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**The Controversy over Primacy and Conciliarity and the Orthodox Christian Struggle with Ecumenism: An Orthodox Reflection on *Unitatis Redintegratio*.**

ABSTRACT: The paper will explore the main theological and practical dilemma of the Orthodox Church since Vatican II, that has successively hobbled its ecumenical witness and dialogue with the Catholic Church, which is the lack of an agreed vision of ecclesial primacy and conciliarity in Orthodoxy. During the last 60 years, support for ecumenism in Orthodoxy has generally declined with rise in the suspicion of ‘the West’, denigration of its churches and the rise of the view of ecumenism as the ‘pan-heresy’ (Justin Popović). As there is such division in Orthodoxy, the number of church wide formal dialogues of Orthodoxy with non-Orthodox churches have been reduced resulting in the increase of both bilateral dialogues of different local churches with the non-Orthodox and new non-formal academic dialogues between Orthodoxy and the non-Orthodox. More specifically, it will be argued that the struggle between the Churches of Moscow (Moscow Patriarchate) and Constantinople (Ecumenical Patriarchate), Moscow’s use of Orthodox ‘unanimity’ under the guise of Orthodox ‘unity’/‘conciliarity’ and its systematic questioning of the church wide primacy of Constantinople in Orthodoxy has book ended the last 60 plus years of Orthodox-Catholic dialogue since *Unitatis Redintegratio* (1964). This intra-Orthodox division begins with Moscow-Constantinople dissension on the issue of sending observers to Vatican II (1961-1964) through to the Moscow Patriarchate’s objections to membership of some Orthodox in the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church (Belgrade 2006), Moscow’s rejection of various aspects of the Dialogue’s documents (Ravenna 2007) and, finally, its refusal to attend the Dialogue at all (Alexandria 2023) in light of its break with Constantinople in the Ukraine ecclesial crisis (2018-) and the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022), which Moscow blesses and Constantinople condemns. The crisis of unity in Orthodoxy, which concerns its own understanding of primacy and conciliarity, is simultaneously a crisis of ecumenism for Catholic-Orthodox rapprochement because the major issue that separates Orthodoxy and Catholicism is their different understandings or ecclesial primacy vis-à-vis conciliarity. How can the Orthodox Church dialogue with the Catholic Church on this crucial issue when there is no agreement on the subject within Orthodoxy itself? The paper will contend that a much more robust theology of primacy in Orthodoxy needs developing which is asymmetrical to conciliarity in order to preserve conciliarity and avoid the degeneration of conciliarity into a sterile never-ending discussion (i.e. sobornal fundamentalism) and so that one church does not hold the others hostage to its veto. This crisis of primacy and conciliarity in Orthodoxy and in its struggle with official ecumenism will be explored in light of certain key touch stones discussed in *Unitatis Redintegratio* and other conciliar texts including the ‘hierarchy of truths’ (§11), the Catholic reference to the Orthodox Church, which sees itself as one Church, as various discrete separated ‘Eastern churches’ (*UR*, §14), the stumbling block of the existence of Catholic ‘eastern rite’ (= *sui iuris*) churches (= uniatism) (*Orientalium ecclesiarum*, §2) and the widely differing views on *communicatio in sacris* (intercommunion) (*UR*, §§8, 15, *OE*, §§24-29).