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A BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST



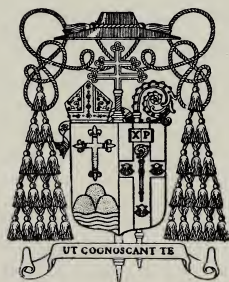
By

Richard Cardinal Cushing

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Why should we be interested in and concerned about a bridge between East and West? Have we not urgent calls upon our time, our energies and our resources? Why is there need to be concerned about this somewhat remote problem, which, in any case, does not seem to effect our own lives or the good estate of the church here and now?

If any one is inclined to think in such fashion, let him ponder the words of Christ: "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift".

In these words Christ Himself assigns the priorities in all our service of Him and our sacrifices for Him; go first and be reconciled to our brothers. Concern for unity is not a secondary matter, not something to be left to a group of enthusiasts or specialists. It is an essential for all. Pope John has said that there is an obligation upon all of us:

"Ut unum sint!" This is the design of the Divine Redeemer which we must bring to realization; and it remains a serious obligation, entrusted to the conscience of each individual. Our concern in these considerations will be with the Christians of the East—hence the title **A Bridge Between the East and the West.**

Many of the Eastern Christians are in union with the Holy See. They are Catholic Christians. In 1,000 years of separation between Western and Eastern Christianity about ten million Orientals had returned to communion with Rome, accepting papal supremacy while retaining their own non-Latin rituals. Have they any complaints against their present status? A book recently published in French contains some of these as expressed rather bitterly by Patriarch Maximos IV and the Greek Melchite Hierarchy:

1. The Oriental Patriarchs are made inferior to Cardinals, which is a failure to recognize the traditional set-up of the Church.

2. Converts in the East are allowed to choose either the Oriental or the Latin Rite. In the West, v.g. in America, they are allowed only into the Latin Rite. They say this is in effect an attempt to suffocate the Oriental Rites.

3. The permission granted only after the intervention of John XXIII to use English, or a modern language, in Rites of Oriental origin, is restricted in a way which is unliturgical, that is, the use of the vernacular is limited in a way which makes the Rite a hodge-podge. Some must be in the ancient language, and there is a mixture of the ancient language and the modern language which is quite unjustified.

4. The faculties granted to Eastern Patriarchs are merely the same as those granted to Latin Archbishops, and this is a failure to recognize the traditions of the East.

5. The Roman Curia wants a Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. But this is an insult to the Orientals.

6. In general, the complaint is made in different forms that the Curia—and specifically the new Code for the Orientals—favors Latinizations,—contrary to the repeated promises of many Popes.

I confess myself unable to make any judgment about the justice of these complaints. But the fact that they are

made in published form and with vehement feeling is itself significant. Complaints of this kind, however, must be settled before we can hope to build a lasting bridge between the East and the West. It is probable that they shall be settled before the end of Vatican Council II.

The Orthodox Christians, those not in union with the Holy See, our separated brethren, are our primary concern for the moment.

As the present Ecumenical Council approached, the Catholic Church accepted almost everything about the clergy, hierarchy, cult, and sacraments of the 165 million Orthodox, but the traditional offer of many Orthodox to accept the Pope as "first among equals" was rejected as insufficient. Some authoritative voices in Rome sought to placate the Orthodox by emphasizing that in the Catholic view Jesus Christ was head of the Church with the Pope merely his "vicar," and that infallible knowledge was attributed to the Pontiff only in limited circumstances and only as head of the whole Church. However, *Kathimerini* of Athens, the conservative Greek paper, commented dryly on December 30, 1958, that the "separated brothers," as the Pope called the non-Catholic Christians, might better stay merely "good cousins."

One of the leaders of the Greek Orthodox Church remarked, for instance, on February 1, 1959, that his Church would not accept the three Catholic dogmas added since the middle of the 19th century: Mary's conception without original sin, papal infallibility, and Mary's bodily assumption into heaven.

DISINTERESTEDNESS

Far away it may be but many advantages would come from reconciliation with our Orthodox brethren: the happiness of friendship and trust instead of the misery of hostility and suspicion. Unbelievers would no longer be

able to mock and jibe that Christians preach charity and unity but practice division and dissension. Apostolic work would be aided by co-ordinated and combined efforts. The glory of the Church would shine more conspicuously through the manifestation of its unity amid diversity.

But all these things are secondary to the love of Christ. It is for His sake, not for ours, that we seek unity. Pope John has said: "The only triumph we seek is the triumph of Christ and of His Cross." If there is any glory for the Church, it must be Christ's triumph. Christ's glory is His cross: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." It was through humiliation and obedience that Christ was glorified; it is through humility and obedience that His Church will be glorified.

HUMILITY AND REPENTANCE

"If your brother has anything against you"—have our Orthodox brethren anything against us? Making all allowances for the complications of history, we must in simple honesty confess that they may hold certain things against us: neglect to help them when they were attacked by the Moslems, the pride and ruthlessness of the Crusaders, the sack of Constantinople, the assumption that Latin customs and viewpoints were superior; the controversial and hostile spirit of much western writing,—even in comparatively recent times; the ignorance and indifference towards Byzantine history and theology which has been evident for centuries; the attempts of not a few "missionaries" to latinize the whole Church; the very language we often use about union, that the Orthodox must be "led back", must "submit", must "return" to obedience—all this, and perhaps more, is what our brethren have against us.

Therefore we approach them to ask forgiveness and to come with us to lay together our gifts upon God's altar.

SINCERE ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE

We admire in our Orthodox brethren the spirit of martyrdom which their faith has inspired and nurtured. St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Polycarp of Smyrna, St. Irenaeus of Lyons began that tradition which recognizes in martyrdom the highest gift a Christian can desire. The history of our Orthodox brethren shows almost miraculous faithfulness in spite of repeated savage persecutions; the earliest Roman persecutions fell more heavily upon the East, where Christians were more numerous; and then attacks and invasions by Persians, Arabs, Mongols and Ottoman Turks. For four centuries the Orthodox churches were oppressed by the Turks. Within our own memory has come the onslaught of atheistic communism; over 2,691 priests "liquidated" in 1921 and 1922; over 50 bishops killed or died in exile between 1922 and 1926, and the resources of suppression and propaganda turned in full force against the faith that was Orthodox. The vitality of the Orthodox churches has been almost miraculous and is proof that the Spirit of God has been with them.

So many of our Orthodox brethren died with meekness, trust and forgiveness. I quote the words of a bishop who in the early ages died a cruel death: "It is the unique privilege of the Christian to die a martyr, because none but the martyr at the day of judgment will be able to take his stand before the judgment Seat of God and say: 'In Thy name and following Thy example I have forgiven: Thou hast no claim against them any more.'" It is through such heroic forgiveness and love that hope comes to us for the conversion of those who persecute us.

ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

We admire and are grateful, too, for the spirituality of the Orthodox. The Life of St. Antony of the Desert, for

example, composed by St. Athanasius, converted St. Augustine, was a model for St. Jerome, spread in countless manuscripts throughout the Western Church and awoke in thousands the resolution to renounce the world and give themselves completely to God in an eremitic or monastic life. How sound, how attractive a spirituality is revealed in that Life of St. Antony; there is no fear in Antony's religion; there are courage and love of God, a serene courtesy, a uniform cheerfulness, a ready half-humorous common sense, an avoidance of excess and a penetration into the workings of the human spirit which, though put into the form of appearances of devils in material shapes, can even today be of inestimable service to a student of depth psychology. The power of Christ's cross shines like the sun through the morning mists. "Let no man", says St. Antony, "who has renounced the world think that he has given up some great thing; the whole world set against Heaven is scant and poor." His visions have a startling simplicity, as the vision in which he saw the table of the Lord's house with mules standing round it on all sides and kicking against its inner mysteries; or the vision of the demons making noises "like the cat-calls of rude boys" and being puffed away with the name of Christ.

The spiritual heritage of the Western Church is deeply indebted to the East. Not only the Life of St. Antony, but a whole series of spiritual writings passed from East to West. The famous **Collationes** of John Cassian are only an instance of the link which binds organically Eastern and Western monastic and eremitical ideals and guidances: the rule of St. Basil, the collections of Palladius, the **Spiritual Meadow** of John Moschus—St. John Climacus, St. Nilus, of Macarius, Maximus the Confessor,—these and many others bear witness how much Western spirituality owes to the East. There is a serenity and a simplicity in Eastern spirituality which goes along with the completest self-giving

and the most absolute cleaving of the soul to the inward vision. In sober fact, in spiritual writings and guidance the Eastern saints were the leaders and the masters of the West.

ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

The earliest theological language of the Church was Greek. The New Testament was written in Greek to be read by people who spoke and thought Greek. In the first ages of the Church many of the Supreme Pontiffs were chosen from the East: Anacletus, Evaristus, Anicetus, Eleutherius, Zozimum and Agatho. It was the genius of Greek scholars and Greek Fathers of the Church which met and conquered the old paganism, with its luxury and refinements of life, met and conquered the subtle mythologies of the mystery religions, and the assumptions of superior wisdom of the Gnostics. It was Origen who laid the foundations of scientific biblical scholarship. It was the Greek Fathers, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, John Chrysostom and so many others of glorious names—who made secure the fundamental doctrines of the Faith—the Incarnation and the Trinity. With deep sagacity they held to the sacred Tradition; they presented the saving mysteries in their wholeness, liturgy, spirituality, theology blended into completeness. They grasped with formidable energy the reality of the fact that God had a mother, and they held as a cardinal principle of Christian thought that God became what we are in order that we might become what He is.

We hear much today of Biblical theology. But one may ask whether any theology can be truly biblical if it is not also truly patristic? Can we understand the word of God in the Bible unless we understand it also in the Christian Tradition? Return to the Bible must carry with it return to the Fathers; and this is a truth which today our Orthodox brethren can teach us.

APOSTOLIC ZEAL

Nor must it be imagined that the theology of the Eastern Church was merely speculative. On the contrary, it was the Eastern Church that brought to Christ the Armenians, with their heroic faithfulness in repeated persecutions, the Rumanians, the Magyrs, the Slavonic peoples, the Ethiopians, the Lithuanians, the Ukranians, some Finnish tribes . . . and it was the Eastern Church that went to India, to the Aleutian Islands, Alaska and Japan. Who can forget the apostolic and prudent zeal of Saints Cyril and Methodius, through whom, with the encouragement of Popes Adrian II and John VIII, the Slavonic Rite was formed?

THE QUESTION OF RITES

What we call a "Rite" strikes us particularly in the matter of liturgical practice, with its differing languages, gestures, prayers, adoration and intercession in which the sacred Sacrifice is embodied. But a "Rite" is more than liturgy, or, rather, the liturgy is the expression of a whole complex of customs, laws, spiritual outlooks, traditions,—almost the whole "culture" of a people. In the Liturgy is enshrined a people's sacred memories, present sanctities and future hopes. The devotion of our Orthodox brethren to their liturgies and ancient institutions is something which we not only admire, but recognize as precious to the Christian faith. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the preservation of these Rites, for their variety sheds lustre on the whole Church and is at once evidence of and a tribute to the Catholicity of the faith.

"It is necessary", wrote Pope Pius XII, "that all peoples of the Oriental Rites, in everything that concerns their particular history, genius and character, should enjoy legitimate liberty, insofar as there is nothing contrary to the true and integral doctrine of Jesus Christ. This should be known

and given the most studious attention, and as much by those who were born in the bosom of the Church as by those who in longing and desire tend towards it. All must be convinced that in no way will they be put under pressure to change their own proper and lawful Rites, or their ancient traditions and institutions, for Latin institutions or rites. Each and all of these Rites must be held in equal honor and esteem, because they form within the one Church, their common Mother, a royal entourage of truth. What is more, diversity of rites and institutions keeps intact all that is ancient and precious in each church, and adds lustre to the truth and essential unity."

The implication is clear: the unity willed by Christ and sought by the Church is not an absorption, nor a Latinization, or a diminution, but, on the contrary, is an enrichment, a re-evaluation, a new radiance and the beginning of a new era.

THE VOCATION OF THE UNITED EASTERN CHURCHES

There are amongst us churches of the Byzantine, the Antiochene, the Chaldean, the Armenian and the Alexandrine Rites united with the Holy See. They are comparatively few in numbers, perhaps ten million, but their importance is incalculable. They have a unique vocation: to bring to us the insights and the traditions of the Eastern Rites and to affirm by their very existence the catholicity of the Church. I beg our Orthodox brethren to regard them not as deserters from their cause, but as ambassadors to carry the traditions, and the institutions of the East into the inner councils of the West. Their traditions, their convictions and their feelings are not Latin, but Oriental; and they feel most acutely their separation from their Oriental brothers. In fact, they are performing well their vocation as temporary ambassadors. On the preparatory Commissions

of the Second Vatican Council, of some 300 members, about 50 were Orientals; they spoke and keep speaking in no other way than their Orthodox brothers would speak. They are proud being Oriental and they are tenacious of their traditions and customs. They come from Lebanon, from India, Iraq and Syria, and from the Diaspora of the Ukrainian, Roumanian, Ruthenian and other churches. In matters concerning the Eastern Church their collaboration is most valuable and regarded with the keenest interest. "How often," said one prelate, "have we not felt that on our own commission the voice of the East is not only listened to with satisfaction, but also solicited: 'Lux ab Oriente', our fellow members would amiably remark."

Our approach, then, and our whole attitude towards our Orthodox brethren must be inspired by honest acknowledgment of our faults and deficiencies, by sincere humility, admiration and gratitude. Let me add the need of patience, of charity and a grasping of every possible opportunity for cooperation and for dialogue.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND IS BEING DONE

I cannot do more than make very passing references to the many evidences which prove that the Church has a most sincere interest in reconciliation with our Orthodox brothers. There have been numerous and effective directives from the Holy See, whose purpose was to preserve the Oriental Rites, institutions and traditions, and to curb any attempts at Latinization. Benedict XV established the Congregation for the Oriental Churches as an independent body. Its history goes back to Gregory XII in 1575. Liturgical books have been published for the Chaldeans, the Ethiopians, the Greeks, the Ukrainians. Colleges have been established in Rome for Oriental ecclesiastical students, and Colleges of various kinds in Eastern lands. The Pontifical

Institutes for Oriental Studies and for Russian studies have done and are doing invaluable scholarly work. Pius XI gave the Benedictines a special mandate to interest themselves in the cause, and there is scarcely need here to mention the splendid work of Chevetogne and of our own St. Procopius Abbey in Illinois. Other Orders have shown practical and effective interest: the Dominicans, the Assumptionists, the Jesuits, the Friars of the Atonement; while the Near East Welfare Council has erected schools, hospitals and other charitable agencies in the East. I, myself, built a small seminary in Canada, staffed by Canadian Redemptorists for the training of priests to serve in Russia when our prayers for that country will be answered through the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima. One could scarcely enumerate the various associations and societies whose purpose is to help towards reconciliation. The list of books and of periodicals is long, and worthy of praise.

I wish, however, to make two practical suggestions to help build the bridge between the East and the West. First, a greater interest in the history of the divided churches, and the second, a greater zeal in translations, both of Oriental works into English and of Western works into Russian and modern Greek.

A WIDER KNOWLEDGE OF HISTORY

The estrangement between the Oriental Churches and the Latin Church has sometimes been said to consist not so much in affirmations of different doctrines, such as the **Filioque**, the papacy, the epiclesis, and so on, but rather in a radical difference in theological and even spiritual mentality and fundamental outlook: the East intuitive, the West logical; the East ontological, the West juridical; the East mystic, the West moralistic; the East approaching God as it were in an ascending spiral cloud, the West up a straight staircase of sharp-cut steps. There may be some

truth in such generalizations, though I am a little skeptical about them.

The facts show that East and West began in accord and agreement, with one Tradition and one Faith. But in the course of the centuries each had to defend the one Faith and the one Tradition in different conditions and against different attacks. The Monophysite controversy and the Iconoclast controversy had comparatively little impact in the West, whereas the Donatist and the Pelagian controversies had comparatively little impact in the East. The same is true of the other distortions of Christian faith which arose in the West: The Berengarian dispute about the Eucharist, the problems of faith and reason, the Albigensians, the Jansenists, and later the Reformers—all these were specifically Western and had to be met by the West, while the East remained comparatively untouched by them.

But it must be noticed that, though the conditions differed, it was always the same Faith and the same Tradition which was being defended, clarified and affirmed. Yet the emphasis, the formulations, even the experience, were different, and it is easy to lose sight of the underlying unity of Faith and Tradition.

It is for this reason that objective study of the history of both East and West is essential—and historical study based upon the new methods which embrace the totality of social structures, and the cultural conditions in which the faith was actually lived. Such study is, of course, proceeding and leading to re-assessments of old outlooks.

Yet that work must be extended and widened. There is need of post-graduate scholars; there is need of fellowships which will enable men of ability to devote themselves to the study of the history and of the traditions of our churches. And so I venture to speak a word of encouragement to all our Catholic universities and colleges—indeed to all universities and colleges—and to ask them if it

would be possible for them to do even more in the realm of scholarship by which the objective historical truth can appear more clearly and be more widely known and appreciated.

THE NEED OF TRANSLATORS

Here I touch on a topic which is unromantic and which promises no spectacular or immediate results: the need to make accessible to a greater number of people both inside and outside the Orthodox and Catholic Churches the thought and writings of the great Fathers of the Christian tradition who gave serene and profound expression to the history of Christian salvation in the earliest days of the Church. It is a commonplace of ecumenism that it is not merely doctrine, or small learned groups, that have to be united, but people who have to be united. But how can people be united if they are ignorant of the treasures of Christian truths which are hidden from them in the works and the writings of the great Fathers of the common tradition and the common faith?

In the *Patrologia Graeca* of Migne there are some 161 volumes. In the *Patrologia Latina* there are over 220 volumes. Of all this how much is accessible to modern folks who speak and read only English, or only Russian or Greek? The new editions of the Eastern writers—for instance, the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, which includes those who wrote in Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic as well as Greek, how many are translated into English in readable and accessible form?

I am fully aware that an immense scholarly effort is proceeding both in editions and in translations. The Library of Christian Classics, the translations appearing under the aegis of the Catholic University of America and in the Ancient Christian Writers series, directed by Dr. J. Quasten and Fr. Walter Burghardt,—and other groups or

individuals—are doing excellent work. They deserve our fullest and most generous support. But I have the impression that there is need of a more coordinated effort,—a cooperation of scholars from all communions, who can plan and work together. There is definite need of more men familiar with the ancient languages, able to translate with accuracy but without being pedantic, able to give the style and tone of the originals. This work, as I said, is unromantic and it does not produce spectacular or immediate results. Nevertheless it is an essential work and a work which needs the interest and the support of all who have at heart not only reconciliation between Christians, but have at heart the maintenance of those values which Christians must maintain unless our civilization is to be submerged by a technological and inhuman science inspired only by materialistic outlooks and convictions.

NEW SITUATIONS AND NEW PROBLEMS

The churches of the East and the West are living in a new situation and are facing new problems. We are all well aware of it. There is need to put the timeless and unchangeable Christian message into forms and language capable of influencing the men of our time. There is need of adaptation,—and we all agree on this.

But adaptation to new situations and new experiences can only be the evolution of what the Church already possesses: Her expression of the Faith grows throughout the centuries, but remains none other than that which her Founder wills her to have and to develop: how could it be otherwise, since it is he who in a true sense preaches and sanctifies himself in his Faith?

And it follows that the Tradition of the Fathers is the foundation and the guide of all “adaptation”, of all “modernization” of “the salvation action of God” as it comes to us in our time. We need freshness, the vitality and the

strength that can come to us from the Fathers of the Church, both Eastern and Western, for they, like us, faced new problems and met them, making the Christian truth understandable and attractive to the men of their time. At our peril do we neglect that vital and powerful Tradition of Christianity which enabled the Church in the early centuries to meet the most formidable assaults and to enable humility to conquer the pride of this world.

VATICAN COUNCIL II AND THE EASTERN RITES

One characteristic of the Vatican Council which reveals it as a "bridge" between East and West was the presence of the prelates from the East. I refer to the Bishops from Syria and Iraq, from Armenia and Egypt, from behind the Iron Curtain and the many Eastern Rites from Canada, the United States and other parts of the West. In that opening-day procession of October 11—which took an hour to file into the basilica of St. Peter—the crowns on the heads of the Eastern brethren were few in comparison with the mitred heads of the Western bishops but they were very significant and noteworthy. Not only were they a sign of the universality, the catholic diversity of the Church of Christ, but they were a jarring reminder to us, that it was the very nature and mission of the Church to be universal; that hundreds of crowns which were missing should have been there; that there were millions of Oriental Christians who were not represented.

While the presence of the Eastern Catholic bishops was a sign of the unity of the Church and a testimony of the centuries of suffering which these loyal Catholics of the East had endured in their communion with Rome, it was also an alarming reminder that nine-tenths of Eastern Christendom are not in communion with the Catholic Church. Confirming this sad fact was the presence of a

few observer delegates from the Eastern Churches not in union with the Holy See. Two delegates from the Russian Patriarchate of Moscow plus delegates from several of the so-called "Lesser Eastern Churches" attended each session. The regrettable absence of the Greek Orthodox was a most conspicuous reminder of the separated condition of Christendom.

One of the happy results, however, which has come from this council has been the creation of a special part of Cardinal Bea's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity which will deal exclusively with the Orthodox and other Eastern dissidents. This should make it easier for future and I hope more effective contacts.

During my stay in Rome I greeted a large number of the bishops from the East. I met and talked and lunched with many of these extraordinary and dedicated men. And while we Western bishops were thrilled and pleased to see or meet with so many leaders of the Eastern Rites, we were uneasy nonetheless in realizing that the past two or three centuries had not produced the results that we in the West had expected. The bridge had not been built, the union which we Latins had so confidently expected had not been forged by the many unions of the 17th and 18th centuries by the re-establishment of the Eastern Patriarchates. In fact, on several occasions—and more indeed than a few, more disunity had resulted and an increase of fraternal strife was effected in the division of community loyalties. The past attempts at piecemeal unions had not proved successful in many instances. The result is that the problem of united Eastern Catholics and union between East and West is one of the foremost tasks and hopes of this council.

But the mere presence of Eastern Catholic prelates did not alone impress me; their active participation in the Council was a pleasant surprise. The frequent celebration of one of the Eastern liturgies, the articulate expression of

the opinions of these prelates, their scholarly familiarity with the Scriptures and ancient Fathers and their frankness in presenting the problems of the universal Church as well as the grievances of the Eastern rites—these will never be forgotten.

The subject matter of the Council itself also had something to do with this “orienting” of the West. The Preparatory Commission for the Oriental Churches had prepared an excellent statement on Church unity and the means of fostering unity between East and West. It was a most beautiful document—called “*Ut unum sint*”. It was received with enthusiasm by all the fathers of the Council. The discussion on the draft lasted for about three sessions and it was accepted almost unanimously. It will be combined with another statement prepared by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. This documentary, “*Ut unum sint*”, contains thoughts that needed to be said. Its language is that of the Bible, rather than that of the text book; its voice is that of a pastor rather than that of a school master; its words are those of brothers anxious for reconciliation. I feel safe in predicting that the promulgation of this friendly approach will mark a beginning for better relations between us and our separated brothers of the Orthodox and other Eastern dissident Churches.

These characteristics of the first session of the present Vatican Council show that a better bridge is being planned between East and West. The presence of the patriarchs and bishops from the Eastern Catholic Rites plus the noteworthy absence of so many who are separated from us; the active part the bishops from the East played in the first session; the constitution “*Ut unum sint*”—these give some proof that the bridge may be built.

The human architect of this Council, Pope John, is thus showing himself to be a true “pontifex,” a true bridge-builder. The divine architect of the Council and of the

bonds which bind us with our brothers of the East—the Holy Spirit—is revealing in this our day what our role in this great project must be. The Council and the Holy Spirit call us to a solemn duty we cannot refuse. They call us to unity and to its achievement, to the vigorous work of understanding each other (the work that requires that we roll up our sleeves); to mutual patience (the patience that keeps our fists unclenched); and to the unmeasured charity of Christ, (the charity that always has its arms outstretched).

THE POWER OF CHRIST

To conclude: the world needs evidence of the power of Christ, evidence that his power can overcome the weaknesses, the antagonisms, the misunderstandings and the suspicions of men, and is able to reconcile all his followers. It is our duty to give that evidence. Perfect union of Christians may be long in coming. But meantime we can give evidence of forgiveness and of charity: we can, as Pope John XXIII exhorts us to do, resolve to pray, to labor and to suffer, to try to be wise, prudent, patient and persevering in our support of all the efforts of charity, mutual respect and esteem for the religious beliefs of all people, in all those programs that bring scholars together for dialogues and in all endeavors that prove that despite our differences we Christians like those of the earliest centuries still love one another. In this way we shall create a better climate for the fulfillment of the prayer of our Divine Lord: "That all may be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee".

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