

JUST FOR THE RECORD

— Part One —

by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

From time to time, we receive inquiries from people asking why we do not give Holy Communion to individuals who belong to "World Orthodoxy" and new calendar jurisdictions. The reason is very simple: it is because the bishops of these jurisdictions are **officially** in communion with the Roman Catholic, Anglican (Episcopalian) and other non-Orthodox denominations. If the bishops are **officially** in communion with these non-Orthodox denominations, then so are the laypeople who belong to those jurisdictions. By their official inter-communion with these non-Orthodox bodies, they are no longer Orthodox!

We have to be so careful because if A is in communion with B, and B is in communion with C, then A is also in communion with C. If A approves of B's confession of faith, but not of C's, it doesn't do any good to say, "But I'm only in communion with B," because as long as A is in communion with B, A is also in communion with whomever else B is in communion with — and whoever they are in communion with, too.

And when we say "in communion with," one way to think of it is that, at the Second Coming, when we will have to stand before the Son of God, we will stand before Him as having agreed with that which all with whom we were in communion in this life said about Him publicly and officially. So that if we remained in communion with those who openly preached that He did not rise bodily from the dead, or is not God incarnate, or that the Koran taught about Him correctly, or that all religions were equally true and therefore each one represented Him as well as any other, then we will have to stand before Him as having agreed with such falsehoods.

So that no one may have any doubts about what we say, we shall present the text of documents that demonstrate clearly that "World Orthodoxy" is now officially in communion with various non-Orthodox groups:

New York Times, February 21, 1970
Russian Priests May Minister to Roman Catholics

By James F. Clarity
Special to the New York Times

MOSCOW, Feb. 20 — The Russian Orthodox Church has decided to permit its priests to administer sacraments to Roman Catholics.

The full details of the decision, taken by the church's Holy Synod last month, were not available today and have not been publicized in the communications organs of this officially atheist nation. But a spokesman for the Moscow Patriarchate said the sacraments would be made available to Roman Catholics who are able to prove they have been baptized in their religion.

Sources informed on Orthodox Church affairs said the synod's action could have a threefold effect.

First, they said, it would improve relations between the Russian church and the Vatican.

Second, the decision would make it potentially easier for Roman Catholics in the Soviet Union to receive the sacraments, especially communion.

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes the validity of sacraments administered to Catholics who are unable to receive them from their own priests. Also, Catholic priests are authorized to give the sacraments to Orthodox believers.

The third effect of the Synod's decision, the sources said, could be to complicate the Russian church's relations in the Pan-Orthodox Conference. The conference, headed by Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul, attempts to coordinate the attitudes of 14 autonomous Orthodox churches. The patriarch is said to support ecumenical relations with the Vatican, but there is considerable opposition to it among some Orthodox leaders.

The sources said the synod's decision would especially benefit Roman Catholics of Polish descent in Kiev, the third largest city in the nation, where there is no operating Roman Catholic Church. In Moscow, the Roman Catholic population estimated at 5,000 to 10,000 exclusive of foreigners, has one functioning church, St. Louis.

The majority of Soviet Roman Catholics live in the Baltics republics of Latvia, where they have about 100 churches, and Lithuania, with about 500 churches.....

(A copy of the full article above is easily obtainable at the following link: www.query.nytimes.com)

Our note: In 1988, this resolution was "postponed" by the Moscow Patriarchate. This does not change anything: "Postponed" is not the same as "retracted."

[To be continued]