

PEACEMAKING IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The period humanity is now crossing is seen by all as the time faced by an increased threat of life on this planet being annihilated through military action. But this is also the time of incessantly growing consolidation of all peace-loving forces on earth. This latter tendency appears not only as natural, but as having no rational alternative.

The universal aim of preserving international peace unites people often belonging to different social groupings, ideologies and religions having different orientations in peacemaking and resorting to different forms of peace struggle. Besides, at each stage of this consolidation the necessity emerges to correctly determine general principles for, as well as spheres and forms of, peacemaking activity.

For instance, interreligious peacemaking efforts going on for the last thirty years have always been based on the principles of cooperation which do not infringe on religious differences and call religious leaders to work jointly for the benefit of peace without creating any elements of syncretism (His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Report at Conference "Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life From Nuclear Catastrophe", JMP, 1982, 6, p. 7).

At present, antiwar movement increasingly takes on a truly global dimension and embraces all of humanity, while the unification of all peacemaking forces into a united front capable of concerted and responsible action becomes more and more of a reality. Under these conditions it is important to understand what aspects of the peace problem, and what aspects of peacemaking, are specific to certain political or religious groups, and what are universal, in order to involve more widely people having various ranks in society and to achieve more successful peacemaking. The present contribution is dictated by an urge to comprehend more fully these questions.

I The Problem of Peace Within and Outside the Church

1. The standing of the problem of peace in the Church is distinguished by its theological character. In this view, peace is the fruit of the action by the Holy Spirit within the Church and in the faithful's hearts. Christ is the Giver of this peace: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (Jn 14:27). This spiritual peace of Christ is the condition for grace-endowed entrance into the Kingdom of love and eternal life in order to establish a link between man and God. This peace is granted to the repentant and the converted who have forsaken the path of evil and sin, who believe in Christ and follow Him: "Come to Me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mt 11:28-29). The person who has received the peace of Christ finds tranquility and joy which surpass all understanding (Phil 4:7) and indeed Christ Himself, "our peace" (Eph 2:14). Inside the Church peace with others is inseparable from peace between man and God. This is the peace to which God calls us (Mt 5:25, Rom 12:29, Heb 12:14), the fruit of truth (James 3:18), achieved by love (Zach 8:19) and self-sacrifice (Mt 5:40, Lk 6:29-1 Cor 6:7) as well as by praying "in peace", i.e. in peace of the spirit, "for the peace of the world". This prayer expresses the Church's effort to the implementation of Divine economy whose aim is complete transfiguration of creatures into the radiance of the Creator's glory. God calls on the faithful to pursue peace (1 Pet 3:11, 2 Tim 2:22),

to seek everything that serves peace (Rom 14:19), to incline others towards peace (Rom 12:18-2 Thes 3:12) The God of peace (1 Cor 14:33-2 Cor 13:11) grants bliss to peacemakers (Mt 5:9) The lack or absence of internal, spiritual peace goes together with incessant infringements of external peace expressed in enmity, strife and war with all their destructive and tragic consequences

The Church focusses attention first of all on this deepest and essential sphere for peacemaking, striving to eradicate not only the symptoms and destructive sequels of the disease, but also the very root of it, human sinfulness But one may speak of peace in this sense only in terms of theology and the Holy Scripture It is the Church and only the Church as the Body of Christ that is fully the realm for the peace of Christ Such understanding of the peace problem may not be presented outside the Church as the general norm of life and human relations It could be freely taken up by the people placing themselves on Christian positions

But as the problem of peace on earth also exists as a problem not only for the Church and the Christians, but also for the humanity as a whole, under this aspect and in this meaning it should be settled not as just an ecclesiastical and theological problem, but as a general humanistic one which is not dependent upon religious, confessional or other ideological attitudes which are not universally accepted

2 A general humanistic approach to the problem of maintaining and consolidating peace is founded upon the development of principles of humanity on an international scale This is expressed through establishing firm links of mutual respect, openness and trust as well as developing strong multilateral political, economic and cultural relations These humanistic principles which are so dearly cherished by all people striving for peace both in interhuman and international relations, are, according to St Paul, written in the hearts of men (Rom 2:14-15) But sin which goes on depraving human nature counteracts this moral law This is why the necessity exists of constant struggle against destructive action by the forces of evil which usually tend to cover up their aggressive intentions and acts by hypocritical demagoguery in extreme situations shift to an openly cynical stance If during unruffled development of international relations the struggle for peace may be dominated by the efforts to spread humanistic principles, in critical situations the problem of peace becomes properly the problem of preserving peaceful coexistence, i.e. of sticking to the lawful norms in the international sphere and of seeking ways to alleviate political tension

Peacemaking unites in itself all the multiple aspects of human activity which are characterised by their life-affirming orientation Indeed this activity itself emerges as the struggle by the forces of good and life against those of evil and death

This activity is vitally important at all times and under all conditions though it has not always and not universally been acknowledged as such, partly because earlier this question arose mainly in the spiritual sphere A feature of the contemporary period is such an unprecedented increase in potentiality of evil forces within the physical world that now they are capable of engulfing all peoples into the abyss of unparalleled suffering, terror and despair and are now menacing the very terrestrial existence of mankind As it leaves no room for indifference, this threat has determined the widest possible development of such forms of peace struggle, and in such spheres that could be described as generally humanistic At the same time, purely religious forms of peacemaking

do not at all lose their own significance, as they in a mysterious way spread the peace of the spirit into the ~~ecumene~~ and bring the spirit into the humanistic currents. But joint peacemaking activity by Christians and non-Christians could develop mostly on the general humanistic level. It is on this common foundation that they may speak a common language and pose joint political objectives.

2. Struggle for Peace as Opposition to Evil

The task of preserving, consolidating and promoting peace at all levels calls for constant active effort tending at establishing peace as well as at opposing contrary tendencies which are seen as manifestation of evil forces. The problem of the existence of evil and the attitude to be adopted in the face of it is resolved to the fullest possible extent and at the highest level in Christian theology. In practical life this problem emerges in more concrete form and every time it calls for special consideration in function of the real balance between the forces of good and evil and the concrete sphere where their confrontation is taking place. It seems to us that the main stages of this consideration could be as follows:

1 In Church life, the concepts of peace and salvation, life and death appear at their clearest in connection with the reality of the eternal and the absolute which includes the spiritual sphere where the main values of Christian life are rooted and where the struggle for them and against destructive action by the forces of evil goes on.

The answer to the problem of spreading spiritual peace which is an indispensable element of Christian life and indeed of the very essence of grace-endowed life in Christ, has been formulated by the great Russian ascetic St Seraphim of Sarov (+1833): "Acquire the spirit of peace, and thousands shall be saved around you." This spreading of spiritual peace is implemented by the Church under conditions which are far from pacific. Christians do realise that our "adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour" (1 Pet 5:8). But any opposition to evil, implies force, in some cases purely spiritual, in others - physical as well. The fact that the Son of God has trodden down death and hell is an instance of the first, and the expulsion by Him of traders from the Temple, of the latter. It depends on the concrete opponent to be dealt with and follows from the twofold nature of the Church wherein the Divine and spiritual as well as human and terrestrial are united. The fact that performing works of the spirit is a specifically ecclesiastical and strictly Christian form of life-affirming struggle against evil, implies that this way may not be recommended as the universal norm for the non-Christian humanity. But at the same time we may affirm as justified Christian participation in various extra-ecclesiastical and generally humanistic forms of the struggle for peace on which we now intend to dwell.

2 Opposition to evil as convinced determination to pursue the path of good and the preaching of trust and peace is the sphere where Christians and Christian communities are called upon by the Saviour Himself to set to the world the example in realising the possibility of living up to the principles of peace and love (Jn 13:34-35). This Christian vocation is an extremely responsible one, for unworthy example is more susceptible of diverting people from good than the worthy one of attracting them towards it. Understanding of this fact called to life a wide-ranging ecumenical movement whose participants - religious leaders of various Churches and confessions - intent upon healing inter-Christian divisions dedicate their activities to the cause of universal peace. At present peacemaking is represented in the ecumenical movement by such influen-

tial organisations as the World Council of Churches, the Conference of European Churches, Pax Christi Internationalis, the Christian Peace Conference etc which unite in their ranks millions of Christians the world over and pose as their objective concrete and practical aims of struggling against the armaments race and of consolidating détente, which are dictated by life itself

It is important to note that Church leaders and ecumenic organisations successfully cooperate with national and international non-Church peacemaking movements and are, sometimes integrated into their structure. For instance, in the USSR Russian Orthodox Church representatives are members of numerous peace committees and societies while the Christian Peace Conference is registered as one of the UN non-governmental organisations

The imperative of humaneness is the most general moral law deeply ingrained in non-perverted human nature, one in which non-religious consciousness often sees even the highest sense and justification of human existence. It is in propagating good by word and deed that Christian and general humanistic ideals come closest together forming a field of greatest practical possibilities

Proclaiming good involves constantly speaking out in defence of peace, issuing numerous appeals which Christians and other religious and non-religious fighters for peace address to governments and peoples of the world where not only humanity's general will for peace finds its expression, but where constructive measures are also proposed directed at ameliorating political climate and strengthening trust and collective security among nations. Gigantic scale of this movement which develops at different levels of social and political life, is well known

Implementing the programmes aimed at attaining the principles of humanity in the international sphere, achieving mutual understanding, overcoming mistrust, contributing to shaping public sentiment in favour of peace and détente, wide-ranging support for peaceful initiatives on the part of both non-governmental and governmental organisations: all of this forms a field where there is room enough for even wider development of joint efforts by all peacemaking forces on the planet without exception

During acute international crises when intergovernmental links slacken and even turn ineffective, peacemaking activity by different NGOs, especially the religious ones, attains especial significance. The divided humanity looks with hope at the contacts undertaken by them in these circumstances

3 This positive peacemaking activity is necessarily bound up with overcoming evil by exposing it, manifesting one's refusal of it and voicing one's protest against infringements upon peace and the concrete forces of evil

The representative forums in favour of peace over the recent period have incessantly made calls for struggling against such evils in international political life as the drive for domination, misunderstanding the true national interest, adventurism and mendacity, the policy of confrontation and hostile rhetoric instead of constructive talks. Participants in numerous peace marches in many countries urge the governments to act immediately to slash armaments, conclude various international conventions widening nuclear-free zones, prohibit and stop proliferation of some mass destruction weapons etc

The world community through the representatives of the many different cultures, ideologies and political systems, and experts in various branches of knowledge and practical activity speak out in a responsible way affirming the untruth and perversity of the new military concepts such as the "limited" nuclear war or the "clean" bomb and explaining the potential consequences of the arms race

Peacemaking circles are constantly fighting the mood of passivity and acquiescence in what concerns the tendencies fraught with the threat of destruction

The world peace movement protest against the depravity and immorality of war preparations which not only leave breadless hundreds of millions people but also spread an atmosphere of cynicism and indifference in the face of evil dominating the world and views of aggressivity as the natural and ineradicably human characteristic

4 General humanistic effort to save the world from destruction could be successful only in case they do not remain a voice crying in the wilderness, and those bearing the heavy responsibility for the peoples' destinies would not hesitate to undertake decisive and courageous action by abandoning the course towards confrontation and assume as their task implementing the policy of peaceful coexistence humanity vitally needs

This orientation calls for constant opposition to evil by creating barriers to its spread using for this purpose various ways provided for in law Any break of international law or disregard of agreements earlier concluded is sharply felt in today's world as an act against the foundations of peaceful coexistence, and opposing such actions is an instance of struggle for the peace of the world

Denunciation of aggression and other acts destabilising relations between countries from the UN rostrum, resolutions calling for cessation of military aid to governments guilty of breaking the peace, for barring the acquisition and counteracting the development of their own nuclear weapons by irresponsible and humanity-hating régimes which go on proliferating throughout the world are acts founded in international law and vigorously supported by the movement to prevent the threat of a World War III This worldwide and decisive support for various actions aimed at strengthening the international lawful order and implemented by governmental and international organisations wielding effective power increasingly becomes the indispensable factor for containing aggression in all its forms

5 An instrument of such containment, and in some situations the most important one, used to be the military power of the countries opposed to aggression But now a deep-going reappraisal of this extreme form of opposing evil by force is taking place Reliance on military force as an instrument of peace even in the past was fraught with some unwelcome consequences, but with the emergence of mass destruction weapons it led to a quite absurd situation It soon became quite clear that using these weapons would be equally destructive for both warring parties Moreover, humanity now recognized this as the beginning of an avalanche of death which could totally engulf it, leaving practically no survivors Thus the most effective weapon proved incapable of achieving its purpose as a means of defence Still, it stayed on in international politics as the military deterrent To keep its significance intact still new theories of warfare became necessary wherein military strategists though in fact this kind of war is impossible to win, persist in trying to prove just this possibility But it is the unceasing stockpiling of mass destruction weapons and the development of still newer and numerous systems in the field whose numbers are surely in excess of any rational needs whether of defence or deterrent that is most dangerous and criminally wasteful These weapons in themselves become more and more of a force capable of becoming un-

controllable an apocalyptic holocaust

Under these conditions especial prominence is attained by the forms of struggle for peace which preclude armed intervention, i.e. the forms included under the general heading of peacemaking. In its turn, one of the latter's forms became the fight for abandoning the attitude to armed force which has evolved along with the wars that preceded the emergence of nuclear weapons

III Conclusion

The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is the source of good and of peace for the whole humanity. By spreading the peace of Christ the Church brings about grace-bestowing union of man with God, striving to propagate this salutary link which gives sense to every life, through the whole of creation. It is in this that we see the unique mission of the Church in the world and the specific vocation of the Christians as soldiers of peace fighting against the forces of evil and destruction both in the spiritual and the earthly spheres. Although the Church is the source of peace as specific Divine energy which is fully brought to fruit only in the blessed climate of the Church itself, this could be partially manifested outside the Church as well through different forms of humane and amicable relations, respect for others' rights, containment of aggression etc. These last general humanistic forms of peacemaking are the field where Christians can and do successfully cooperate with all peace movements. Each Christian's degree of involvement into these forms of the peace struggle is determined by his own religious conscience and by the field where he is active.

Especially dramatic stature is given to the contemporary period by the fact that opposing evil and fighting for the humane principles in relations between individuals and nations are now an issue which may determine whether or not the human race shall go forth in its historic existence. It is for the first time that humanity is faced on such a global scale by the problem of life or death. The very universality of the problem, however, points to the imperative of involvement by all people of goodwill into the fight for peace, the fight in which every effort and any labour are justified and indispensable.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH
AS THE BODY OF CHRIST,
IN PARTICULAR ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL ECCLESIOLOGY

Leninград

1983

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One of the main presuppositions of logically correct reasoning is the necessity of maximum clear and accurate definitions of those rational objects, as well as real things, beings and entities, which present the matter of mind and are operated by the reason (or, in case of being expressed in speech or writing, by the language). Even the most elementary concepts (e.g. those of mathematics -- "point", "line", "plane") demand more or less adequate definitions reflecting their quality or (more frequently) properties.

The Church is a very complex phenomenon and (though it would seem strange) it has no common, generally accepted and completely adequate definition of its reality.

There is no scarcity of attempts to produce such a definition. However all of them are extremely different and as a rule have no organic unity, sometimes being contradictory to each other. This situation probably arose from the fact that the definitions were presented by the people whose attitudes and relations towards the Church diverge at a large scale.

This, the conception of many bystanders alien to Church is that the Church has to be regarded as an organization, once appeared and historically stipulated, with a certain illusive purpose and mission, of which the most concrete and conceivable is that of collecting donations and hence the feasibility to support the churchmen, who employ these resources and even the existence of the Church itself for their personal prosperity or enrichment as well.

For some other bystanders the Church is a product of exploitation man by man and serves to class interests of exploiters by distracting the exploited men from their struggle for better life.

For many observers more benevolent to the Church but likewise foreign to it the Church is an irreversibly obsolete, yet at some degree effective stronghold of moral norms prevailing in the society and its age-long experience of ascendancy over people may have a considerable significance for the moral guidance of masses.

We have mentioned so far only those who observe the Church

from without and do not feel themselves affiliated or even reject any connection with it. For a certain part of those who regard themselves (and usually are regarded) as the members of the Christian Church, it predominantly remains a guardian of the venerable traditions, rites and rituals, which are kept, honoured and observed especially for their antiquity, fascination and habitual character. Many of Christians combine such a concept of the Church with an idea that the Church is a protector of morality; as a law this kind of Church members are diligent to observe a certain minimum of Church rules and discipline such as the baptism and chrismation¹⁾ of children, the Christian funeral service (which now may sometimes be conducted in absence of the dead body) and more or less frequent, yet regular (at least once a year)²⁾ "performance of Christian duties".

Some members of the Church not only agree with the above mentioned high opinion of the Church, but also realize their membership with a more profound sincerity and conviction; they are joyful with the affiliation, regard the fact as a pledge of their personal salvation and consider it to be "the God-established community of men, cojoined with the Orthodox Faith, the Divine Law, the hierarchy and the Sacraments".³⁾ This does not imply, however, that these Christians have some kind of a special theological education or can give a summary of their faith in some coherent way. The content of the faith of these Christians is deeply rooted in their spiritual life, they value it as a precious inheritance and it makes a certain impression upon their life.

Finally, there is also such a group of Christians, who acknowledge their organic union with the Church and through it with its

1) The Byzantine name of what is called confirmation in the West.

2) Note: The phrase was until recently the common designation for participating in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper preceded with a confession of sins.

3) "The Detailed Christian Catechism of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church", Moscow, 1909, p. 42.

Heard, Christ the Saviour, and consciously rejoice over their articulation with Him as well as with other Church members. While these Christians are people subjected to seduction and temptation into sin, as all of above mentioned categories, their living faith reveals its effectiveness by inducing them to do good and overcome sin, the influence of which they suffer painfully.

It is true, however, that our description of the types of attitude towards the Church has some conventionally generalized character - in fact, the attitudes towards the Church differ in case of every individual. Nevertheless, we may suppose the suggested descriptions in general reflect the reality not only for the Russian Orthodox Church, but also for many other Churches including those of non-Orthodox tradition.

We do not want to try to give a comparative evaluation of the above suggested conceptions - this task seems to be beyond our forces and too pretentious as well as groundless. What we are only trying to declare is our belief that the ideas concerning the Church suggested by "them which are without" (i.e. persons and movements, that do not belong to the Church) can not principally because one of the main conditions for the comprehension of the nature of the Church is the participation in it.

Indeed, the dialectical perception of Church as the living reality implies the reception of it as a duality in unity, as the integration or homogeneity of the material, external, sense-perceivable aspect with that of internal, spiritual and apprehensible exclusively for the religious insight, not only for the rational, but also for emotional one. This reminds us analogies with the dualistic structure of human person, as well as with the double spiritual and physical contents of every Sacrament or, trying to transcend to the maximally accessible for us heights of theological insight, with the dual unity of hypostasis of the World of God incarnate.

One can easily see, that the spiritual nature of the Church will certainly remain concealed and unaccessible for observation or apprehending of every bystander who does not belong to the Church, nor regard himself as a Church member (while such a person may be a very sophisticated religiologist). Those who are interested in organizational structure of the Church and its economic or financial life and consider through the observation of ritual acts or worship to grasp the real nature of the Church resemble an investigator trying to evaluate the significance or the artistic merit of a picture by means of estimating the quality of the canvas or through the analysis of the chemical structure of the artist's colours.

On the contrary, one who consciously declares his devotion

to Christ, participates in the Church life and in some way manifests this participation, he can practically experience the inward graceful nature of the Church, even if such an individual is unable to define or express explicitly the concept because of insufficiency of his intellectual or specially ecclesiastical potency. In Church and through Church, by means of the Holy Spirit dwelling in it (Jn. 14: 16), the individual receives the knowledge of "the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent", i.e. he gets life eternal (Jn. 17: 3).

As we have seen, the level of the ecclesiastical self-consciousness of Church members is very different; therefore the theological definition of the Church must be so wide as to include all the members: those who in accordance with the formulae of the Catechism regard the Church essentially as a union of people on the ground of their faith and its manifestations, but also those who consider their Church membership to be the articulation with an indivisible mysterious organism, the Head of which is Christ.

Recognizing that the true Church membership demands a certain degree of the ecclesiasticism, i.e. a definite minimum of the information about and practical participation in the Church life as well as some kind of progress in moral development, we however have to bear in mind that the spiritual life of man can be correctly evaluated by God only (I Cor. 2: 11-16); the attempts of the supreme Church authorities to determine for some members the degree of their inward spiritual union with the Church sometimes were accompanied by mistakes and errors, which led to the extremely tragic consequences.

We have therefore to recognize the practical importance and expedience of the above quoted catechistical definition of the Church. This definition provides us with an explicit description of the Church principally from the side of its external structure, but at the same time it also mentions the Church Sacraments and doctrine, which of course are related to the indivisible and spiritual reality of the Church.

It seems interesting to compare the Orthodox catechistical definition with that of the classical Roman Catholic ecclesiology. The latter was formulated by the famous Roman Catholic theologian R. Bellarmine (1542-1621). He wrote: "The Church is the unity of people, bound, through the confession of one Christian Faith and participation in the same Sacraments under administration of competent pastors, particularly of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on Earth" ("De Ecclesia militante", 2).

The thesis about the Pope as Vicar of Christ on earth (this peculiarity of the Roman Catholic ecclesiology) excluded, it is

not difficult to observe in Bellermin's formula the presence of the same elements, which are found in the definition of the Church, presented by Metropolitan Philaret Drozdov who was the author of the Orthodox Catechism.

But in the Orthodox theological literature the catechistical definition has repeatedly been criticized for the absence of the notion of Christ as the Head of the Church and consequently for the over-emphasizing of human element in the Church. Referring to the presence in the catechistical definition & conception of the personal faith a famous theologian of the last century E. Akvilonov wrote: "The objective substantial existence of the Church does not entirely depend on a subjective personal faith, but particularly on the Divine actions through Sacraments" ¹⁾. "The dispensation of gracious gifts constitutes the Christian community and the receiving of the gifts only produces the possibility for individuals to become members of the existing community, because the subjective personal faith is no more than an answer to the Divine invocation (Jn. 6: 44)" ²⁾.

At this point we may quote the definition, formulated by the author of an earlier Orthodox Catechism - Metropolitan Petr Mogila: "The Church is the assembly of those faithful to God, who are gathered in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for the learning of the faith and doctrine of the Apostles all over the Universe as members of the indivisible Body of Christ under the only Head of Church-our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and are bound with the proper discipline" ³⁾.

As one can see, this definition while being some more verbose and diffusive has at the same time an advantage over the formula presented by Metropolitan Philaret. "A Brief Catechism" explicitly says about Christ the Saviour as the Head of the Church Body.

However, despite all its defects the presented by Metropolitan Philaret catechistical conception of the Church has such unquestionably useful characteristics as clearness, brevity and openness.

1) E. Akvilonov,

1) "The Church. Scientific Definitions of the Church and the Apostolic Doctrine of It as the Body of Christ", St. Petersburg, 1894, p. 74.

2) Ibid, p. 78.

3) Metropolitan Petr Mogila, "A Brief Catechism", Kiev, 1645. Cited following the article "Ecclesiology in the Russian Theology" by Archbishop Vladimir Sabadan, in "Theological Studies" publ. by the Moscow Patriarchate, No. 2I, v. 159.

for not only religious Church members, but also for "those which are without", granting everybody with an understandable, sensible and essentially eternal conception of the Church. Moreover the definition helps the ignorant people, whose who often have a very erroneous idea of the Church, to accept some more correct, yet comparatively shallow concept of the nature and manifestations of the Church.

Purposing to get the most complete and exhaustive expression of the mysterious inward nature of the Church - the nature which of course could not be satisfyingly presented by the Catechism intended chiefly to give only initial ideas of the theological knowledge - the theology turns to its main source, i.e. to the most authentic and fixed part of it, namely to the Holy Scriptures.

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The using of the word "church" connected with the passage where Jesus Christ gives a practical instruction on solving conflicts and mutual animosity (Mt. 18: 17) while being transformed during the following centuries to receive an ecclesiological meaning, could be interpreted by the hearers only as signifying the synagogal community. Therefore at this point we have to lay it aside.

The most fundamental ecclesiological saying of Christ the Saviour is the words said Him to St. Peter: "I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18).

These few words contain three the most important characteristics of the Church:

(a) the Church is the creation of Christ and the foundations of its existence are based on His will;

(b) the Church belongs to Christ and is articulated with Him;

(c) the Church is invincible: all powers of the evil in their most forceful manifestations and maximal concentration will never conquer the Church nor will be able to destroy it.

The context of the passage suggests that the invincibility of the Church is the result of its intimate connection with Christ as well as of those its properties which are consequences of its origin and bonds. The words of our Lord may be understood in such a way that the Church - His creation - is as much as invincible as He Himself and the work He came to perform, the instrument for which must become His Church.

We do not know other instances when Christ said the word "church", however this does not imply that the Gospels have no

more passages related to the Church. These passages testify that Christ is thoughtful of the destiny of His Church. We may quote the instructions given by Christ to St. Peter before His sufferings (Lk. 22: 32) and after His Resurrection (Jn. 21: 15-19); the prayer to His only Father not only for the Disciples, but for "them also which shall believe through their word" (Jn. 17: 20); and the solemn promise of being with them "always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28: 20) - the words said after commendment to go forth, to teach and to baptize, i.e. to spread and grow up the Church through transferring its mission as well as that of Christ to the following generations.

It is these familiar to us and may be some other unrecorded ecclesiological sayings of Christ the Saviour, that were undoubtedly known to St. Paul and became the ground for the growth of his ecclesiology.

St. Paul and his writings are inseparable from the Church and its tradition. In his works you could not find neither a single hint of individualism or subjectivism, nor an evidence of contrasting himself to or separation from the Church. And even when he engages a controversy against other Apostles (especially to St. Peter, cf. Gal. 2), Paul does not defend his own interests, nor is he guided with his pride, self respect or some other personal motives. His purposes are always connected with the interests of the whole Church, which never permit any "cult of a person" (I Cor. 1: 10-13; 3: 4-7) or seductive behaviour (I Cor. 10: 32-33; Gal. 2: 11-14), but demand "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4: 3).

One of the main peculiarities of the Apostle's character is his constant perception of the organic unity with Christ and through Him with all of His disciples, with those "who seemed to be pillars" (Gal. 2: 9) as well as with ordinary Christians, who are saluted by the Apostle at the end of almost every of his Epistles. It is this unity, that induced St. Paul to use such a great variety of images for the Church in order to express through them different aspects of its relation to and connection with Christ: "a chaste virgin", the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11: 2; Eph. 5: 25-32), a building or a temple (I Cor. 3: 9-17; Eph. 2: 20ff; 3: 17; 4: 12; I Tim. 3: 15), simply "the Church of Christ" (Rom. 16: 16) or "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 28). This is a short list of presented by Paul names for the Church. All of them have a very profound dogmatical meaning and at the same time they are inspired by the hard personal feeling of the Apostle.

However in case of St. Paul ecclesiology we have to recognize the definition of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the

most frequent and ontologically the most rapid one. This definition is not merely a picturesque naming but the theologically precious descriptions.

The sources of the definition may be traced in the teaching of the Founder of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed the last parable told by Jesus to the disciples at His Farewell Discourse (Jn. 15: 1-6) gives an expressive picture of their organic bonds with Him and with each other. Christ in this parable is the vine, and the disciples are the branches. Their life, growth and fruitfulness depend on the connection with the vine; from it they receive their nourishment and life-bearing forces, without it they are fruitless and barren.

Speaking to the narrow circle of the disciples, the Lord clearly suggests that the meaning of the parable refers not only to those present there, but to "them also which shall believe through their word" (Jn. 17: 20). Afterwards, in the High Priestly Prayer, Jesus Christ is praying about the strengthening and enlargement of the unity, which presents the main idea of the parable: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (Jn. 17: 21).

This unity was a very characteristic feature of the early Church. Describing it St. Paul repeatedly puts special emphasis on predominated there spirit of the total unity and mutual nearness. As before the descent of the Holy Spirit all of them "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1: 14), so after that, when the number of the disciples increased, "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ... and all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts 2: 42, 44). And afterwards, when the persecutions began, they could not prevent the believers to be "of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4: 32).

St. Paul doctrine of the Church as one Body of Christ is definitely presented in "The First Epistle to the Corinthians", "The Epistle to the Romans" and especially in "The Epistle to the Ephesians".

In I Corinthians we are brought to the doctrine gradually, step by step. The conflicts and controversies in the Church of Corinth forced the Apostle to remind the Corinthians about the necessity of keeping the unity of Christ and inadmissibility of disturbing of the original perfect joint "in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1: 10). Establishing the necessity of the unity, St. Paul refers to the Baptism, common for all Christians and bound them into the whole, i.e. to one Church (1: 12f). Following the Lord, St. Paul borrows analogies from the life of flora and writes: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that

planteth any thing, neither he that watered; but God that giveth the increase" (3: 6f). For the clarification of his thought the Apostle employs another analogy: "Ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" 53: 9ff).

In this chapter the Apostle presents the Church as the temple of God in which the Spirit of God dwells (3: 16f).

Another reason for the consideration of this subject were those moral transgressions in the Christian community of Corinth, which seemed to be out of strict treatment from the side of the Corinthian Christians. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? ... What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God? (I Cor. 6: 15, 19). Here the Apostle directly calls the members of the Church the members of Christ's Body, and the directness and expressure of language give no ground for regarding his phrase as a metaphor. The affiliation to the Body of Christ the Apostle understands as the mysterious unity with Christ Himself.

If in chapter 6 St. Paul calls the Corinthians "the members of Christ" without mentioning the word "Body", in chapter 10 of the same Epistle, however, he removes any perplexity by referring to the liturgical unity as to the mysterious communion of Christ's Body and Blood: "For we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (10: 17). Another and more expressive explication we can find in chapter 12, where the Apostle speaks about the coordination of those Church members, which have different gifts. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many" (I Cor. 12: 12ff). After the colourful description of the relations and mutual aid between the members of the body (12: 15, 25) ¹⁾ the Apostle concludes: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all

1) The well-known suppositions about the hypothetical analogies between this passage and the classical literature arose from the following texts: Cicero "De officiis" III, p. 19-22; Seneca "De ira", II, 31, 7; T. Livius, II, 32.

the members rejoice with it. Now, ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular" (I2: 26f).

So in Romans, one of the most significant and penetrating Epistles, St. Paul does not forget to describe the Church as "one Body in Christ" having many members with their special functions (Rom. I2: 4ff).

But the most completely developed St. Paul doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ we meet in his Epistle to Ephesians. "He wrought in Christ ... and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. I: 20, 22f).

In chapter 4 the Apostle does not limit himself with thesis that the Church is one Body, the Head of which is Christ. Here St. Paul is proposing the intrapud theology of the development of this Body, which grows as a physical body "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, from Whom the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body, unto the edifying of itself in love" (4: I2-I6).

At the same time we may note, that the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ - declared for example in the mentioned passages of St. Paul - is not separated from other formulas adopted by the Church for expressing its identity, but shows the closest relation with them. It is known, that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed defines the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Indeed, the Church is one through the unity, which the Body retains; at the same time the Church is varied and catholic (or universal) as the Body it has many different members. Christ is the Head of the Church and this is the ground for the unity of it. The holiness of the Church has the same source - it is emanating from Christ, Who as the Head retains the Church. Finally, the apostolic succession in the Church attests to the presence of those properties, which are attributed to it as to the Body of Christ at every moment of its historical actuality.

The concept of the Church as one Body of Christ had been reflected in the patristic literature ¹⁾ and thus it was included into the Orthodox Catechism, being the necessary supplement to above mentioned definition of the Church: "The Church is one Spiritual Body and has one Head, ²⁾ the Lord Jesus Christ, and is animated by one Spirit of God".

The Apostle's concept of the Church as the Body of Christ is closely connected with the Eucharist. The principle words for this are those said by the Apostle when he was affirming the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the eucharistic elements and concluding from this to the unity of all Christians, which is actualized by the participation in the Eucharist. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one Body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 10:16f).

A more detailed representation of the Church we meet in "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles": "As this broken bread was dispersed all over the hills and gathered together became one, so let Thy Church from the uttermost parts of the earth be gathered in Thy Kingdom". ³⁾

The same profound conception of the correspondence between the ecclesiastical and eucharistical unity penetrates the whole patristic literature. "What do the communicants become? -- writes St. John Chrysostom -- They become the Body of Christ, not many bodies, but one Body" ⁴⁾

Finally let us quote another author of the patristic age, who was the last of the Church Fathers. St. John of Damascus wrote: "As we partake of one bread, so we all become one Body of Christ and one Blood and members for each other, making one Body with Christ". ⁵⁾

1) Cf. for example St. Ignatius "Epist. ad Smyrn."; St. Irenaeus "Adv. Haer.", iii, 16, 6; St. Gregory of Nyssa "Comm. in Cant. C." 13 et al.

2) "The Detailed Christian Catechism of the Orthodox Catholic Eastern Church", Moscow, 1909, p. 42.

3) "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles", ix. 4.

4) St. John Chrysostom. "Works", St. Petersburg, 1903, Vol. 10, p. 237; xxiv "The Discourse on The First Epistle to the Corinthians".

5) St. John of Damascus. "De Fide Orthodoxa", iv. 13.

Here we find a significant confirmation of the apostolicity of the Church Tradition: the idea, expressed by St. Paul and accepted by the Church as the Word of God, subsequently was developed and elaborated in the patristic literature.

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In one attempt to depict the problem of the definition of the concept "Church" we took in consideration actual modern attitudes towards the Church. Then we studied the Holy Scriptures and there, amongst many concepts, metaphors, similitudes, parables, and epithets, we noted the description of the Church as the mysterious Body of Christ. The description is picturesque as well as ontologically adequate definition, because the image here correctly represents the actual nature of the Church.

Now we may look round again and to ask ourselves the question whether the modern Church is realizing its nature of the God-human organism and if so, what is the realization and what is the scale of it? And there are some more burning questions - where and when does the Church diverge from the norms corresponding with its nature and what does distort the image of the Body of Christ?

Note that the actuality of the Church as the Body of Christ is something fixed, static or invariable. The existence of the Church as the Body of Christ is its mission, the source of its constant development and manifestation. The process is realized in particular through the Sacraments, which are the exclusive channel for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church.

"The Eucharist and the Church are the Sacramental Body of Crucified and Risen Christ. They become the area for the "energy" of the Lord's Spirit, Who Himself is the Spirit, or of the New Adam, Who "was made a Quickening Spirit".

By the Baptism in Spirit the community of believers in Christ becomes the Church. The believers are baptized in Spirit to form one Body (I Cor. 12: 12). ... In the Baptism and Chrismation the members of Christ are "anointed" or engrafted in Christ. But at the same time in the Eucharist the whole Paschal event is enlarged into the Church - the Easter of the Head becomes the Easter for the members; the Church is made the Sacramental Body of Christ - for which it is called through the Baptism and Chrismation".¹⁾

1) After the text composed at the working session of the Second Subcommittee of the Joint Theological Commission for the Dialogue between the Local Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church (Rome, 27-30 Dec. 1980), typescript, p. 3.

The genesis of the Church as the Body of Christ is not however actualized through the Sacraments only, but through the entire life of the Church as well. And at this point a bystander as well as a Church member can easily see the most depressive and striking discrepancy between the Church life and its ideal, which is unseparately connected with the concept of the Church Body.

Indeed, at the age of the Apostles every member of the Church (at least every man) had his own duty (I Cor. 12: 7) and presented his own contribution to the Church life just as every member of the human body contributes his functions to the life of the whole organism (I Cor. 12: 4-31).

All the charisms mentioned in chapters 12 and 14 of I Corinthians undoubtedly made their possessors morally responsible for their use. We can surely assent that Christians of that time regarded and performed every secular activity as a divine mission, and thus the activity transformed its secular character into charismatic and ecclesiastical one.

The modern Church life presents a quite different picture. The most part of laity even those regarding themselves to be Church members, make no conclusion about their activity and explicitly separate their pastime in the Church from the rest entertainment, which has absolutely secular character. Some degree of the ecclesiastical activity may be ascribed only to clergy and to a very limited stratum of laity, connected with the economic life of the Church (it is well-known that many representatives of such "serv-ing" laity are often concerned with especially practical business-like activity and do not regard it as a charism at all).

Another depressing feature of the modern Church, as contrastive to the Church of the apostolic age, is the absence (or at least a comparative defectiveness) of mutual contacts between Church members even inside the same community. Indeed, can we together with St. Paul say about the members of one Church Body: "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12: 26)? Of course, between some Christians, including those of one certain community, sometimes there are personal contacts, fellowship and mutual aid, but these usually arise from territorial, industrial, official or blood ties, which have no connection to the acknowledgement of the ecclesiastical co-membership.

As the doctrine of the Sacrament of the Eucharist gives one of the most expressive presentations of the Christian unity at the common Lord's Supper, so the eucharistic practice presents clearly the mutual estrangement and alienation of communicants. This situation is especially obvious in case of large urban cathedrals,

where to the Chalice come thousands of people, who do not know each other and therefore, if some of them experience the communion, that is exclusively personal one with Christ the Saviour and not with other partakers of the Sacrament.

One can give some more signs of the secularization of the Church, but the above mentioned examples seemed to be the most obvious and perceivable in the Church life.

In fact, there is another more important reason for the sorrowful situation and symptoms, unsuitable for the normal state of the Body of Christ. It is scarcity of love to God, that causes the insufficiency of Christian love to the neighbours, including those who first can expect the love from a Christian - his brothers in faith, related to him through their common organic unity with the Church Body.

Searching to indoctrinate the disciples with the preeminent significance of the Love, the ontology of which is related to the very essence of God's nature (I Jn. 4: 16), Christ before His Suffering asked His disciples to preserve the mutual love, relating it to the love to Him and to the Heavenly Father: "If ye love me, keep my commandments, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. ... If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him" (Jn. 14: 15; 15: 12; 14: 23).

The way of love is that "a more excellent way" (I Cor. 12: 31), which St. Paul praised at his famous "The Hymn of Love" (I Cor. 13), which was addressed to the Christian community in Corinth. Without this excellent gift no one of the ecclesiastical organisms can exist or develop. The absence of love will inevitably lead to the distortion of Christ's image in the God-human ecclesiastical organism. Finally, the strengthening of the mutual love between members of the organism may be actualized only through intensification of their love to each other (Jn. 15: 15), to the Teacher and Lord (Jn. 13: 13), to the Founder and the Head of the Church - Jesus Christ.

PEACEMAKING WORK OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TODAY

The reconciliation of mankind with God, attained in Our Lord Jesus Christ, manifests itself in the everyday life of the sacramental Body of Christ, His Church. As a beneficent gift of the Lord, reconciliation is expressed above all in the harmonious interaction of the members of the Body of the Church, which Paul the Apostle described so strikingly in several of his epistles. The otherwise unattainable reconciliation between freedom and necessity, between one's personal life and the life of the social entity is accomplished in Christ, and this is typical of the life of the Church both in its internal and external aspects. The spiritual gift of peace is effective only where there is penitential striving toward the Lord's truth; it is effective only inasmuch as Christians exert their efforts in their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 1:3). Therefore peace is not only a gift of God but also the fruit of man's aspirations and efforts.

Peace begins wherever two or three people assemble in the name of Christ. Under the Orthodox tradition this assembly, this ecclesia is chiefly interpreted as the Liturgical assembly. To the Orthodox Christian the Liturgy, with the Eucharist as its focal point, was yesterday and is today not only a demonstration of his faith and his life according to the Spirit, but also a perceptible source of the Spirit's imperceptible gifts of reconciliation. The pacification of a man's consciousness is a necessary condition for entering into communion with God and an important condition for abiding in the Church. The first Liturgical call which begins the major Orthodox service is, "Let us pray to the Lord in peace". Thus the inference is that peace in people's hearts is the prime condition for the prayer to be effective. Reconciliation with all one's neighbors is also indispensable for taking part in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, making one's communion with the sacred Body and Blood of Christ.

The role the Liturgy plays in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church is well-known. The fact that to the Russian people, the truth came above all from the actual service of the Liturgy is not only the result of an accidental combination of historical conditions but also the outcome of the Lord's Providential Work, for the Russian people proved very responsive to the beautiful Liturgical forms and created an incomparable rite which found its expression in distinctive church architecture, music and iconography, permeated with the spirit of unperturbed serenity and unique quiet beauty.

Given this historical experience, the Russian Orthodox Church today considers it its duty to continue its ancient Liturgical traditions. The record of recent decades shows that to this day, the Liturgy is the chief factor in the evangelization of our society, the main vehicle of Grace among our people, the foremost visible source of reconciliation which begins with peace within the Christian family, within the Christian community.

While on the subject of the Liturgy, one must not lose sight of its educational value. Aside from education by the Word of God which rings forth during each Liturgical assembly, aside from education by ecclesiastical poetry and other ways of Liturgical communion, the Russian Orthodox Church attaches great importance to instruction, to the sermon from the church pulpit. Here one must stress that typical of the Orthodox sermon is interpretation, exegesis of the Holy Scriptures and especially, an ethical and educational conclusion from the Word of God the people have heard. Education for peace is one of the central points in the sermon of today.

The spoken sermon of peace is continued through the printed word. Besides sermons, each issue of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, the chief periodical of the Russian Orthodox Church, features several reports and articles in its In Defense of Peace column. A number of books issued by our Church's publishing house in recent years has been specially devoted to the subject of peacemaking. Making use of the spoken and printed word, the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church strive to instill in their congregations a sense of peaceableness, humanness, reverence for the sacred gift of life and respect for all people, no matter what their race, ethnic origin, creed, social status or nationality.

"Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (Matt. 5:15). The house we live in is, first, our country. In what way does the Russian Orthodox Church serve the cause of peacemaking within our state? Aside from the distinctly Christian ways of sermon and instruction, other ways of witnessing peace are open to the Russian Orthodox Church in our country. The opportunities in question are inherent in the distinctive position our Church occupies within our vast multinational state which comprises several Christian Churches and the world's major religions. Fortunately, there are no tragic pages of religious strife in the history of our country; nevertheless here, as all over the world, an ecumenical challenge is facing Christians. Aside from its value to the Christians, the ecumenical movement no doubt furthers the attainment of two extra-Christian goals: the affirmation of the Christian witness of peace and the promotion of peace among men. Naturally, one cannot maintain that by striving toward peace with one another, by striving toward universal peace, the Christian Churches are doing something extraordinary. No, such is their mission, their duty, expressed in the words of the Saviour: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). The Russian Orthodox Church maintains close ecumenical contacts with the other Christian Churches of our country. These contacts take the form of joint prayers, as well as ecumenical seminars within the framework of the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches. For example, in the course of the preparations for the forthcoming General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, several ecumenical seminars on this assembly were held in Moscow on the initiative of the Russian Orthodox Church. Issues of the all-Christian peacemaking service were prominent at these seminars.

In our country there are many followers of non-Christian religions too -- Buddhists, Judaists and Muslims. For all the diversity of their spiritual experience, representatives of different religions are rather close to one another in the ethical expression of their faith. Their religious practice is based on the conviction that the existence of this world has an ultimate goal of good, and that man's efforts should be aimed at this good. There is justice in the opinion that the ideal of life in peace is inherent in all religions. However, vigorous efforts in the field of interfaith peacemaking cooperation have a comparatively short history. It is precisely recent decades that have awakened believers to the need of joint struggle for peace. The first attempt to direct the efforts of all the Churches and religious associations of the USSR to the defense of peace was undertaken by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1952. Those were the years when nations had not yet healed the wounds inflicted by World War II, when nuclear confrontation and an international political crisis began to threaten the world. The first Conference of all the Churches and religious associations of the USSR, devoted to the subject of defending peace, was held in the Orthodox Trinity- St. Sergius Monastery near Moscow. Since then, our country's believers have accumulated a rich store of experience in interfaith peacemaking cooperation. One should note that the Russian Orthodox Church has invariably been the initiator of the interfaith conferences held regularly in the USSR. The fruit these contacts bear are not only the joint appeals and statements adopted at conferences but also the gradual education of people in the spirit of mutual respect and fraternal joint efforts for peace. One would be fully justified to say that such valuable contacts would have been psychologically impossible as recently as several decades ago. Today we are witnessing in our country not only the simply inevitable peaceful coexistence of different religions but also their vigorous peaceful cooperation.

Aside from its peacemaking cooperation with Christian and non-Christian religious associations and organizations, the Russian Orthodox Church is collaborating vigorously with all people of goodwill in our country. Representatives of our Church have invariably participated in the All-Union Conferences of Peace Champions since the postwar years. The Soviet Peace Committee, founded in 1949, is the major Soviet lay peacemaking body. Active in its work are His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, as well as other prominent hierarchs of our Church. This committee comprises a broad network of republican and regional committees in which the Russian Orthodox Church is represented. By their participation in this movement, Orthodox Christians carry their service and Christian witness beyond our Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church is equally active in the Soviet Peace Fund. While it is individual representatives who take part in the work of organizations like the Soviet Committee for European Security, the Soviet Peace Committee, the Soviet Committee of Solidarity with Asian and African Countries, the Soviet Women's Committee and other peacemaking entities, the entire congregation of the Russian Orthodox Church are involved vigorously in the activities of the Soviet Peace Fund. Established in 1961, the Fund finances the work of peacemaking organizations, holds forums and meetings to strengthen peace among nations, and assists victims of war and aggression. There are many

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commissions and aid groups in the fund, and it is replenished by millions of voluntary contributors, with the Russian Orthodox Church among its major contributors. Society accepts our Church's involvement in this humanitarian effort with gratitude; this is evident in the many awards of honor bestowed on the eparchies and parishes of the Church by the Board of the Fund.

Among our country's peacemaking organizations there are many USSR Friendship Societies with various countries. All these societies are members of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries. Orthodox representatives belong to many of these societies, with clergymen working hard in their governing bodies. As members of Friendship Societies' delegations, Church activists often pay friendly visits to foreign countries.

However, the Russian Orthodox Church exerts most of its peacemaking efforts on the international scene. From the rostrums of international congresses, conferences and other forums, from the pages of the ecclesiastical press Orthodox bishops, other clergy and lay people fervently advocate peace and security not only for their own nation but for the entire world.

It would be hard to list all the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church in its peacemaking service over recent years in a brief survey. Let us therefore confine ourselves to pointing out the major landmarks on the path of this service. First and foremost, one should dwell on the cooperation with the national Orthodox Churches and other Christian Churches and associations. In 1961 our Church joined the World Council of Churches -- the largest international Christian organization; the strengthening of international peace and security plays an important part in its work. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church are active in the peacemaking efforts of the World Council of Churches and its Committees.

The Russian Orthodox Church was directly involved in the establishment of the Christian Peace Conference in 1958. Since then the Conference has emerged as a respected and highly mobile international peacemaking movement which reacts promptly to acute international issues. The Russian Orthodox Church is very active in the day-to-day work of the Christian Peace Conference, registered with the UN Economic and Social Council as a nongovernmental organization represented at the United Nations. From 1971 to his demise in 1978 Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod served as President of the Christian Peace Conference. Shortly before his passing he was elected Honorary President of this organization.

Life kept drawing the Russian Orthodox Church into new peacemaking ecumenical contacts. The Moscow Patriarchate participated in the 1959 foundation of the Conference of European Churches, today comprising over 100 member Churches. Contributing to stronger peace in Europe is among the foremost tasks of this organization too.

Since 1974 the Russian Orthodox Church has been cooperating with the international Catholic peacemaking movement Pax Christi Internationalis. Several bilateral meetings have highlighted the common views held by the representatives of the two Churches on many urgent problems of today's world.

Since 1975 the Russian Orthodox Church has been involved in the dynamic work of the Ecumenical Council of European Youth. The Council devotes a large part of its efforts to the strengthening of peace and promotion of understanding among young people in different countries.

Generally, as we can see from our meeting today, the Russian Orthodox Church attaches great importance to bilateral ecumenical contacts. In all such bilateral contacts, our Church strives to raise not only questions of dogma and canonical issues but also topical peacemaking problems. This has become traditional for all the ecclesiastical dialogues of the Russian Orthodox Church, including the dialogue with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland:

In today's divided world, we consider it important to maintain brotherly contacts between our Church and the U.S. National Council of the Churches of Christ. These contacts are as timely as they are necessary for building peace on Earth. We note that for all the difficulties existing in U.S.-Soviet relations, Christian contacts continue to develop successfully. Initiated in 1955, when the world was in a state of Cold War, the relations between the Christians of our countries contributed to the establishment of the climate of trust between our nations, the climate that marked the 1970s. This culminated in the 1979 "Choose Life" meeting between representatives of Soviet and U.S. Churches in Geneva. In the joint statement elaborated at the meeting, the participants condemned the arms race unconditionally and advanced a joint program of action to remove it. Despite the exacerbation of the international situation over the past few years, the Christians of our countries not only keep up but also work to strengthen the brotherly contacts existing between us. This is borne out by the continuing meetings of our representatives. At the latest meeting in 1981 we jointly reiterated our commitment to the principles set forth in the "Choose Life" statement.

In its efforts for the reconciliation of mankind our Church has always striven to introduce into life an element of trust and respect among nations. The Russian Orthodox Church was among the few religious organizations which advanced and upheld the notion of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems. One might recall that there was a time when many religious quarters viewed this fruitful idea as one-sided. Today, however, it is recognized universally, for everyone is aware that there is no other alternative. Our Church was the first to advance the concept of detente during the Cold War times. Even those religious quarters which used to treat this concept with suspicion are now working to have it implemented. Our Church was among the initiators of the transition from detente to inter-Christian peacemaking cooperation. This activity of the Russian Orthodox Church was often viewed with distrust and even gave rise to charges of political opportunism. But today we see that peacemaking is one of the main factors of cooperation among various Christian Churches within the framework of many organizations.

I have already pointed out the fact that our Church realized the concept of inter-faith peacemaking cooperation as early as 1952. By overcoming the age-old mistrust among people of different religions, the Russian Orthodox Church began to engage in this cooperation at first at home and then on the international scene. The first significant

achievement in this field was the Moscow World Conference "Religious Workers for Durable Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations among Nations", convened on the initiative of our Church in 1977. Over 650 representatives of major religions from 107 countries witnessed at that forum their common desire to "work together, in cooperation with all people of goodwill, to establish a world without weapons, to build a society where durable peace and just relations would create a basis for living conditions worthy of man".

Of equal importance in the interfaith peacemaking effort was the World Conference convened in Moscow on the initiative of His Holiness Pimen in May 1982. This time the theme was "Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe". The Conference was attended by 590 representatives from 90 countries. The religious workers assembled in Moscow proved that they were not impassive observers merely watching the world's tragic slide to the brink of nuclear self-destruction but dedicated champions of mankind's salvation. Archbishop Dr. Mikko Juva, honorary trustee of the Conference, had this to say about the contribution of our Church to the success of this representative international forum: "The Russian Orthodox Church conducts an independent policy of peace which the representatives of the Western Churches present at the Conference were glad to associate with" (Lutheran World Information, 21/82, June 3).

While on the subject of interfaith peacemaking contacts, one can also mention the continuous representation of the Russian Orthodox Church at assemblies of the Asian Buddhist Peace Conference "Religion and Peace" and at many other interfaith religious forums.

Aside from its peacemaking cooperation with Christian and non-Christian religious associations, the Russian Orthodox Church serves the interests of peace by working together with all people of goodwill throughout the world. Representatives of our Church took part in the establishment of the World Peace Council in 1949 and have been its active members ever since; they participated in the Assembly of Civic Forces for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1972 and 1975, the 1979 International Forum of Peace Forces and other peacemaking movements.

The Russian Orthodox Church has always supported the role of the United Nations in the settlement of conflict situations, responding with its word to the alarming developments in various parts of the globe and making appropriate public statements in this regard. Today, our Church advocates a cessation of the further buildup and perfection of nuclear and other mass destruction weapons, a universal and complete ban on nuclear weapon tests, and an ultimate prohibition of these weapons. In this connection, special statements have been made to support the decisions of the 1977 First Special UN General Assembly Session on Disarmament and other initiatives in this field. In 1982, at the Second Special UN General Assembly Session on Disarmament, His Holiness Pimen spoke on behalf of the entire Russian Orthodox Church. One has every reason to say that our Church uses all the opportunities and means at its disposal to fulfill our Saviour's commandment of peacemaking. Of course, our Church is far from complacency in this regard. And, as the late Metropolitan Nikodim said, we are "still

facing a long and perhaps arduous road. Along this road there is much for the intense thought of the theologian, the experience of the veteran peacemaker, and the energy of the young to do for the building of a world which, in its external social environment, would demand a cessation of all international conflicts and call for relations of trust, friendship and brotherhood.... And, appealing to the Lord of Creation and the Saviour of all men, we must ask Him 'to guide our feet into the way of peace' (Luke 1:79)" (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1978, No.9, p.34).

SUMMARY

Peacemaking in the Contemporary World

Contribution to Sinapi VI
Conversations Between Theologians
of the Russian Orthodox Church and
the Evangelical Lutheran Church of
Finland

1. The universal aim of preserving peace among nations unites today men of different religions, ideological and social orientations, each possessing its own specific nature. In the contemporary peace movement, the unconditional acceptance of this specificity goes together with the objective need for joint and concerted action.
2. In the Church's understanding of it, the problem of peace appears first of all as the problem of spreading the peace granted by Christ as the gift of Divine grace which is the foundation of any true peace. It is distinguished by a profoundly theological and religious character and direct effort at its realisation in its specificity is possible only for Church members. It represents an especial mission for the Church in the world.
3. The task of preserving and consolidating peace among nations is a general humanistic problem. Its realisation is based on the efforts at developing the principles of humanity on an international scale. Implementation of this effort necessarily implies opposing evil.
4. The difference in forms of struggle for peace as opposition to evil is determined by the concrete balance between the forces of good and evil in the world and cover a wide range from proclaiming goodness, trust and peace to opposing evil by force. It must be noted that appreciation of extreme forms of containment based on military force has been undergoing deep-reaching changes over the last several decades as weapons of mass destruction made their appearance. Under these conditions the emphasis is shifted towards the forms of struggle for peace which exclude military intervention, i.e. precisely the forms described in general as peacemaking.
5. The Church in carrying out its incessant internal work of spreading spiritual peace within the ecumene and being conscious of the radical significance this activity has, it takes an active part in external, general humanistic forms of peacemaking jointly with other forces throughout the world who struggle for peace.

BRIEF OUTLINE OF REPORT

Peacemaking Work of the Russian Orthodox Church Today

1. Peace, which the Church sees as the Lord's gift, is also the fruit of man's aspirations and efforts. The constant prayers and Liturgies of the Russian Orthodox Church uphold ancient traditions and are, to this day, a source of reconciliation within the Christian community.

2. The sermon which educates people for peace is inseparable from the Liturgy. The printed word is the continuation of the spoken sermon. Russian Orthodox Church periodicals regularly publish information on the subject of peacemaking.

3. The Russian Orthodox Church performs its peacemaking service in our country a) through close ecumenical contacts; b) through interfaith contacts which our Church was one of the first to initiate; c) through vigorous cooperation with people of goodwill in our country. The Russian Orthodox Church is especially active in and is a member of the Soviet Peace Fund.

4. The Russian Orthodox Church exerts most of its peacemaking efforts on the international scene. These include: a) vigorous involvement in the peacemaking programs of the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical organizations; b) continuous bilateral ecumenical contacts in the course of which urgent issues of peacemaking are often discussed; c) broad interfaith cooperation based on the striving toward peace common to all religions (quite recently, the Russian Orthodox Church initiated the convening of the World Conference "Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe"); d) cooperation with all people of goodwill within the framework of numerous international peacemaking organizations and forums.

THE EUCHARISTIC ASPECT OF THE CHURCH'S NATURE

S.P. Rasskazovski

The two concepts, the Eucharist and the Church, are inseparable. Being both integral parts of Christology, ecclesiology and Eucharistic doctrine have their common foundation in the theandric fact of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. And just as any complete teaching on the Church cannot omit Eucharistic doctrine, so the Eucharist cannot be contemplated or understood if conceived as being outside the Church or unrelated to it.

The Eucharist is not only organically bound up with the Church. In fact, it is the apex of the Church's mystical life, occupying as it does the central position within the Church. Divine presence reaches its greatest fulness and intensity in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, whence its intransient absolute significance and tremendous importance for the life of the whole Church and each of the faithful in particular.

The atoning Sacrifice of the Son of God on the Calvary, whereby "we have been sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10; cf. 1 Pet. 3:18) is the greatest instance of Divine love for humanity (Rom. 5:8). Heaven and earth, angels and men are reunited around this Sacrifice, for it is the focus of their spiritual life and the source of human salvation. The Eucharist, being the "celebration of bloodless sacrifice" culminating in a "holy and spiritual feast" (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom), i.e., the partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, is the atoning Sacrifice on the Calvary actualised in the life of the Church. It is in virtue of being related to Jesus Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross that the Eucharistic sacrifice possesses grace-bestowing power of forgiving and cleansing those believing in Jesus Christ.

Ontologically bound to the Sacrifice of the Calvary, the Eucharist celebrated within Divine Liturgy historically has been the focus of prayer and centre of life of the Church and within the Church. The whole of the faithful's Church life turned round the Eucharist and was sanctified by it. In the Orthodox Church, the seven offices of the daily cycle - Vespers, Mattins, the Midnight office and the four Hours - just anticipate the Liturgy. Prayers, psalms, Scripture readings and other sacred acts prepare the Christian to the chief celebration, Divine Liturgy (Divine Liturgy, Moscow, 1982, p. 73).

All of the Sacraments used to be linked to the Eucharist and, having it as their centre, were incorporated into it. In early Christian times and later on in the Apostolic and the Byzantine periods as well as in Early Russia the Sacraments of the Church were celebrated together with the Liturgy, as testified by the ecclesiastical writers of the times.

In all the earliest expositions of Baptism, the Sacrament of acceptance into the Church, the Baptism "of water and the Spirit" (Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation) is followed by the Eucharist and communion which seals the admission to the Church. This much we find in St. Justin the Martyr's First Apology and in the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolyt of Rome. St. Hippolyt writes, in fact, that those newly baptised should pray with the faithful after Baptism and imposition of hands by the bishop, but not before receiving these (XXI-XXII). Further on, St. Hippolyt gives a description of how the Eucharist should be celebrated and Communion given.

St. Justin after describing Baptism goes on to say that the newly baptised person is forthwith brought into congregation in order that he may most zealously offer common prayers. After the celebrant has recited prayers and given thanks, all the faithful respond, Amen. Following the thanksgiving by the celebrant and the words spoken by the people, the so-called deacons let everyone partake of the Bread over which thanksgiving has been accomplished, and the Wine and water. This food is called the Eucharist (65-66).

The Sacrament of Priesthood is also indivisible from the Eucharist. When describing in his Apostolic Tradition the Eucharist celebrated at episcopal consecration, St. Hippolyt of Rome indicates that after consecration the deacons proffer to the new bishop the Bread and Wine over which he then offers thanks (IV).

Anointing of the Sick, a Sacrament whose office underwent various changes in the process of formation, used to be practised during Divine Liturgy: the holy oil was consecrated during the Preparation of the Elements while the anointing itself followed the Prayer before the Ambo (Archim. Prof. Kiprian, Evkharistia, Paris 1947, p. 26).

Tertullian stressed the preeminence of the Eucharist in the Sacrament of Marriage as it seals the union of husband and wife, as marriage is subject to the Church's approval, confirmed by the offering (the Eucharist), marked by blessing and recorded by the angels in Heaven (Letter to Wife, I, 9).

The Eucharist surpasses all the other Sacraments by the overflowing richness of Divine love and the extreme majesty of the gift granted in it to men by God. Jesus Christ extends to the participants in the Eucharist gifts of the grace of the Holy Spirit and in a direct and tangible way manifests His presence so that the communicants in His Body and Blood are brought into most close relationship with Him.

The Eucharist is the culmination of all the Sacraments of the Church. The author of the Areopagitica considers that any other sacred act by members of the hierarchy does not grant fulness of participation, being incomplete (Church Hierarchy, III, 1). St. Maxim the Confessor explains this as meaning that no Sacrament may be complete without Holy Communion (On Dionysius Areopagite). St. Gregory Palamas speaks of the mysterious and all-holy sacred ceremony, communion and assembly of prayer at which the other sacred offices are performed too (PG, 150, col. 766 D-767 A). St. Symeon of Thessalonica directly states that the completion of any sacred ceremony and the seal of every Sacrament is Holy Communion (P G, 155, col. 512 D). It is, according to the author of Areopagitica, the Sacrament of Sacraments (III, 1).

The best definition of the Church and its most vivid description in the Holy Scripture are to be found in St. Paul's Epistles. His words are, in fact, more than his own teaching as they represent the doctrine of the Church which stretches back to the sources of ecclesiastical tradition which in its turn goes back to Christ Himself, as testified by St. Paul: "...I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you..." (1 Cor, 11:23).

Dwelling on the mysterious essence of the Church, the Apostle refers to the Church as the Body of Christ. The Apostolic teaching on the Church could be summarised as follows. The Church is the Body of Christ and Christ, the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:2-23); everyone believing in Christ, God and Man, is a member of the Church (1 Cor. 12:27) and all the faithful constitute the Church (Rom. 12:5).

In this way the Church is seen as a theandric organism, one whole constituted by its members, indissolubly united to each other. The Church's body depends for its life upon its life-giving Source and Head, Christ, "for no other foundation can anyone lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

Several meanings of the expression itself have been pointed out by the Fathers following the Pauline teaching on the Church as the Body of Christ. Firstly, one of the meanings of the phrase, as seen above, conceives the Church of Christ as the mystical Body.

Secondly, the phrase "the Body of Christ" means the unseen and mysterious Body of Jesus Christ, God and Man, under the eucharistic species of the Bread and Wine extended to the faithful in communion which is the culmination of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is celebrated in remembrance of the Last Supper where the Sacrament was instituted and first celebrated by the Saviour. Following the Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25) the Eucharist is and shall be celebrated until the Second Coming of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:26).

The Saviour's words at the Last Supper, "Take, eat; this is My Body...", "Drink of it, all of you; for this is My Blood..." (Mt.26:26-28; Mk.14,22-24) determine the administering of the Sacrament: it is a meal. This is why the Eucharist is a feast, the "table of the Lord" (1 Cor.10:21), being an ecclesiological continuation of the Last Supper. It follows from the words of Jesus Christ, "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you have no life in you..." (Jn.6:53) that the main purpose of Communion is the grace-bestowing effect on the believer's soul conducive to his salvation in eternity. Therefore the necessary condition for the Church members to attain salvation is keeping the obligation of Communion. This is why the call for the faithful to communicate regularly has stood since the early days of the Church, as amply testified by the Fathers, e.g., by St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. John Chrysostom.

The ecclesiological significance of the Eucharist is revealed in the words of Jesus Christ: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me, and I in him" (Jn.6:56). The Eucharist is the Sacrament in which after certain prayers (the anaphora) the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Bread is no longer called bread, but aptly is named the Body of the Lord (St. John Chrysostom, Letter to Cesarius). The final moment of the Eucharist comes with Communion - the end to which this Sacrament is actually celebrated. It is for the purpose of Communion that the change is effected of the eucharistic bread and wine into the Saviour's Body and Blood. The Church, according to St. Paul, is the Body of Christ (Eph.1:23; Col.1:24).

Through partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ Church members are especially confirmed and strengthened in their relationship with Christ within His Mystical Body, i.e., the Church. In this, the eucharistic character of the Church is realised and fulfilled. St. Paul's teaching, which is representative of liturgical experience, brings eucharistic reality to expression: "Because there is one Bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor.10:17). The reality of the bread reveals the complete reality of the Body of Christ and its oneness - the Bread is one - reveals the oneness of the Body. St. John Chrysostom says that we constitute His very Body, asking, What is this Bread? This is the Body of Christ. What happens to its partakers? They become the Body of Christ, not many bodies, but one (1 Cor.10:13). He then goes on to explain: just as bread, produced of numerous individual grains, is one, and although it does contain the grains they cannot be seen and their former separateness is no longer perceived as they are all united among themselves, so are we in this way reunited with each other and Christ.

St. Augustine also delves into the essence of the Church's eucharistic nature and the indissoluble bond of the Church and the Eucharist, writing that if one is to understand about the Body of Christ, one has to listen to the Apostle's words: "You are the Body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor.12:27). If therefore you are the body and members of Christ, then your Mystery is on the Altar: what you are partaking of is your own Mystery. Your response, Amen, is addressed to yourselves, and in responding thus you bring about your own ascension. You hear the words, The Body of Christ, and you respond, Amen. You should be one of Christ's members for your Amen to be true (Homily 272).

Celebration of the Eucharist is stipulated by the Church's existence, and as there is no Eucharist outside the Church, so there is no Church without the Eucharist.

Warning against misunderstanding the eucharistic nature of the Church, Nicholas Cabasilas, one of the best authors to interpret the Liturgy, says that the Eucharist is not a symbol or an image of the Church, but there is complete identity of the two. There is, he goes on to say, neither a simple identity of name nor resemblance, but identity of fact. Just as we see incandescent iron not as iron, but as fire, because the properties of iron have been completely obliterated by the

latter, so, if someone could see Christ's Church in its union with Christ and participation in His Body, he should see it as nothing else but the Body of the Lord (The Interpretation of Divine Liturgy).

Through partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ communion with God is effected, i.e., union and fellowship of the believer with Him. St. John Damascene says that this Sacrament is called "participation" (in Eastern tradition) as by it we become participants in Jesus's Divinity (Precise Exposition of Orthodox Faith, 4:12). Thus we become, in the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, participants in Divine nature. (Mystagogical Homilies, 4,3). The partaking of the Sacred Elements creates koinonia (1 Cor. 10:16), communion which is real union with the Body and Blood of Christ. St. John Chrysostom in his homily on St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:16) draws a distinction between the two Greek terms metoche and koinonia (partaking, participation - communion), and gives preference to the latter as expressing greater and closer fellowship. He emphasises that St. Paul wanted to say more to the communicants and to point to greater unity. Then Chrysostom goes on to say that we are not just participants and sharers in Communion, but we are also united with Christ. In the way Christ's Body is united with Him we are united with Him through this Bread (Homily XXIV on 1 Cor. 10:13).

Stating that the Body and Blood of Christ are the true food and drink, Nicholas Cabasilas explains how the union of the Divine and the human comes about. The Church, he says, in partaking of these Elements does not change them into human body as any other food, but is itself changed into them, as best always overpowers worst, in the manner iron, when in contact with fire becomes fire, and not fire turns into iron. He insists on a quite concrete and realistic understanding of St. Paul's words, "you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor. 12:27), and goes on to explain that the faithful, through His Blood, live already the life of Christ and are truly united to Him as Head and are clothed in His Body. Therefore, he goes on, there is nothing unnatural that Holy Mysteries should here denote the Church (Interpretation of Divine Liturgy). In other words, the Eucharist is an ontological revelation about the Church: the latter is, so to speak, visibly manifested in Holy Communion. According to Cabasilas, the Sacraments point forward to the Church in the same manner as the heart, to bodily members, the root of a tree, to its boughs, grapevine to grapes. Communion with God, i.e., man's union with Him in the Eucharist, is the foundation of, and the condition for, discovering the other side to Holy Communion. Eucharistic communion is real and ontological unity as well as realisation of organic unity of life in Christ, bringing the participants in it into closer relationship with each other and deeper fellowship in Christ. Partnership among communicants is ontologically linked with ecclesiology, for the Eucharist is only conceivable in the Church and exists in it. It is for the communicants to become fellow members to each other that He has commixed Himself with us and dissolved in us His Body (St. John Chrysostom - Homily XLVI on Jn. 6:41,42). That is to say, the fellowship of the faithful is a direct sequel of their communion and union with Christ in the Eucharist.

Unity of theandric life opens up for the faithful who become, in the words of St. Symeon the New Theologian and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, of one Body and one Blood with Christ (Homily 45 - Mystagogical Homilies, 4:1,3), in virtue of, and to the degree of, their union with their Lord and Saviour. "Human separation and exclusion is overcome, and the faithful become fellow members in Christ and therefore as if members of one body to each other. A new and universal ("Catholic") humanity is being set up, the Christian people. As St. Symeon says, all is One Christ, as a single body out of many members (G. Florovski, Evkharistia i sobornost, Put, 19, Paris, 1929, p.8).

Hence Communion as finalisation of the Eucharist makes manifest in a visible way the Church and its members' union with God as well as

between themselves. The Eucharist does not just bring together in a human way friends or people thinking in the same way: united are members of one and the same Church, the one Body of Christ. The Eucharist is often referred to as the Sacrament of the Church in the process of becoming, its self-realisation and actualisation. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Church whereby every Christian is included, through his union with Christ, into the unity of the whole Church, and the Sacrament whereby the Church is realised as the source of the Kingdom of God here and now (Bishop Alexander, O knige prot. A. Schmemmanna o kreshchenii, Paris 1976, p. 57). Holy Communion is the most effective means of communication with the God of love and peace and at the same time the actualisation of the Church as the Body of Christ which is one, as we all partake of the one Bread 1 Cor. 10:17) (Archpr. Prof. L. Voronov, Osushchestvlenie primirenia v zhizni i deiatelnosti Tserkvi, BT, 6, Moscow 1971, p. 178).

Eucharistic celebration taking place within Divine Liturgy is common action of the Church as a whole - common celebration and community prayer. The whole Church is praying, and prayers are being offered for the whole Church. In this prayer action the celebrant's prayers intermingle, alternating, with those of the faithful. The whole congregation prays with the priest. Almost all eucharistic prayers have a dialogical structure. Every eucharistic prayer offered by the priest is confirmed and sealed by the people's Amen. It is of great significance that in one of the earliest descriptions of the Eucharist dwells on the meaning of this Hebrew word, explaining it as "Let it be". Amen when pronounced by the faithful signifies not only their approval of the priest's words and actions: it is also their active appropriation of them, organic and conscious participation by all and every member of the Church in its general celebration and its prayer. St. John Chrysostom is quite definite in stating that at the very consummation of the terrible Mysteries the priest prays for the people and so does the people for the priest; the very words, "And with thy spirit" mean precisely that; the prayers of thanksgiving are also in common (Homily XVIII on 2 Cor. 8:16).

This common praying represents not only prayerful unity of all the faithful now living, the congregation, and the priest - but also of the Church in Heaven - the saints and the "faithful departed" as well as the whole of angelic host. The very form of the eucharistic prayers is witness to its community character: "With these blessed powers, O Lord Who lovest mankind, we sinful pray, saying..." (Liturgy of St. Basil the Great). Consolidation of all in eucharistic prayer is quite natural and regular, and there is no reason to doubt the reality of this fellowship. As St. John Chrysostom says, No wonder that the faithful call out together with the priest when he offers these sacred songs together with the very Cherubim and celestial powers (Ibid.).

While the external part of eucharistic celebration is performed by a bishop or a presbyter, it is really accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In fact, only the lips which speak the consecratory prayer are the priest's, but the effective power comes from the Lord (Bishop Feofan, Sobranie pisem, Letter 629, f. 4, Moscow 1899, p. 103). Christ the Saviour is the unseen High Priest and at the same time, the Sacrifice: "For Thou art the Offered and Who brings offering, Who accepts and is given, O Christ our God" (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom).

The Eucharist as Sacrifice is offered by the Lord on behalf of the Church and therefore it may also be called the Sacrifice of the Church, as a theandric organism headed by Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit (Archpr. Prof. L. Voronov, Evkharistia, BT, 21, Moscow, 1980, p. 65).

The celebrant presiding over eucharistic assembly presents the offering not only on his own behalf, but also on behalf of the whole Church, all the faithful, the congregation "praying with us" and "serving Thee in love" (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom). Chrysostom states that not just the single priest, but all the faithful offer thanksgiving

ing (Homily XVIII on 1 Cor.8:16). There is no opposing priest to the people: it is the whole congregation of the faithful that unites in worship around the celebrant. In fact, the priest prays: "And we also offer to Thee this bloodless worship of word, and ask, pray and exceedingly implore Thee: send down Thy Holy Spirit upon ourselves and these Gifts here presented", while the people "with one voice" seal this prayer of invocation with their assent: "To Thee we sing, Thee we praise, Thee we thank... and pray to Thee..." (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom). This assent testifies to the indissoluble unanimity and identity in prayer of all Church members.

While offering prayers the priest does so on behalf of the whole Church and in the name of the assembly of the faithful. The whole Church speaks in the priest's voice. In offering the eucharistic prayer the Church congregation in a real way conceives itself as one whole, the one living Body of Christ in which various members are distinguishable and their voices heard. The 'we' in prayers is not just grammatical plural. It first of all signifies spiritual unity of the Church as it is present at the Liturgy and the indissoluble community character of the invocation. "O Thou Who hast granted us these common and concordant prayers...", the Church says in one of the eucharistic prayers. For the faithful's prayer should be "symphonic" and offered "in one voice and from one heart". It is not just a matter of individual - personal and isolated - prayers being summed up. Every prayer going to make up the whole should be freed from its personal particularism, ceasing to be just individual and becoming general, Church community prayer (G. Flo-rovski, *Evkharistia i sobornost*, pp. 10-11).

The emphasis on general and united prayer should not be interpreted as disparagement on the Church's part of the particular effort in prayer by its individual members. On the contrary, it constantly calls on the faithful to practise just that. In celebrating the Eucharist, the Church strives to mention by name in prayer all of its members, the whole Church, both visible and invisible, the saints and the sinners, the living and the dead. This multitude of names is full of its special significance. The Eucharistic commemoration of the living and the faithful departed as fulfilment of the wish, indeed the obligation, by the faithful to pray for their next of kin, would seem to embrace the whole Church in its spiritual unity and individual variety, thus confirming and sanctifying every individual in the Church's conciliar body. But it takes more than just individual prayer to effect consecration. This prayer finds its fulfilment in common eucharistic prayer, and this consecratory power goes to strengthen ontological consolidation of the faithful in Christ and in His Body, as the Saviour Himself said in His High Priest's prayer: "That they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may become perfectly one" (Jn. 17: 21, 23). This union of the faithful - so much divided and isolated - in the image of the Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity, could be brought about only in Christ in the oneness of His Body, in communion of His Chalice and his love of humans.

In the Eucharist it is after fulfilling the call to "love each other" that we may pray: "unite us all to one another, the communicants of the same Bread and Chalice, into the fellowship of the one Holy Spirit..." (Liturgy of St. Basil the Great). And every time as the Eucharist is being celebrated, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father" pours over the faithful, and in Holy Communion the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit brings them together in a union of love. St. John Chrysostom calls this "most holy feast" a bond of love stronger and more intimate than that of kinship (Homily XII on Acts 18:18).

The Eucharist is the mysterious foundation and enactment of the Church's unity in Christ - unity of the whole Church, both on earth and in Heaven. By Holy Communion its living and dead members are united in Christ. Nicholas Cabasilas says that both the living and the dead

generations partake of this Bread and this Chalice, each in its own manner (Interpretation of Divine Liturgy. Thus gone is the division brought about by death, and barrier are torn down and the dead join the living in eucharistic communion at the Lord's feast. The external and visible sign of this unity - the Holy Paten with the commemorative particles around Christ the Lamb in the Sacred Host, sacrificed by cross-shaped cuts, represents in this way the Church which embraces the heavenly and the earthly. This is more than a simile or image, not just symbolism, but a mystic and metaphysical realism.

An almost physical intimacy and as if direct contact between the saints, members of the heavenly Church, and members of the Church on earth is realised in holy relics which according to Church rules and following an ancient custom are laid into the foundation of the Altar and into the antimension, or the corporal upon which the Eucharistic Sacrament is celebrated. It is in the Eucharist and only in it that the whole Church could be united in this way. In it, "the powers of Heaven celebrate with us" accompanying the priest, as the Entrance prayer of the Liturgy says, "Grant us that this our entrance be accompanied by the entrance of holy angels concelebrating with us and glorifying Thy mercy". All - "the spirits of the faithful departed", "the lightning-bright assembly of Heaven", the just who "achieved love" here on earth, and the martyrs who "suffered in the good way and were crowned", the confessors of faith, and the whole "host of saints", or all of the dead, and we unworthy sinners - constitute a single body, belonging to the one Church, and come together in grace-endowed prayer before the throne of the One God of Glory (G. Florovski, Dom Otchi, Put, 7, Paris, 1927, p. 73).

By bringing together members of the whole Church the Eucharist engenders in them one soul and body (cf. Acts 4:32). Christ abides in them and so do they in Christ. But Christ's presence is the presence of God in His essence and His wholeness. This is why Christ's presence means the fulness of the Church is present. In the Eucharist, yesterday and today, always and everywhere the fulfilment of the plenitude of the Church is realised and perceived "in all fulness of its unity and in all unity of its fulness" (Archpr. Prof. N. Afanassiev, Trapeza Gospodnia, Paris, 1952, p. 87).

SUMMARY

The Eucharistic Aspect of the Church's Nature

- 1 Being ontologically bound to the Sacrifice on the Calvary, the Eucharist is the culmination in its intensity of the mystical life of the Church and within the Church. The whole of the faithful's church life is focussed in it, sanctified and completed in it, as the fulness of Divine presence is at its greatest in the Eucharist.
 - 2 The Eucharist is the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. The Church, in St Paul's words, is the Body of Christ. By partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ every Christian is therefore confirmed as member of His mystical Body, the Church while all Christians in general, as the mystical Body of Christ. "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one Bread" (1 Cor 10:17). In this, the eucharistic nature of the Church is realised and fulfilled.
 - 3 The Eucharist is an ontological revelation about the Church Communion which completes the Eucharist makes manifest the Church as well as communication of the members of the whole Church with God and with each other.
 - 4 Celebrating the Eucharist is stipulated by the very existence of the Church. As there is no Eucharist outside the Church, there could be no Church without the Eucharist.
 - 5 The Eucharist celebrated during Divine Liturgy is the common action of the Church as a whole, common service, common and community prayer by all members of Christ's mystical Body - of the Church both in Heaven and on Earth.
 - 6 In the Eucharist which reunites in itself all the members of the Church, Christ Himself is present. Christ's presence of God in His essence (Jn 1:16) and wholeness.
- Thus all of the Church is really manifested and seen in the Eucharist.