tradition, speaking French fluently and thus accessible to broad personal contacts and dialogue, were enabled to understand and appreciate what was happening in the Catholic Church in a way they never could have done with a simplistic caricature-image and paranoid rejection of the West. That is why the Melkites at Vatican

II were repeatedly called a "bridge" between East and West: they knew both sides of the river and could mediate between them.[31]

Of the other qualities, *courageous, intelligent, innovative leadership* was shared by all the great progressive leaders of Vatican II. Peculiar to the Melkites, however, was the disproportion between their conciliar leadership and their numbers – one patriarch and a mere sixteen bishops awash in a Latin sea!

Equally unique to the Melkite Council Fathers as a group was the truly remarkable *imaginative and universal vision* they showed. In addition to being among the first to state categorically that the Council should avoid definitions and condemnations, the list of important items of general import on the Vatican II and postconciliar agenda that the Melkite bishops were the first to propose is simply astonishing: the vernacular, eucharistic concelebration and communion under both species in the Latin liturgy; the permanent diaconate; the establishment of what ultimately became the Synod of Bishops held periodically in Rome, as well as the Secretariat (now Pontifical Council) for Christian Unity; new attitudes and a less offensive ecumenical vocabulary for dealing with non-Catholic Christians, especially with the Orthodox Churches; the recognition and acceptance of Eastern Catholic commu-

[31] Those who would deny this should remember that it is a question here of the lived experience of the Catholic Church. Catholics did experience the Melkites to be a bridge that allowed the voice of the East to be heard at the Council sessions, and no one but Catholics have the right to judge their own experience. Whether Eastern Catholics at Vatican II were also a bridge between Orthodoxy and Rome is something we must let the Orthodox decide. But no less an authoritative Orthodox exponent than Professor Alivizatos of Athens wrote in 1963 of the "persuasive way in which he [Maximos IV] expounded the Eastern point of view" at Vatican II (Inglessis, *Maximos IV*, note 23 above, 74). These sentiments were echoed by the highest Orthodox hierarch, Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, when Maximos IV and he met for the first time, on January 5, 1964, during Pope Paul VI's pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In reply to Maximos' affirmation that he was trying to represent the authentic Eastern tradition at Vatcan II, Athenagoras replied, "You represent all of us. Thank you! (Vous nous répresentez tous; merci!: *ibid.* 71)." And at their meeting in Constantinople on June 2 of the same year, Athenagoras referred to Maximos as a gift of God to His Church (*ibid.* 72-73).

nities for what they are, "Churches," not just different "rites," an ecclesiology ultimately canonized by the Council documents concerning the Eastern Catholic Churches.[32]

But for the Melkites, perhaps none of the above qualities would have "worked" without the audacious yet unfailingly courteous courage of Maximos IV and his close collaborators. For Maximos IV did not stand alone at Vatican II. He was the first to acknowledge the synodal, collegial nature of the Melkite enterprise, and other major Melkite Council figures like Archbishops Elias Zoghby, Neophytos Edelby, Peter Medawar, and Joseph Tawil, also made the trenchant and eloquent "voice of the East" heard at Vatican II.

But when all is said and done, our basic point of reference will always remain the great figure of Patriarch Maximos IV and the rôle he played in his own and the broader Church during the twenty critical years (Oct. 30, 1947-Nov. 5, 1967) of his historic patriarchate. Among the dozen or so most quoted Council Fathers in the published histories of Vatican II, he gave from the start a hitherto unimaginable importance to the Eastern Catholic minority at the Council by the content and élan of his interventions.[33]

At the First Session of the Council, Maximos' electrifying opening speech on October 23, 1962, set the tone for the Melkite onslought on the one-sided, Latin vision of the Church. He refused to speak in Latin, the language of the Latin Church, but not, he insisted, of the whole Catholic Church nor of his particular Church. He refused to follow protocol and address "their Eminences," the cardinals, before "their Beatitudes," the Eastern Catholic patriarchs, for in his and any sane ecclesiology patriarchs, the heads of local Churches, did not take second place to cardinals, who are but second-rank dignitaries of one

[32] See R.F. Taft, "Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*)," in: *Modern Catholicism, Vatican II and After*, ed. Adrian Hastings (London: SPCK/New York: Oxford University Press 1991) 135-140, esp. 135-36.

[33] See for example X. Rynne, *Letters from Vatican City* (London: Faber & Faber 1963) 26, 85.

such communion, the Latin Church. He also urged the West to allow the vernacular in the liturgy, following the lead of the East, "where every language is, in effect, liturgical." And he concluded, in true Eastern Christian synodal fashion, that the matter at any rate should be left to the local Churches to decide.[34] All this in his first intervention at the First Session! No wonder numerous Council Fathers, overcoming their initial surprise, hastened to congratulate him for his speech. And no wonder it hit the news. That was a language even journalists, impervious to the torturously endless periods of Vatican clericalese, could understand. Maximos spoke simply, clearly, directly – and he spoke not in Latin but in French.

Has postconciliar Eastern Catholic thought lived up to its promise at Vatican II? Has any of us? Ideals always have a headstart on reality. That is why we call them ideals, something not yet fully attained, that towards which we strive. But the leaven was planted, and since Vatican II the message has spread bit by bit throughout the Eastern Catholic world, and with it have come many small but unmistakeable signs of renewal.

## 8. Catholic Intellectual Commitment to the Christian East: The Pontificio Istituto Orientale (PIO) and Other Institutions

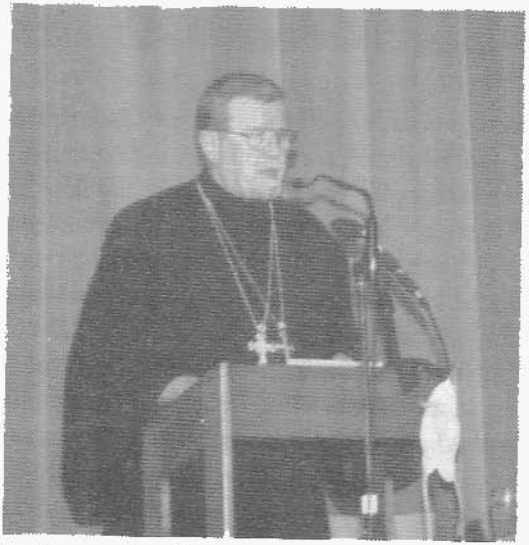
More hidden and indirect, doubtless, but nonetheless real in laying the groundwork for the impact the Melkites made at Vatican II, and for the still ongoing postconciliar fallout, was the massive commitment to the Christian East of the Catholic Church in our century. It is impossible to mention every individual, group, institution, or publication. I have already spoken of the Benedictines of Amay/Chevetogne. Pride of place would also have to be given to the great intellectual work of the Assumptionist Byzantinists, and the Jesuits have also done their part, along with so many Catholic academic institutions and the scholarly establishment in the much berated "secularized West," which have for generations labored to instill the values of fairness, objectivity,

[34] *Ibid.* 102-5.

dialogue, courtesy and common human decency in their study of the non-Catholic East.

This has led to openness and the desire to know the other, rather than the ghetto-like insularity and smug self-satisfaction of those who think they have nothing to learn from other traditions. Witness the endless list of "Western" studies and publications on the Christian East, its Fathers, its spirituality, its liturgy, its monasticism, its theology, its history. Witness the huge list of serious journals founded and published under Catholic auspices that deal with the culture of the Christian East objectively, sympathetically, even with admiration and love. A short list, off the top of my head, would include, in alphabetical order: *Bolletino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata, Christian Orient, Der christliche Osten, Diakonia, Eastern Churches Journal, Eastern Churches Quarterly, Eastern Churches Review, Echos d'orient, Ephrem's Theological Journal, The Harp, Het christelijk oosten, Irénikon, Istina, Le Lien, Logos, Le Muséon, Nicolaus, Oriens Christianus, Orientalia Christiana Periodica, Oriente cristiano, L'Orient syrien, Ostkirchliche Studien, Pokrof, Parole de l'Orient, Proche-orient chrétien, Revue de l'orient chrétien, Revue des études byzantines; Roma e l'oriente, Russia cristiana = L'altra Europa = La nuova Europa, Stoudion, Tanima...*[35]

[35] In the light of such a list one can perhaps understand the perplexity of poor benighted "Westerners," accustomed to dealing with facts, at the following opening sentence of a recent article by two Serbian Orthodox writers: "In the Western literature and periodicals there is an inadmissable small number of articles, studies and books dealing with either Orthodoxy in general or the Serbian Orthodoxy and the Serbian Orthodox Church in particular." D.B. Djordjevic and B. Djurovic, "Secularization and Orthodoxy: The Case of the Serbians," *Orthodoxes Forum* 7 (1993) 215. Incidentally, the journal containing the complaint is published in Munich with "Western" funds. How many Orthodox journals are dedicated to an open, sympathetic, objective study of the Christian West? How many books does one find by Orthodox authors (excluding those living in the Western diaspora) that treat the Catholic Church and its history and tradition with objectivity, fairness, respect, and Christian love? I am of course perfectly aware that the Catholic world has greater resources available for this sort of work. But in the light of the above list of publications, we might at least be spared this gross distortion of the facts.



*Archimandrite Robert Taft delivers his lecture*

Among still operative Catholic academic institutions, pride of place must be accorded, I believe, to the role of my own Pontifical Oriental Institute in Eastern Catholic theological renewal. Institute alumni were engaged from the start in the foundation and formative years of the Secretariat, later Pontifical Council, for Christian Unity. The role of PIO professors and alumni in Eastern Catholic liturgical renewal is well-known.[36] The study of Eastern Spirituality as an academic discipline was invented at the PIO. More important for the theological enterprise is how this immersion in the sources of Eastern liturgy and spirituality, and in the beginnings of Catholic ecumenism, served as a leaven to transform the study of Eastern Theology. Of course Eastern Theology had been taught at PIO from the start. But apart from patristics, which was considered a distinct discipline, it was largely a study of "Orthodox theology" considered as something "non-Catholic," and therefore to be studied as the theology of someone else; studied, to

[36] See Gabriele Winkler, "The Achievements of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in the Study of Oriental Liturgiology," in Taft-Dugan, *Il 75° anniversario del Pontificio Istituto Orientale* (note 12 above) 115-141.

be sure, fairly, from an objective, historico-critical point of view; but studied the way one is supposed to drive on the German Autobahn, "mit Abstand," from a detached and uninvolved, if not apologetic and even polemic, point of view, as a part of apologetics.

That has now totally changed. Eastern theology is not just studied. It is done from within, with sympathy and love. The point of departure, the perspective, the method, and above all the mentality, have completely changed. *Eastern theology is no longer an object, someone else's theology, that one studies, but the subject of creation, a way of theology that engages one creatively and personally, in one's life as well as in one's thought.*[37]

Lack of time forces us to pass over many other new academic institions – the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies in Ottowa, 1990; The Centre Emmaüs in Montréal; the Centre de Documentation et de rechereches Arabes Chrétiennes at the Jesuit Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut; the Maronite Catholic Church's Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik at Jounieh north of Beirut... At the Catholic University of Eichstätt in Germany, the Diocese of Eichstätt recently founded the "Collegium Orientale," an initiative, one hopes, that will lead to further developments in Eastern Catholic theological education at that university. The presence there of students from *all the Eastern traditions, not just the Byzantine,* leads directly to my next point, the characteristics of Eastern Catholic theology.

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[37] On the history of theology at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, see E.G. Farrugia, "The Theological Profile of the Pontifical Oriental Institute," in id. (ed.), *The Pontifical Oriental Institute: the First Seventy-Five Years* (note 12 above), 9-47; id., "La dogmatica al PIO," in *Il 75° anniversario del Pontificio Istituto Orientale* (note 12 above) 95-113; E.G. Farrugia, "The Rise of Modern Eastern Theology," *Ephrem's Theological Journal* 1/1-2 (October 1997) 5-16, and, in Bulgarian and at greater length: id., "Теология на символа," in R.F. Taft and Edward Farrugia, S.J., Теология на литургията и теология на символа *[The Theology of the Liturgy and the Theology of Symbol]*, ed. with an introduction by Gheorghi Minčev, trans. Elena Velkovska and Elizaveta Musakova (Sofia: Нов Български университет - Rome: Папски Институт за Востока 1992) 97-199.

## III. CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC EASTERN THEOLOGY

Thus far we have been speaking largely of the Byzantines, and legitimately so, because Eastern Catholic spiritual, liturgical, and theological renewal began largely with them. But first among the characteristics of Eastern Catholic theology, we must emphasize that

**1.** *Eastern Catholic theology is not just Byzantine Catholic* theology. There has also been a remarkable renewal in the non-Byzantine Catholic Eastern Traditions. This is a major point. By and large today, the only Orthodox theology worth the name is Byzantine Orthodox theology. The state to which the communities Adrian Fortescue (1874-1923) called "the lesser Eastern Churches"[38] have been reduced by persecution (or in the case of the Armenians, outright genocide) and by Islamic, Russian, then Soviet domination, has, with few exceptions, by and large precluded the development in modern times of any intellectually productive modern theological tradition. In no way do I mean to imply that these Churches have no theology. They have their age-old traditional theology, rooted in their liturgy, their synods, their Fathers, their monasticism, their spirituality. In the case of the Syrians and Armenians, this theology is an astonishingly rich one. But the struggle for physical survival has, with some notable exceptions, especially in the diaspora, largely precluded the serenity needed for modern scientific theological scholarship and speculation to build on and develop this heritage.

**2.** Secondly, *Eastern Catholic theology is a theology in reaction.* Karl Barth once said that the theologian must have the Bible in one hand and the daily newspaper in the other. What he meant was that any true existential theology exists at the intersection of God's eternal Revelation and the evolving day-to-day realities of human history. So like any true theology, Eastern Catholic theology is a theology in reaction to the world-situation in which it finds itself. Traditionally, that

[38] A. Fortescue, *The Lesser Eastern Churches* (London: Catholic Truth Society 1913, reprint AMS Press NY 1972).

situation has been one of enemies right and left: on one side the "*praestantia ritus Latini*" of Benedict XIV's constitution *Etsi pastoralis* of May 26, 1742,[39] apparently said without intended irony in those days when Latin ecclesiastical arrogance came combined with a healthier dose of ingenuousness than we would tolerate today; on the other side we have the Orthodox rejection and systematic calumniation of "Uniatism";[40] a status of rejection by both sides of the East-West divide that is the source of ongoing reflection.[41] Very few besides the Catholics are doing this reflection, since the Crusades and "Uniatism" have hitherto rendered impossible for the Orthodox any objective history of their relations with the West.

**3.** *Eastern Catholic Theology is not made but in the making.* This characteristic derives directly from the situation just described. Eastern Catholic theology is a theology *in via*, a theology of Eastern Catholics in the process of recuperating and repossessing, with the help of both East and West, their ancestral tradition. Still tentative and unsure of itself, it is a theology largely without pretense. Like Anglo-Catholic Anglicans vis-à-vis Rome, Eastern Catholic theology keeps one eye over its shoulder at the "other," the Orthodox. This distinguishes it radically from the self-satisfied isolationism so characteristic of certain strains in contemporary Orthodox theology. I see this process as alive, exciting, dynamic, full of hope.

4. *Eastern Catholic Theology is self-conscious.* Like Orthodox theology, Eastern Catholic theology is self-conscious in ways the West, complacent in its size and strength, never needs to be. But it is not xenophobic or paranoid, unlike much in modern Orthodox theology.[42]

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[39] See Croce (note 7 above) I, 13-15, note 60.

[40] See R.F. Taft, "Reflections on 'Uniatism'." *Eastern Churches Journal* Volume 7 Number 1 (Spring 2000) 33-72.

[41] E.g., Melkite Catholic Archbishop Elias Zoghby, *We are all schismatics* (Newton MA 1996); M. Pelishka, "From Easternization to Inculturation: Re-interpreting the Mission of the Eastern Catholic Churches." *Worship* 71 (1997) 317-335.

[42] For entertaining if disconcerting reading, just dip into Yanni Spiteris, *La teologia*

On the contrary, Eastern Catholic theology is open to the modern West, which it does not reject, and whose objectivity and fairness it embraces.

**5.** *Eastern Catholic Theology is open and unashamedly eclectic.* Because of the Western influence – indeed, dominance would not be too strong a term – it has long been subjected to, Eastern Catholic theology is also eclectic in ways that would be an abomination to most Orthodox thinkers. A quintessential representative of this spirit is the popular Russian Catholic spiritual writer Catherine de Hueck Doherty.[43] Her spiritual eclecticism joining East and West, the sort of thing that sends tremors through those so fixated in their pretense to the exclusivity of their tradition, was so vitally contemporary! This Western influence, if often deleterious, has also had the positive effect noted in the following characteristic.

**6.** *Eastern Catholic theology rejects the pseudo-antitheses between Eastern and Western thought, and the false polarization consequent to it.* As that versatile polymath Louis Bouyer, equally at ease in the theological and spiritual traditions of both East and West, was fond of asking those who liked to tout the famous Western spiritual classic, Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*, as propagating a "typically Western" spirituality inimical to the spirit of the Christian East, how it was, then, that Kempis went through fifteen editions in Russian?[44] And then there is that "Eastern spiritual classic," the *Unseen*

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ortodossa neo-greca (Collani di studi religiosi, Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane 1992). This book should be translated into other languages, if only to make widely known what some Orthodox theologians really think and say.

[43] See the recent biography Lorene Hanley Duquin, *They Called Her the Baroness. The Life of Catherine de Hueck Doherty* (New York: Alba House 1995), and my review of it in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 62 (1996) 517-519.

[44] L. Bouyer, "Les catholiques occidentaux et la liturgie byzantine," *Dieu vivant* 21 (1951-52) 17-31. On the same question, see the more thorough discussion and references in G. Podskalsky, "Entwicklungslinien des griechisch-byzantinischen theologischen Denkens (bis zum Ende der Turkokratie)," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 47 (1998) 34-43, esp. 35-36. On the Orthodox tendency to overdo the East-West distinction/opposition, see id., "Ostkirchliche Theologie in der Weltkirche: Alternative (Antithese), Annex oder Allheilmittel?" in R.F. Taft (ed.), *The*

*Warfare* of Nikodemos the Hagiorite (1748-1809), the strikingly erudite Athonite monk who produced both the *Philokalia* and the *Pedalion*, to this day the classic standard anthologies of Orthodox spirituality and canon law. Since we now know that Nikodemos' *Unseen Warfare*, published in Venice in 1796, is no more than a slightly abridged translation, with adaptations and additional notes, of the Neapolitan Barnabite Lorenzo Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat (Combattimento spirituale)*, one can understand the scathing derision serious scholars reserve for those commentators who have put forward Nikodemos' work as a pure expression of Eastern Orthodox spirituality in contrast to that of the benighted West![45]

**7.** *Eastern Catholic theology is a theology rooted in the Fathers of the Church, and especially in the lived experience of the Church's liturgy and the spirituality that flows from it.* This distinguishes it sharply from typically Western theology. Professional liturgical scholars and theologians apart, when does one ever hear a Western theologian citing the liturgy? From this flows the next characteristic.

**8.** *Eastern Catholic Theology forms an integrated whole.* Like Orthodox theology, it is an integral (though not closed) world in which liturgy, spirituality, art, and architecture comprise an integrated, harmonious whole in a way unthinkable in the West, with its clash of competing methodologies and philosophies. Like the difference between a gothic cathedral and a small, fully decorated Middle-Byzantine

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Christian East. Its Institutions & its Thought. A Critical Reflection. Papers of the International Scholarly Congress for the 75th Anniversary of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 30 May – 5 June 1993 (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 251, Rome 1996) 531-541; also D. Wendebourg, "'Pseudomorphosis' – ein theologisches Urteil des Axiom der kirchen- und theologiegeschichtlichen Forschung," *ibid.* 565-589 = eadem, "'Pseudomorphosis:' A Theological Judgement as an Axiom for Research in the History of Church and Theology," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42 (1997) 321-342.

[45] L. Bouyer, *Orthodox Spirituality and Protestant and Anglican Spirituality = A History of Christian Spirituality*, III (A Crossroad Book, New York: The Seabury Press 1969) 39-44; G. Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der Türkenherrshcaft 1453-1821* (München: C.H. Beck 1988) 380-81.

church, Eastern Catholic theology is an enclosed world, one that can be taken in at a glance, but also one in which every tessera is an essential piece of the mosaic. Nothing could be more totally different from it than the pick-and-choose, à la carte, self-service smorgasbord approach to religion fast becoming widespread in the West. As a result of this integral nature, Eastern Catholic theology has not just a different liturgy and liturgical iconography and monasticism. It also has a different pneumatology, a different liturgical and spiritual theology, a different theological anthropology, a different Mariology, a different feminism...

**9.** *Eastern Catholic theology is ecumenical.* From the very start, the Eastern Catholic renewal has sought to build bridges to Orthodoxy[46] despite – with some notable exceptions – the latter's systematic rejection of the outstretched hand. In my writings I have already defined elsewhere what ecumenical theology means.[47] Ecumenical scholarship is not content with the purely natural virtues of honesty and fairness, virtues one should be able to expect from any true scholar. Ecumenical scholarship takes things a long step further. Ecumenical scholarship is a new and specifically Christian way of studying Christian tradition in order to reconcile and unite, rather than to confute and dominate. Its deliberate intention is to emphasize the common tradition underlying differences which, though real, can be the accidental product of history, culture, language, rather than essential differences in the doctrine of the faith. Of course to remain scholarly, this effort must be carried out realistically, without in any way glossing over real differences, which still remain for the future to resolve.

[46] See Inglessis, *Maximos IV* (note 23 above) and Korolevsky, *Metropolitan Andrew* (note 15 above) passim.

[47] R.F. Taft, "Ecumenical Scholarship and the Catholic-Orthodox Epiclesis Dispute," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 45 (1996) 201-226, here 202-4.

## IV. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What else that future will offer I leave to the prophets, though there can be little doubt that it will be in the hands of those who embrace the "Western" values of balance, fairness, objectivity, openness, and historical truth. The ecumenical "dialogue of love," which seeks to stress that which unites rather than that which divides, is an ideal to be striven for but not yet achieved.

For the Eastern Churches will survive not as hermetically sealed protectorates, Indian reservations or mission reductions in the jungle, like those in the film "Mission," interesting experiments ultimately doomed to extermination by outside forces. The Eastern Churches must be helped to survive not in the wilderness but in the marketplace of the City. And in this, both the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches are in the same boat. It is my own view that despite all the paeons of praise we heap – and rightly – on the riches and splendor of the Eastern Christian traditions, Eastern Christianity is in deep trouble almost everywhere, though only a few of its wiser spokesmen have the sense to realize it. The Eastern Churches are facing serious erosion through secularism even in traditional societies like Greece. These Churches, by and large, have shown themselves clearly inadequate to meet the task of confronting the modern world.

This situation is fraught with danger. The growing number of educated Eastern Christian clergy and laity, both Catholic and Orthodox, who are not and will not be spiritually satisfied with what they are getting from an inadequate leadership, is cause for alarm. The East has a reputation for transcendance and spirituality, but apart from monastic life – and then only in some monasteries – I think that reputation is largely undeserved. The lack of preaching, religious instruction, and pastoral care; the superficiality of religious practice; the widespread lack of interiority; are in fact appalling.

That is perfectly clear to anyone who has read some of the young, activist Orthodox priests in post-Communist Russia, or diaspora writers like the late Alexander Schmemann, with a sense of objective reality and the capacity for self-criticism, instead of the "scapegoat" approach (whatever is wrong must be someone else's fault) pervasive among the more conservative and fundamentalist clergy and laity. It is

my own personal view that Eastern Christianity finds itself in a profound crisis from which it has not yet found the means to extricate itself, and even more preoccupying is the refusal of so many to recognize this situation, or their attempts to distract attention from it by lashing out, with a chauvinistic xenophobia altogether too traditional in Russian, Greek, or Balkan history, against enemies, real or imagined, who are presumed culpable for whatever is wrong.

Eastern Christianity has not yet learned to face modernity, a lesson learned in the West only with great pain and many failures. But in addition to the failures, important lessons have been learned, important values acquired, hopefully with some permanence. Despite fearful reactions and attempts to turn back the clock by those without the intellectual equipment to face and process change, efforts which surely will not succeed, since Vatican II Catholics have succeeded in facing the modern world. And for the most part they have done so, I believe, with courage, honesty, integrity and imagination.

That the Eastern Churches are beginning only now to face the problems of modernity is largely the fault of the circumstances in which these Churches have been forced to live, either as minority confessions in an at-best tolerant Islamic world, or for the past three generations under Communist persecution.

It would be wrong, however, to think that Eastern Christianity does not have within itself the spiritual means to cope with modernity. We see this in Eastern liturgy – and liturgy is simply the mirror to Eastern Christianity's inner world – which shows that the Churches have preserved from the storehouse of its past, elements that are not only desperately needed but also of great appeal to modern men and women. An attachment and profound rootedness in what is best in its own past, a deeply reverential spirit, a sense of the utter transcendence and holiness of God, a high Christology, the only truly integral and effective pneumatology in Christian history, an emphasis on the local Church and the consequent synodal or sobornal structure of church koinonia and governance.

But the East also needs the more typically "Western" virtues of flexibility, the ability to cope with change as a law of our modern culture, objectivity, openness, fairness, self-criticism, and a sense of the

unity of modern global culture in which no one is or can remain an island. If Christianity is to survive as a viable lifestyle attractive to modern men and women, it will not be as an obscurantist, anti-intellectual culture of folklore and ritualism, sustained by the rejection of modernity and change.

The choice is there for those able to make it. Pope John Paul II's repeated attempts to reach out in reverential respect and love to our Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Sister Churches,[48] and the highly successful meetings of the bishops and religious superiors of the Eastern Catholic Churches of Europe, organized by the Vatican Congregation for the Oriental Churches at Nyíregyháza in Eastern Hungary, June 30-July 6, 1997, and then of North and South America and Oceania at Boston, November 7-12, 1999, on both of which occasions the firm will toward renewal and restoration of the Eastern heritage was once again affirmed,[49] has made it clear that negativity is, for Catholics at least, not the voice of the future. Eastern Catholics now see clearly that they must continue their pilgrimage toward renewal with the help of those of good will, regardless of what others think or say. We Eastern

[48] See *Ecumenical Documents of 1995. Orientale Lumen, Ut Unum Sint, Addresses in Rome* (Fairfax, VA: Eastern Christian Publications 1996).

[49] See the Allocution of Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, then Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Oriental Churches, and the Final Document of the meeting, in *L'Osservatore romano* for July 13, 1997, pp. 4-5. The author of this paper was summoned by Cardinal Silvestrini to participate in both these meetings, where he gave a paper at the first on "Liturgy as an Expression of Church Identity," delivered and published in Italian as "Liturgia come espressione di identità ecclesiale," in: Congregione per le Chiese Orientali, *L'identità delle Chiese Orientali Cattoliche.* Atti dell'incontro di studi dei Vescovi e dei Superiori Maggiori delle Chiese Orientali Cattoliche d'Europa, Nyíregyháza (Ungheria) 30 giugno - 6 luglio 1997 (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1999) 119-136. It has also appeared in English translation: "Liturgy as Expression of Church Identity," *Folia Athanasiana* 1 (Nyíregyháza, Hungary, 1999) 29-45; and, in summary form, in "Liturgy as the Expression of the Identity of the Church," *Eastern Churches Journal* Volume 6 Number 1 (Spring 1999) 30-35; and at the second: "The Liturgy in the Life of the Church," *Eastern Churches Journal* Volume 7 Number 2 (Summer 2000) 65-106.

Catholics would prefer to proceed hand in hand with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. But let no one doubt for a minute that with them or without them – and the choice is theirs – we shall stay the course, confident that God is with us. For that is the mandate we have received from our Catholic Church, and that, under God, is the positive voice of encouragement and hope to which we must attend.



*The audience at the lecture included Bishop Basil Schott of Parma (first row, far left) and Metropolitan Nicholas of Amissos (first row, second from the left)*