



## **PAPAL PRIMACY - A Hideous Ecclesiological Heresy**

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### **Introduction**

It is well-known that the Papists insist upon the so-called "primacy" of the Pope with unrelenting obstinacy. In addition, they have declared that: "Union of Christianity means nothing else but subjugation [to the Pope], the only representative of Christ on earth". And that "the primacy and infallibility are not ecclesiastical decrees that the Church can annul but dogmas whose foundations no one is in a position to shake"[1]. And furthermore that "the Catholic Church [i.e. the papist parachurch] is not going to sacrifice anything from its truths [note: rather its falsehoods]". "In other words", as the Professor of Dogmatics at the Theological School of the Aristotelian University of Thessalonica Demetrius Tselengides [writes in an epistle he sent to the Holy Community of the Holy Mountain](#), "the Pope in the Latin West - through the dogmatically consolidated "infallibility", also affirmed by the Second Vatican Council, and through the contested primacy of authority upon the entire Church - has arbitrarily taken the place of the Spirit of Truth in the Universal Church"[2].

The Papists' constant reiteration of this position leaves no doubt as to what type of union they seek through their dialogues with the Orthodox. They seek a union modelled after the detestable [Unia](#).

Many worthy books par excellence have been written on where the Papists base their arguments for the "primacy", how that came to be and how it was established. As an example, we bring three such paradigmatic informative, scientific and weighty studies: a) St. Nectarius of Pentapolis, Historical study on the causes of the Schism ... and on the question of possibility or not for union; b) Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Chrysostom Papadopoulos, The Primacy of the Bishop of Rome [a historical and critical study], ed. Periodical "Ecclesia", Athens 1964; c) P. N. Trembelas, On the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome, ed. "O Soter", Athens 1965.

In this short study that follows, we re-publish five texts that have been previously published in the magazine "O Soter" [Year 2001 Volume] and we reply to the unacceptable position that the Synod of Constantinople [Eighth Ecumenical Synod, AD 879-880] supposedly acknowledged the Pope's "primacy of authority", and that consequently the matter has already been settled since then! ...

We publish these articles supplemented with additional material into one new article on account of the discussions taking place as regards the "role of the bishop of Rome in the communion of all nations" in the way that came to be accepted by the Joint International Theological Commission for the theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Papists in Ravenna [8-14 October 2007][1]. The conversation focuses on how we Orthodox need to understand or interpret the

blatantly heretical "Papist Primacy", so that the union between Orthodox and Papists is established! ...

The stance held by certain Orthodox on the matter is deplorable, if we are to judge by the things we heard from them during the proceedings of the "Scientific Meeting" entitled "The Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches", organised by the Department of Dogmatic Theology [of the Faculty of Theology] of the Aristotelian University School of Theology on 20 May 2009 in the Ceremonies Hall of the aforementioned University[2].

It is deplorable and extremely worrying because these Orthodox, as Professors of Theology, with their present demeanour not only scandalise the Orthodox fold but they also harm the Papists themselves. Unfortunately, once again it is verified that the words of St. Basil the Great addressed to Bishop Eusebius of Samosata about the Pope and the Westerners of his time have diachronic validity. He wrote: "Truly, when those of a proud nature are flattered, it is natural for them to become more arrogant than they usually are. After all, if the Lord is merciful to us what other help do we need? If however the wrath of God remains against us, then what possible use is there for the help from the Westerners' "eyebrow" [i.e. arrogance, haughtiness, pride]?"[3]

Let the Patriarch of Constantinople Joseph II also instruct us, who went to the pseudo-Synod of Ferrara-Florence [AD 1438-1439] with great courage believing also [rather naively] that the Orthodox would return "triumphant victors"! It was not long however before he was utterly disappointed and confessed: The Latins are "quarrelsome people, vainglorious and invincible. They do not come around or consent to our words, nor do they want to submit to the truth[4]."

It is about time we feared the God of Truth. And it is about time we felt for Christ's rational flock, the Christian fold of our Orthodoxy. Let us not wound them with our constant retreats to the heresy of Papism or with our uncompromising union with cacodoxy, believing ourselves to be wiser than the God-bearing Fathers and Orthodoxy's Saints had been.

### **Unacceptable positions**

The Papists do not leave any opportunity that may serve Papism's dreadful ecclesiological heresy on the Papist primacy go unexploited. This way we find "Katholiki", the Uniate Papist newspaper of Greece, on 26 June 2001 republishing an envoy's article from the Athenian newspaper "BEMA" [29 April 2001] entitled "The primacy of the Pope of Rome and the way it is exercised". The article included the following: "More and more people insist that supposedly the Eastern Church [viz. Orthodoxy] does not recognise, not has she ever recognised any primacy to Rome, apart from a mere honorary seniority in the etiquette, we could call it, of the presbygenous patriarchates. This position", the author continued, "is so baseless that it harms the credibility of those who uphold it and renders in advance the outcome of any serious dialogue that promptly aims towards the gradual rapprochement of the two Churches to be impossible. [...] Those who support such a position in good faith, and there are of course many who do, overlook, among other things, that the Synod of Constantinople of 879-880, through which the complete restoration of the relations between Old and New Rome was sealed, adopted a Canon through which not only was the primacy of Rome recognised, as the Synod itself understood it in those days, but also sealed this establishment opposite future doubts and controversy".

Next, the writer of the article insists on the aforementioned Canon, the 1st canon of the Synod of Constantinople in 879-880, about which he says that his Orthodox interpreters, among them the ever-memorable Professor of Dogmatics John Carmiris, gave "a different, diametrically opposite, interpretation to the last paragraph". This interpretation he considers it to be "outrageous"!

It is obvious that the Uniate - Papist newspaper rushed to re-publish the article in question because it supports the positions of the Vatican and in particular the "primacy of authority" that the Pope insists he has.

According to John Carmiris, during the Synod of AD 879-880, the Orthodox supported that "based on a recommendation by the Papal representatives ... any innovation of the honorary rank and privileges of the pope of Rome, i.e. every alteration of the *primatus honoris* [primacy of honour] of his into *primatus jurisdictionis* [administrative primacy], was prohibited"[5]. The interpretation of this Canon by the ever-memorable Professor John Carmiris is not at all "outrageous", as we shall be proved further down.

Before we do this however we first have to reply to the article's accusation that the position held by the Orthodox, that "the Eastern Church does not recognise, nor has she ever recognised any primacy for Rome, apart from a mere honorary primacy in the etiquette ... of the presbygenous patriarchates" is "baseless". This position is not at all baseless."

Ecclesiastical History confirms that during the course of the first three centuries we do not find any event during whose course the Church recognised any administrative primacy to the Bishop of Rome. During that period, the Church of Christ was not being governed "monarchically" nor was it receiving orders from Rome. Ecclesiastical Synods would convene unbeknownst to the Bishop of Rome. Bishops would be elected and judged without any interference from the Bishop of Rome.

This tactic is also confirmed by the Apostolic Canons where the principles for the governance of the Church of Christ during the first centuries have been recorded. The great and most significant authority of these Canons has already been evidenced by the Holy 1st Ecumenical Synod [AD 325] in its 1st, 2nd, 5th, 9th and 10th Canons. According to the Apostolic Canons, every local Church would be governed by her own Bishop [cf. Apostolic Canons 32, 35, 38, 39, and 76], while any type of interference of a Bishop in another Bishop's jurisdiction was prohibited [Apostolic Canons 34, 35].

The local episcopates [communities] constituted the local Churches, each one of which would be governed by the "first" as its "head". However, the "first" would never do anything without the concordant opinion of the other Bishops, just as none of the others would do something without the concordant opinion of the "first". "The bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing superfluous without his opinion; each one must only do whatever is within his own community, and in the lands that are subject to it. But neither should he do anything without the opinion of the others; for that is how there will be concord ..." [Apostolic Canon 34]. In other words: the bishops of every land must acknowledge who is "first" among them; that is, bishops must know who their Metropolitan is, and regard him as the "head", and not do anything without his opinion that may be superfluous; namely, anything that does not pertain to the parishes of the bishop's own episcopate, but attempts to transgress this. Each and every bishop may act without obtaining the opinion of his Metropolitan, only on whatever belongs to the limits of his own episcopacy and in the territories that fall within those boundaries. But even the Metropolitan must not proceed with anything of common concern "on his own and according to his own opinion", without the opinion of all his bishops. Only in this way can concord exist.... Therefore, the Bishop of Rome likewise had jurisdiction ONLY over his own episcopate whose "head" he was, and no other[6].

This system applied during the first three centuries of Ecclesiastic History. What ensued in the centuries that followed we shall describe further along.

## **The difference between "Primacy of Honour" and "Primacy of Authority"**

As already mentioned above, during the first three centuries, the Church of Christ solved all the emerging problems by means of local Synods. There is no instance where the Church had sought the resolution of an issue of general ecclesiastical nature, only by the Bishop of Rome. However, from the 4th century onwards, on account of the major issues that had appeared, which had been caused by the various heresies, these issues were discussed and resolved by Ecumenical Synods. In these Synods, the representatives of the Bishop of Rome were accorded first place, not because he had any authority over all the other Bishops, but because the Bishop of Rome was regarded as the "first" in honour among all the other "first" Bishops. He was acknowledged "honourably" as "first" because his See was situated in Rome, the State capital. At the time when the Holy First Ecumenical Synod [AD 325] was convened, "firsts" were the Bishops of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. They were regarded as equals among themselves, in compliance with the 6th canon of the First Ecumenical Synod.

When the Ecumenical Synods bestowed Bishops with a primacy of "honour" and determined the order of the "firsts", they would only accept as a basis for this determination the political significance associated with the cities in which these older hierarchs were Bishops. This, after all, is the reason that the Holy Canons command "to co-adjust ecclesiastical things with political ones" for the preservation and increment of a state's "cohesion". This principle was upheld both in the East and in the West, throughout all the centuries.

Besides, "the first characteristic of every Ecumenical [Synods] is that they must be convened upon the orders not of the Pope or a certain Patriarch, but by royal commands"[7]. "Pope" was the title given to the Bishops of Rome from the 8th century onwards. It should be noted however that the Bishop of Alexandria was already being addressed as "Pope", even before the 8th century; as for the title "Patriarch", it began to be bestowed during the reign of emperor Theodosius II the [AD 408-450].

Ecumenical Synods were usually presided over by those who were first among the ranks of Bishops, and not by the Papal "legati" [=envoys, representatives]. No Bishop of Rome had ever been present in person, during any of the Ecumenical Synods. As for the solving of various issues that were discussed during Ecumenical Synods, the one who could have authority and influence - and essentially did have - was only the one who stood out for the constancy, integrity, clarity and strength of his Orthodox convictions; that is, anyone who presented himself and proved himself to be a genuine expresser and representative of the evangelical truth, even if he were not a Bishop. A characteristic example of this is St. Athanasius the Great who played a very basic and important role in the Holy First Ecumenical Synod, even though at the time he was only a young archdeacon of the Church of Alexandria.

After all, the validity and legitimacy of the decisions of the Ecumenical Synods were dependent just as much on the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, as they were on the validation by any other Patriarch. Moreover, the decisions of the Holy Synods, in which neither the Pope nor his representatives were present, these had absolute and complete validity and were of a compulsory nature for all the Bishops. They were just as compulsory for the Bishop of Rome.

During the course of the first eight centuries, in other words during the period prior to the devastating Schism, when the Church of Christ was still united, the supreme authority in the Church belonged exclusively to the Ecumenical Synods. They were the ones that authentically and infallibly formulated the teaching of the Church; they were the ones who judged the Bishops, even if the Bishop was a Pope or a Patriarch. It is well-known that [the Holy Sixth Ecumenical Synod \[AD 680\] condemned the Patriarchs of Constantinople Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul II and Peter, Pope of Rome Honorius, Cyrus of Alexander and others.](#)

Now, if the Ecumenical Synods gave a "primacy of honour" to the Pope, in parallel to all the other Patriarchs, this was not an authority or leadership. Because there can be "primacy" among equals. Whereas leadership or authority presuppose subordinates, subjects and the subjugated.

The "primacy" that was recognized in the Pope was only a primacy of honour and not a privilege of authority and leadership. Besides, the Holy Second Ecumenical Synod had also bestowed the "equal rank of honour" as that of the bishop of Rome to the Bishop of Constantinople. The God-bearing Fathers of this Synod decided: "Τον μὲν τοὶ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειν τὰ πρεσβεία τῆς τιμῆς μετὰ τὸν τῆς Ρώμης Ἐπίσκοπον, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν Νέαν Ρώμην" [Canon 3]. [The Bishop of Constantinople should have the rank of honour immediately after that of the Bishop of Rome, on account of Constantinople being the New Rome and is called such for this reason. However, in this case, the preposition "after" as correctly interpreted by St. Nicodemus the Haghiorite "does not denote a later point in time", as some interpret, "but neither a demotion or a reduction" as others do, but "it denotes an equality in honour and rank, according to which, the one is first, the other is second, in order of honour"[8].

The Holy Fourth Ecumenical Synod institutes similar things with its 28th Canon, whereby, according to Saint Nicodemus' interpretation: "Just as the Fathers had rightly given privileges to the throne of Old Rome on account of the presence of regency in that city - in other words, that he [the city's Bishop] be addressed as the "first" of all the other Patriarchs in rank, thus likewise they gave equal and identical honorary privileges to the most holy throne of New Rome - that is, of Constantinople." [9].

But the Holy Sixth Ecumenical Synod also instituted the same things. In its 36th Canon it mentions: "We stipulate that the throne of Constantinople is to enjoy equal honours with that of Old Rome". In other words, the God-bearing Fathers of this Synod were stipulating that the Bishop of Constantinople "should enjoy equal and the same privileges as the bishop of Rome [...], being second to him only in rank"[10].

### **The 1st, 3rd, 4th Ecumenical Synods and the Synods of Constantinople of AD 867 and 869 on the "Primacy" of the Pope**

The Metropolitan system of the ancient Church, which was not at all monarchic, is interpreted in an excellent manner by the 6th Canon of the Holy 1st Ecumenical Synod [AD 325]. It states: "The ancient customs should be preserved, the ones in Egypt and in Libya and in Pentapolis, so that the Bishop of Alexandria will have authority over all of these [places], because this [the ethos, custom] is also usual for the Bishop in Rome. Similarly in Antioch and in the other provinces, the ranks of honour are preserved by the Churches". This Canon testifies that the Bishops of Rome, Alexandria and Antioch "were regarded as equals towards each other". The Canon says; in the same way that the Bishop of Rome has the same custom [ethos] as the Bishop of Alexandria, thus does he have the same authority as he does. Furthermore, the same Canon testifies that the system in the ancient Church was not a monarchic one. It also interprets that "the Bishops were not assigned under only one Bishop, nor were all the Churches under one Church. All Bishops and all Churches were administratively independent of each other. But among all the Bishops, the one of Rome was recognized as the "first throne", for being the Bishop of the capital city of the State. His status did not differ from the status of the Patriarch of Constantinople that he now has in the Orthodox Church"[11].

On the Latins' insistence that the Holy 3rd Ecumenical Synod [AD 431] had proclaimed the "primacy" of authority of the Bishop of Rome in the overall-universal Church, we refer the reader to the wonderful scientific work of the Archbishop of Athens Chrysostom Papadopoulos, The 3rd Ecumenical Synod and the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. Reply to the encyclical of Pius XI "Lux

Veritatis", Athens, 1932. The truth is that the Holy 3rd Ecumenical Synod not only did not alter, but with the same decree had supported the existing order in Church administration even more. "It strictly prohibited the violation of the rights that belonged to the local episcopal thrones of the Administrations and the Provinces, according to the custom that prevailed long before, during ancient times" and "it proved that it was foreign to any notion of monarchical primacy", that is, of "the authority of one episcopal throne over the others"[12].

Nor did the Holy 4th Ecumenical Synod [AD 451] recognize any "primacy" in the Bishop of Rome. Like the 3rd Ecumenical Synod, it too repulsed every notion of administrative primacy for the Bishop of Rome. "Glaringly evident proof of this is all that [ took place] during the [discussion] of the sensational 28th Canon of this Synod"[13].

This is the situation that prevailed in the Church during the first 8 centuries.

We now come to respond to the claim that the 8th Ecumenical Synod [Synod of Constantinople of 879-880] had supposedly recognised and sanctioned the "primacy" of authority for the Bishop of Rome!

The arbitrary intervention by Pope Nicolas I in the internal affairs of the Church of Constantinople, which was brought on by the deposing of Patriarch Ignatius and the election as Patriarch of Photios the Great [despite his involuntariness] in 858AD is well-known. Pope Nicholas I was the one who had presented the Church of Rome as an ecumenical Church! He therefore perceived this as an opportunity to impose himself on the Eastern Church also. However, his scandalous interventions in the internal administrative affairs of the Bishop of Constantinople were repulsed and condemned by the Synod of Constantinople of AD 867. This Synod, "condemned and anathematised the unprecedented for the Church of the East and with such arrogance projected 'primacy' [of the Pope], by means of which "the canonical order that was designated by the Ecumenical Synods as well as the independence of the Patriarchal thrones was being overturned" and by means of which "the Bishop of Rome striving to render himself the absolute monarch over the catholic [= entire] Church"[14].

But also in the Synod of Constantinople of AD 869, the independence, autonomy and equality of the five Patriarchal thrones had been supported without any objection by the Papists. Furthermore, every notion of a monarchic primacy or a primacy of authority for Rome was rejected. In this manner, "the Papal primacy with its new meaning", which had been presented in a dictatorial and anti-ecclesiastic manner by pope Nicholas I, was not accepted by this Synod either[15].

However, the primacy of the Pope's authority was also rejected triumphantly at the Synod of AD 879-880. This Synod is the last general Synod of the united ancient Church of Christ. Both the Fathers and the ecclesiastical authors characterized it as the 8th Ecumenical Synod. But even the Synod itself had characterised itself many times in its Minutes as "Ecumenical". [For more information [read here](#)].

The Synod of AD 879-880 was convened by Photios the Great, who had already risen to the rank of Patriarch. He was also the one who presided over the Synod, while three representatives of the Pope also participated, as well as three representatives of the Eastern Patriarchs, 18 Metropolitans and many Bishops from the ecclesiastic administrations of Thrace, Pontus, Ephesus, Illyria and Southern Italy; 383 Bishops in all. This Synod was truly imposing. Unanimity prevailed; its activities were conducted smoothly, and during its fifth Session the Minutes of the Holy 7th Ecumenical Synod were acknowledged by everyone.

Further along we shall comment upon the truly important first Canon of this Synod, which directly relates to our topic.

## **The important Synod of AD 879-880 in Constantinople**

At this most important Synod of Constantinople of AD 879-880, it was clarified that the reinstatement of Photios to the patriarchal throne was not accomplished by the Pope, the way that the Pope had wanted it to be acknowledged. The latter had acknowledged the reinstatement as a finalized matter. It is however characteristic that, with regard to the renowned decree of the 1st Canon of this Synod, the Papist historians had attempted to dispute its authenticity! But because they did not succeed, they attempted to misinterpret it and ascribe to it a meaning according to which this decree supposedly does not limit, but rather it validates, the privileges of the Pope and the Papist church! ...

Unfortunately for the Papists, the truth of the matter differs. The purpose of the decree - as can be surmised in general, both from the Minutes of the Synod as well as from the content of the decree - was to avert the anomalies that arose from the fact that clerics convicted in Constantinople resorted to the West in order to be acquitted! In fact, there were followers of Ignatius who, encouraged by Rome, did not recognize Patriarch Photios!

However the tendency of Pope Nicholas I and his successors to arbitrarily acquit clergymen of another Church, whom She had condemned - or to condemn clergymen of another church by anti-canonically intervening in its internal affairs - was an obvious innovation. The same should of course have applied for any possible anti-canonically out-of-bounds intervention by the Patriarch of Constantinople in the internal affairs of the Church of Rome, and the possible acceptance and acquittal by the Patriarch of Constantinople of Latin clerics who had been condemned by Rome.

Pursuant to this paragraph, the decree ends as follows: "...on none of the ranks of honour that belong to the most holy throne of the Church of the Romans or to Her President (or Primate) overall shall we innovate now, or later on". The rank of honour referred to here, is the one that pertained to the Pope.

These had already been determined by the 6th Canon of the Holy 1st Ecumenical Synod, the 3rd Canon of the 2nd Ecumenical Synod, the 28th of the 4th Ecumenical Synod and the 36th of the Quinisext Ecumenical Synod. Subsequently, with the aforementioned decree, every innovation to the privileges of the Bishop of Rome was forbidden, as was every transformation - both now and in the future - of the "primacy of honour" into a "primacy of authority" As the Archbishop of Athens Chrysostom Papadopoulos correctly observes "through the aforementioned decree, the Patriarch of Constantinople was equated to the Patriarch of Rome, and subsequently every transgression by the latter [the Pope] was forbidden. Not only was the Bishop of Constantinople equated to the Bishop of Rome, but Photios himself was personally elevated above Pope John." The Patriarchs of the East had praised Photios with their epistles. Michael of Alexandria addressed him as "a luminous and illuminated person, the perfection of Priesthood, the gnomon of truth, arch-pastor of the Church of God". Theodosius of Jerusalem referred to him as "head of the body of the Church". Theodosius of Antioch as "holy father" while Avramius of Amida also called him "holy father". But even the papal representatives compared Photios "to the sun" that illuminates "all of creation". During the last session, where Procopius of Caesaria in praise of Photios had said: "this is the kind of person that should truly have the supervision of the entire world - in the manner of the arch-shepherd, Christ our God", the papal representatives had added: What you said is true "and we, who live at the end of the earth, these are the same things that we hear"! But even before these words were uttered, the same representatives had said[16]: "Blessed be our God, for the good fame of the most holy Photios the Patriarch has reached not only our land, but all over the world". And yet, Saint Photios "did not puff up [become arrogant, pompous, haughty] on account of these praises, and he never sought to exercise an office above the one set by the

holy

canons".

It is also worth noting that the Synod of AD 879-880 ended with the following statements about Photios: "Paul and Eugene, the most holy Bishops and vicars of Old Rome, also Peter, the very God-fearing presbyter and cardinal, said: if someone does not consider him [Photios] to be a holy Patriarch and does not respect communion with him, let his portion be with that of Judas and let him not be included at all among the Christians. And the Holy Synod cried out: all of us believe and think the same, and if someone does not consider him a Hierarchy of God, let him not see the glory of God"[17].

Pope John VIII initially acknowledged this Synod, after being notified of its Minutes. The Latins however did not want the Minutes to be published! At the same time they attempted to alter them, or to deny their authenticity! ... Scientifically however, all these attempts have now been refuted so, nowadays both the authority of that historic Synod, as well as its Minutes "remains incontestable".

### **A timely blow against the Papist primacy of authority**

It was very natural that the decision of the historic Synod of AD 879-880 would displease the Pope. For this reason, on account of certain complaints made by the Pope against this most important Synod [chiefly because the Church of Bulgaria was not ceded to his jurisdiction and because Patriarch Photios had not officially expressed his gratitude towards the Roman Church in that Synod, for the recognition on their part of Photios], Latin historians asserted that the Papal representatives who had participated in the aforementioned Synod: a) had violated the instructions that had been given to them; b) were not familiar with the Hellenic language and for this reason were not in a position to properly whatever was being discussed; c) were bribed! ... But these arguments by the Franco-Latin historians merely prove that either the Pope's representatives were incapable of faithfully upholding Rome's guidelines or, that when observing and familiarizing themselves with matters at close range, they perceived the irrationality of the Pope's demands[18]. Besides, the two Bishops [representatives] of the Pope had remained in Constantinople for about two years prior to the Synod of AD 879-880 and therefore it was only natural that they would have learnt and subsequently comprehended the Hellenic language very well. Furthermore, Cardinal Peter, a member of the Pope's delegation at the Synod, had vividly participated in the Synod's discussions, proving his familiarity with the Hellenic language. Moreover, all three Papal representatives "were convinced by and acquiesced on the decisions" during the Synod.

Apart from the other very positive results of the aforementioned Synod, it was also "proven" that the Bishop of Rome "is not the ruler of the catholic [entire] Church; that his authority is not absolute and therefore he had improperly and mom-canonically intervened in the internal affairs of the Church of Constantinople [...]. Hence a timely blow was struck against Papal authority, given that it had expressed itself with non-canonical acts. The new primacy of authority was rebutted. It was accepted that the Pope of Rome is one of the five Patriarchs of the catholic [overall] Church and that the honorary primacy that he has -along with them- does not give him the right for arbitrary transgressions [...]. Through this [Synod], the Church had once more officially refuted the primacy of authority of the Bishop of Rome. The decisions of this Synod were in accordance with what the preceding Ecumenical Synods had instituted, in compliance with the Tradition of the Church"[19].

### **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the above, it is proven that the united Church during the first millennium had never acknowledged in the Bishop of Rome "a primacy of



authority and power at a universal level". It only admitted that the Bishop of Rome was first among equals (primus inter pares) - among the five Patriarchs. It conceded that he, just like the Bishop of Antioch, did not inherit any privilege of administrative authority or office from the Apostle Peter, who -after all- was never the head or any kind of monarch of the Christian world, nor was he the founder of the Church of Rome, nor had he ever served as bishop for a long time in Rome. Furthermore, the Bishop of Rome is not a successor of the Apostle Peter, given that Peter had never been Bishop of Rome. These claims have no historical basis[20]. But even if we accept that the Apostle Peter had founded the Church of Rome, so what? Was that the only Church that he had founded? Both he and the Apostle Paul had founded many Churches.

Therefore, the office of Pope was the same as the office of the other Patriarchs. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Ecumenical Synods, which had spoken of the "primacy of honour" for the Bishop of Rome, did not state that they had determined this as a "divine right" or "by divine command and in relation to the Apostle Peter"; they had determined it thus, because Rome was the ancient capital of the State. Besides, it was for this reason that the throne of Constantinople was honoured "for Her being the New Rome"[21].

This, therefore, has been the steadfast faith of the Eastern Orthodox Church, who has continued to unswervingly uphold the guideline, the teaching and the tradition of the united Church of the first eight centuries. This was also declared by the response of the Synod of Constantinople of 1895 to Pope Leo XIII, who had been inviting the Orthodox to a union with Rome, on the basis of the principles of the Latin Unia! That significant Patriarchal and Synodical Epistle, which had been sent to the Pope in August of 1895, mentioned among other things [excerpt conveyed here in an English translation]:

"XVI. Each particular self-governing Church, both in the East and West, was totally independent and self-administered in the time of the Seven Ecumenical Councils. And just as the bishops of the self-governing Churches of the East, so also those of Africa, Spain, Gaul, Germany and Britain managed the affairs of their own Churches, each by their local synods, the Bishop of Rome having no right to interfere, and he himself also was equally subject and obedient to the decrees of synods. But on important questions which needed the sanction of the universal Church an appeal was made to an Ecumenical Council, which alone was and is the supreme tribunal in the universal Church. Such was the ancient constitution of the Church; but the bishops were independent of each other and each entirely free within his own bounds, obeying only the synodical decrees, and they sat as equal one to another in synods"[22]. Moreover, none of them ever laid claim to monarchical rights over the universal Church; and ii sometimes certain ambitious bishops of Rome raised excessive claims to an absolutism unknown to the Church, such were duly reprovved and rebuked The assertion therefore of Leo XIII, when he says in his Encyclical that before the period of the great Photius the name of the Roman throne was holy among all the peoples of the Christian world, and that the East, like the West, with one accord and without opposition, was subject to the Roman pontiff as lawful successor, so to say, of the Apostle Peter, and consequently vicar of Jesus Christ on earth is proved to be inaccurate and a manifest error.

XVII. During the nine centuries of the Ecumenical Councils the Eastern Orthodox Church never recognized the excessive claims of primacy on the part of the bishops of Rome, nor consequently did she ever submit herself to them, as Church history plainly bears witness [...]"

These are the things that prevailed up until the time that the Church was united. This position is summarised very nicely by Professor Demetrius Tselengides, who writes:

During the first millennium, when the Church was united, "the supreme authority in the Universal Church was exercised always and only by the Ecumenical Synods. Besides, the Orthodox Church had never accepted the papal

primacy, the way it was perceived and interpreted by the 1st Vatican Council [1869-1870], which had proclaimed the Pope as the infallible expresser of the conscience of the Church, with the ability to contradict even those decisions by an Ecumenical Synod!" With this decision, the heretic Papists "not only invalidate the synodic system of administration of the Church; they essentially invalidate that very presence of the Holy Spirit in Her"[23].

Now that the "Church" of Rome is clearly heretical, the primacy of honour in the Orthodox Church is held by the Patriarch of Constantinople ["for her being New Rome"], who is, however, "the first among equals". Every other position is inadmissible and constitutes an entirely illegitimate and conceited claim to disastrous authoritarianism in the Church and a Luciferian mindset.

Those who strive to support this antichristian mindset are doing so in vain and are committing a grave sin. This is the reason that every time this foreign mindset appeared the Church reacted, checked it, castigated it and rejected it. That is why there can be no substantial dialogue with the Vatican as long as the Pope continues to persist in the accursed "primacy of authority" which is a horrible ecclesiological heresy, as are "infallibility", the procession of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son " [Filioque] and his other heresies.

"Papal primacy: a Hideous Ecclesiological Heresy"

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[1] Cf. the Ravenna Document: Ecclesiological and Canonical consequences of the sacramental nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority.

[2] Cf. "The Theological Dialogue between Orthodoxy and Papism", magazine "O Soter", issue 1985, pp. 361-363 and issue 1986, pp. 390-392

[3] St. BASIL THE GREAT, Epistles 239, To Eusebius Bishop of Samosata, PG 32, 893B

[4] S. SYROPOULOS, Les "MEMOIRS" sur le Concile de Florence [1438-1439], supervised by V. Laurent, ed. Du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971, Vol. VII, Chap. 22, p. 372 [17-21]. For more cf. NIK. P.

VASILIADES, St. Mark the Eugenicus and the Union of the Churches. Edition "O Soter", 20076, p.109

[5] JOHN CARMIRIS, The Dogmatic and Symbolic Monuments of the Orthodox Catholic Church, Vol. 1, Athens 19602, p.267

[6] For more see also CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, The primacy of the Bishop of Rome, Historical and critical study, ed. Periodical "Ecclesia", Athens 19642, pp. 15-20.

[7] Cf. NICODEMUS THE HAGHIORITE, Rudder of the noetic nous of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church, ed. "Aster", Al. and E. Papadimitriou, Athens 1970, "Prolegomena" to the Holy 1st Ecumenical Synod, p.118, footnote 1.

[8] St. NICODEMUS THE HAGHIORITE, Rudder, pp. 157-158

[9] St. NICODEMUS THE HAGHIORITE, Hermeneutics on the 28th Canon of the 4th Ecumenical Synod, Rudder, pp. 207-208

[10] St. NICODEMUS THE HAGHIORITE, Rudder, p.252

[11] CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit., p.22

[12] CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit., p.71

[13] For more information cf. CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit. pp. 78-86

[14] CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit. p.176

[15] CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit. p.184

[16] CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit. pp. 192-193. Mansi XVI, 521; 524

[17] Mansi XVII, 524

[18] Cf. CONSTANTINE PAPAREGOPOULOS, History of the Hellenic Nation, ed. Eleutheroudakis, Athens 1932, Vol. 4, Part 1, p.265

[19] CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit. pp. 198-199

[20] For more information cf. CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit. p.10

[21] CHRYSOSTOM PAPADOPOULOS, op. cit. p.204. For the position and role of Apostle Peter in the Church, see the beautiful and very informative study of P. N. TREMBELAS On the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, ed. "O Soter", Athens 1965

[22] For the entire text of the very important reply cf. JOHN CARMIRIS, The Dogmatic and Symbol Records of the Orthodox Catholic Church, Vol. 2, Graz-Austria 19682, p.932[1018]-946a[1032]

[23] Letter of DEMETRIUS TSELENGIDES, To the Holy Community of the Holy Mountain

[1] Newspaper KATHOLIKI [instrument of the Uniates of Greece], Athens 16.10.1963

[2] Cf. Letter of the Professor of the theological School of the A.U.T. DEMETRIUS TSELENGIDES to the Holy Community of the Holy Mountain [www.romfea.gr, 14.9.2009]