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Pope Challenging All to Unity, Primate Declares

New York (RNS) — The primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in North and South America says Pope Paul's kissing of the foot of an Orthodox metropolitan is a "challenge addressed to all Christians."

Archbishop Iakovos said the "unprecedented gesture should not only be seen as a saint's action or symbolic of his humility . . . but as a step forward, for I don't see how else he could ever justify his prostration."

"I consider it an official challenge addressed to all Christians, who in their search for unity, should bow out of the trenches, confessional and otherwise, and declare as openly as they could their obedience to the Lord, Who is inviting us to restore the unity and oneness of His Church," he added.

The spontaneous and unplanned papal action followed an announcement by Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon, a personal emissary of Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios, spiritual leader of all Eastern Orthodoxy, during an ecumenical service in the Sistine Chapel.

The metropolitan announced that the Ecumenical Patriarchate had decided to establish a Pan-Orthodox commission to prepare for unification talks with the Roman Catholic Church. The

service was held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the lifting of the mutual excommunications proclaimed by Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius in 1054.

In his statement, Archbishop Iakovos said, "The period of 'ecumenical romanticism' as well as that of 'informal discussion' have come to an end. A 'dialogue' with a specific aim, the reconciliation of the Church, must be initiated at once."

During his Sistine Chapel address, the Pope said Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy "are already united in such a deep communion that it lacks very little to reach a fullness allowing the common celebration of the Lord's Eucharist."

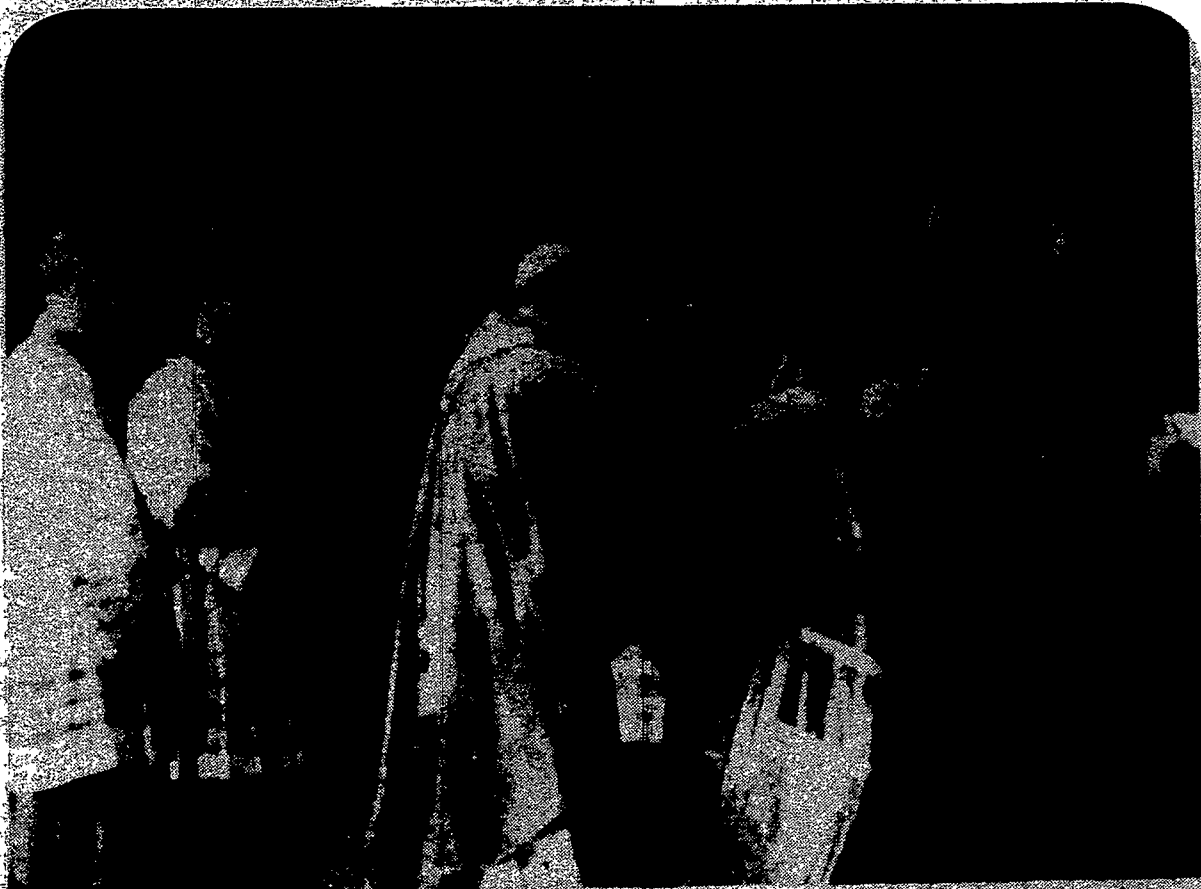
The Pope added that the two "have in common the same sacraments, the same priesthood, the same system of bishops and apostolic succession, and for centuries they celebrated ecumenical councils together."

In calling for a new stage in dialogues among different Christian traditions, Archbishop Iakovos said, "Dialogues of the type cited in church bulletins and church press have served their educational purposes. Now it is time for a dialogue in depth and in the spirit of humility so impressively manifested by Pope Paul."

Basilians Named to Parish

The new pastor of Christ the King Parish in Irondequoit will be Father Thomas Mailloux, CSB, who has been pastor of Holy Rosary, Toronto, for the past six years. His assistant will be Father Donald McCarthy, CSB, a Rochesterian who has been on the Aquinas Institute Faculty for many years. They will move in Jan. 15, the Pastoral Office

announced Monday. Father Mailloux, ordained in 1950, also has taught at Aquinas and holds a master's degree from the Eastman School of Music, the announcement said. Father McCarthy, former chairman of the Aquinas theology department, has been teaching part time this year and helping out at Holy Cross.



Dramatic Gesture

Pope Paul VI embraces (top photo) and then kneels down and kisses the feet of (bottom photo) Eastern Orthodox Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon in an unusual and dramatic gesture during an ecumenical service Dec. 14 in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel. The spontaneous papal action followed an announcement by the Orthodox prelate that Eastern Orthodox Churches had decided to establish a joint commission to prepare for unification talks with the Roman Catholic Church. Because of the spontaneous nature of the Pope's action, and the fact that photographers were blocked by participants in the ceremony, there were no still photos taken of the gesture. These pictures were taken from a telecast by RAI-TV, the Italian television network. (RNS)

Northeast Region Plans Annual Assembly Jan. 14

The second Regional Assembly of the Northeast Region will be 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 14, at St. Francis Xavier, 314 Bay St. The principal activity will be a discussion regarding the activities of three standing committees of the region: Youth, Education and Human Development.

The most important mission of the regional organization is service to member parishes, stated Neil

Murphy, region president. This service is most immediately performed by the daily and weekly work of the standing committees. Leaders of the committees will be on hand to lead the discussions, which will focus on present successful operations and directions that the member parishes would like the committees to take. The purpose of the meetings is to help parishes which do not have viable committees in one or more to get

one started and to better service those parishes who already have committees functioning smoothly. Parishes are urged to consult with their councils and with those leading the individual committees. Other features of the program include a description of the revisions affecting Confirmation by Sister Michael Lappetito and a forum period where delegates may bring up and discuss topics that concern them. * * *

Beginning this week, the Courier-Journal presents a two-part series of excerpts taken from the U.S. Catholic Bishops' recent statement on Catholic-Jewish relations. The series is on Page 3.