

Excerpts from: "Primacy ..and the Unity of the Church"
Paper presented by Professor Demetrios Tselengidis
University of Thessaloniki
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[Editor clarifications in brackets; emphases added]

1) UNITY IN FAITH

The unity of the Church, as we have already suggested, does not constitute an autonomous and abstract dogmatic truth independent of the Church's life. It expresses its self-awareness and its **experience** in the Holy Spirit. The Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, becomes a charismatic sphere, where the unity of the faithful is constituted, lived, and revealed as an icon of the unity of the Triune God. The unity of the faithful consists of the fruit of their participation in the **Uncreated grace of the Triune God** and establishes an expression of life of the one and ever-united Church, as an indivisible unity and perfect communion of persons. Consequently, the theological-ontological presuppositions for the allusion of the faithful to the Triadic unity are found in the creation and founding of the Church as the Body of Christ, in which the faithful become organic members.

The faithful as a dwelling of the Divine Persons, *through grace*, are called to live according to the model of Triadic unity and in this way are to express their communion and participation in the life of the Triune God. In addition, according to the Evangelist John, the treatment of the unity of the faithful according to the model of the the unity of the Divine Persons also constitutes their witness to the world: "*that they may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they may also be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me*" (**John 17:21**).

In the aforementioned hierarchical prayer Christ, according to **Athanasios the Great**, asks His Father for the unity of the faithful according to the model of Their own unity. Of course, here the unity of the faithful is not referring to the nature of the Triune God, because "*in nature only all things are far from Him.*" (**Against the Arians 3.26 BEP 30, p.269**). The unity of the faithful as members of the one and only Church is grounded **not** in nature, **but in the Uncreated deifying Energy** and Glory of the Triune God. The significance of this position is unquestionable, since the hypostatic Truth Himself, in the immediate continuation of the hierarchical prayer, expresses this explicitly: "*And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one, I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me*" (**John 17: 22-23**). In this passage one finds the concise hermeneutical "key" to understanding the foundation in the Holy Spirit of the unity of the Church. That which unites the faithful in the Church, or that which makes the Church one and indivisible, organic, a theanthropic **[Divine-human]** Body, is the **Uncreated sanctifying glory and grace itself of the Triune God**. This Uncreated divinity, which connects and perfects the body of Christ, is charismatically [through the Holy Spirit] made familiar and, in a mystical way, forever remains in the Church liturgically by virtue of Christ, Who is also the Head of the one *theanthropic* **[Divine-human]** Body of the Church (**see Eph. 1: 22-23**). In this body the "I in them" of Christ is accomplished ontologically and charismatically.

Consequently, the necessary prerequisite for our unity with the Triune God in Christ is the charismatic presence of the Holy Spirit active in us. In other words, we are not united with the Triune God on account of our nature, but because of the Holy Spirit (see Athanasios the Great, **Against the Arians 3:25**, BEP 30, 271: "*It is the Spirit then which is in God, and not we viewed in our own selves*"). This charismatic unity of the Church is evident in our agreement in conviction and the existence of the united mind in us (see *Against the Arians 3:23*, BEP 30, 269).

However, if the unity of the Church as a sacramental and theanthropic Body, but also the unity of that the faithful as constituent members of the Church have **between themselves**, according to the model of the unity of the Triune God, is accomplished directly and personally by the Triune God Himself through the Uncreated Energy of the Holy Spirit, then it is easily understandable that the **heterodox** - Roman-Catholics and Protestants - who in no way comprise Churches but are religious communities with an ecclesiastical name, *having changed the Apostolic faith of the Church* in the Triune God through the Filioque and basically not making the distinction between the uncreated essence and uncreated energy in God, set forth an impossible unity (of an ontological and charismatic nature) with the Triune God and with us in Christ.

But also every other attempt at unity with the heterodox which skirts the above-mentioned theological presuppositions for the "*faith once delivered (Jude 1:3)*," is actually impossible. Nevertheless, the delegates of the local Orthodox Churches with their center of coordination (the Ecumenical Patriarchate) appear to have another opinion about the unity of the Church. This is why it is particularly typical that in the first paragraph of the submitted draft of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue with the Roman-Catholics in **Cyprus, in October of 2009**, it is cited that in the agreed upon Joint Statement of **Ravenna (2007)** Roman-Catholics and Orthodox refer to "*the age of the undivided Church*," (See Statement of Ravenna 41). It is clear that this phrasing presupposes for the members of the Joint International Commission that today the undivided Church does not exist. Therefore, today the Church is divided, despite the faith of the Church, which we confess verbally in the Symbol of our Faith. However, this means the falling away from the Church of all those who consciously support all that the Statement of Ravenna contains about the identity of the Church, since it indirectly but clearly does not accept a part of the dogmatic teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council.

However, already much earlier the Roman-Catholics had deviated from the dogmatic teaching of the Second Ecumenical Council with the addition of the Filioque. **The Filioque was conceived and appeared in the West when the experience of the charismatic presence of the Holy Spirit in the ecclesiastical assembly of the Pope's see withdrew.** Essentially, the Filioque was the crystallization of the estrangement from the living experience of the Uncreated grace and Energy of the Triune God, through which immediate and real communion with Man is realized in the chief conveyor of the unity of God and man, that is, in the Church.

Consequently, due to our dogmatic disparity from the Roman-Catholics **there cannot be** - neither actual nor formal - **union with them**. Nonetheless, the strange thing (dogmatically and ecclesiological) is that the **Statement of Ravenna**, consistent with the previous Joint Statements of Munich, Bari, Valaam and Balamand, refers to a common apostolic faith, the common mysteries (sacraments) and the ecclesiastical character of the heterodox. Thus, the false and blasphemous impression is given that with the joint Statement of Ravenna Christ is deceived, Who assured us that branches cut from the vine cannot bear fruit. The members of the Joint International Commission affirm in their statements, that in spite of the heretical divergences, the Roman-Catholics constitute a Church and that they possess genuine sacraments. It is theologically and logically odd that the representatives of the local Orthodox Churches do not realize the enormous dogmatic error of the Roman-Catholics concerning the created nature of their sacraments, an error which literally invalidates the aforementioned claim of the Roman-Catholics, which Orthodox representatives also endorse. The Roman-Catholics themselves assure us with their dogmatic teaching about created grace, that they are empirically devoid of the experience in the Holy Spirit of the Church and of the theanthropic nature of its unity in the Holy Spirit. Consequently, with the existing presuppositions it is completely theologically unwise and pointless for unity of an ecclesiastical nature to be attempted with them. In addition, such unity is practically and completely impossible, since it goes against the theological presuppositions of the Church and the ontological content of its nature.

2) UNITY IN WORSHIP

Any form of unity in the Church, without unity in liturgy and communion, is surely an imperfect union. Unity of the Church itself, as a united body, is mainly a sacramental event. With its [Mysteries], the Church imparts the mystical body of Christ to the people. It combines them and unifies them with the **Head [Christ]** of the Body but **also with each other**. Finally, it makes them one Spirit with the Triune God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, offering them deification (*theosis*) by grace according to their receptivity. This happens dynamically, progressively and endlessly in the uncreated Kingdom of Christ, of the unwaning and unending **eighth day of the eternal age to come**.

The unity of the Church as a whole and the unity of the faithful as members of the Church has its sensible (i.e. of the senses) and **visual manifestation in the Eucharistic gathering** during divine worship, and especially in the faithfuls' participation of Holy Communion. It is precisely then, in proportion to our purity and receptivity, that we commune as in a type of betrothal in the uncreated kingdom of Christ. Then we are actually united together, charismatically, through uncreated deifying grace and energy with the whole Triune God, with the Mother of God, with the bodiless and *noetic* beings, with those that have been found pleasing to God since the ages - reposed, righteous and saints - but also with all the faithful throughout the world, who are organic members of the body of Christ and receptive of His uncreated divine grace. That characteristic sensible experience - through word and sound - of the Eucharistic gathering comes from this, through the celebrant of the Holy Eucharist commemorating, not only the saints that have come before us, but also today's Church leadership during that great moment of the sanctification of the Holy Gifts.

Here, however, we must make a few necessary theological clarifications, since today we are in danger of a suspicious, watered-down, secretive (and I would say, **audacious**) **idolatry**. It is being promoted from all those who - on grounds of expediency - one-sidedly stress the structural expression of the sacraments of the Church, as as if they operate unconditionally, magically and mechanistically, even outside the Church. However, like this the Patristic theory of the sacraments is mistaken for expressions of the Church. The sacraments are the branches of the tree of the Church, the members of its heart, as Saint Nicholas Cabasilas says. They provide the Uncreated unifying power of the Holy Spirit for the realization and experience of the ontological nature of the unity of the faithful members under clear presuppositions.

The unity of the Church is accomplished mystically through uncreated deifying grace and specifically through Holy Communion, but not mechanistically and unconditionally. On the contrary, charismatic union presupposes the faithfuls' purity from sin, their free co-operation and this mindset towards the faith. Moreover, God is glorified correctly in the context of Divine Worship, only when the doxology (glorifying) takes place "with one mouth and one heart." This though presupposes not only one faith, but also one life in the Holy Spirit. This is theologically obvious, because God as self-glorified, can actually be glorified by us, only when He Himself acts in us through His Holy Spirit. However, this happens only when we have His Own Spirit working in us, which we received during our own personal Pentecost, through Holy Christ.

However, when the leadership of the Church happens to have another way of thinking, which is contrary to the dogmatic conscience of the Church as expressed in the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils, then clearly the unity of the leadership with the body and the Head of the Church appears to be functionally problematic.

Such a situation is particularly problematic for the unity of the Church in worship, when certain leaders, who are commemorated in the Holy Eucharist, happen to believe, to live and to behave in a way incompatible with the letter and the spirit of the holy canons of the Ecumenical Councils. When it happens that the leadership of the Church prays with the heterodox and accepts, be it even tacitly, the joint statements that the their representatives

sign with the heterodox, that is when they indirectly, but clearly, consider the heterodox to comprise churches - in the ecclesiological sense of the word - and therefore to have genuine sacraments, in spite of the fact that the heterodox themselves dogmatically deny the uncreated nature of the grace and the energy of the sacraments, and in this way literally emptying the sacrament of the Church and its theanthropic nature reducing it to a purely human organism, then surely the unity of certain leaders with the Church itself is compromised to some degree. Then the aspired unity of this leadership is basically spent on the created and human level. Then this unity does not actually include the Triune God, since the Roman-Catholics, with whom they are trying to unite, continue to dogmatically deny the uncreated nature of divine grace, which being divine ontologically bridges the chasm between the uncreated Triune God and created man. Thus, holy communion between the uncreated God and created man is basically done away with. But when it happens that our life as members of the Church is not compatible with the mindset of the faith of the Church, then our apparent structural unity during divine worship is external and superficial. Clearly, it is not that which Christ asked for from the God the Father in His hierarchical prayer, since this unity does take into serious consideration the theological presuppositions and those inspired by Holy Spirit for its experience in all judgement.

Unfortunately, the Calendar change, along with the theologically problematic ecumenical initiatives within the Orthodox Church, have become a cause of turmoil for unity in worship and administration between the new-calendarists and the Orthodox old-calendarists zealots. We are of the opinion that this problem should be taken up theologically and lovingly by the leadership of our Church, as long as the Orthodox faith is common among us. Recorded history after 1920 can mutually help in self-assessment regarding the problem of ecumenism with the goal of regaining complete unity and communion between us.

3) UNITY IN ADMINISTRATION

This refers specifically to the canonical and organizational unity of the Church and essentially has its theological foundation in the royal-pastoral office of Christ. In particular, the unity in the administration of the Church is immediately connected to its traditional structure, to its ontology of an Eschatological nature, but also its identity of a Charismatic nature. The established heresies and the established ecclesiastical schisms are proof of a departure from its (the Church's) institutional acceptance.

The **visible unity of the Church itself is expressed, as we have already said, mystically during Divine Worship** and more specifically in **Holy Communion**. However, the visible unity of the Church is unquestionably, equally and timelessly apparent in the eminent administrative expression of the Church, according to the Ecumenical Councils. In them, the mindset of the *theanthropic* **[Divine-human]** Head of the Church is articulated synodically and infallibly - in all exactitude. The Head [CHRIST] expresses the whole Triune God, since the will of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is one. It is exactly this nature of the content of the synodal expression of the whole Church which is preserved in the distinct formulation of these councils, as is e.g. the expression of the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem: "*it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us*" (**Acts 15:28**) or as in the Ecumenical Councils: "*following the Holy Fathers till now....*" Thus, the one mindset of the leadership of the Church is safeguarded by the mindset of the Holy Spirit, which is active in the many members of the hierarchy of the Church and this is objectively attested to, provided the hierarchs expressed themselves humbly, that is "*following the Holy Fathers.*" This means that each council of bishops is obligated to agree with and "follow the Holy Fathers." Otherwise, whatever decision it makes is not only institutionally but essentially in abeyance.

A "key" for ensuring the genuineness of the mind of the Church, which the administration of the constituent local Churches or whole Church expresses, is the dogmatic conscience of the members of the Church. In this way the dogmatic conscience of the members of the

whole Church proves to be an ultimate criterion of the truth. In the final analysis the ecumenicity of a pan-Orthodox council is judged unerringly by the conscience of the members of the Church. From what was stated above, it is clear that the unity of the administration of the Church is assured institutionally, not mechanistically and democratically. It is assured only in the Holy Spirit. This basically means that unity in Church administration has ontological presuppositions, and more specifically, presuppositions set down by the Holy Spirit. Namely, it presupposes the ontological unity of the faithful in the mystical body of Christ and [presupposes] the experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit in all judgement, which as an uncreated deifying grace unites the mystical body and bridges the created members with the uncreated divinity of the theanthropic Head of the mystical body of the Church, charismatically and existentially (ontologically). This means it is theologically legitimate and spiritually incumbent for any of the faithful to question the institutionally expressed synodal decision of the highest administration of the Church, as long as with certainty he finds that the particular decision is not in "keeping with the Holy Fathers." It should be noted that while holding such a position, a person remains united with the Head of the mystical body, and also with the whole Church.

The unity of the Church in its administration is not ensured mechanistically through the institution of Synodality which is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It most certainly presupposes that the hierarchs participating in the synod have a mindset according to the Holy Spirit. Moreover, a true member of a council (synod), in the strict sense and mainly according to the spirit of the word^{liii}, is he who is following the Way, which in this case is the hypostatic Way, Christ. He is with Him, not simply out of custom or institutionally, but chiefly in an essential and active way only in the Holy Spirit, only when he truly has the "mind of Christ." From what was said above it is clear that the unity of the Church, especially in its administration, is not secured by the president and "first" at whatever council.

If, however, we think about each first or presiding bishop in the administrative hierarchy of the Church as an expresser and guarantor of its unity - as much in the first millennium (e.g. the Pope, as the Roman-Catholics would like) as in the second millennium (in the sphere of Orthodoxy, the Ecumenical Patriarch, as it seems from some of his statements as of late) - then inevitably we will have to accept that even some leaders having been condemned as heretics, just as much in the West as in the East, secured the unity of the Church with their heresy, while they were institutionally in their administrative position. However, this would mean that unity was secured mechanistically, by default of the unsound personal faith of those leaders. But it would mean still that the unity of the Church does not have an ontological nature confirmed by the Holy Spirit, or that the Church can exist divided or in heresy. Something like this comes in complete conflict with the dogmatically defined faith, which we express in the Symbol of Faith with "one Church."

The Joint Statement of Ravenna (2007, &41) appears to indirectly support, though it is clear, the institution of primacy over the whole Church, despite its different understanding in the East and the West during the first millennium. As far as we know, in the relevant canons of the Ecumenical Councils there is mention of "place of honor" and not of primacy in administrative authority on a global level. This reference to "first" (see 34th Apostolic canon, 2nd and 3rd canon of the Second Ecumenical Council and 28th canon of the 4th Ecumenical Council) restricts his administrative responsibilities to a strictly local and eparchial level.

We are of the opinion that it is not theologically or patristically permissible (see Athanasios the Great and St. Gregory Palamas) to have a theological dialogue with the Roman-Catholics about the primacy of the Pope over the whole Church, even during the first millennium, while the Roman-Catholics are not members of the Church, as they firmly hold to their heretical stances till this day about the Filioque and created divine grace, along with the primacy and infallibility of the Pope.

4) THE ERRONEOUS THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF PAPAL PRIMACY

If we approach papal primacy and the Filioque in a historical-dogmatic manner, we see that their appearance and development are **concurrent**. **Both of these dogmatic deviations go together historically.**

The historical starting point of papal primacy is found in the 4th century, both in the West and in the East. Already in the Western Council of 371 it is supported that councils without the consent of the Pope are invalid. In the East, St. Basil the Great mentions the "**arrogant papal brow,**" while the records of the Ecumenical Councils inform us about the papal claims the papist representatives conveyed until the 8th Ecumenical Council (879/880) under Patriarch Photius. It is internationally confirmed by history that the Orthodox East never recognized the primacy of the bishop of Rome in administrative jurisdiction and authority, neither in theory nor in practice, but only a "position of honor." This means that he was the first among equals, "primus inter paribus" (see 28th canon of the 4th Ecumenical Council). Finally, the Orthodox East's refusal to submit to the claims of the West concerning a primacy of authority over the whole Church became the reason the papists broke away from the Church in 1054.

In the attempts for union which followed, the West always tried to impose its monarchical type of ecclesiology on the East, based on the idea that the Pope should always be considered the only visible head of the Church.

The dogmatic safeguarding of papal primacy formally happened at the First Vatican Council (1870). At this council, along with the infallibility of the Pope, the exact substance of primacy was defined, which is understood as an administrative authority over the whole Church, with a view to preserve the true faith. Therefore, it is clear that papal primacy comprises a structural element of papism and part of its dogmatic teaching. This means that without this, full ecclesiastical communion is not possible. The dogmatic inception of papal primacy goes back through the Apostle Peter to Christ Himself.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1964) attempted to modify the above monarchical ecclesiology of the First Vatican Council with the introduction of a peculiar ecclesiology of communion (communio), which refers to the gathering of bishops ["Lumen Gentium" (Light of the Nations) article 22]. Based on the Second Vatican Council there truly seems to be a double supreme authority: On the one hand, the assembled bishops with the Pope as the head, and on the other hand, only the head. [Any episcopal body's ability of action is impossible without its head, for it acts only when assembled and in communion with the bishop of Rome. The Pope is somehow placed "above the episcopal body" in a capacity of vicar of Christ (vicarius Christi).] However, it is particularly important that the Council often restates that the Pope can administer the office "alone."

So it is clear that harmony was essentially not achieved between Papism and the episcopal office. The two ecclesiologies were placed next to each other in a problematic articulation. History has proved the total inconsistency of the two ecclesiologies of the West. In any case, the prediction of the Western theologians is that, in theory and practice, we will probably again see a clearly Monarchical Ecclesiology imposed, which will push back the forms of collectiveness and synodality, which recently came to the foreground again (see concerning K. Schatz).

As is easily understandable from what was said before, papal primacy - which is connected to papal infallibility - in theory and in practice, completely renders the disapproval of the pope powerless on account of his dogmatic errors. This alone confirms the distortion (on an ecclesiological level) of the synodality of bishops, and clearly goes against the experience (led by the Holy Spirit) of the Church, as was institutionally expressed at the Apostolic Council and Ecumenical Councils. Primacy, as it came to mean in the West, not only did not accommodate the unity of the Church, but contrarily gave birth to tendencies of division and

ultimately caused papism to fall away from the Church. Of course, all this was combined with other deviations from the dogmatic teaching of the Church.

The fallacious theological presuppositions of papal primacy go hand in hand with the historically concurrent Filioque, whose institutionalization chronologically came first, since it had already been adopted in the West by the 6th century in the Council of Toledo (547) and was added with local validation to the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople (589). The fallacious theological presuppositions of primacy should be re-discussed first and foremost in the pneumatology of the West. In the life and practice of the Church in the West, the pneumatological factor has fallen into disuse, resulting in the adoption of the Filioque, which **belittles the Holy Spirit on a dogmatic-theoretical level.** Something similar happened at the same time with Papal primacy, which theologically reveals the reduction of the charismatic dimension of the Church and the reduction of the meaning of the Holy Spirit in it. In a condensed way, this reveals the manner of organization of Roman-Catholicism with its centralized and hierocratic character and its governing power over the clergy and laity.

Even more specifically, the fallacious theological presuppositions of papal primacy are clearly of a pneumatological nature for the following reason. Those in the West, very early on and progressively in any case, were alienated from the living experience of the Orthodox East, which has to do with the charismatic presence of the Holy Spirit, which according to the promise of Christ will lead the Church after Pentecost "into every truth," and will truly guarantee the unity of the Church through His invisible presence and in all judgement, according to the hierarchical prayer of Christ. That is, Western Christianity lost the living experience of unity with the uncreated divine glory and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. The ecclesiological structure of Roman-Catholicism, which we mentioned, confirms as much. This structure, with primacy as the fundamental element, does not allow the charismatic functioning of the Spirit of Truth, since the hypostatic Truth and theanthropic Head of the Church is substituted with the created presence of its vicar, the Pope, while at the same time the reference to the presence the Holy Spirit was defiantly ignored. In other words, since the Roman-Catholics do not make a distinction between the uncreated essence and the uncreated energy of God, due to the fact that they do not have the living experience of the charismatic presence of the uncreated energy and grace of the Holy Spirit - and hence their dogmatic teaching concerning created grace - they are not able to theologically understand the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church ontologically, in accordance with His uncreated and sanctifying energy, as a guarantor of the truth till the end of time. Because of the lack of the aforementioned theological presuppositions, the Roman-Catholics cannot theologically understand how Christ reveals Himself invisibly to the living members of His mystical body and not in the world to come, but also how His uncreated kingdom within the faithful is invisibly present, not coming "with observation" (see Luke 17:20-21), for those that do not have active spiritual senses. However, here the theological question understandably arises: "What is the primary reason for this theological confusion and disorder, which immediately comes out in ecclesiology and in practice, in the life of the Church and with soteriological consequences?" Papal primacy, either with its open sense of authority or under the guise of service (see the **Statement of Ravenna**) in the administration of the Church, has as its primary cause egoism, vainglory, and pride. These in their very nature are - in any form - evil disrupters of unity. Multifarious egoism is the primary cause of any heterodox teaching, according to the testimony of Holy Scripture (see 1 Tim. 6: 3-6). It inflates and corrupts the mind and leads it to a falling away from the *one* and ever-united Church. This same primary cause also tore Lucifer and his like-minded angels away from the primordial Church of the Triune God with His holy angels, just as it did with the first created couple. The egoistic mindset is irreconcilable with the living experience of the charismatic presence of the Spirit of Truth in the Church. This living experience has always had humility as its fundamental characteristic feature, which is mainly apparent in obedience only to the will of the one theanthropic Head

of the Church, in accordance with the example of His obedience to the will of God the Father.

Christ Himself, during His historic presence on earth, **explicitly spurned every vainglorious desire for superiority among the Apostles (see Matt. 20: 20-28 and 23: 8-11; Mark 10: 35-45)**, saying to two of His chosen disciples: **"Ye know not what ye ask" (Matt. 20:22)**. Still, it is particularly important that the Apostles, after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and from then on having It in them **experientially** "in all judgement" and active to the greatest degree, asserted no primacy, nor administrative authority or service, as is attested to in the Acts of the Apostles. Thus, we see for example that in the Apostolic Council the preeminent Apostle Peter did not preside, but James the brother of our Lord. And the Apostle Peter's position did not prevail, but that of the Apostle Paul (see Acts 15). There, for the first time it was proven in a real way that no institutional figure is infallible, but the whole Church, when it expresses itself institutionally through an Ecumenical Council. But all the things testified to in the book of Acts are enlightening for our subject at hand, from the selection of the Apostle Matthias, to the selection of the seven deacons, and particularly everything that has to do with the way they were elected and the criteria coming from the Holy Spirit (**see Acts 6: 2-3**). A main criterion of election was the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the candidate deacons (**"among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" - Acts 6:3**).

It is also a historical truth that never did one Apostle govern the Church. All the Apostles equally **administered it**, as is obvious from the Apostolic Council. But even after the Apostles, the successors, as equal bishops, governed the Church coming together in councils under the presidency of an equal bishop, as is witnessed to in the Ecumenical Councils. The "position of honor" of the "first" (or one presiding) does not do away with equality. And he who has the "position of honor" has one vote and is subject to the criticism of his fellow equal bishops. This is why some leaders among the hierarchy both in the East and in the West were condemned as heretics during the first millennium.

Consequently, Papal primacy has **no** theological foundation, **no** legitimacy from the Holy Spirit and **no** ecclesiological legitimacy. It is clearly **based on a worldly understanding of authority and ministry**. It does permit the structure inspired by the Holy Spirit of the mystical body of the Church. It relativizes and in practice, does away with synodality as a function of the Holy Spirit in the body of the Church, and introduces to it the worldly mindset. It annuls the equality of bishops, it appropriates the total administrative authority of the whole Church, essentially pushing aside the God-Man and placing a man as a visible head and in this way institutionally repeats the ancestral sin. And, just as the equality of the persons of the Holy Trinity was institutionally abolished with the Filioque in the West, especially that of the Holy Spirit, which according to St. Gregory Palamas was belittled in the ontological category of created things, thus with Papal primacy, the **absence of the charismatic presence of the Holy Spirit** in the Body of the [Church] is institutionally confirmed. And the ecclesiastical body is basically converted from a theanthropicentric [Divine-human] to a anthropocentric [human-centered] one. Lastly, the cure to this ecclesiological deviation of the Papists can only be obtained through their humble return to the traditional ecclesiology of the Orthodox East.

^[i] Trans. note: The term "charismatic" in this paper is to be understood in the Orthodox theological sense, coming from the Greek word "charisma," that is relating to God's grace through His Holy Spirit.

^[ii] Trans. note: The word for "council" in Greek is "synod." Someone taking part in an ecclesiastical council is called a "synodikos," which means one who accompanies or goes along with.