

Declaration of the Catholic-Orthodox Mixed Commission of France on the Balamand Agreed Statement¹ (Châtenay-Malabry, 19 November 1993)

Резюме

Документ Міжнародної Православно-Католицької Мішаної Комісії для Екуменічного Діялогу п.з. „Уніятизм: колишній метод об'єднання й сучасні пошуки повної спільності (κοινωνία)” виданий в червні 1993-го року в Баламанді (гляди *Логос* 34 (1993), 667-75) викликав широкий відгук у світі. Між різними відозвами є наступна спільна заява Католицько-Православної Мішаної Комісії Франції з 19-го листопада 1993 р. Ця заява дуже позитивно реагує на документ з Баламанду, цитуючи слова речника Царгородської Патріархії Митрополита Єремії та Папу Івана Павла ІІ. Заява підкреслює, що глава УГКЦ Блаженніший Мирослав Іван вповні піддержав Баламандський документ. Рішено запросити представників східних католицьких церков Франції на дальні православно-католицькі екуменічні діалоги в Франції.



¹ This is an unofficial translation from the French text as published in *Service Orthodoxe de Presse*, Document 184A, January 1994. The Balamand Statement entitled “Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past and the Present Search for Full Communion” was accepted in June 1993 by the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

The Catholic-Orthodox Mixed Commission of France, constituted in 1978–1980 by the hierarchs responsible for our Churches to respond to the needs of dialogue and rapprochement of the Churches of Christ in France, after having completed and published its study on the Roman Primacy in the communion of the Churches (*La Primauté romaine dans la communion des Églises*, Éd. du Cerf, coll. “Documents des Églises,” 1991) has undertaken since January 1991 to reflect on the ecclesiological problems which the history of the relations between East and West, the birth and the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches united [with Rome], and the sometimes different perception which we have of being Sister Churches have created or left on our common roads towards full communion.

Simultaneously, our Mixed Commission has been following with much interest and attention the reflection and the dialogue which has been occupying the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church since the Agreed Statements which concluded the first phase of its dialogue (1980–1988) on *the Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity; Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church; and the Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church*. This reflection and this dialogue, which occupied the years from 1989 through 1993, finally led, in the course of the seventh plenary session of the Joint International Commission, to the Balamand (Lebanon) Agreed Statement, elaborated at the Saint John of Damascus Orthodox Theological Institute of Balamand from 17 through 24 June 1993 with the title mentioned above: *Uniatism, method of union of the past and the present search for full communion*.

While awaiting the official reactions and eventual directions from the responsible authorities of our Churches, we have decided, insofar as this concerns us, to receive this document and to inform our faithful accordingly. The publication of the Balamand Statement permits us, on the occasion of our autumn meeting of 19 November 1993, to express our common recognition, both for the ecclesiological principles and for the practical rules, which together make up the two parts of the document.

Metropolitan Jeremias, our co-president, was the head of the delegation of the Church of Constantinople which visited Rome in the name of His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios I on 29 June 1993 for the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Metropolitan Jeremias delivered a letter to the Pope dated 21 June [1993], just four days after the opening of the Balamand plenary. In this letter, one reads as follows:

We glorify the Holy Name of the Lord, for He has permitted the meeting of the Joint Commission of our Theological Dialogue; we desire that this should console and promote the dialogue.

We rejoice in that which Your Holiness has stressed on the occasion of this meeting, the necessity of *honesty* in our dialogue, which, applied to all the aspects of the relations between our two Sister Churches, should influence them in a fundamental way for still more positive results.

Metropolitan Jeremias listened to the response on 19 June 1993, five days after the conclusion of the Balamand plenary. John Paul II, Bishop of Rome, said to Metropolitan Jeremias in his official allocution:

In these days which follow the plenary session of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, we have a particular reason to give thanks to the Lord, for a new stage has been gained. We know that this has been in an atmosphere of deep brotherly love and mutual confidence, fruits of the dialogue of love which must continue to develop and deepen so as to accompany the theological dialogue and enable its progress. The results of the Balamand meeting should assist all the Orthodox Local Churches and all the Catholic Local Churches, Latin and Eastern, which live in the same region, to take part further in the dialogue of love and to begin or continue relations of collaboration in the field of their pastoral activity. It is