

only in this way that the Orthodox managed to register a real progress, and so it is difficult to imagine that this process cannot be continued. Seen from the outside, and maybe even for some members of the Orthodox Church, this synodal process may look very complicated and very slow; some might lose faith noticing eventually that the Orthodox do not understand among themselves. Nevertheless, for those who experienced this process directly, who have participated in one or several meetings presented above, have realized that the Orthodox Church is one, that in spite of all difficulties, the representatives of the Orthodox Churches have always felt as brothers and members of the same Orthodox Church, and were permanently penetrated by the great responsibility to find the best solutions in promoting the mission of their Church in the world today, fully convinced that the whole preparatory process, the summons and success of the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church, "depends, first of all, on the grace of God and the synergy or our courageous and responsible co-operation with this grace."²⁴⁵

Part II

ANNEXES: DECISIONS

Annex I

The Pan-Orthodox Congress

Constantinople, 10th May – 8th June 1923

I. 1. The Decision to correct the Calendar¹

The Pan-Orthodox Congress,² held in Constantinople in May 1923 under the chairmanship of Patriarch Meletios IV, recognizes that the abolition of the difference between the religious and the civil calendar is an unavoidable necessity and that there is no canonical impediment to correct the ecclesiastical calendar in use according to the data of the astronomical science, as such it decides the following correction to the Julian Calendar:

1. The 13 days of the Julian calendar, which make up the difference in solar years from the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea up to the present, are to be removed. Therefore 1st October 1923 will be considered 14th October 1923.
2. The feasts of the removed days will be celebrated all together on the 14th October or as the bishop of the diocese will determine.
3. All the months of the year will keep the same number of days, as it was until now. In the leap years, the month of February shall have 29 days, as it was until now.

¹ See Archim. Iuliu SCRIBAN, "The Religious Conference in Constantinople", *op. cit.*, p. 169-171.

² The title of this conference, as well as of the following conferences until the seventh decade of the last century was not well established. Some thought that one can speak of a "Pan-Orthodox Congress" (see A. JENSEN, *Die Zukunft der Orthodoxie*, *op. cit.*, p. 229f.) or of a "Pan-Orthodox Conference" (see D. MPATSTATOU, *Proceedings and Decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Council in Constantinople*, Athens, 1982 (*in Greek*) and A.D. DELIMPASIS, *Pascha of the Lord, Creation, Renewal, and Apostasy*, Athens, 1885, 1 (*in*

4. There shall be, as it is now, two types of years: the common year of 365 days and the leap year of 366 days. The leap years are those that can be divided by four and have no remainder, as it was until now. There is an exception for the secular years; for them the following rule will be applied:
5. Century years (i.e. those ending in two zeroes) will not be leap years except when the number of centuries divided by 9 gives as remainder 2 or 6. All the other secular years will be common years. Therefore, among the century years that are to follow, leap years are those underlined in the following table:

2000 2100 2200 2300 2400 2500 2600 2700 2800
2900 3000 3100 3200 3300 3400 3500 3600 3700.

According to this reckoning, the average duration of the civil year will be 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 48 seconds. This value agrees, except for one or two seconds, with the average duration of the civil year.

6. The immovable feasts will not change the dates they had until now.
7. The movable feasts will be determined in relation to Easter. According to the canonical decisions, which are observed inviolate, Easter will be celebrated on the Sunday that follows the full moon after the vernal equinox.
8. The determination of the Paschal full moon will be made with the help of the astronomical calculations, taking into account the progresses achieved by this science. The calculation of the Easter date will always be done according to the time of the Holy City of Jerusalem.
9. The Ecumenical Patriarch will request the astronomic observatory and the departments of astronomic physics in Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest and Pulkovo (Petrograd) to put together long term Paschal tables, and will bring them to the knowledge of all Orthodox Churches.
10. It is understood that the present reform of the Julian calendar cannot constitute in any way an obstacle to its subsequent modification, which modification would be observed by all Christian Churches.

Notes [included in the 1923 Decision – our note V.I.]

1. To § 5. Therefore, the new calendar is more accurate than the Gregorian calendar whose ordinary year's length differs by 24 to 26 seconds from the ordinary length of the tropical year. This observation should not be taken as a depreciation of the Gregorian calendar. When this calendar was established there was no precise knowledge as to the exact duration of the tropical year and it was admitted that this duration equals 365 days, 49 minutes and 16 seconds. In fact the difference in length between the civil years in the new calendar and the Gregorian calendar is so small that the difference among the calendars will be observed only after 877 years.

- years will be leap years in the Gregorian calendar: 2000 2100 2200 2300 2400 2500 2600 2700 2800. Therefore the variance will show in the year 2800.
2. To § 8: (Since a day is reckoned from midnight to midnight), the civil date of the first opposition of the moon after the vernal equinox is to be determined on the basis of the time of the meridian which passes through the cupola of the Holy Sepulchre. The first Sunday after this date is the Easter day, i.e., if this day coincides with a Sunday, then Easter shall be celebrated on the next Sunday.

Adopted in the Ecumenical Patriarchate on 5th June 1923

Signed by:

Meletios, Patriarch of Constantinople

Kallinikos of Kyzikos

Gabriel of Montenegro

Basil of Nicaea

Jacob of Dyrrachion

Archimandrite Juliu Scriban

Antoniadis V., Professor at the Theological Institute in Halki

Dr. M. Milankovich, Professor at the University of Belgrade

Archimandrite Germanos, Secretary

I. 2. Orthodox Church and the Adoption of a Calendar by the United Nations³

The Congress held in Constantinople under the chairmanship of the Ecumenical Patriarch Metelios IV discussed, during its sessions from 23rd May to 5th June, the terms under which the Orthodox Church would be able to participate in conferences which have in view the discovery of a new fully scientific and practical calendar, and unanimously decided the following:

1. "The Ecumenical Patriarchate is requested, after first consulting with the other Orthodox Churches, to communicate to the League of Nations that the Orthodox Church is willing to accept a new calendar that is to be elaborated in the future, if all Christian Churches are ready to accept it. If the League of Nations does not consider itself justified in accepting this declaration of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, it shall be its task to employ other means that would seem adequate, in order to make this decision known.
2. The Orthodox Church prefers a calendar retaining the continuity of the week, but it is not bound by this view in a case where the other Churches

agree unanimously to accept a calendar that would make necessary the curtailment of the continuity of the week.

3. In as much as a common agreement among the Christian Churches would be reached, the Orthodox Church is willing to accept a fixed date for the celebration of Easter always on a Sunday.
4. The meeting expressed its desire that this fixed Sunday of the Easter celebration will always correspond with the real Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord, which would be determined by scientific methods”.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, 5th June 1923
(followed by the same signatures as in I. 1.)

I. 3. The Priority between the Mysteries of Marriage and Priesthood

The Congress held in Constantinople under the chairmanship of the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV discussed, during its sessions on 25th and 30th May, as well as on 5th June, if the anteriority between the mysteries of marriage and priesthood is inflexible, and took into consideration that:

- From a dogmatic and sacramental point of view these two sacraments do not excluded each other;
 - The appropriate practice established earlier on and preserved up to the present for the welfare of the Church, may be changed for the same benefit of the Church as required by the hierarchs and believers all the same. This is also understood from the Scriptures (see I Cor. 9:5) and is compatible with the spirit of the ancient Church (see the 10th canon of the Council of Ankyra). The conferences decided, sometimes unanimously and at other times by majority vote, the following:
1. To recognize that there is no dogmatic reason for a permanent anteriority between the mysteries of marriage and priesthood, and considers that, in principle, the marriage of the priests and deacons after ordination is allowed, with the exception of those who have taken the monastic vows.
 2. The synods of the local churches have the right, with the approval of the local bishop, to allow the marriage of the priests and deacons who so petition.
 3. This measure is reckoned valid from a canonical point of view, until the convocation of a Pan-Orthodox Synod, to which alone is reserved to invest this legislation with universal validity.”

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, 5th June 1923
(the same signatures follow)

I. 4. The Second Marriage of the Widow Priests

The Congress held in Constantinople under the chairmanship of the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV examined, during its sessions on 25th and 30th May, as well as on 5th June, the question of the second marriage of the widow priests and deacons which has become very urgent in some local churches. For the benefit of the whole Church, for the shepherds and the people, the Congress decided unanimously that:

1. The Church considers that the second marriage of the widow priests and deacons can be accepted, as not contrary to the spirit of the teaching of the Gospel, but rather protects against blame the priestly condition;
2. The synods of the local churches are authorized, on the advice of the bishop of the place, to allow the second marriage, if they so petition.
3. This measure is reckoned valid from a canonical point of view, until the convocation of a Pan-Orthodox Synod, to which alone is reserved to invest this legislation with universal validity.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, 5th June 1923
(the same signatures follow)

I. 5. The Age of the Candidates for Ordination

The Congress held in Constantinople, under the chairmanship of the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV examined, during its sessions on 30th May, 1st and 2nd June, the points below, also taking into account the existing needs and conditions of the local autocephalous churches and for the benefit of the clergy and believers in the Church, decided unanimously that:

1. A deacon cannot be ordained before the age of 21, the priest before 24, and a bishop before the age of 30;
2. The pastoral obligations necessarily imply physical and spiritual integrity of the Church's pastor. The local Synod has the responsibility to do all that is necessary in order to see that these requirements are met.
3. In agreement with Apostle Paul's injunction (I Cor. 11:14) and the legislation and practice of the ancient Church, we find it right that the clergy should have their hair cut and that their external appearance in society should observe the ancient canonical legislation concerning the colour and quality of their attire; that they should not look different from the lay people.
4. The monastic vow found in the small and great *schema* should be considered mandatorily for the whole life, were it not taken before the age of 25.

5. Major impediments to marriage are considered those mentioned expressly in the canons of the Ecumenical Councils. As for any other impediments to marriage, prescribed by a later legislation, the local synods will decide according to particular needs.
6. Since it was observed everywhere in the Orthodox Churches a loosening of the bonds of the mystery of marriage in as far as the Church is concerned, we decided that only a marriage contracted ecclesiastically will be considered ecclesiastically dissolved if it is declared as such by the competent church authority. Once marriage is suspended, the guilty party cannot contract another marriage before the expiration of one year from the divorce. Under no circumstances is anyone to have communion of marriage with a person of whom it was legally established that it has committed adultery, which led to the dissolution of marriage.
7. It stays in the responsibility of the local churches to adjust the time of the celebration of the feast days of the saints falling on working days, until a calendar will be established and accepted, which should arrange for certain feast days of the saints to be celebrated on Sunday, with the aim of reducing the number of days when no work is done.
8. Regarding the question of fasting, each ecclesiastic authority may be guided by the 69th Apostolic Canon which stipulates that: "If a bishop, or a priest, or a deacon, or a subdeacon, or a reader or chanter does not fast on Wednesdays and Fridays during the Holy Fast of 40 days before Easter let him be defrocked except if he were prevented on account of bodily weaknesses; but if a layman let him be excommunicated." However, on account of situations of necessity, the principle of "economy" should be observed. In this context Balsamon's commentary should be taken as a guide: "In connection with this canon, it should be noticed that there is a fasting period which lasts for forty days; for if there were other such periods, the canon would mentioned them. However we are not ashamed to fast during other fasting days, namely before the Holy Apostles, before the Dormition of the Mother of God and before the Nativity of our Lord".

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, 5th June 1923
(the same signatures follow)

I. 6. The Anniversary of 1600 Years since the First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea, 325)

During its session of 1st June the Congress held in Constantinople, under the chairmanship of the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV, decided unanimously:

1. It accepts with joy the proposal by His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae of Transylvania concerning the festive celebration in 1925, of the 1600th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea.
2. The Conference requests that the Ecumenical Patriarchate undertake the initiative so that this event may be celebrated solemnly by the whole Orthodox Church, not only on a local level, but also through the convocation of a Pan-Orthodox Synod, whose task should be to solve all questions the Orthodox Church is confronted nowadays.
3. The Conference expresses its desire that all churches which confess the Symbol of Faith of Nicaea may be invited to this anniversary.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, 5th June 1923
(the same signatures follow)

I. 7. In Connection with the Situation in the Russian Church

The Congress held in Constantinople, under the chairmanship of the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV, took knowledge of the fact that an ecclesiastical assembly, made up of clergy and lay people, was held in Moscow and that it decided to defrock His Beatitude Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow and All Russia, currently held in prison. The Congress decided unanimously as follows:

1. In connection with this act directed against the Primate of the Holy Church of Russia, whose martyrdom still continues, the Congress expresses its concern and deeply felt compassion for this confessor Patriarch.
2. The Congress makes supplication to the Most High that He may strengthen him until his last breath during his good fight for the faith.
3. The Congress makes an appeal to the whole Christian world, that the patriarch and the hierarchs held captive with him be released from their bonds.
4. The Congress requests the Ecumenical Patriarchate that, together with the other Orthodox Churches, might reflect on the ecclesiastical situation in Russia and find a way to give firm guidance to the troubled religious conscience of the pious Russian people, terribly tested in its faith.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, 6th June 1923
(the same signatures follow)