

**Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group – Groupe de travail orthodoxe-catholique Saint-Irénée  
Gemeinsamer orthodox-katholischer Arbeitskreis Sankt Irenäus**

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## **Communiqué – Paderborn 2004**

*From 23 to 27 June 2004, an Orthodox-Catholic working group with international composition met in Paderborn (Germany) for its constituent assembly. At the invitation of Catholic Bishop Dr. Gerhard Feige, Auxiliary Bishop in Magdeburg, and Serbian Orthodox Bishop Dr. Ignatije (Midić) of Braničevo, 11 Orthodox and 11 Catholic theologians discussed the possibilities of giving a new impetus to the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue at the international level. The Orthodox members of the working group came from Bulgaria, France, Greece, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and the USA; the Catholic members came from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and the USA. The working group decided to use the name “Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group”, and to continue to work together as a group with the same composition. At the end of the conference the group adopted the following statement about how it sees itself:*

“In view of the fact that Christian unity is not a task about which we have an option, but is based on a mandate of Jesus Christ himself, we came together because of our concern about current difficulties in the dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics, and because of our wish to contribute to a continuation of this dialogue. We want to devote the theological competence of our working group to our churches in order to continue the theological dialogue between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches, being convinced of its necessity.

We are aware that the division between our churches has an ecclesial and a theological dimension, and that it is also based on social, historical and psychological factors. The latter factors, in particular, have led to a crisis in the official international theological dialogue between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches in recent years. We, therefore, consider it to be our task

- to provide a space for an unofficial exchange of opinions and for free and open discussion of the existing problems;
- to reflect on the current situation of Orthodox-Catholic relationships and, where possible, to make proposals for practical solutions;
- to remind our churches that the present obstacles can only be overcome if we continue the dialogue.

In this sense, we see it as our genuine task, by means of an international working group which transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries, to investigate the profound differences in mentality, ways of thinking and of doing theology which are related to current problems, to understand their character, and to try to see how both traditions can enrich each other without losing their own identity. We hope that in this way we will be able to work for a growing mutual understanding in our respective churches, and we commit ourselves to personal involvement towards this aim.”

*The members of the working group expressed their thanks to the Johann-Adam-Möhler-Institute in Paderborn which took the initiative for this forum of conversation and organized its constituent*

assembly. Prof. Dr. Nikolaos Ludovikos, Thessaloniki, and Dr. Johannes Oeldemann, Paderborn, were appointed co-secretaries of the working group.

On the Orthodox side, the following persons participated in the constituent assembly of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group: Bischof Ignatije (Midić) of Braničevo; Marios Begzos, Athens; Job Getcha, Paris; Viorel Ionita, Bucharest/Geneva; Nikolaos Ludovikos, Thessaloniki; Paul Meyendorff, Crestwood/N.Y.; Grigorios Papatomas, Paris; Vladan Perišić, Belgrade; Iosif Pustoutov, Moscow/Aachen; Viktor Savik, Smolensk; Mariyan Stoyadinov, Veliko Tarnovo.

On the Catholic side, the following participants were present: Weihbischof Gerhard Feige, Magdeburg; Thomas Bremer, Münster; Zygfryd Glaeser, Opole; Basilius J. Groen, Graz; Pieter Kohnen, 's-Hertogenbosch; Antoine Lambrechts, Chevetogne; Hervé Legrand, Paris; Johannes Oeldemann, Paderborn; Rudolf Prokschi, Vienna; Ronald Roberson, Washington/D.C.; Wolfgang Thönissen, Paderborn.

