

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

Orthodox Co-secretary:

Prof. Dr. Nikolaos **Loudovikos**
Hortiatis 57010
Thessaloniki
Greece / Griechenland
Phone: +30-2310-348004
Telefax: +30-2310-300360
E-mail: nloudovikos@aeath.gr

Catholic Co-secretary:

Dr. Johannes **Oeldemann**
Johann-Adam-Möhler-Institut f. Ökumenik
Leostr. 19 a, 33098 Paderborn
Germany / Deutschland
Phone: +49-5251-8729804
Telefax: +49-5251-280210
E-Mail: J.Oeldemann@moeplerinstitut.de

Communiqué – Athens 2005

At the invitation of the Church of Greece the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group met for its second conference in the monastery of Penteli in Athens from 9 to 13 November 2005. Chaired by its two Co-Presidents, Orthodox bishop Dr. Ignatije (Midić) of Braničevo (Serbia) and Catholic bishop Dr. Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg (Germany) the members of the Working Group discussed during this meeting common elements and differences in Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiology.

The Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group had its first meeting last year in Paderborn (Germany). The Group understands itself as an international, long term theological Working Group which transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries. The Working Group consists of 12 Orthodox and 12 Catholic theologians. The members of the group come from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia and the USA. The Working Group includes theological scholars who endeavor to discuss freely and openly the existing problems between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches. The group's task is "to reflect on the current situation of Orthodox-Catholic relationships and, where possible, to make proposals for practical solutions; (and) to remind our churches that the present obstacles can only be overcome if we continue the dialogue" (Statement of the 2004 founding assembly in Paderborn).

The Archbishop of Athens and all Greece Christodoulos in his greetings to the members of the Working Group stressed that in the present time „a new period in the relations between the Churches in East and West“ seems to begin, in which „the need to re-establish that unity in truth and love, which for more than thousand years characterised our two churches, becomes an urgent priority“. He wished the meeting fruitful deliberations, so that it may „contribute to the further promotion of theological and ecclesiastical unity and understanding“.

During its meeting in the monastery of Penteli the Working Group concentrated on the topic of ecclesiology with the main theme „The One Church and the many churches“. In the lectures and debates it was discussed how the Catholic Church looks on non-Catholic churches and to which extent the Orthodox Church could acknowledge the ecclesial character of non-Orthodox churches. Furthermore the members discussed the relationship between local churches and the universal church in Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiology, especially the understanding of local churches and the meaning of the term "Sister Churches". The conclusions of the deliberations will be summarized in form of theses and further elaborated during the next meeting.

The members of the Working Group expressed their gratitude to the Church of Greece, especially to the Synodal Committee on Interchristian Relations, for the hospitality they experienced. The meeting took place in a warm and open atmosphere that included common morning prayer, and left a good impression with the members. They thanked the Co-secretaries of the Working Group, Dr. Johannes Oeldemann (Paderborn) and Prof. Dr. Nikolaos Loudovikos (Thessaloniki), for their

work to prepare the conference. The next meeting of the Working Group will take place in November 2006 in the monastery of Chevetogne (Belgium).

Additional information:

On the Orthodox side, the following persons participated in the meeting of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group in the monastery of Penteli in Athens: Bishop Ignatije (Midić) of Braničevo; Marios Begzos, Athens; Job Getcha, Paris; Viorel Ionita, Bucharest/Geneva; Nikolaos Loudovikos, Thessaloniki; Paul Meyendorff, Crestwood/N.Y.; Grigorios Papathomas, Paris; Vladan Perišić, Belgrade; Viktor Savik, Smolensk; Mariyan Stoyadinov, Veliko Tarnovo; Jan Zozulak, Prešov.

On the Catholic side, the following participants were present: Bishop Gerhard Feige, Magdeburg; Thomas Bremer, Münster; Edward Farrugia, Rome; 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.

