

# Everyone, Let us Prepare the Council Together

Olivier Clément

Translated by Gregory Tucker

## Translator's Note

“*Tous, préparons ensemble le Concile*” appeared first in *Contacts* 76.4 (1971) and was reprinted in the first volume of *Synodika* (1976), the official publication of the Secretariat for the Preparation of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church. The latter publication is available online ([http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/gr\\_main/dialogos/SYNODHIKA\\_1.pdf](http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/gr_main/dialogos/SYNODHIKA_1.pdf)) but is corrupt; several clauses have been transposed between different sections of the paper, leaving incomplete and incomprehensible sentences. The present translation has been made from the text in *Contacts*. At points, the essay reads more like the transcript of a speech than a polished publication; the translator has attempted to reflect this. Furthermore, Clément sometimes takes on, without notification, the voice of those he is criticizing. It is necessary for the reader to infer the tone of sarcasm and irony in what he writes. All notes are added by the translator.

<sup>1</sup> Aristoklēs Mathaiou Spyrou (1886–1973) was Patriarch of Constantinople from 1948 to 1972. His meeting with Pope Paul VI in Jerusalem in 1964 led to the rescinding of the excommunications of 1054, a symbolic step towards Orthodox-Catholic reunification. His efforts were opposed by anti-ecumenists, including Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) of ROCOR.

<sup>2</sup> *Oikonomia* is a term used to describe the application of canons according to circumstances with a view to effecting a specific end result, rather than strictly according to the letter. Judgments “according to *oikonomia*” may be perceived as either lenient or stringent, but are always directed towards ultimate healing.

## I. A New Situation: Ebb and Tensions

In the Orthodox Church, the unifying dynamism sparked by Athenagoras I reached its peak at the Chambésy conference in June 1968.<sup>1</sup> Since then, we have witnessed the ebb of this dynamism and the reappearance—indeed, the aggravation—of fault lines which he had temporarily covered or sought to heal. Two fault lines must be mentioned especially:

### a) *The Tension Between the Second and Third Romes*

This tension raises the problem of the universal structure of the Church.

In 1969 and 1970, the Patriarchate of Moscow made importance deci-

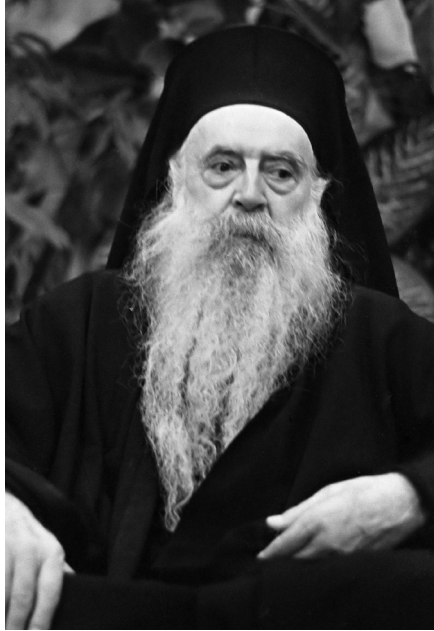
sions concerning the organization of the *Diaspora* (American autocephaly) and ecumenical relations (openness, according to *oikonomia*, and under certain conditions, to Eucharistic communion with Roman Catholics).<sup>2</sup> Here is not the place to judge the intrinsic value of these actions. But it must be recognized that they showed a certain indifference toward the preconciliar situation in which the Church has found itself since 1968. Thus, the notion that Orthodoxy is merely a federation of sister churches with total independence has been confirmed. The recent Council of Zagorsk [today Sergiyev Posad] marked the culmination of this “absolute autocephalism,” since Orthodox guests attended but did not participate in

the debates, even in those that were pan-Orthodox in scope: for example, when the anathemas against the Old Believers instituted by the Council of Moscow of 1666–67, in which the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch had taken a full part, were lifted.

On the other hand, one might wonder whether, for Moscow, in this confederation of sister churches, the problem of primacy does not arise in terms of historical number, power, and initiative of these churches.

From these perspectives, the conflict with Constantinople is deep. Constantinople regards its traditional prerogatives of presidency, initiative, and being the universal center of communion as being challenged; it sees its mystery denied—this mystery of a charismatic geography which, after the great invasions, preserved the primacy of an almost-deserted Rome; it senses the ascendancy of the negation of its very existence, having already been so maltreated by history. And certainly, the historical sins of Constantinople are great, through the frequent confusion of spiritual Hellenism and national Hellenism. It is all the more regrettable that they were denounced at the moment when Athenagoras I had largely overcome them to promote a selfless gathering of Orthodoxy.

Be that as it may, the conflict between the two churches and the two ecclesologies is hardly conducive to the meeting of a council. Certain officials of the Patriarchate of Moscow seem to have decided to delay this meeting, without doubt fearing that the council, if it meets during the lifetime of Athenagoras I, its true promoter, will confirm the prerogatives of Constantinople. The means of slowing down the conciliar process, when necessary, have all been found: it is enough for



Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople, 1967. Photo: Pieter Jongerhuis / Anefo, CC BY-SA 3.0 nl.

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Moscow to insist that the churches it regards as autocephalous (Poland, Czechoslovakia, and especially America) be invited as such.

#### *b) Towards a New Schism of “Old Believers”*

Another fault line appears today in Orthodoxy, which manifests itself in particular in the growing role of the “Russian Church Abroad” or the “Synodal Church” [the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia]. This Church seeks herself to constitute a universal Orthodox Church: she has received in her bosom Serbs, Romanians, and French (and the paradoxical logic which drives the French community founded by Bishop John Kovalesky toward her is easily debunked); she has just given a bishop to the Greek partisans of the “Old Calendar”; and she enjoys great support in the Balkans, notably from the Serbian Church and Mount Athos.<sup>3</sup>

The rise of the phenomenon of the “Synod” and the parallel or con-

<sup>3</sup> Evgraf Evgrafovich Kovalevsky (1905–70) was ordained as a priest of the Patriarchate of Moscow. For much of his life, he was involved in the leadership of various “Western Rite” Orthodox groups. These were sometimes under the care of canonical Orthodox bishops and at other times independent and uncanonical. The active successor to these groups is the “Catholic Orthodox Church of France,” which has been uncanonical since 1992.

vergent phenomena of “Old Belief” (the version of the twentieth century awakening while the version of the seventeenth century fades away) may be explained:

- by the stagnating effect of most of the European Communist regimes and the resulting impression of a slow asphyxiation of the churches, which promotes, in the “opposition” to these churches among certain factions of the emigration, corresponding psychological reactions of apocalypticism and quasi-Manichaeism;
- by the lack of cooperation between the episcopate and the faithful, especially, but not only, in certain churches of the East, which explains why the main initiatives of the episcopate in the ecumenical domain, as well as the inter-Orthodox domain, have not been received by the people;
- by the more general fact that, in the crisis of civilization in which we find ourselves (and which has provoked spectacular convulsions in Western Christianity), many Orthodox are trying to protect themselves by constituting Orthodoxy as a tradition-transmission cemented by rites, by a literal reading of doctrine and the fathers, and by an anti-intellectual pietism. This phenomenon is reminiscent of the fate of Judaism at the time of its dispersion into a hostile world.

Here also we encounter the refusal of the council, in a double opposition to the broadly “demonized” contemporary world and to ecumenical dialogue (the truth, objectified and possessed, does not enter into dialogue; it is here, so it is no longer there). Most of the bishops of the countries of the East are charged with complicity with the atheism of the State—and it is quite

Metropolitan Pimen (Izvekov) presents the Tomos of Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America to Bishop Theodosius (Lazor), 1970. Photo: Orthodox Church in America.



true that if a council were to meet, the theological and spiritual forces of these churches would be perhaps only partially represented. The Ecumenical Patriarch himself is charged with “Papism” and with doctrinal and ecclesiological relativism.

In order to understand the importance of this movement, it is necessary to know that it extends far beyond the “Synodal” jurisdiction alone, which is content to use it on occasion and to amplify it through its publications. The anathemas which the Patriarchate of Moscow is preparing to launch against the “Synod” will no doubt strengthen it: will they not come first and foremost from persons denounced as “uniates” and “crypto-communists”? The “Old Belief,” which is presently found everywhere in Orthodoxy, is made up of all those who are afraid, who do not understand history, who refuse what seems to be new and different, who seek the security of the letter and of the rite meticulously repeated, and, through all of this, uphold a fierce faith and preserve the treasures of piety. Among them are many “little ones” whom certain “grandees” of the church, preoccupied above all with diplomacy, have “scandalized” without mercy.

## II. What Is To Be Done?

The worst thing would be to ignore these realities and just talk about the council, here and there, vaguely and limply. Orthodoxy suffers from too much empty talk and schizophrenia.

A temporary renunciation [of the goal of a council], clearly motivated, would have a frank and virile character. It would point out that a great opportunity has been lost, the opportunity that cooperation between Moscow and Constantinople represent-

ed in the 1960s: between a Russian Church, strong in its own bonds, matured by the sorrowful patience of its people and bishops, not just a unique womb of the universal Church but a servant of Orthodox unity, a great national church inseparably linked with the tragic—even Christlike—destiny of Russia; and an Ecumenical Throne transfiguring its historical weakness in the humble and tenacious creation of an authentic “presidency of love,” always exercised after consultation with the sister churches, to ensure their cohesion and common witness. One could cry bitterly and make penance for having failed to appreciate this *kairos*, this time of grace offered by God to his people, and having allowed both the demons to appear and one’s brothers to become wolves, so that each sees only the worst in the other.

However, on calmer reflection, renouncing the [goal of a] council does not seem desirable. A hope and an obligation have existed since 1968. Serious work has been carried out by all the churches, in particular those of Romania and Greece. In Crete—uniquely, to my knowledge—the laity have been involved in this effort. At the same time, theological discussions with the non-Chalcedonians are on the verge of making possible an act of union, which the celebration of a council would facilitate. It even seems that the present situation is finally giving the council its real necessity. The great Ecumenical Councils did not meet together, as we know, for the purpose of mutual congratulation, but in tragic situations and in order to respond to specific threats which were compromising this or that aspect of life. But today, it is the whole truth that is compromised, both in its content and its ecclesial vessel. On the one hand, in the West and even in West-



<sup>4</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae (1903–93) was a Romanian Orthodox priest and theologian. His major contributions include a Romanian translation of the Greek *Philokalia* and a multi-volume systematic work, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă* (Bucharest, 1978), translated as *The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* (Brookline, MA: 2005–13). The article Clément refers to seems to be Stăniloae’s celebrated essay, “The World as Gift and Sacrament of God’s Love,” *Sobornost* 5.9 (Summer 1969): 662–73.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Evdokimov (1901–70) was a Russian émigré theologian and a professor at Saint Sergius Theological Institute in Paris. His theology attempted to bring together the Neo-Patristic Synthesis and trends in Russian religious philosophy. He was actively engaged in ecumenical work. The work to which Clément refers is *Les Ages de la vie spirituelle* (Paris, 1964), translated as *Ages of the Spiritual Life* (Crestwood, 1998). Clément subsequently wrote a study of Evdokimov’s work, *Orient-Occident: Deux passeurs, Vladimir Lossky et Paul Evdokimov* (Paris, 1985).

ern Christianity, the very meaning of Christianity is radically brought into question. Now that the Western way of thinking is becoming the global way of thinking, it would be futile to hope that Orthodoxy will endure if it does not have a living consciousness of its message. On the other hand, the threat of collapse which now presses on the Orthodox Church tends to prevent it from attaining this consciousness.

The aim of the council is therefore clear: it is to formulate, in a brief and synthetic manner, with power and simplicity, *what unites the Orthodox* and, consequently, what constitutes the essence of Christianity, the meaning of Christianity *hic et nunc* for the salvation of the world. And not only to formulate, but to help to live: the vocation of the council therefore appears fundamentally apostolic and pastoral.

### III. Towards an Apostolic and Pastoral Council

The council must attempt to answer two questions:

- What is Christianity today?
- How is it to be lived in the Church?

That is to say, an essentially apostolic question and an essentially pastoral question.

#### a) *What Is Christianity Today?*

It is important, let us repeat, to make the Orthodox conscious of what unites them and therefore, on the one hand, who can heal their quarrels or place them in perspective, and on the other hand, what constitutes their major witness to humanity today.

It is not a matter of elaborating a Confession of Faith that would inevitably

be discursive and analytic, but of allowing there to issue from the guts of the church—in the face of spiritual emptiness, scrabbling about, and Lucifer’s “alternative facts” [*les contre-façons lucifériennes*], over which people argue today—a great cry of faith and joy, that great experience of Love stronger than death, which the martyrs have sealed with their blood and the saints with their transfiguration. It is a matter of celebrating the God “beyond God” who allows himself to be murdered to revive his murderers; of proclaiming the witness of the resurrection that raises us up, of the Spirit who vivifies us, of the Trinity as the source of all love and all personal existence. It is a matter of showing that the Church, in all its wretchedness, is the place where the power of the resurrection is communicated, where we are called to live in Trinitarian communion, where we are able to find in this communion, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, our truly personal vocation and creative freedom.

It is necessary to elaborate a brief text—at once humble and great—for the purpose of reminding the person of today *who* God is, and that God became human so that the human might become God.

I am thinking here of the common theological declarations elaborated during these last years at the meetings between the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Orthodox; some recent messages of Patriarch Athenagoras I, including those of Christmas 1970 and Pascha 1971; certain brief definitions of the Orthodox understanding of the world given by Fr Stăniloae in 1969 during his stay in England and published in *Sobornost*;<sup>4</sup> certain passages of Paul Evdokimov on the *Ages of the Spiritual Life*;<sup>5</sup> or the treatise of Bishop Ignatius Hazim, *The*

*Resurrection and Modern Man*<sup>6</sup>—and it would be possible to multiply the examples. . . .

Traditionalists should find in this text the echo of the great patristic definitions, of the lofty asceticism of the Hesychasts. But they should give up any thought against [such a text in principle]: the meaning of the “new age” is not the building up of walls, but the diffusion of light.

Modernists, for their part, should find in this text their demand for innovation, their openness to the anxieties and inquiries of the human being today, of the global human being. But they should also understand that the tradition alone is creative, and that the Spirit of prophecy rests upon the sacramental, ecclesial, hierarchical body of the Risen One.

The preparation of this text in the preconciliar period would make it possible to specify a pedagogy of the faith, something Orthodox people, especially the youth, need very much today, and on which they—the youth, but also others, most especially women, who are more sober, more realistic, less lyrical and cerebral than men—could in turn provide suggestions, which might be very enlightening for the bishops and the professional “theologians.”

*b) How Is Christianity To Be Lived in the Church?*

We must admit that Orthodoxy today suffers from schizophrenia and empty words, due to the growing gap between the theology and the social reality of the church. An effort towards frankness and realism is essential in enabling the faithful to live better, both collectively and individually, the mystery of their Church.

Here, some closely related problems arise:

1. *How are we to make the parish, wherever possible, a vibrant community?* No doubt there are many problems of which we are scarcely aware in rural parishes where, as political conditions permit, liturgy should become the leaven of life, worship the leaven of culture. But it would be necessary above all, I think, to pose the problem of the size of parishes and eparchies in the large cities (I am not speaking here, of course, of the small communities of the Diaspora, which are often poignant in their closeness, their human warmth, but whose problems go from those of the ghetto to those of the sect). Does not future life in the “megalopolis,” the “technopolis,” belong to parochial communities on a human scale, much smaller and more numerous than the present parishes, so that Eucharistic sharing can be part of an experience of fraternity? So that each Christian community, as in the early Church, really is an agape . . . ? Conversely, what does “one bishop per city” mean when it is no longer a question of the Roman *civitas* or the city of average importance in the age of Christendom, but of gigantic agglomerations, each of which, sometimes, has the population of a country? If the bishop is not to be an administrator but a father—and a father whose proximity we feel—must we not consider the large contemporary city as a metropolitan province rather than a mere diocese?

Does not the effort to create parishes that are truly fraternal require new modes of recruiting clergy as well? No more (not only, in any case) adolescent “vocation” and “setting apart,” so questionable from the psychological point of view, but the designation by the community of men already

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<sup>6</sup> Habib Hazim (1920–2012) was the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East from 1979 until his death, presiding as Ignatius IV. He was known for his humble style of leadership, for his commitment to youth work and catechesis, and for encouraging frequent communion. The work to which Clément refers is *L'homme d'aujourd'hui et la Résurrection* (Beirut, 1970), translated as *The Resurrection and Modern Man* (Crestwood, 1985).

engaged in life, who, while becoming ministers of small communities, would not, however, give up their profession. How should we train these men? Should not we call into question the purely academic character of the teaching of theology, which makes it a discipline among others, whereas it should be the deciphering of all existence in the light of the resurrection? Adjacent to or within current educational institutions, should we not imagine “schools of faith,” where theology would be inseparable from praying the services, from knowledge of the contemporary world?

Of course, the council would have to give here only general pastoral suggestions, which each sister church, and ultimately each bishop, would apply to a greater or lesser degree, considering the local situation. If some experiments, some renewed communities could be born from this effort, would not the future be cleared?

Lastly, it is likely that the problem of recruiting bishops will be posed here or during the preconciliar process. Indeed, on this will depend the health of the Church in our day and age, when the status of Christendom is receding and so is the violent eschatological reaction of monasticism that it provoked. Today, in “secularized” or aggressively “secularist” society, eschatological tension is more and more the result of conversion to the Risen One and membership of his church. On this point, as well as many others, it is necessary to take into consideration the practices of the pre-Constantinian church. But nothing will be achieved if we wish to maintain artificially, in the preconciliar process, the unanimity of the sister churches: reflection must come also “from below” (we shall return to this) and we must accept that it is multiple, sometimes contradictory. . . .

2. *How are we to make the liturgy a common work and the radiant center of our entire existence?* The parish will only be alive if it becomes a Eucharistic community. One of the major scandals of contemporary Orthodoxy is that theologians expound on “Eucharistic ecclesiology,” while at most liturgies nobody communes. (There are many excuses, I know; nevertheless, it is a solid fact). The preconciliar process and the council would be worthy of the true Tradition if Sunday communion appeared again to Christian people not as obligatory, to be sure, but at least as normal. On this point, a whole pedagogy of the faith would be needed in the parishes themselves, to explain the true link between the sacrament of penance and that of the Eucharist, and what preparation for Communion means.

Secondly, it would be important, at least in certain exemplary parishes, to recover the pre-Constantinian practice of a liturgy that is less a spectacle for the people and more a common action, in the “synergy” of ministerial and universal priesthoods. This implies the double “unconcealing,”<sup>7</sup> spatial and temporal, of the celebration, and especially the anaphora: by the lightening of the iconostasis and the pronunciation aloud of the whole anaphora, especially the epiclesis . . . .<sup>8</sup> It is indeed another of the scandals of contemporary Orthodoxy that the epiclesis is hidden to the point of being ignored by the people while theologians develop *in abstracto* an admirable “sacramental pneumatology.” For the liturgy to become a common action, the people must first discover themselves as concelebrants [*coliturge*] by sealing the epiclesis with their triple *Amen*.

Other reforms that are in fact practical and accord with the original meaning

<sup>7</sup> Here Clément uses the unusual word *désoccultation*, which means something like “uncovering” or “unhiding” in a plain sense, but falls within the same semantic field as *occulte* (“occult”), and so has a flavor of the secretive, perhaps demonic, supernatural.

<sup>8</sup> The anaphora is the central, consecratory prayer of the Divine Liturgy (called, in other traditions, the Eucharistic Prayer or Canon); within this, the epiclesis is the invocation of the Holy Spirit over the Eucharistic Gifts, which some Eastern Christian authors consider to be the consecratory “moment,” in contradistinction to the Latin emphasis on the dominical “Words of Institution.”

also seem to be called for: the re-establishment of the kiss of peace; the singing by the whole people of not only the Creed and Our Father but also large parts of the Liturgy and especially the responses to the diaconal litanies; perhaps finally the return to the original meaning of the Great Entrance as a collective offering. Here again it is necessary to proceed cautiously, by sketches, trials, and model experiments.

If the actual text of the Eucharistic Liturgies poses no major problem—though the legitimacy of other rites must be recalled—it will still be necessary to pose the problem of language and to recommend, wherever possible, a gradual transition to the language spoken today.

As far as the offices are concerned, an Orthodox liturgical movement should be promoted, which is both informed by research and respectful of the mystery. The Hours, unburdened of the monastic will for unending prayer, must be returned to their symbolic nucleus, which is the sanctification of time, as reminders of the major moments in the economy of salvation through the cycle of day and night. The translation of the Hours into vernacular languages would be an opportunity for renewal through the condensing of texts, the highlighting of fundamental images, and the elimination of certain allusions to a dead past. The restoration of regular readings from the Old Testament is also necessary. The Hours thus revived could encourage the development of an “interior monasticism,” by their use either in personal prayer or in meetings, on certain evenings of the week, of faithful who wish to pray together.

Finally, in some parishes at least, the resumption of liturgical creativity should be envisaged, not as opposed

to but even within traditional prayer: so that young people, in particular, have the impression that ecclesial life is not separate from life, but transforms life itself into sacrament.

3. *How are we to recover the true meaning of the canons?* Orthodoxy today knows a very profound crisis in its canonical consciousness. Some ignore the canons or despise them with the pride of “the civilization of the twentieth century.” Others regard them as sacred, often without knowing them well enough, and put them on the same footing as the texts of the Fathers and the Scriptures. The first results in a disincarnate spiritualism, the second Judaizes.<sup>9</sup>

It is essential that the council, leaving aside any project to systematize canon law, make the Christian people aware of the meaning of the canons: not taboos and prohibitions pertaining to some Old Testament dialectic between pure and impure, but the application of the fundamental dogmas of Christianity to the changing circumstances of history, a collective asceticism (which *oikonomia* adapts to personal circumstances) granting access to the spiritual experience of the Church and preserving it from being in any way watered down, a therapeutics of the whole human being—body included—by the discipline of love.

Once the articulation of dogma and history is clarified, it becomes possible: to unlock the spirit of the canons; to accept, where applicable, that the form in which the spirit is expressed, after rendering its service in a certain historical context, is now obsolete; to seek, therefore, new forms, for the sake of fidelity to the spirit of the canons.

<sup>9</sup> Clément here uses the term “*judaisent*.” Its meaning is ultimately derived from the use of the Greek verb *ιουδαίζω* in Gal. 2:14, where Paul criticizes Peter for compelling Gentile converts to Christianity to follow the Mosaic Law. It was taken up in early Christian discourse and its meaning expanded to include all attempts to establish a rigid Christian law which must be fulfilled in order to attain to salvation. This is clearly the sense in which Clément understands the term and it is unconnected with his contemporary Judaism as such.



Two domains especially, it seems to me, would require without delay just such an effort of re-expression:

- *That of fasts and abstinences*, whose provisions, of monastic origin, are not applicable in urban and technological civilization, which lacks the consensus [*l'unanimité*] that both supports and constrains traditional societies. It is necessary to reveal the deep, too often forgotten, meaning of these provisions, and to re-express it in the kind of psychosomatic disciplines that are indispensable to contemporary humans, who often seek it in “yoga” or “Zen” but must learn to put themselves at the service of the Gospel, that is, of the difficult love of God and neighbor. . . .
- *That of the sexual life in general and of the status of women specifically*, which has suffered in particular from a certain monastic totalitarianism, a hatred of life rather than its transfiguration. The prohibitions of Leviticus have thus been extended to the detriment of the great “nuptial” texts of Genesis, so loudly reprised in the New Testament. Not that the meaning of these prohibitions cannot be explained: they show that “natural” birth is in fact a birth unto death, and that fertility itself is partly connected with this. But it is important today to affirm the possibility and meaning of human love. And to leave to the free responsibility of spouses, enlightened by the life of the Church and the counsels of a spiritual father, the problem of “birth control.” Enough hypocrisy.

4. *How are we to promote the rebirth of personal spirituality?* Just as in the fourteenth century and around 1800, a re-

lationship of reciprocity and mutual intensification must be established between Eucharistic renewal and that of personal prayer.<sup>10</sup>

The monastic vocation is more indispensable than ever and the council must proclaim that. However, Orthodox monasticism will not overcome the crisis of its traditional forms—linked to rural Christian society—unless it renounces general and summary disqualification of the contemporary world and establishes with it links—and tensions—of a new type.

A void not only geographical but psychological, even spiritual, has been created between traditional monasticism and the assembly of Christian people. To fill the geographical void, it is desirable that, in addition to rural [monastic] communities, but in close contact with them, small “fraternities” be established in the “technopolis,” in the heart of the “lonely crowd.” To fill the psychological or spiritual emptiness—which is much more serious—it must be understood that traditional asceticism, which is directly related to the anthropological categories in older rural societies, “comes up empty” when compared with the anthropological categories that result from urban and technological civilization. *New foundations* must be built, of detoxification, of pacification, of existential deepening, of a thankful openness to beings and things. Traditional spirituality, which is a spirituality of transfiguration, is in fact rich in indications of this direction. The Orthodox peoples, for their part, appear to have preserved a sense of the *grace of being*, which manifests itself, for example, in art, or in certain fundamental attitudes toward life, outside the apparent limits of the Church, but that the Church now has the vocation to elucidate and fertilize. The development of a nuptial spiritu-

<sup>10</sup> Clément alludes to two movements for the renewal of prayer and liturgy, led by groups centered on the Holy Mountain. The late-medieval Hesychasts expounded a tradition of contemplative prayer, leading to an experience of God’s uncreated activities (ἐνεργεῖα) in the light of Mount Tabor. They (especially Theophanes III of Nicaea) also affirmed that the bread and wine of the Eucharist are identical with the light of Tabor as vehicles of the divine. The early-modern Kollyvades sought a restoration of hesychastic prayer and traditional liturgical practices, including frequent communion. Among their number were Nikodemos the Hagiorite and Makarios of Corinth, who anthologized the hesychastic tradition in the Greek *Philokalia*, and Paisius Velichovsky who compiled its Slavic equivalent (not strictly a translation) under the calqued title *Dobrotolyubie*.

ality and also a spirituality of culture, of a way of life as prophets, priests, and kings, must occur through this elaboration. In this way, the great tradition of hesychasm, in which one progressively ascends through degrees corresponding to various “spiritual ages,” would regain its place—which is foremost—and all its fruitfulness.

On the other hand, we must remember the great effort that has been under way for half a century to elucidate, readapt, and disseminate among the Christian people the “Jesus Prayer.” This effort has been and remains very important in the Orthodox Diaspora in Western Europe. One day we will discover its full ecumenical significance.

Under these conditions, Orthodoxy, as it prepares for the council, could encourage two great initiatives. First, the elaboration and publication in several languages of a *new Philokalia*, taking as its point of departure the Romanian *Philokalia* that began to be published after the Second World War, but enriched by texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and giving a prominent place: to the experience of martyrdom as lived in this century by

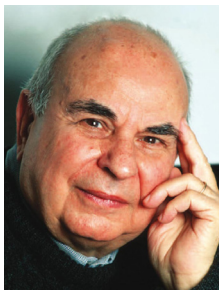
several Orthodox churches; to the effort to adapt the Jesus Prayer, which I mentioned above; and to “foundational” spirituality, which I also mentioned earlier, and which is sometimes expressed in literary and philosophical texts apparently external to Orthodoxy, but whose spiritual implications would be revealed.

The other initiative could be the discreet opening of “schools of prayer,” where genuine spiritual guides would accept—as a sacrifice and as a service—to teach interested laypersons of profound and dedicated life, who remain in the world, a certain “interior monasticism,” the rudiments of asceticism and Orthodox prayer. This is an essential effort at a time when so many Christians and, among the young, so many seekers of the Absolute, are turning to the impersonal spiritualities of Asia. There would be a close link between “schools of prayer,” “schools of the faith,” and renewed monasticism at the heart of great cities.

On all these topics, the council must speak.

*The conclusion to Clément’s analysis will appear in the next issue of The Wheel.* ✽

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**Olivier Clément** (1921–2009) was a French lay Orthodox theologian who devoted his life to the study of Christian spirituality and ecumenical rapprochement. Raised in an agnostic household, he was baptized into the Orthodox Church in 1951. For many years, he was a professor of moral theology at Saint Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris. He wrote more than thirty books.