

# A House Divided: The Eastern Churches – Catholic and Orthodox

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## Introduction and Scope of the Chapter

At the Last Supper, after Jesus had spoken of the many mansions in the Father's house, he also prayed "that all may be one . . . that they may also be one in us" (John, 17.21). This, however, is not the case. There are divisions in the Father's house, and what once were "sister churches" now seem to be scarcely on speaking terms. The disunity within the originally unified universal Church is a scandal both within and outside the Christian community. History reveals when the divisions occurred and the subsequent attempts to heal them, but theology (how Christians think and speak about God) and ecclesiology (how the Church might be organized and lead) repeatedly appear as seemingly insurmountable obstacles to union. Theology and ecclesiology have led to major divisions: in the West (e.g., the Protestant and Anglican Churches from the Church of Rome); and, in the East (e.g., the Assyrian and the Oriental Orthodox Churches from the early Church, and, later on, the Eastern Orthodox Churches from Rome, and, in some cases, from one another).

This chapter gives an overview of eastern Christian Churches, Catholic and Orthodox: who they are; when and why they separated; salient issues impeding reunion; and, efforts in the "ecumenical movement."<sup>1</sup> Of the latter, there have been many, more than this brief article should dare to attempt. To illustrate one aspect of the current efforts toward union between Eastern Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, the author draws upon his personal acquaintance with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic

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<sup>1</sup>The Vatican II Ecumenical Council defined the ecumenical movement as "activities and enterprises which . . . are started and organized for the fostering of unity among Christians. . ." – such as eliminating offensive words and actions, engaging in dialog, and collaborating in projects for the common good (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, art. 4).

Church and some of its attempts to bridge the divisions with its sister Churches in the Orthodox communion.<sup>2</sup>

The main point of this chapter is to show that the theological issues usually given as the reasons for divisions do not carry the weight they once did. The main reasons for continued separation are ecclesiological – issues of jurisdiction and governance – and in this regard it is not a matter of “one side coming over to the other,” but of both sides recognizing and respecting – and accepting – the truth of the other. There is a case to be made for the Eastern Catholic Churches to be able to stand with their Orthodox siblings – even to the extent of celebrating of the Eucharist together. Likewise, there is a case to be made for recovering and reinstating modes of Church governance that prevailed in the universal Christian Church before the rise of the monarchical papacy in the second millennium. In other words, it is not simply a case of the Orthodox returning to or “reuniting” with the Roman Catholic communion,<sup>3</sup> but of that communion rediscovering its original roots and embracing its Eastern Orthodox siblings.<sup>4</sup> To move in such directions requires that the Roman Catholic Church, and “the Vatican” in particular, reconsider how the primacy of Peter (also recognized by the Orthodox) is defined and exercised. There are many, even within the Roman Catholic Church, who think it should and must move in different directions. This chapter indicates some of the possible directions – for the Roman Catholic Church in general and the Eastern Catholic Churches in particular. It is intended as a brief introduction to the complexities of any efforts for bridging the gaps between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches. Although it is written primarily from the Roman Catholic perspective, it does reflect salient Orthodox thoughts and feelings about reunification.

## Both Sides of the Bridge

It is worth remembering that *pontiff* comes from the Latin “pontifex,” which means bridge maker. It is ironic, however, that for the Orthodox, the manner in which Roman Pontiffs have exercised their claim to universal jurisdiction are anything

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<sup>2</sup>Interested readers are directed to the author’s article, “Many Mansions: East and West in the Roman Catholic Communion,” for an overview of the 19 Eastern Catholic Churches and their history within the Roman Catholic Church. For a much more comprehensive and in-depth study, readers should consult Roberson (1999) and Saato (2006).

<sup>3</sup>In this article, *Roman Catholic Church* means the totality of *all* the Churches, anywhere, who are in full ecclesiastical communion with the Church of Rome. It currently includes 20 Churches; the Church of Rome plus 19 Eastern Catholic Churches. The *Roman Catholic communion (of Churches)* signifies the same reality as *Roman Catholic Church*, i.e., 20 Churches. The word *communion* is used to emphasize the plurality and interdependence of these Churches.

<sup>4</sup>A striking (but, unfortunately, unique) symbol of this mentality and behavior occurred in 1975 in the Sistine Chapel during a Mass commemorating the lifting of the mutual excommunications of 1054, when Pope Paul VI unexpectedly rose, knelt, and kissed the feet of Metropolitan Meliton, the envoy of the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch. Meliton, when prevented by Paul from reciprocating, kissed the Pope’s hand instead (Papas, 2006).

but bridge makers; their claims and actions are the major source of the division. In a similar vein, the Orthodox also view the Eastern Catholic Churches as being unfaithful to their authentic traditions; in uniting with Rome, they “left” orthodoxy. As such, they remain impediments to church union.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Orthodox may not see them as bridges, the Eastern Catholic Churches have been charged with fulfilling a role in promoting Christian unity, which was a major goal of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Its Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) addresses the divisions both in the West and in the East, and its Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches states: “The Eastern Churches in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome have a special role to play in promoting the unity of all Christians, particularly Easterners. . .” (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, art. 24).<sup>6</sup>

Our concern here, therefore, is with the East, with those Churches in the Roman Catholic communion that have a “sister” Eastern Orthodox Church. Between these counterparts, there is an affinity that provides a broad basis for ecumenical dialogue. Despite divisions and differences, they have commonalities and, usually, shared origins that can facilitate efforts toward reunion. Except for the Italo-Albanian and the Maronite Churches, which never left the Roman Catholic communion, and the Hungarian Church, which grew in the –fifteenth to sixteenth centuries out of various groups of Orthodox from neighboring countries, the 16 other Eastern Catholic Churches<sup>7</sup> have an identifiable counterpart among the 40 distinct Orthodox Churches listed by Roberson (1999). Table 1 gives a “concordance” of these Orthodox Churches and their Eastern Catholic “sister” Churches. The table indicates their communions, dates of founding and, for the Catholic Churches, of their union – or most recent reunion – with the Church of Rome.

The reader will note that only three of the Eastern Catholic Churches do not have a time when they “left” the Orthodox communion and “came over” to Rome. Sixteen of the 19 Eastern Catholic Churches have their origins within the Catholic communion but at some point “left” the Roman communion and became part of the Orthodox communion. In some instances, an Orthodox Church broke off from an existing Catholic Church; e.g., the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church was founded in 1938 by a group that parted from the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church over the issue of mandatory celibacy for Eastern Catholic priests in the United States (cf., Barriger, 1985; Kaszczak, 2007; Paska, 1975). Most Churches today will acknowledge that whenever and for what-

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<sup>5</sup>Conversely, some Orthodox “left” the Roman Catholic Communion and saw this, not as a betrayal, but as preserving the truth, e.g., the formation of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the United States of America in 1938 (Berringer, 1985).

<sup>6</sup>All references to the documents of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council are from Abbot (1966).

<sup>7</sup>The chapter follows the official list of all the self-governing Churches in the Vatican’s *Annuario Pontificio* (cf. Roberson, 2008a).

**Table 1** A Correspondence of the Orthodox Churches and the Eastern Catholic Churches

| The Main Orthodox Church Communion<br>(Dates of initial separation from Catholic<br>Communion) | ↔ The 19 Eastern Catholic Churches<br>(Dates of reunion with Catholic<br>Communion) <sup>a</sup>  |
|--|---|
| The Assyrian Church of the East (> 431)  | ↔ Chaldean Catholic Church (1830)<br>↔ Syro-Malabar Catholic Church (> 1599)  |
| <b>The Oriental Orthodox Churches (&gt; 451)</b>   |   |
| The Armenian Apostolic Church  | ↔ Armenian Catholic Church (1742)   |
| The Christian Coptic Orthodox Church   | ↔ Coptic Catholic Church (1741)   |
| The Eritrean Orthodox Church   | ↔ Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic Church (1961)   |
| The Ethiopian Orthodox Church  | ↔ Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic Church (1961)   |
| The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch  | ↔ Syrian Catholic Church (1782)   |
| The Malankara Orthodox Church  | ↔ Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (1930)   |
| <b>The Eastern Orthodox Churches (&gt; 1054)</b>   |   |
| The Albanian Orthodox Church   | ↔ Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church (1939)   |
| The Bulgarian Orthodox Church  | ↔ Bulgarian Byzantine Catholic Church (1861)  |
| The Orthodox Church of Greece  | ↔ Greek Byzantine Catholic Church (1911)<br>Hungarian Byzantine Catholic Church<br>Italo-Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church<br>Maronite Greek Catholic Church |
| The Antiochian Orthodox Church   | ↔ Melkite Greek Catholic Church (1724)  |
| The Orthodox Church of Romania   | ↔ Romanian Greek Catholic Church (1698)   |
| The American Carpatho-Russian<br>Orthodox Greek Catholic diocese<br>of the United States       | ↔ Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church (1646)  |
| The Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church   | ↔ Slovak Greek Catholic Church (1646)   |
| The Ukrainian Orthodox Churches (5) <sup>b</sup>   | ↔ Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (1596)  |
| The Macedonian & Serbian Churches  | ↔ “Yugoslavian” Greek Catholic Church (1777)  |

<sup>a</sup> Roberson (1999).

<sup>b</sup>1.) The U.O.C of the USA and Diaspora; 2.) The U.O.C of Canada; and, in Ukraine; 3.) The U.O.C – Moscow Patriarchate, 4.) The U.O.C-Kyivan Patriarchate, and 5.) The Ukraine Autocephalous Orth. Church.

ever reasons the separations occurred, they contradict the prayer of Jesus “that all may be one.” The ecumenical movement, therefore, still exists, and efforts toward reconciliation and reunion continue. Those who engage in ecumenical dialogues know very well that, regardless of who “broke away” from whom, and despite the circumstances, there are wounds on both sides that may be opened, and unresolved issues between parties will reappear. As in any kind of conflict resolution, in ecumenical discussions, each party should be aware of the issues, be sensitive to and respectful of the other party’s position and feelings, and admit to any past and present responsibility for the separation.

This then leads to asking: what are some of the issues to be aware of; what are the kinds of ecumenical efforts occurring between the Churches; and what can religious education offer to help resolve any issues and promote such efforts? Let us look at the Churches in Ukraine for some examples.

## Divisive Issues

There are many. One tends to think that they will be doctrinal or theological, but this need not always be the case. It can depend on the Churches involved. For example, the Eastern Catholic Church and the three Orthodox Churches in Ukraine have had to wrestle with the issue of Church property. With the liberation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (and others) in 1989, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church began reclaiming some of the Church property confiscated by the Soviets in 1945 and given over to the Orthodox. This marked “the beginning of deteriorating relations between the Catholic and Orthodox churches” (La Civita, 2007, p. 19). Most of the property disputes have since been resolved,<sup>8</sup> but it still is an issue to be aware of and sensitive to. Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), after mentioning the over one thousand Orthodox communities that registered as Greek Catholic when allowed to do so after 1989, added: “I can understand the (feelings of) the Russian Orthodox Church. . . It is a wound for the Russian Orthodox Church which is very difficult to heal” (RISU, 2004, p. 28). The Cardinal, however, asserted the right of the UGCC to exist and to reclaim the confiscated property. While wounds are healing, dialogue continues.

Another issue in Ukraine is that of territoriality, jurisdiction, or “who should be in charge here?” Which Eastern Church can now claim to be the “Kyivan Church,” the Church of Ukrainians? There are four today in Ukraine: (1) the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, (2) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate (which was dominant under the Soviets), (3) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyivan Patriarchate (which broke off from the Moscow Patriarchate in 1992), and (4) the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (which left the Moscow Patriarchate in 1989). The three Orthodox Churches, moreover, are divided among themselves, with the heads of the latter two (3 & 4) claiming the title of “Patriarch of Kyiv.” Add to this considerable problem the fact that in August 2005, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church moved its see from Lviv to Kyiv and changed the title of its head from “Major Archbishop of *Lviv*” to “Major Archbishop of *Kyiv* and *Halych*.”<sup>9</sup> This results in there being four Eastern Churches with Kyiv as their center and each having jurisdiction over their members throughout Ukraine. Is it possible, desirable, to have only one Church in Ukraine for all the faithful of the Byzantine tradition? Should all become “Orthodox” or all become “Catholic”? Some Orthodox have argued that the Ukrainian Catholics should be either Orthodox or “Latin Rite,” either under a Patriarch of Ukraine (Kyiv) or under the Patriarch of the West (Rome). This position recalls the historical attempts to “latinize” the Eastern Churches.<sup>10</sup> Archbishop Husar, reflecting the position of the UGCC, says:

<sup>8</sup>In 2004, Major Archbishop (and Cardinal) Husar, head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, said disputes still existed in about 25 places in eastern Ukraine, and over 300 in western Ukraine (RISU, January 26, 2004, 24–26).

<sup>9</sup>*Halych* is the territory of Lviv, the western part of the archeparchy, and Kyiv is the eastern (predominantly Orthodox) part.

<sup>10</sup>cf. Bumbar, “Many Mansions” chapter in this Handbook.

... one cannot tell us: Disappear! Become Latin or convert to the Orthodox confession! We (the UGCC) wish to be Orthodox in the sense of being of this (Byzantine) tradition. ...But we also wish to remain in communion with the Pope of Rome as the successor of Saint Peter, as the symbol of unity. ... we could be a good example of what it means to be Catholic, in the sense of being in communion with the successor of Peter and not losing in any way our religious or national identity (RISU, 2004, p. 40).

This issue does not go away; namely, the question of a Church being in communion with Rome while at the same time maintaining its own particular theology, liturgy, spirituality, and canonical discipline.<sup>11</sup> As mentioned previously, most Orthodox consider ecclesiology – Church governance and canonical discipline – to be their main problem with Rome. They, in effect, are asking: will we be swallowed up and overwhelmed by the ruling hegemony of Rome? Husar is trying to make the case to the Orthodox – and the Church of Rome has to support it – that if the Ukrainian Catholic Church can do it, so can you; be in the Orthodox tradition, and still be in communion with the Bishop of Rome. Any failure or reluctance on the part of Rome to respect the Orthodox as equals, rather than as Churches suffering from some “defects” (*Declaration “Dominus Iesus”*, 2000, p. 17), will be seen as evidence of the West’s desire to dominate and, perhaps, to “convert,” the East.

In the dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox communions there are also theological issues. The first ecumenical councils were very involved with theological disputes, and the first schisms in the universal Church (first, the Assyrian Church of the East and then the 6 Oriental Orthodox Churches) were because of doctrinal disagreements. The issues still remain, but – and this is a sign of hope – they do not seem as divisive as they were originally. Archbishop Husar acknowledged that there may be differences in the emphasis and in wording of Orthodox and Catholic theology, but they are expressing the same faith; essentially, albeit differently:

Our attitude practically is that between the Orthodox and ourselves there are not differences in faith. Questions like purgatory, the Immaculate Conception or the filioque are theological concepts, not faith. And they of course are very different but they are ultimately complementary. ...They represent a different understanding of the gift of faith (RISU, 2004, p. 44).

Such thinking is not unique to those in the Roman Catholic communion, but also can be found in members of the Orthodox communion. In 1994, Pope John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV (Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East) signed a “Common Christological Declaration” (CCD), affirming that Catholics and Assyrians are “united in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God. . .” and they established a common committee to address and remove obstacles to full communion between the two Churches (in Roberson, 1999, p. 18). Moreover, even though the Assyrian Church accepts only the first two ecumenical councils and uses terminology regarding the natures and person of Christ that differs from the terminology of the fourth ecumenical council (in 451), “. . .ecumenical discussions

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<sup>11</sup>These are the four characteristics according to which an individual Church in the Catholic communion is considered to be a self-governing (*sui iuris*) particular church (cf. Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, art. 3, Abbot, p. 374).

held under the auspices of the *Pro Oriente* foundation<sup>12</sup> have concluded that in substance the faith of the Assyrian Church is consistent with the christological teaching of the Council of Chalcedon. . .” (CCD, p. 19). The same has been said regarding the six Oriental Orthodox Churches, that is, “the christological differences between the Oriental Orthodox and those who accepted Chalcedon were only verbal, and. . .in fact both parties profess the same faith in Christ using different formulas” (Roberson, 2008b, p. 4). One, therefore, may conclude that not a few of the theological differences adduced to explain the separation between Orthodox and Catholic Churches never were valid or now are no longer seen as important.

The issue of inserting the phrase *filioque*<sup>13</sup> in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which has been long seen by the Orthodox as papal usurpation of the dogmatic authority proper to ecumenical councils,<sup>14</sup> has also been revisited. After 4 years of discussion, an Orthodox-Catholic theological consultation recommended, *inter alia*, “. . .that the condemnation made at the Second Council of Lyons (1274) of those ‘who presume to deny that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son’ is no longer applicable” (North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, 2003, Part IV), and recognized that there are legitimate *theological* differences between Churches trying to describe the procession of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity.<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting that this theological ambiguity is tolerated even within the Roman Catholic communion. Well before the Second Vatican Council, the Creed in the official liturgical texts of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (which texts are printed in Rome “with the blessing of the Holy Roman Apostolic See”) has the phrase “and the Son” in parentheses, meaning, it can be omitted. This position seems to have been affirmed by Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I when together they recited (in Greek) the Creed without the “*filioque*” at Mass in the Sistine Chapel for the feast of SS. Peter and Paul on June 29, 2008.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Dialogues between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church are sponsored and published by the (Austrian) PRO ORIENTE publishing house; wittine@pro-oriente.at

<sup>13</sup>The word means “. . . and the Son” and refers to the procession of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>It was in 1014 that the Church of Rome, apart from any ecumenical council, added *filioque* to the text of the Creed formulated at the Council of Constantinople (381) and formalized at the Council of Chalcedon (451).

<sup>15</sup>The Consultation, however, left open for further discussion “the *ecclesiological* issues of primacy and doctrinal authority in the Church” (Part IV). Morbey’s assertion (2001) still holds, “It is. . .ecclesiology that ‘really’ divides us.”

<sup>16</sup>It is noteworthy that: (1) the Roman Catholic Church builds its ecclesiology on the primacy of Peter, but celebrates his feast along with that of Paul, his “colleague” – who withstood Peter to his face (Gal. 3:11); and (2) the Ukrainian Catholic Church ranks the feast of Peter and Paul as a “holy day of obligation.” Both these facts might suggest that the Orthodox emphasis on conciliarism/collegiality and the primacy of the particular churches really is an authentic and necessary, albeit neglected, element of Catholic ecclesiology; *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the rule of prayer is the rule of belief).

This is but a recent instance of increasing rapprochement between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. There is a series of other instances. Back in October 1940, when the Italo-Albanian Catholic Church held an inter-eparchial (“diocesan”) synod to unify church discipline and protect its Byzantine traditions they had a delegation from the Italo-Albanian Orthodox Church present. In a similar vein, there were delegations from Orthodox Churches at all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The very day before the closing of Vatican II on December 8, 1965, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras issued a joint declaration in which, as heads of their respective Churches, they clearly stated joint regret for past offensive (sometimes downright insulting) words, the subsequent excommunications, and the “misunderstanding and mutual distrust (which) led in the end to the actual breaking off of ecclesiastical communion” (in Holmes & Bickers, 1983, p. 66). Their regrets were countered with their hopes for the eventual restoration of full communion. One sign of these hopes was the formation of the *Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church* in 1980.<sup>17</sup> Despite setbacks, apparent “dead ends,” and threatened walkouts over the years, the Commission continues its work. It ended its most recent, and very productive, session in October 2007 by issuing the lengthy “Ravenna Document,” which clarifies areas of agreement on ecclesial communion, conciliarity, and authority. The Commission acknowledged that while “primacy at the universal level is accepted by both East and West, there are differences of understanding with regard to the manner in which it is to be exercised. . . .” (Joint International Commission, 2007, 43.2), and went on to add “It remains for the question of the bishop of Rome in the communion of all the Churches to be studied in greater depth . . . the specific function of the bishop of the ‘first see’ in an ecclesiology of *koinonia*” (Joint International Commission, [JIC] 2007, p. 45).

Here, as throughout history, the most controversial issue is ecclesiological; that is, the exercise of “primacy at the universal level in the Church” (JIC, 1993, p. 46). It seems that the Roman Catholic Church resists any rethinking in its current understanding of papal primacy; the pope being “the divinely appointed successor of St. Peter in supreme governance over the universal Church” (Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, art. 3, Abbot, p. 374). On the other hand, the Orthodox Churches resist any dilution of their ecclesiology of *koinonia*, that is, a universal communion of autonomous and autocephalous Churches united in shared acceptance of the Apostolic faith – as defined by all the bishops in an ecumenical council.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>It must be noted that, as a “commission,” the group does not represent the official voices of its respective Churches. It does, however, reflect current thinking and aspirations.

<sup>18</sup>Part of the problem may lie in conflating *primacy* and *infallibility*. The primacy of Rome is accepted – even by the Orthodox – but not all pronouncements of popes are inerrant. *Infallibility* attaches to ecumenical councils and also to the pope, but only *when he speaks, ex cathedra, as the head of all the bishops, the official voice for the universal Church*. Since the declaration of papal infallibility at the Vatican Ecumenical Council (1870), only once has a pope done so – Pius XII in 1950 proclaiming the dogma of the Assumption of Mary – and this just affirmed the centuries-old belief of the Church.



The Orthodox fear (not without historical justification) that communion with Rome can lead to loss of identity, autonomy and authority. In the “Balamand Statement” issued at its VII Plenary Session, the Commission had repudiated “unitism”<sup>19</sup> as a model for seeking Christian unity “because of the way in which Catholics and Orthodox . . . discover each other once again as Sister Churches. . .” (JIC, 1993, p. 12). “Sister Churches” is a long-standing metaphor in the Orthodox communion to describe the relationship between all its Churches, even though they also use the term *patriarch* (from the Greek for “head father”).<sup>20</sup> In the filial relationship, one may be older or have a certain status, but an essential equality remains between siblings. It seems this is what the Orthodox Churches would like to see in the Roman Catholic Church; acceptance of the fact that while “the bishop of one local Church (may) have precedence in a metropolia, a patriarchate, or in the universal Church. . .he still remains primarily bishop of a local Church” (Saato, 2006, p. 157), and respects the authority and autonomy of a “sister church.” Failure to recognize and respect their Churches has been sharply criticized by the Dean of the Orthodox Cathedral in Ottawa:

... the attempted subversion of our Churches by the “agents of Rome” – ONLY took place BECAUSE the Roman Church saw the Orthodox world as “ other”, as “not-subject-to-Rome” . . . “not-truly-Christian.” . . .If Rome had seen us as fellow Christians, sister-Churches, as the local Church wherever we were . . . there would have been. . .no need for persuasion, evangelization, subordination, domination. So the issue is not . . . only one of grievances concerning historical acts – . . . for which we need to repent, too – but one of . . . ecclesiology. “That is truly and only the Church which subsists in communion with the See of Rome,” says Rome. Period. (Morbey, 2001, p. 7)

Both parties – Catholic and Orthodox – seem to be on either side of a Rubicon in the ecumenical movement. Attempts, however, are being made to cross the divide. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) proposed two noteworthy, and remarkable, initiatives regarding: (a) inter-ecclesial concelebration of the Eucharist and (b) simultaneous dual membership in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox communions.

## Inter-ecclesial Concelebration

At the end of the 2006 synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Archbishop Husar had declared that, as a *sui iuris* Church of the Eastern Christian Byzantine tradition, the UGCC was “called to assist in the full and mutual understanding of two

<sup>19</sup>Churches “leaving” Orthodoxy and “joining with” Rome, usually as a result of missionary activity.

<sup>20</sup>The fact that, in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI deliberately stopped using the title “Patriarch of the West” – the only title of the Bishop of Rome that dates back to the time of an undivided Christianity – but continues to use “Supreme Pontiff,” is seen by the Orthodox as another papal assertion of universal jurisdiction over all Churches, and it troubles them (Saato, 2006, p. 157).

Christian traditions – Byzantine and Latin”<sup>21</sup> (Husar, 2006a, 1.1–4). He went on to say that to “promote the holiness of the united people of God” the UGCC should “consciously and consistently work for the uniting of Christians of the Kyivan tradition”<sup>22</sup> (Husar, 2006a, 2.B.2). He suggests that the UGCC and, one presumes, other Eastern Catholic Churches can serve as a bridge over the ecumenical Rubicon.

One month later in Rome, at the Synod of Bishops presided over by Benedict XVI, Archbishop Husar proposed a rather radical notion: concelebration of the Eucharist among Orthodox and Eastern Catholics. His reasoning and question:

If the Liturgy is a *regula fidei* (*lex orandi, lex credendi*); if the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Oriental Churches in communion with the See of Rome and by the Orthodox or Apostolic Churches is identical for both; if there is mutual recognition of the Apostolic Succession of Bishops and, consequently, of priests that celebrate it, then my question is: what more is required for unity? Is there maybe another *fons* or another *culmen* superior to the Eucharist? And if not, why isn't concelebration permitted? (Husar, 2006b, p. 3)

The Archbishop's question went unanswered. He later said “this issue should be widely discussed by both the Catholic and the Orthodox sides . . . inside the Kyivan Church, in its four separated branches” (emphasis added) and that the results of such work could be proposed for other Churches because it is a universal problem that “deals with the nature of the Church and . . . of the Holy Eucharist” (Husar, 2006a, p. 4). The Archbishop, by the way, did not seem to limit the need for dialogue only to Orthodox–Catholic relations, but ended his remarks by proposing that the next Synod (2007) be dedicated to the Eastern Catholic Churches, “in order to grow also in Catholic *intra*-ecclesial communion.”<sup>23</sup>

Archbishop Husar's promoting Orthodox-Catholic concelebration of Eucharist was seconded at the Synod by Sophron Mudriy, Bishop Emeritus of Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukraine). He proposed revising Canon 702 of the Eastern Code, which prohibits concelebration of the Eucharist with “non-Catholic” priests, and suggested that “non-Catholic” perhaps should not include Orthodox priests.<sup>24</sup> He added, “. . . the Eucharist not only expresses the unity of the Church, but produces it. As an element constituting unity, it cannot come afterwards; but must be welcomed as a key moment in order to make our ecumenical aspirations practical,” and “common participation in celebration of the Eucharist” could help realize Jesus' prayer that all may be one (Mudriy, 2006, pp. 3–5). He concluded by saying that discussions on

<sup>21</sup>The “Byzantine tradition” would include all the Christian Churches, both Catholic and Orthodox, whose historical roots are traceable to Constantinople. Likewise, the “Latin tradition” includes the Churches traceable to Rome.

<sup>22</sup>The “Kyivan tradition” would include all the Eastern Christian Churches who can trace their origins back to Prince Volodymyr's baptizing (988), i.e., the UGCC and three Orthodox Churches - in Ukraine and, presumably, the Diaspora.

<sup>23</sup>Unfortunately, the 2007 Synod did not address this issue, thus possibly further convincing the Orthodox that the status of Eastern Christians, even those within the Roman Catholic communion, is not a priority.

<sup>24</sup>The Eastern Code already allows, in cases of pastoral necessity, Catholics to go to an Orthodox Church or Orthodox to a Catholic church to receive Eucharist and other sacraments.

concelebration are not very present “in the official relations between our Churches, but are felt more and more in our daily pastoral work” (6). This seems to suggest that “grassroots ecumenism” might produce changes in thinking and attitudes, and pastoral initiatives will accomplish what talking alone has failed to do.

## Dual Unity

The second possible ecumenical initiative was reportedly proposed by Archbishop Husar: “A system of dual unity, allowing Greek Catholics to rebuild formal links with Orthodoxy while retaining communion with Rome” as “part of a move to create one Ukrainian Church” (Luxmoore, 2008). The Constantinople Patriarchate, however, officially stated its position: “full unity in faith is the precondition for the communion in the sacraments” (RISU, July 7, 2008). Political considerations once again, it seems, triumphed; the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow thought Patriarch Bartholomew<sup>25</sup> was “intensifying efforts to become the Eastern Pope” and this could “lead to schism in the Orthodox world” (Luxmoore, 2008). The first schism could well be in Ukraine if, as reported, “The Cardinal’s proposal is part of a move to create one Ukrainian Church incorporating Greek Catholics (the UGCC) and two of the country’s three rival Orthodox denominations.”

Church structure and governance, therefore, are major problems in *inter*-ecclesial relations. It should also be evident that the Eastern Orthodox Churches themselves have *intra*-ecclesial differences based on structure and governance, cf., the three Orthodox Churches in Ukraine. Some also see similar problems in the Roman Catholic Churches – both the Roman Church and the Eastern Churches. Wilkins decries the withering of a promised collegiality in the universal church: “Structural change is the great unfinished business of Vatican II” (Wilkins, 2008, p. 11), and Greeley bluntly says: “Don’t expect real reform in the Catholic Church until the Roman curia is brought under the control of local bishops” (Greeley, 2008, p. 1). The problem also exists in the Eastern Catholic Churches. Galadza contends: “the structure of the Church now in place throughout large segments of Eastern Catholicism is detrimental to the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of Christ’s Church” (Galadza, 2009, p. 373). The comments of all three recall what the Orthodox often say: the “problem with Rome” is one of ecclesiology – how authority is structured and exercised in the Church. The issues between Orthodox and Catholics and between Eastern and Western Catholics are similar: they revolve around the hegemony of Rome. It exacerbates rifts between Orthodox and Catholics and creates tensions and fault lines within the Roman Catholic communion. What

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<sup>25</sup>The Patriarch of Constantinople, as the “Patriarch of the East” since Chalcedon (451), holds a primacy of “first among equals” among the world’s nine canonical Orthodox Churches. The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest of the nine, and also the mother church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, whose head resides in Kyiv.

can the Eastern Catholic Churches do to heal division in the “Father’s house,” and what can religious educators do?

## Future Agenda

The ecclesial bodies involved are the entire Roman Catholic Church (RCC), the Church of Rome, and the Eastern Catholic Churches. Each of these can effect some change in its interactions with the Orthodox as well as with others in the Roman Catholic communion.

Throughout its history the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has been both a help and a hindrance in efforts toward Church reunion. It has always “welcomed back” the separated Churches, but less often “reached out” to them and admitted its own failings and wrongdoing. It will have to more readily admit that failings in *inter*-ecclesial relations were not simply actions of rogue individuals, but sometimes the actions of the RCC as institution, e.g., the sacking of Constantinople by the Church-sanctioned Fourth Crusade. When, therefore, in 2001 on his visit to Greece, Pope John Paul II asked God to forgive “some sons and daughters of the Roman Church” who had done wrong, the Orthodox did not see this as an apology for the actions of the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, they felt that the Pope should have asked the Orthodox – not just God – for forgiveness of wrongdoing against them (Morbey, 2001). Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in 1965 had expressed mutual regret for the wrong done by the *Churches* on either side. Why, the Orthodox rightly ask, should John Paul II, 36 years later, not be able to say the same thing? The attitude of the RCC has to be consistent and not depend on the personality of the incumbent Pope.

Another thing that must be addressed by the Roman Catholic Church is an attitude, as perceived by the Orthodox, of “imperialism” and self-righteousness, that is, “taking over” other Churches and insisting that it alone is the one true Church<sup>26</sup> and other Christian Churches “suffer from defects” (*Declaration Dominus Iesus*, 2000, p. 17). The RCC has to develop new, more inclusive language and attitudes in defining itself and inter-ecclesial relationships. Moreover, the historical attempts to “latinize” Eastern Churches and the papal pronouncements of “universal jurisdiction” over all Churches still echo in the minds of the Orthodox who so greatly treasure the autonomy/autocephaly of their individual Churches, where “the Patriarch or any other Primate is always a *primus inter pares*”<sup>27</sup> and has no “personal jurisdiction . . . over other bishops” (Alexander Schmemmann, in Abbott, 1966, p. 388). To this end, the RCC might seriously consider the call of Margaret O’Gara, a leading ecumenist and former head of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

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<sup>26</sup>The “Church . . . subsists in the Catholic Church,” and “. . . the Church of Christ survives in the world today in its institutional fullness in the Catholic Church, although elements of the Church are present in other Churches. . .” (*Lumen Gentium*, 8., and footnote 23, in Abbot, 1966, p. 23).

<sup>27</sup>“first among equals”

O’Gara said that for the (Roman) papacy to serve the cause of Christian unity, it must be reformed “in a more pastoral . . . less centralized way, in a way that defends the diversity of the local Churches” (in Allen, 2008, p. 7). The Orthodox would welcome this, but they might have some wariness about two of O’Gara’s specific suggestions for a reformed papacy.

O’Gara’s first suggestion is to remedy “a confusion between papal infallibility and papal primacy, the latter referring to pope’s regular business of governance” (in Allen, 2008, p. 9). In other words, not everything “official” that comes out of Rome is “Gospel truth.” The Orthodox would readily agree with this, but they might still be suspicious of the pope’s “regular (business of) governance” and exercise of primacy, which show little sign of operating in ways that are “less centralized, less authoritarian, and more respectful of the diversity of local churches” (in Allen, 2008, p. 2).

O’Gara’s second suggestion is to reframe *infallibility* so that “Rather than appearing as an unchanging grasp of truth, infallibility could be reinterpreted as the process through which, over time, *the Church* (emphasis added) discerns core teachings of the gospel for its age and culture” (in Allen, 2008, p. 11). Traditional Orthodox theology, with its emphasis on preserving “the one Tradition, the fundamental Christian message” (Ware, 1997, p. 197), may be wary of the Gospel message being discerned for an age or culture.<sup>28</sup> Some Orthodox, however, eschew a “theology of repetition,” and look forward to the Gospel message “assuming new forms” and being “enriched by fresh statements of the faith” (Ware, 1997, p. 198), so this may not be an insurmountable obstacle in dialogue, but it must be tactfully addressed. However it is defined, infallibility must be seen as a characteristic of the universal *Church* for which the Bishop of Rome can speak, in certain, well-defined instances – and apart from which he cannot “speak infallibly.” This is more congruent with an Orthodox understanding of the role of ecumenical councils and synods of bishops. Such an understanding of infallibility of the *Church* must be made evident in papal pronouncements and actions, and any attempts within the RCC to minimize the authority of an ecumenical council (viz., Vatican II) will be seen by the Orthodox as evidence that “Rome” does not value the authority of ecumenical councils or episcopal synods,<sup>29</sup> and really relies only on the person of the Pope to speak for – and to – the other Churches. This is anathema to them. The Roman Catholic Church is making efforts for Church union, but its practices will always speak more persuasively in ecumenical dialogue than its preaching.

One thing the Orthodox Churches closely look at is the position and status of the Eastern Catholic Churches within the RCC: how they are treated in communion with the Church of Rome. If ecumenical efforts are to produce more positive results, the historical record has to be overcome by evidence of real change. For example,

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<sup>28</sup>Recall that *orthodoxos* is Greek, combining *orthos* (“right, true”) and *doxos* (“opinion, praise”). Applied literally, this makes it hard to alter one’s currently held belief system. Ware (1997, p. 197) recalls the bishop at the Council of Carthage (257) who said: “The Lord said I am truth. He did not say, ‘I am custom.’ ”

<sup>29</sup>For an analysis and critique of *collegiality* in the RCC, see Wilkins (2008, June 6).

despite the pronouncements of Vatican II about the rights of the *sui iuris* Eastern Catholic Churches – one of which is a married priesthood – there was initially strong opposition to Ukrainian bishops ordaining married men to the priesthood in Canada and the United States<sup>30</sup> and opposition to married priests persists in the Church of Rome. At the 2005 Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Scola gave the opening speech in which he maintained “profound theological motives” for not ordaining married men. When he was challenged on this by Melkite Patriarch Gregoire III, Cardinal Scola again asserted that “in the Latin Church theological reasons exist” for celibacy (Meichtry, 2005, Oct. 4). Such a bald assertion is insulting to Eastern Catholic Churches – to their many-centuries-old practice and to their married priests. It also insults the Orthodox. They may rightly say that if Rome does not genuinely respect the traditions of the Eastern Catholic Churches, it will not honor ours; despite well-intentioned and high-sounding pronouncements, the attitude of Rome has not really changed and Rome will still determine what should be true for all.<sup>31</sup>

The Eastern Catholic Churches must themselves attend to “the preservation and growth of each individual Church” (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*[OE], p. 4), first, by preserving and promoting their own individual traditions and then by asserting their right and duty “to rule themselves” (OE, p. 5). This includes not only the right to maintain a tradition of married priests but other rights and privileges “which flourished when East and West were in union” (OE, p. 9). Most important among these is the right to self-governance in ways that more closely reflect an eastern, synodal Church structure.

An example of this Eastern structure occurred at the start of Vatican II. The Preparatory Commission of the Council had asked bishops to submit their proposals. Instead of submitting individual responses, the bishops of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church followed their eastern synodal tradition and wrote to the Commission: “We have believed it more useful to give our proposal together, in common. . .” (Taft, 1992, p. 2), thus modeling a collegiality that perhaps helped the Council itself to later espouse.

A second example of Eastern assertiveness, also from the Melkites, came from Maximos IV, their Patriarch. In his opening speech at the first session, he showed that he and the Melkite Church would not go along with the hegemony of the Church of Rome – even “when in Rome” – and in St. Peter’s!

He refused to speak in Latin, the language of the Latin Church, but not . . . of the Catholic Church nor of his. He refused to follow protocol and address “Their Eminences,” the cardinals, before “Their Beatitudes,” the Eastern patriarchs, for in his ecclesiology patriarchs, the

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<sup>30</sup>The Ukrainian Bishop of Toronto who did so after Vatican II was so severely chastised by “Rome” that, according to R. Danylak, the then Chancellor of the diocese, he would “never do it again” (personal communication, August 1979). Over the past decade, however, some Ukrainian bishops in the United States have begun again to ordain married men.

<sup>31</sup>Cardinal Sfeir, The Maronite Patriarch, said that despite problems, clerical celibacy is “the most precious jewel in the treasure of the Catholic Church” (Allen, 2005, p. 4). Such statements by Eastern Catholic hierarchs can only confirm Orthodox fears that their traditions would be suppressed in any communion with Rome.

heads of local Churches, did not take second place to cardinals, who were but second-rank dignitaries of one such communion, the Latin Church. He also urged the West to allow the vernacular in the liturgy, following the lead of the East, “where every language is, in effect, liturgical.” And he concluded, in true Eastern fashion, that the matter at any rate should be left to the local Churches to decide. (Taft, 1992, p. 14)

Patriarch Maximos was affirming the rights and privileges of the Eastern Churches viz. their synodal structure, the place of patriarchs, their liturgical tradition and practices, and their authority for self-determination. He was affirming that these rights were theirs, not by virtue of Rome’s permission but by virtue of ecumenical councils’ decisions and their own Church history. The actions of a U.S. cardinal may have added impetus to his stance. Prior to the Council, the cardinal complained to Maximos that because English was being used in Melkite Eucharistic liturgies in the United States, Latin Rite Catholics would also want to do the same. The cardinal asked Maximos to discontinue use of the vernacular. Maximos “responded with dignity and courtesy, but with great firmness and unambiguous clarity, that the liturgical languages of the Byzantine Church were none of His Eminence’s business” (Taft, 1992, p. 10).<sup>32</sup> Maximos explained his response to the cardinal and his behavior at the Council by saying it was because “the Catholic Melkites had never lost contact with their Orthodox roots . . .” and were able “to discern what is essential (i.e., Catholic) from what is contingent (i.e., Latin) in Catholicism. . .” and become “a counterbalance to Latin Catholic unilateralism” (Taft, 1992, p. 2). Other Melkite bishops at the Council followed Maximos’ lead and by doing so set an example for other Eastern Churches. Years later at the 2005 Synod in Rome, when Archbishop Husar and Bishop Mudriy proposed concelebration between Catholic and Orthodox priests, they were demonstrating (eastern) episcopal authority and challenging the canonical status quo “approved by Rome.”

The direction that the Eastern Catholic Churches should move in has been demonstrated, but such leadership has to be shown consistently, and by all 19 Eastern Catholic Churches. A Byzantine Catholic priest, writing of possibilities for Eastern Catholic liturgy and spirituality, cautions that “little of this potential is bound to be realized – except in discrete communities where bold, intelligent and holy leaders have managed to emerge or retain their positions at the helm” (Galadza, 2009, p. 13). Such leaders, however, have an uphill battle. The very Vatican II document that asserted the right and duty of Eastern Churches “to rule themselves” (OE, p. 5) goes on to say that “The Patriarchs with their synods constitute the superior authority for all affairs of the Patriarchate” and can establish new eparchies or nominate bishops within their territory, but they do so “without prejudice to the *inalienable right of the Roman Pontiff to intervene* in individual cases” (OE, p. 9). This undercuts Eastern Churches’ autonomy and their authority “to rule themselves.”

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<sup>32</sup>Maximos could also have added that even as Patriarch it would be contrary to Eastern Church governance for him to tell another Melkite bishop what to do in this regard.

## *Religious Educators*

Because hierarchical leadership may be hamstrung, religious educators have an even more pressing role in challenging the “ruling hegemony” and in facilitating ecumenical efforts between Eastern Churches. According to Vatican II: “An individual layman, by reason of the knowledge, competence, or outstanding ability which he may enjoy, is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his opinion on things which concern the good of the Church” (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, p. 37). Just as infallibility and the primacy of the Pope of Rome should not be confused, neither should authority and leadership. In the Church, as in any organization, leadership is found not only “at the top” but also in anyone who moves the group in a specific direction – which, if not different, can be at least more determined. True leadership challenges the status quo, going beyond what currently exists. Religious educators, therefore, have a critical leadership role – in educating (fr. *e-ducere* – “to lead out/forth”), not only individuals but also the institution of which they are a part.

Religious educators also have a role in promoting Church unity. Change is the domain of education. Ecumenical efforts depend on changing the behavior, ideas, and language of individuals and the institutions of which they are a part. Religious educators must help clarify the language used in ecumenical dialogue, and be very sensitive to the language they use. They need a working knowledge of the other Churches – their names, numbers, relative size, and distinctive features. One must know at least something about others in order to talk to and relate to them.

Roman Catholic religious educators can also do this within their own communities. They can counterbalance any prevailing hegemony by teaching about the diverse and different, yet equally valid, traditions of all the Eastern Churches – Catholic and Orthodox. They can teach that no one Church is “superior” and others are “inferior,” but that all are “sister/brother” Churches in the Christian family. By so doing, they can foster greater understanding and acceptance of the “other” and, perhaps, of their own traditions. It may also help everyone see that, at least theologically, within the Orthodox and Catholic Churches there truly is more that unites us than divides us; that what once were justifications for separation (e.g., the *filioque*, or the Christological disputes at Chalcedon) have lost much validity and should not obstruct the dialogue.

An increased awareness of the “other” must also obtain between the Eastern Catholic Churches. Melkites and Maronites, Ukrainians and Ruthenians, for example, will profit from learning about the commonalities and the differences between them. Religious educators from one particular Church, therefore, should also be teaching about the traditions of other Eastern Churches, not just their own. Doing so might help reduce the traditional insularity frequently seen in the Eastern Churches, and can enrich the life of a community by bringing new ideas, ways of doing things. To grow and develop further, to move out and beyond (*e-ducere*), requires contact with other ways of thinking and being. By learning more of their own and of other traditions, the Eastern Churches can enrich and develop their own identity and tradition, and enable others do the same. They should follow the model of the



Melkites who, as Patriarch Maximos IV said, “never lost contact with their Orthodox roots, and thus never became closed in on themselves” (Taft, 1992, p. 2). They must present themselves not as ethnic enclaves but as living repositories of a vibrant particular theology, liturgy, spirituality, and discipline that enrich all who are bound together in one baptism (Galadza, 2008).

If the Orthodox Churches see that the traditions of the Eastern Catholic Churches are prized and cherished, and that the Eastern Churches enjoy genuine autonomy in the Roman Catholic communion, progress toward Church unity will be greatly facilitated. It will show that the holy and apostolic Church of Christ can be simultaneously one *and* universal. It will demonstrate that while “a path to the absolute truth and divine purpose is found within this (Roman) rite and Church . . . the same can be said of any other rite and Church within the Catholic communion” (Kania, 2008, p. 9); that both East and West can be equal siblings in “the Father’s house.”

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