

Communiqué

Of the 4th Pre-Conciliar Panorthodox Conference

(Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Chambésy-Geneva, June 6-12, 2009)



The 4th Pre-Conciliar Panorthodox Conference, convened by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with the mutual consent of Their Beatitudes, the Primate of the local Orthodox Churches, as expressed during the Holy Synaxis held at the Phanar from October 10th to 12th, 2008, gathered at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy-Geneva from June 6th to 12th, 2009.

The proceedings of the Conference, which began with a Panorthodox Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Pentecost, were chaired by His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch, with the assistance of the Secretary for the preparation of the Holy and Great Council, His Eminence Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland. The proceedings were attended by representatives of all Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, at the invitation of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

The Primate of the local Orthodox Churches conveyed greetings to the participants of the Conference through messages or else through their representatives. The members of the Conference sent telegrams to all the Primate of the local Churches, requesting their prayers and blessings for their impending task.

The theme of the 4th Pre-Conciliar Panorthodox Conference was, in accordance with the will of the Primate and the representatives of the local Orthodox Churches, as

expressed in the Message of their Holy Synaxis at the Phanar (October, 2008), the discussion of the subject of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Diaspora. The relevant decision regarding the agenda was agreed upon by the Conference at the opening of its proceedings.

The Conference examined the texts prepared by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Committee in its conferences at Chambésy, namely: a) from November 10-17, 1990; and b) from November 7-13, 1993; as well as the document of the Conference of Canon Lawyers held in Chambésy from April 9th to 14th, 1995. These texts, together with the relevant clarifications, supplements, corrections and additions, were unanimously agreed upon.

The Conference expressed the common desire of all Orthodox Churches for a solution to the problem of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Diaspora, in accordance with the ecclesiology, canonical tradition and practice of the Orthodox Church. The Conference decided to establish new Bishops Assemblies in certain regions throughout the world in order to resolve the problem of the Diaspora, namely for the Orthodox faithful that have settled outside the traditional boundaries of the local Orthodox Churches. The Presidents of these Assemblies are the primate hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in that region or, in their absence, the next in order of the Church Diptychs.

The members of these Assemblies include all those recognized by all Orthodox Churches as canonical bishops, who shepherd the existing communities in each region. The mission of the Bishops Assemblies is the proclamation and promotion of the unity of the Orthodox Church, the common pastoral ministry to the Orthodox faithful of the region, as well as their common witness to the world. The decisions of the Bishops

Assemblies are made on the basis of the principle of unanimity of the Churches, which are represented therein by bishops.

The Conference also approved – by means of clarifications, corrections and additions – the draft Regulation of how the Bishops Assemblies would function, whereby the fundamental principles of organization and operation.

The remaining issues of the Holy and Great Council, namely the manner of proclamation of Autocephaly and Autonomy, as well as the order of the Diptychs, will be examined in the following Conferences of Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Committees and will be submitted to the next Pre-Conciliar Panorthodox Conference for approval.

In Chambésy-Geneva, June 12, 2009

The President of the Conference

Metropolitan John of Pergamon