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Patriarch Visits Holy Land, Meets Leaders

From OPS-Syndesmos, Associated Press and other reports

JERUSALEM — Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, spiritual leader of the world's 250 million Orthodox Christians, made his first official visit to Jerusalem and the Holy Land on May 9-15 and met with top Israeli and Palestinian officials.

He was met at the Jaffa Gate entrance to Jerusalem's walled Old City by 50 Orthodox priests and hundreds of believers who laid flowers in his path as a sign of love and respect, according to reports.

Emerging from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Patriarch Bartholomew said he prayed for peace everywhere, "but especially here because the very message of peace has been brought first of all here to this Holy Land."

He was accompanied on his week-long visit by Orthodox Metropolitans Germanos of Traianoupolis, Panteleimon of Belgium, Meliton of Philadelphia and Philippos of Tyanon, by cardinals and priests and about two dozen Greek Orthodox Americans selected for the pilgrimage.

During his stay, Patriarch Bartholomew met with PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat in Gaza City.

Arafat is reported to have asked the Patriarch to help him secure Palestinian claims to Jerusalem.

The Ecumenical Patriarch promised Arafat support and prayers "for the total implementation of all U.N. resolutions, especially those related to the Palestinian problem ... The main aim of our visit to you is to tell you that we support you morally," the Patriarch said.

Gaza is home to about 3,000 Orthodox Christians. The strip also has one of the world's oldest Orthodox churches, built in 410 AD.

The Patriarch met with Israeli leaders, including President Weizman and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"The dangers in store from any violation by the agreeing parties are clear to all and must be seriously considered," Patriarch Bartholomew told President Weizman, according to a statement distributed by the Patriarch's aides.

"Blessings (are) borne by honoring agreements and cohesion among peoples," the statement continued, without mentioning specific violations.

Palestinian authorities have protested strongly in recent days against Israeli plans to confiscate 140 acres of mostly Arab-owned land in East Jerusalem to build Israeli homes.

In a later meeting, the Patriarch urged Prime Minister Rabin to move forward with the talks with Palestinian authorities, but Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet said "I think (the

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Commencement tradition

Graduation day at Holy Cross School of Theology and Hellenic College evokes a bit of nostalgia as seminarians and undergraduates pose one last time for their photos. In the background, the site of their spiritual nurturing, Holy Cross Chapel, stands as a beacon and sentinel atop the "holy hill" of the HC/HC campus, bastion of Orthodox Christian education in the world. (Graduation coverage inside)

Orthodox Observer photo

Holy Cross-Hellenic College Holds 53rd Commencement

BROOKLINE, Mass. — Under a brilliant blue New England sky, the 48 graduates of the Class of 1995 embarked on their own bright futures at the 53rd commencement of Holy Cross School of Theology and Hellenic College on May 20.

Of those graduating, 23 received Master of Divinity degrees, five earned a

Master's of Theological Studies, two received Master's of Arts in Church Service, two earned Master's of Theology and 16 received Bachelor of Arts degrees.

The upbeat ceremonies also included conferral of honorary doctorates upon Metropolitan Philip Saliba of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese,

architect William G. Chirgotis, and Angelus Cotsidas, a great benefactor of the school.

Metropolitan Philip, head of the Antiochian Archdiocese since 1966, received part of his theological education at Holy Cross in the mid-1950s. Archbishop Iako-

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Historic First Meeting between Patriarch, Pope

A Visit Filled with Symbolism

(Editor's note: The following Religion News Service story was written Wednesday, June 28, at the start of Patriarch Bartholomew's visit with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican).

By Steven Heilbronner

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VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II does not often share center stage. But in a gesture rich in symbolism, the pontiff will worship side by side on Thursday with Patriarch Bartholomew I, the archbishop of Constantinople and spiritual leader of the Orthodox Churches.

The service celebrating the holiday of Sts. Peter and Paul caps a three-day visit by Bartholomew and his first papal meeting at the Vatican as patriarch. The visit marks only the seventh time that a patriarch has met with a pope since the Great Schism of 1054.

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At his regular Wednesday audience, the 75-year-old pontiff accentuated the importance he places on the meeting, saying of the patriarch, "His visit will be an effective contribution for the progress of ecumenism."

In welcoming the 57-year-old Bartholomew, who was elected patriarch in 1991, the pope said Tuesday: "Your presence is, in my eyes, an expression of rich spiritual patrimony and of the variety of gifts of the Orthodox Church."

The pope added, "It is possible to be certain of our likeness and our willingness to collaborate on the unique gospel."

John Paul has made numerous overtures to the Orthodox and Protestant churches in an attempt to ease tensions that began with the 11th century schism and rose anew with the 16th century Protestant Reformation.

In June, John Paul published an encyclical on ecumenism in which he acknowledged that the church shared blame for previous schisms and embraced measures to enhance unity among the Christian faiths.

But while saying the Roman Catholic Church was willing to continue negotiations over theological differences between Rome and the Protestant and Orthodox churches, the pope also made it clear that essential Catholic teachings will not be compromised and reunion must happen essentially on Vatican terms — meaning that the pope would remain the prime authority on the Christian faith.

The pope made oblique reference to the "primacy," or full authority, of the papacy during the Wednesday audience in St. Peter's Basilica.

While he said that the split with Con-



Dimitri Panagos photo

PATRIARCH AND POPE prepare to exchange the "kiss of peace" during the service at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on June 29.

stantinople had "contributed to the rich spirituality of the Universal Church," he added, "Jesus wanted to institute in the apostles a specific authority, fulfilling the teaching that "who listens to you, listens to me."

He added, "In this perspective, the meaning of what the ministry specifically assigned to Peter and to his successors in well understood. It is fundamental that the word of Christ is entrusted in the tradition of the evangelical."

Bartholomew was visiting Turkey's ambassador to the Holy See when the pope made the remarks. A second pri-

vate meeting between the two leaders was to be held later in the day.

The patriarch's visit to Rome has resembled a diplomatic shuffle, as he met not only with cardinals, bishops and other Vatican officials, but also with ambassadors, seminarians and an Orthodox group from the United States.

But perhaps the richest symbolic event will fall on Thursday, when the pope exercises his primacy as leader of the church by sharing his authority during the annual worship to celebrate the holiday of Sts. Peter and Paul.

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Pope, Patriarch Pledge Unity

VATICAN CITY (OPS-Syndesmos) — Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew met with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican in a historic visit to mark St. Peter's day, June 29.

The spiritual leader of the world's 250 million Orthodox Christians signed a joint statement with the Roman Catholic leader pledging their separated Churches would seek greater unity as the year 2000 approaches.

The statement said improved relations between the world's Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians would help the cause of peace and they also issued an appeal to save the environment and for Eastern European countries to be allowed to join the European Union.

"We believe that more concerted and active cooperation will also facilitate the influence of the Church on peace and justice in the areas of political and ethnic conflict," the statement said, as reported by international press agencies.

The statement was signed after the celebration of a solemn mass presided by the pope in St. Peter's Basilica, and attended by the Orthodox patriarch.

The mass ended a three-day visit to the Vatican by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.

The statement urged "everybody, with the greatest of care, to address the currently critical ecological problem to avoid the grave danger . . . of the perverse use of resources that are gifts of God." It added: "We also pray for the full realization, without delay, of the European Union, hoping that its borders will be enlarged toward the East."

The Catholic-Orthodox split was sealed by mutual excommunications in 1054 following a series of disagreements on fundamental theological issues between the Roman pope and the four other great "Eastern" Christian centers: the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch.

The Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches mutually nullified the excommunications in 1971, seven years after Pope Paul VI and the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras embraced on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives.

In his address to the congregation gathered in the Basilica, Patriarch Bartholomew said the time had come to close the chapter on "many afflictions and just as many humiliations" and called divisions among Christians "one of the beasts" afflicting humanity.

The pope said the start of Christianity's third millennium in the year 2000 represented a "great challenge" for humanity and particularly for Christians.

"We cannot, therefore, remain separated," the pope told the congregation. In

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‘Η ανάγκη συνεργασίας κοινή διαπίστωση τής ιστορικής συνάντησης Πατριάρχη-Πάπα

NEA YOPKH. – Μία Εύρώπη που θα διευρύνει τα σύνορά της προς τις ανατολικές χώρες, και η πεποίθηση ότι μία πιο ενεργητική συνεργασία μεταξύ καθολικών και ορθοδόξων, θα μπορούσε να διευκολύνει την επίδραση της ‘Εκκλησίας για ειρήνη και δικαιοσύνη στην πρώην Γιουγκοσλαβία και στις περιοχές που υπάρχουν πολιτικές και εθνικές συγκρούσεις. Τα παραπάνω, μαζί με την ευχή να προχωρήσουν από κοινού οι δύο εκκλησίες στο προσκύνημα προς τον ‘Ιωβηλαίο του 2000, αποτελούν τα κύρια σημεία τής κοινής δήλωσης που υπέγραψαν ο Πάπας ‘Ιωάννης Παύλος Β’ και ο Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης κ. Βαρθολομαίος μετά το τέλος των συνομιλιών που είχαν τον περασμένο μήνα, στο Βατικανό.

Στην πρώτη του επίσκεψη στην ‘Εκκλησία τής Ρώμης μετά την εκλογή του στο θρόνο τής ‘Ορθοδοξίας, ή Α.Θ.Π. ο Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης είχε σημαντικές συνομιλίες με τον προκαθήμενο τής Ρωμαιοκαθολικής ‘Εκκλησίας.

‘Η επίσκεψη, που έγινε με την ευκαιρία τής θρονικής έορτής τής ‘Εκκλησίας τής Ρώμης, άρχισε στις 27 ‘Ιουνίου με την άφιξη του Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχη στο αεροδρόμιο Φιουμιτσίνο τής Ρώμης. Τον υποδέχτηκαν ο «πρωθυπουργός» του Βατικανού, καρδινάλιος ‘Αντζελο Σοντάνο, ο υπεύθυνος για τον διαχριστιανικό διάλογο καρδινάλιος ‘Εντουαρντ Κάσιγι και άλλα μέλη του ποντιφικού συμβουλίου.

‘Ο Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης και η επίσημη αντιπροσωπεία, που αποτελούνταν από τους Μητροπολίτες ‘Εφέσσου Χρυσόστομο, Φιλαδελφείας Μελίτων, ‘Ιταλίας Σπυρίδωνα, τον ‘Επίσκοπο Διοκλείας Κάλιστο, τον Πρωτοπρεσβύτερο Δανιήλ Νάν και μέλη τής πατριαρχικής αὐλῆς, κατευθύνθηκε προς τον πύργο του ‘Αγίου ‘Ιωάννου, στο Βατικανό, όπου τον Πατριάρχη κ. Βαρθολομαίο υποδέχθηκε επίσημα ο Πάπας ‘Ιωάννης Παύλος.

Την Πέμπτη 29 ‘Ιουνίου, στη Βασιλική του ‘Αγίου Πέτρου, ο Πάπας ‘Ιωάννης Παύλος τέλεσε λειτουργία παρουσία του Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχη κ. Βαρθολομαίου, με αποκορύφωμα την απαγγελία του Συμβόλου τής Πίστεως στα ελληνικά και χωρίς την προσθήκη του «φιλιόκβε», μίας εκ των βασικών αιτιών του σχίσματος του 1054 μ.Χ.

‘Επιστέγασμα επίσης τής επίσκεψης ήταν το κείμενο του κοινού ανακοινωθέντος που συνυπέγραψαν οι δύο πνευματικοί ηγέτες και αναφέρεται στην ανάγκη συνεργασίας για την προώθηση τής ειρήνης.

Οι σχέσεις Καθολικών και ‘Ορθοδόξων γνώρισαν ιδιαίτερα μεγάλα



ΒΑΤΙΚΑΝΟ. – Με τα Εὐαγγέλια ὑψωμένα στα χέρια τους, ο Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης κ. Βαρθολομαίος και ο Πάπας ‘Ιωάννης Παύλος Β’ ἀπαγγέλλουν τὸ Σύμβολο τῆς Πίστεως στὴ Βασιλικὴ τοῦ ‘Αγίου Πέτρου. (Βλέπε καὶ σελίδα 1 καὶ 24) (Φωτ. Δημ. Πανάγου)

‘Εκκλήση στο Βατικανό νὰ ἀποφύγει τὶς προκλήσεις

ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΗ, (ΑΠΕ). – ‘Η Διορθόδοξη ‘Επιτροπή Θεολογικού Διαλόγου ἀπευθύνει ἐκκλήση προς τὴν Ρωμαιοκαθολικὴ ‘Εκκλησία νὰ ἀποφύγει κάθε ἐκδήλωση ἐορτασμοῦ γεγονότων που ἔχουν ἀρνητικὰ φορτίσει τὴ μνήμη τῆς ‘Ορθόδοξης ‘Εκκλησίας.

‘Ανακοινωθέν τῆς ‘Επιτροπῆς που συνήλθε στο Φανάρι, ἐπισημαίνει ἰδιαίτερα τὴν ἐπερχόμενη ἐπέτειο τῶν τετρακοσίων χρόνων ἀπὸ τῆς συγκλήσεως τῆς «ἐνωτικῆς», συνόδου τοῦ Brest Litovsk τὸ 1595-1596.

‘Η Διορθόδοξη ‘Επιτροπή συνεκλήθη στο Φανάρι κατόπιν προσκλήσεως τοῦ Οικουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχη κ. Βαρθολομαίου καὶ ἀξιολόγησε τὴν πορεία τοῦ διαλόγου μετὰ τὴ Ρωμαιοκαθολικὴ ‘Εκκλησία, ὑπὸ τὸ φῶς τῶν νέων προτάσεων τῆς παπικῆς ‘Εγκυκλίου Ut unum sint περὶ τῶν κριτηρίων τοῦ Θεολογικοῦ Διαλόγου μεταξύ τῶν δύο ‘Εκκλησιῶν.

‘Η Διορθόδοξη ‘Επιτροπή, στὴν ὁποία συμμετείχαν ἐκπρόσωποι τῶν ‘Εκκλησιῶν τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, τῆς ‘Αλεξανδρείας, τῆς ‘Αντιοχείας, τῆς Σερβίας, τῆς Ρουμανίας, τῆς Γεωργίας, τῆς ‘Ελλάδας, τῆς ‘Αλβανίας καὶ τῆς Φινλανδίας, ὑπογράμμισε ὅτι τὸ κείμενο τὸ σχετικό μετὰ τὴν Οὐνία, που καταρτίστηκε σὲ προηγούμενη διορθόδοξη συνάντηση στο Βαϊαμαντ τοῦ Λιθάνου, «περιέχει σημαντικὲς προτάσεις γιὰ τὴν ἐπικοινωνιακὴ ἀντιμετώπιση τῶν πιεστικῶν πρακτικῶν προβλημάτων που δημιουργεῖ ἡ Οὐνία».

‘Η Διορθόδοξη ‘Επιτροπή ἐνημερώθηκε ἀπὸ τὸν Οικουμενικὸ Πατρι-

άρχην καὶ γιὰ τὶς συζητήσεις που εἶχε πρόσφατα στο Βατικανό μετὰ τὸν Πάπα ‘Ιωάννη Παῦλο τὸν Β’ καὶ ἀποφάσισε νὰ συνεχισθεῖ ὁ διάλογος μετὰ τὴν Καθολικὴ ‘Εκκλησία μόνο στο θέμα τῆς Οὐνίας. Μόνο μετὰ τὴν ἐκτίμηση τῆς προόδου που θὰ σημειωθεῖ θὰ ἐπανεξετασθεῖ ἡ δυνατότητα διεύρυνσης τῶν θεμάτων τοῦ διαλόγου, ἀναφέρουν πηγὲς τῆς συναντήσεως.

Οἱ ἀποφάσεις αὐτῆς τῆς Διορθόδοξης ‘Επιτροπῆς θὰ μεταφερθοῦν στὴ ρωμαιοκαθολικὴ πλευρά, ἀπὸ τὸν ‘Αρχιεπίσκοπο Αὐστραλίας Στυλιανό, ὁ ὁποῖος καὶ ἐξουσιοδοτήθηκε «νὰ ἐνεργήσει καταλλήλως διὰ τὴν προώθηση τῶν προτάσεων».

‘Απὸ τὴ συνάντηση ἀπουσίαζαν οἱ ‘Εκκλησίες ‘Ιεροσολύμων, Ρωσίας, Βουλγαρίας, Κύπρου, Πολωνίας καὶ Τσεχίας Σλοβακίας «δι’ ἀνεξάρτητους πρὸς τὸ θέμα λόγους», «καίτοι ὀρισμένοι ἐξ αὐτῶν εἶχον ὀρίσει καὶ τοὺς ἐκπροσώπους των», ἀναφέρει τὸ σχετικὸ ἀνακοινωθέν που ἐξεδόθη στο Φανάρι.

‘Η Σύναξη τῶν ‘Ορθοδόξων Πατριαρχῶν που συνεκλήθη στο Φανάρι τὸ Μάρτιο τοῦ 1992, κατήγγειλε τὴν ἐνίσχυση που παρέιχε τὸ Βατικανὸ σὲ ἀποχιεῖς ἀναβίωσης τῶν λεγομένων οὐνιτικῶν ἐκκλησιῶν κυρίως στὴν Οὐκρανία, τὴ Ρωσία καὶ τὴν ἀνατολικὴ Εὐρώπη, καὶ ἀποφάσισε νὰ περιορίσει τὸ θεολογικὸν διάλογο μετὰ μόνο τὸ θέμα τῆς Οὐνίας.

‘Η Οὐνία, ἀπασχόλησε καὶ τὴ συνάντηση που εἶχε στο τέλος τοῦ περασμένου μήνα στο Βατικανὸ ὁ Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης κ. Βαρθολομαίος μετὰ τὸν Πάπα ‘Ιωάννη Παῦλο τὸν Β’.

προβλήματα τὰ τελευταία χρόνια, λόγω τῶν συγκρούσεων που ἀκολούθησαν τὴ διάλυση τῆς Γιουγκοσλαβίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ λόγω τῆς ἐνθάρρυνσης που δόθηκε ἀπὸ τὸ Βατικανὸ σὲ προσπάθειες προσηλυτισμοῦ τῶν πιστῶν τῶν κανονικῶν ‘Ορθοδόξων ‘Εκκλησιῶν τῆς ἀνατολικῆς Εὐρώπης καὶ τῆς ὑπαγωγῆς τους στὴν ἐξουσία τοῦ Πάπα.

Οἱ τιμὲς ὅμως, που ἐπεφύλαξε ὁ Πάπας στὸν πνευματικὸ ἡγέτη ἑκατομμυρίων ‘Ορθοδόξων ἀνὰ τὴν ὑφήλιο, ἔδειξαν τὸ σημαντικό ρόλο που ἀποδίδεται στὴν ‘Ορθόδοξη ‘Εκκλησία ἀπὸ ὄλους, συμπεριλαμβανομένου τοῦ Βατικανοῦ.

‘Ο Ποντίφικας μίλησε με θερμὰ λόγια γιὰ τὸν «ἀγαπητὸ ἀδελφὸ» Πατριάρχη Βαρθολομαίο καὶ χαρακτήρισε τὶς ἐπαφές «πολύτιμη εὐκαιρία γιὰ τὴν προαγωγή τοῦ διαλόγου μεταξύ τῶν δύο ‘Εκκλησιῶν στο δρόμο τῆς ὁρατῆς ἐνότητος τῶν Χριστιανικῶν ‘Εκκλησιῶν».

Στὸ πλαίσιο, ἄλλωστε, αὐτὸ κινήθηκε καὶ ἡ δήλωση τοῦ Οικουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχη ὅτι «αὐτὰ που μᾶς ἐνώνουν εἶναι περισσότερα ἀπὸ αὐτὰ που μᾶς χωρίζουν».

Τὸ θετικὸ κλίμα που ἐπικράτησε κατὰ τὴν ἐπίσκεψη καθὼς καὶ κατὰ τὶς ἐπανελημμένες συναντήσεις τῶν προκαθημένων τῶν δύο ‘Εκκλησιῶν, ὡς καὶ τὸ κοινὸ ἀνακοινωθέν, δικαιολογοῦν τὸ χαρακτηρισμὸ τῆς ἐπίσκεψης ὡς «ἱστορικῆς».

«‘Εχουμε ὑποχρέωση νὰ καθήσουμε στο τραπέζι καὶ νὰ προωθήσουμε τὸν διάλογο. Αὐτὸς εἶναι ὁ μόνος που ὀδηγεῖ στὴν εἰρήνη. ‘Ολοι, ὄχι μόνο ἐμεῖς, ἔχουμε ὑποχρέωση νὰ προχωρήσουμε στὴν ἐνότητα» εἶπε ὁ Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης, ἐνὼ μετὰ τὸ ρεαλισμὸ που τὸν διακρίνει, ὁ Πάπας ἐξέφρασε τὴν ευχὴ «ἡ τρίτη χιλιετηρίδα νὰ βρεῖ τὴν Καθολικὴ καὶ τὴν ‘Ορθόδοξη ‘Εκκλησία ἂν ὄχι ἐνωμένες τουλάχιστον λιγότερο διχασμένες».

Στὰ πλαίσια τῆς ἐπίσκεψής του, ἡ Α.Θ.Π. εἶχε καὶ ἰδιαίτερη συνάντηση μετὰ πολυπληθῆ ὁμάδα ‘Ελληνορθοδόξων τῆς ‘Αμερικῆς που τὸν συνόδευαν στὴν ἐπίσκεψή του στὴν ‘Ιταλία.

Στὴ Βενετία

‘Ο Οικουμενικός Πατριάρχης κ. Βαρθολομαίος ἐπισκέφθηκε καὶ τὴ Βενετία, ἔδρα τῆς ‘Ορθοδόξου ‘Επισκοπῆς, ὅπου τὸν ὑποδέχθηκε ὁ Μητροπολίτης ‘Ιταλίας κ. Σπυρίδων, ὁ ἐκπρόσωπος τοῦ Καρδινάλιου Μάρκο Τσέ, οἱ ἰταλικὲς ‘Αρχές καὶ ὁ πρέσβης τῆς ‘Ελλάδας στο Βατικανὸ Γεώργιος Χριστογιάννης.

Σὲ ὁμιλία του στο πυκνὸ ἐκκλησίασμα τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ‘Αγίου Γεωργίου τῆς Βενετίας, ὁ Παναγιότατος εἶπε ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἐπίσκεψή του στὴν ‘Ιταλία. (Συνέχεια στὴ σελ. 15)

ECUMENICAL



PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW, Pope John Paul II, and Cardinal Angelo Soldano, the Vatican's secretary of state. The two church leaders held three meetings.



HIS ALL HOLINESS met with members of the Vatican's College of Cardinals at a reception.



THE PATRIARCH visited the Gregorian University of Rome, where he did post-graduate study from 1963 to 1968, with Dr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., a classmate who is now vice chancellor of the school. The Patriarch earned his doctorate at the University's Institute of Eastern Studies.

'One of Most Important Ecumenical Encounters in Decades'

By Luigi Sandri
Ecumenical News International

ROME (ENI) — Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I gave a historic blessing and greeting on June 29 in St. Peter's Basilica.

Bartholomew, who is "inter pares" or first among equals of Orthodox leaders, spoke during the gathering of the need for "the primacy of the kenotic ethos (humility) which alone can "restore the unity of (the Christian) faith."

The Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches together include the majority of Christians worldwide.

Church observers described the gathering as "one of the most important ecumenical encounters in decades."

The Pope and the Patriarch were greeted with enthusiastic applause when they arrived at the basilica for a "liturgy of the word" during which both church leaders were seated, significantly, on identical chairs.

After the gospel was read in Latin and in Greek, the Ecumenical Patriarch preached in Italian, saying that "humility and repentance" were the means to overcome the "long-standing division" between the "Church of Constantinople" and the "Church of Rome."

Reminding the congregation that today was the Roman Catholic Church's feast of St. Peter, Patriarch Bartholomew said, "With God's help, today we have reached an apostolic maturity of conscience which impels us to seek not primacy among persons but among the church's ministries of service."

After stressing that "integrity of faith" was linked to true Christianity, the Patriarch said that being faithful to God required "self-criticism" and, to restore the unity of the church, "the primacy of humility." Welcoming "our dear brother from Constantinople," the Pope quoted the words of Christ to St. Peter—"You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church" - saying that the words were "overwhelming" and an "unfathomable mystery."

The Pope also said that within the Roman Catholic-Orthodox commission set up in 1979, the Roman Catholic Church had shown a firm resolution to elucidate the traditional doctrine of the Filioque—referring to the words in the Nicene Creed which have long been a bone of contention between the Western and Eastern Churches. At the end of the gathering the two church leaders exchanged a kiss of peace and then together blessed the congregation.

Rev. Thomas Fitzgerald, executive director of the World Council of Churches' Unit I — Unity and Renewal—and a theologian of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of (North and South) America, a province of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, said that the meeting between the two leaders "comes at a time when relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church are strained on many fronts."

He added that, however, "with the approaching millennium in view, Pope John Paul II has clearly demonstrated in his recent writings a willingness to listen to the Orthodox and to once again enter into a dialogue which looks towards the restoration of full communion between Christian East and West."



DURING HIS time in Rome, Patriarch Bartholomew also visited several local churches, including St. Bartholomew's Roman Catholic Church where he met with many young people and was greeted with warm applause.

Dimitri Panagos photos



EVERYWHERE HE traveled, the Patriarch received an enthusiastic response from the Romans, including this group of Catholic nuns.