Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy

2nd Council of Constantinople (553 AD)

Introduction

The Byzantine Emperor Justinian and Pope Vigilius decided to summon this council after the latter withdrew his "Judgment" (Judicatum) condemning the "Three Chapters" of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, and Ibas. This "Judgment" had been issued in 548 but the bishops of the west and especially of Africa unanimously opposed it. The council was summoned by Justinian to Constantinople, although Vigilius would have preferred to convene it in Sicily or Italy so that western bishops might be present. It assembled in May of 553 in the great hall attached to Hagia Sophia cathedral.

The Roman pontiff refused to take part in the council. Because Justinian had summoned bishops in equal numbers from each of the five patriarchal sees, there would be many more eastern than western bishops present. Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople, presided. The decrees of the council were signed by 160 bishops, of whom 8 were Africans.

On May 14th of 553 Pope Vigilius issued his "Constitution", which was signed by 16 bishops (9 from Italy, 2 from Africa, 2 from Illyricum and 3 from Asia Minor). This rejected sixty propositions of Theodore of Mopsuestia, but spared his personal memory and refused to condemn either Theodoret or Ibas. Nevertheless, the council, in its 8th session on June 2, 553, again condemned the "Three Chapters", for the same reasons as Justinian had done so, in a judgment which concludes with 14 anathemas.

After carefully considering the matter for six months, Vigilius, weighing up the persecutions of Justinian against his clergy and having sent a letter to Eutychius of Constantinople, approved the council, thus changing his mind. Furthermore he anathematized Theodore and condemned his writings and those of Theodoret and Ibas. On February 23, 554, in a second "Constitution", he tried to reconcile the recent condemnation with what had been decreed at the council of Chalcedon.

Sentence against the "Three Chapters"

(1) Our great God and savior Jesus Christ, as we are told in the parable in the gospel, gives talents to each one according to his ability, and at the proper time asks for an account of what has been done by each one. If the person to whom only one talent has been given is condemned because he has not worked and increased it, but has only preserved it without diminishment, how much more serious and more frightening must be the condemnation to which the person is subjected who not only fails to look after himself but scandalizes others and is a cause of offence to them? It is clear to all believers that when a problem about the faith comes up it is not only the heretical person who is condemned but also the person who is in a position to correct the heresy of others and fails to do so. To those of us to whom the task has been given of governing the church of the Lord, there comes a fear of the condemnation which threatens those who neglect to do the Lord's work. We hurry to take care of the good seed of faith protecting it from the weeds of heresy which have been planted by the enemy. We observed that the pupils of Nestorius were trying to bring their heresy into the church of God by means of the heretical Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia and his books as also by the writings of the heretical Theodoret and the disgraceful letter which is alleged to have been sent by Ibas to Mari the Persian. Our observations prompted us to correct what was happening. We assembled in this imperial city, summoned here by the will of God and the command of the most religious emperor.

(2) The most religious Vigilius happened to be present in this imperial city and took part in all the criticisms against the three chapters. Later he gave a written agreement to take part in our council and to study with us the three chapters so that we could all issue an appropriate definition of the true faith. The most pious emperor, prompted by what was acceptable to us, encouraged a meeting between Vigilius and ourselves because it is proper that the priesthood should impose a common conclusion to matters of common concern. Consequently we asked his reverence to carry out his written undertakings. It did not seem right that the scandal over these three chapters should continue and that the church of God should be further disturbed. In order to persuade him, we reminded him of the great example left us by the apostles and of the traditions of the fathers.

(3) The holy fathers, who have gathered at intervals in the four holy councils, have followed the examples of antiquity. They dealt with heresies and current problems by debate in common, since it was established as certain that when the disputed question is set out by each side in communal discussions, the light of truth drives out the shadows of lying.

(4) The truth cannot be made clear in any other way when there are debates about questions of faith, since everyone requires the assistance of his neighbor. The Lord himself says: “Amen I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven; for where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Vigilius was frequently invited by us all, and most distinguished judges were sent to him by the most pious emperor. Eventually he promised to give judgment personally on the three chapters. When we met together, therefore, we first of all briefly made a confession of the faith which our lord Jesus Christ true God, handed down to his holy apostles and by means of them to the holy churches, the same faith which those who afterwards were holy fathers and doctors handed down to the people entrusted to them. We confessed that we believe, protect, and preach to the holy churches that confession of faith which was set out at greater length by the 318 holy fathers who met in council at Nicæa and handed down the holy doctrine or creed. The 150 who met in council at Constantinople also set out the same faith and made a confession of it and explained it. The 200 holy fathers who met in the first council of Ephesus agreed to the same faith. We follow also the definitions of the 630 who met in council at
Chalcedon, regarding the same faith which they both followed and preached. We confessed that we held to be condemned and anathematized all those who had been previously condemned and anathematized by the catholic church and by the aforesaid four councils.

(9) Cyril of holy memory, in the books which he wrote against Theodore, declared as follows: "Whether or not they are alive, we ought to keep clear of those who are in the grip of such dreadful errors. It is necessary always to avoid what is harmful, and not to be worried about public opinion but rather to consider what is pleasing to God". The same Cyril of holy memory, writing to bishop John of Antioch and to the synod which met there about Theodore who was condemned with Nestorius, says, "It was necessary that a brilliant festival should be kept since all those who had expressed opinions in accordance with Nestorius had been rejected, whoever they were. Action was taken against all those who believed, or had at any time believed, in these mistaken views. This is exactly what we and your holiness pronounced: 'We anathematize those who assert that there exist two sons and two Christs. He who is preached by you and us is, as was said, the single Christ, both Son and Lord, the only-begotten as man, as learned Paul says"'. Moreover in his letter to the priests and monks, he says: "The holy synod of Ephesus, meeting in accordance with the will of God, has pronounced sentence against the heresy of Nestorius and has condemned according to justice and with accuracy both Nestorius himself and all those who might later, in inane fashion, adopt the same opinions as he held, and those who had previously adhered to the same opinions and who were bold enough to put them in writing, placing upon them all an equal condemnation.

(10) Moreover, several letters of Augustine of sacred memory, who was particularly outstanding among the African bishops, were read in which he indicates that it is correct to condemn heretics even after their death. Other most reverend bishops of Africa have also observed this church custom; moreover the holy church of Rome has issued anathemas against certain bishops even after they were dead, although they had not been accused on matters of faith while they were alive; the acts of our deliberations bear witness to both these cases.

(11) After we had investigated in this way Theodore and his heresy, we took the trouble to quote and include in our acts a few of Theodore's heretical writings against true faith. We also included some of Theodore's writings on the side of the heretical Theodore and Nestorius so that it would be made clear, to the satisfaction of anyone reading our acts, that these opinions had been properly rejected and anathematized.

(12) Thirdly, the letter which is alleged to have been written by Ibas to Mari the Persian was brought under scrutiny and we discovered that it too ought to be officially read out. When the letter was read out, its heretical character was immediately apparent to everyone. Until this time there had been some dispute as to whether the aforesaid three chapters ought to be condemned and anathematized. Since the supporters of the heretics Theodore and Nestorius were conspiring to strengthen in another way the case of these men and their heresy, and were alleging that this heretical letter, which approves and defends Theodore and Nestorius, had been accepted by the holy council of Chalcedon, it was therefore necessary for us to demonstrate that this holy synod was unaffected by the heresy which is present in that letter, and that clearly those who make such allegations are doing so not with the assistance of the holy council but so as to give some support to their own heresy by associating it with the name of Chalcedon.

(15) Now that we have given the details of what our council has achieved, we repeat our formal confession that we accept the four holy synods, that is, of Nicea, of Constantinople, the first of Ephesus, and of Chalcedon. Our teaching is and has been all that they have defined concerning the one faith. We consider those who do not respect these things as foreign to the catholic church. Furthermore, we condemn and anathematize, along with all other heretics who have been condemned and anathematized by the same four holy councils and by the holy, catholic and apostolic church, Theodore, formerly bishop of Mopsuestia, and his heretical writings, and also what Theodoret heretically wrote against the true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus, and we condemn also what he wrote defending Theodore and Nestorius. Additionally, we anathematize the heretical letter which Ibas is alleged to have written to Mari the Persian. This letter denies that God the Word was made incarnate of the ever virgin Mary, the holy mother of God, and that he was made man. We anathematize the supporters of these works and those who write or have written in defense of them, or who are bold enough to claim that they are orthodox, or who have defended or tried to defend their heresy in the names of holy fathers or of the holy council of Chalcedon.

(17) These matters having been treated with thorough-going exactness, we bear in mind what was promised about the holy church and him who said that the gates of hell will not prevail against it (by these we understand the death-dealing tongues of heretics); we also bear in mind what was prophesied about the church by Hosea when he said, “I shall betroth you to me in faithfulness and you shall know the Lord”; and we count along with the devil, the father of lies, the uncontrolled tongues of heretics and their heretical writings, together with the heretics themselves who have persisted in their heresy even to death. It has therefore seemed necessary to us to sum up in certain statements both our declarations of the truth and our condemnations of heretics and their heretical teachings.

**Anathemas against the "Three Chapters"**

1. If anyone will not confess that the Father, Son and holy Spirit have one nature or substance, that they have one power and authority, that there is a consubstantial Trinity, one Deity to be adored in three subsistences or persons: let him be anathema. There is only one God and Father, from whom all things come, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and one holy Spirit, in whom all things are.

2. If anyone will not confess that the Word of God has two nativities, that which is before all ages from the Father, outside time and without a body, and secondly that nativity of these latter days when the Word of God came down from the heavens and was made flesh of holy and glorious Mary, mother of God and ever-virgin, and was born from her: let him be anathema.

3. If anyone declares that the [Word] of God who works miracles is not identical with the Christ who suffered, or alleges that God the Word was with the Christ who was born of woman, or was in him in the way that one might be in another, but that our lord Jesus Christ was not one and the same, the Word of God incarnate and made man, and that the miracles and the sufferings which he voluntarily
underwent in the flesh were not of the same person: let him be anathema.

4. If anyone does not accept the teaching of the holy fathers that the union occurred of the Word of God with human flesh which is possessed by a rational and intellectual soul, and that this union is by synthesis or by person, and that therefore there is only one person, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, one member of the holy Trinity: let him be anathema. The notion of “union” can be understood in many different ways. The supporters of the wickedness of Apollinaris and Eutyches have asserted that the union is produced by a confusing of the uniting elements, as they advocate the disappearance of the elements that unite. Those who follow Theodore and Nestorius, rejoicing in the division, have brought in a union which is only by affection. The holy church of God, rejecting the wickedness of both sorts of heresy, states her belief in a union between the Word of God and human flesh which is by synthesis, that is by a union of subsistence. In the mystery of Christ the union of synthesis not only conserves without confusing the elements that come together but also allows no division.

5. If anyone misrepresents the holy synod of Chalcedon, alleging that it declared that the virgin was the mother of God only according to that heretical understanding which the blasphemous Theodore put forward; or if anyone says that she is the mother of a man or the Christ-bearer, that is the mother of Christ, suggesting that Christ is not God; and does not formally confess that she is properly and truly the mother of God, because he who before all ages was born of the Father, God the Word, has been made into human flesh in these latter days and has been born to her, and it was in this religious understanding that the holy synod of Chalcedon formally stated its belief that she was the mother of God: let him be anathema.

6. If anyone, when speaking about the two natures, does not confess a belief in our one Lord Jesus Christ, understood in both his divinity and his humanity, so as by this to signify a difference of natures of which an ineffable union has been made without confusion, in which neither the nature of the Word was changed into the nature of human flesh, nor was the nature of human flesh changed into that of the Word (each remained what it was by nature, even after the union, as this had been made in respect of subsistence); and if anyone understands the two natures in the mystery of Christ in the sense of a division into parts, or if he expresses his belief in the plural natures in the same sense of Christ Jesus, God the Word made flesh, but does not consider the difference of those natures, of which he is composed, to be only in the onlooker’s mind, a difference which is not compromised by the union (for he is one from both and the two exist through the one) but uses the plurality to suggest that each nature is possessed separately and has a subsistence of its own: let him be anathema.

7. If anyone says that Christ is to be worshipped in his two natures, and by that wishes to introduce two adorations, a separate one for God the Word and another for the man; or if anyone, so as to remove the human flesh or to mix up the divinity and the humanity, monstrosely invents one nature or substance brought together from the two, and so worships Christ, but not by a single adoration God the Word in human flesh along with his human flesh, as has been the tradition of the church from the beginning: let him be anathema.

8. If anyone does not confess his belief that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified in his human flesh, is truly God and the Lord of glory and one of the members of the holy Trinity: let him be anathema.

9. If anyone defends the heretical Theodore of Mopsuestia, who claimed that the union of God the Word to Christ is rather like that which, according to the teaching of the Apostle, is between a man and his wife: The two shall become one. Among innumerable other blasphemies he dared to allege that, when after his resurrection the Lord breathed on his disciples and said, Receive the holy Spirit, he was not truly giving them the holy Spirit, but he breathed on them only as a sign. Similarly he claimed that Thomas's profession of faith made when, after his resurrection, he touched the hands and side of the Lord, namely “My Lord and my God,” was not said about Christ, but that Thomas was in this way extolling God for raising up Christ and expressing his astonishment at the miracle of the resurrection. If anyone offers a defense for this more heretical Theodore: let him be anathema.

10. If anyone defends the heretical writings of Theodore which were composed against the true faith, against the first holy synod of Ephesus and against holy Cyril, and also defends what Theodore wrote to support the heretical Theodore and Nestorius and others who think in the same way as the aforesaid Theodore and Nestorius and accept them or their heresy: let him be anathema.

11. If anyone defends the letter which Ibas is said to have written to Mari the Persian, which denies that God the Word, who became incarnate of Mary the holy mother of God and ever virgin, became man, but alleges that he was only a man born to her, whom it describes as a temple, as if God the Word was one and the man someone quite different: let him be anathema.

Such then are the assertions we confess. We have received them from
1. holy Scripture, from
2. the teaching of the holy fathers, and from
3. the definitions about the one and the same faith made by the aforesaid four holy synods.

Moreover, condemnation has been passed by us against the heretics and their impiety, and also against those who have justified or shall justify the so-called “Three Chapters”, and against those who have persisted or will persist in their own error. If anyone should attempt to hand on, or to teach by word or writing, anything contrary to what we have regulated, then if he is a bishop or somebody appointed to the clergy, in so far as he is acting contrary to what befits priests and the ecclesiastical status, let him be stripped of the rank of priest or cleric, and if he is a monk or lay person, let him be anathema.

3rd Council of Constantinople (681 AD)

Introduction

To make an end of the Monothelite controversy, Emperor Constantine IV issued an edict to Patriarch George of Constantinople, ordering a council of bishops to be convoked. The council assembled on November 7th, 681, in the hall of the imperial palace in Constantinople. It immediately called itself an ecumenical council. There were 18 sessions, at the first eleven of which the emperor presided. The council adopted the teaching of Pope Agatho in condemnation of Monothelitism.

The doctrinal conclusions of the council were defined and promulgated in the 18th and last session. The acts of the council, signed both by 174 fathers and finally by the emperor himself, were
sent to Pope Leo II, who had succeeded Agatho, and he, when he had approved them, ordered them to be translated into Latin and to be signed by all the bishops of the west. Constantine IV, however, promulgated the decrees of the council in all parts of the empire by imperial edict.

**Exposition of faith**

(1) The only Son and Word of God the Father, who became a man like us in all things but sin, Christ our true God, proclaimed clearly in the words of the gospel; “I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life,” and again, “My peace I leave to you, my peace I give you.” Our most mild emperor, champion of right belief and adversary of wrong belief, guided in godly wisdom by this teaching of peace spoken by God, has brought together this holy and universal assembly of ours and set at one the whole judgment of the church.

(2) Wherefore this holy and universal synod of ours, driving afar the error of impiety which endured for so much time even till the present, following without deviation in a straight path after the holy and accepted fathers, has piously accorded in all things with the five holy and universal synods: that is to say, with

1. the synod of 318 holy fathers who gathered at Nicaea against the madman Arius, and
2. that which followed it at Constantinople of 150 God-led men; similarly too, with
3. the first at Ephesus of 200 godly men brought together against Nestorius, and
4. that at Chalcedon of 630 God-inspired fathers against Eutyches and Dioscorus, hateful to God; also, in addition to these, with
5. the fifth holy synod, the latest of them, which was gathered here against Theodore of Mopsuestia, the writings of Ibas and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and the letter said to have been written by Ibas to the bishops of the Persian.

(3) Reaffirming the divine tenets of piety in all respects unaltered, and banishing the profane teachings of impiety, this holy and universal synod of ours has also, in its turn, under God's inspiration, set its seal on the creed which was made out by the 318 fathers and confirmed again with godly prudence by the 150 and which the other synods too accepted gladly and ratified for the elimination of all soul-corrupting heresy

“We believe in one God ...” [Creed of Nicaea and Constantinople 1]

(4) This pious and orthodox creed of the divine favor was enough for a complete knowledge of the orthodox faith and a complete assurance therein. But since from the first, the contriver of evil did not rest, finding an accomplice in the serpent and through him bringing upon human nature the poisoned dart of death, so too now he has found instruments suited to his own purpose -- namely Honorius, who was pope of elder Rome, Cyrus, who held the see of Alexandria, and Macarius, who was recently bishop of Antioch, and his disciple Stephen -- and has not been idle in raising through them obstacles of error against the full body of the church sowing with novel speech among the orthodox people the heresy of a single will and a single principle of action in the two natures of the one member of the holy Trinity Christ our true God, a heresy intent on removing the perfection of the becoming man of the same one lord Jesus Christ our God, through a certain guileful device, leading from there to the blasphemous conclusion that his rationally animate flesh is without a will and a principle of action.

(5) Therefore Christ our God has stirred up the faithful emperor, the new David, finding in him a man after his own heart, who, as the scripture says, did not allow his eyes sleep or his eyelids drowsing until through this holy assembly of ours, brought together by God, he found the perfect proclamation of right belief; for according to the God-spoken saying, “Where there are two or three gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.”

(6) This same holy and universal synod, here present, faithfully accepts and welcomes with open hands the report of Agatho, most holy and most blessed pope of elder Rome, that came to our most reverend and most faithful emperor Constantine, which rejected by name those who proclaimed and taught, as has been already explained, one will and one principle of action in the incarnate dispensation of Christ our true God; and likewise it approves as well the other synodal report to his God-taught serenity, from the synod of 125 bishops dear to God meeting under the same most holy pope, as according with the holy synod at Chalcedon and with the Tome of the all-holy and most blessed Leo, pope of the same elder Rome, which was sent to Flavian, who is among the saints, and which that synod called a pillar of right belief, and furthermore with the synodal letters written by the blessed Cyril against the impious Nestorius and to the bishops of the east.

(7) Following the five holy and universal synods and the holy and accepted fathers, and defining in unison, it professes our lord Jesus Christ our true God, one of the holy Trinity, which is of one same being and is the source of life, to be perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity, like us in all respects except for sin; begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from the holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, who is properly and truly called mother of God, as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no separation, no division; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single subsistent being; he is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, Word of God, lord Jesus Christ, just as the prophets taught from the beginning about him, and as Jesus the Christ himself instructed us, and as the creed of the holy fathers handed it down to us.

(8) And we proclaim equally two natural volitions or wills in him and two natural principles of action which undergo no division, no change, no partition, no confusion, in accordance with the teaching of the holy fathers. And the two natural wills not in opposition, as the impious heretics said, far from it, but his human will following, and not resisting or struggling, rather in fact subject to his divine and all powerful will. For the will of the flesh had to be moved, and yet to be subjected to the divine will, according to the most wise Athanasius. For he says himself: “I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me,” calling his own will that of his flesh, since his flesh too became his own. For in the same way that his all holy and blameless animate flesh was not destroyed in being made divine but remained in its
own limit and category, so his human will as well was not destroyed by being made divine, but rather was preserved. And we hold there to be two natural principles of action in the same Jesus Christ our lord and true God, which undergo no division, no change, no partition, no confusion, that is, a divine principle of action and a human principle of action, according to the godly-speaking Leo. For of course we will not grant the existence of only a single natural principle of action of both God and creature, lest we raise what is made to the level of divine being, or indeed reduce what is most specifically proper to the divine nature to a level befitting creatures, for we acknowledge that the miracles and the sufferings are of one and the same according to one or the other of the two natures out of which he is and in which he has his being.

(9) Therefore, protecting on all sides the "no confusion" and "no division", we announce the whole in these brief words: Believing our lord Jesus Christ, even after his incarnation, to be one of the holy Trinity and our true God, we say that he has two natures shining forth in his one subsistence (Person) in which he demonstrated the miracles and the sufferings throughout his entire providential dwelling here, not in appearance but in truth, the difference of the natures being made known in the same one subsistence in that each nature wills and performs the things that are proper to it in a communion with the other; then in accord with this reasoning we hold that two natural wills and principles of action meet in correspondence for the salvation of the human race.

(10) So now that these points have been formulated by us with all precision in every respect and with all care, we definitely state that it is not allowable for anyone to produce another faith, that is, to write or to compose or to consider or to teach others; those who dare to compose another faith, or to support or to teach or to hand on another creed to those who wish to turn to knowledge of the truth, from any heresy whatsoever, or to introduce novelty of speech, that is, invention of terms, so as to overturn what has now been defined by us, such persons, if they are bishops or clerics, are deprived of their episcopacy or clerical rank, and if they are monks or layfolk they are excommunicated.

Second Council of Nicaea (787 AD)

Introduction

A recommendation to summon an ecumenical council, in order to correct the iconoclast heretics, had been addressed to Empress Irene, then acting as regent for her son Emperor Constantine VI (780–797) who was still a minor, both by Patriarch Paul IV of Constantinople and by his successor as patriarch, Tarasius.

The convocation of the council was announced to Pope Hadrian I (772–795) in a letter of Constantine VI and Irene, dated August 29th, 784. They urged him either to attend in person or to send legates. Patriarch Tarasius sent the same message in synodal letters to the pope and the three eastern patriarchs. Pope Hadrian I gave his approval for the convocation of the council, stipulating various conditions, and sent his legates.

The council, which was summoned by an imperial edict in the summer of 786, met for the first time on August 1st, 786, in the presence of Emperor Constantine VI and Empress Irene. When the proceedings were interrupted by the violent entry of iconoclast soldiers, faithful to the memory of Emperor Constantine V (741–775), the council was adjourned until the arrival of a reliable army under Staurakios. It assembled again at Nicaea on September 24th, 787, the papal legates having been recalled from Sicily.

After the bishops suspected of heresy had been admitted, 263 fathers embraced the doctrine concerning the cult of sacred images as explained in the letters of Pope Hadrian I, which were read out at the second session. The question of the intercession of saints was dealt with in the fourth session. Once all these matters had been approved, a doctrinal definition was decreed at the seventh session.

At the eighth and last session, the definition was again decreed and proclaimed and 22 canons were read out. Patriarch Tarasius, at the command of the council, informed Pope Hadrian I about it. Pope Hadrian I wrote no letter in reply, yet the defense he made of the council in 794 against Charlemagne shows that he accepted what the council had decreed.

Definition

(1) The holy, great and universal synod, by the grace of God and by order of our pious and Christ-loving emperor and empress, Constantine and his mother Irene, assembled for the second time in the famous metropolis of the Nicaea in the province of the Bithynia, in the holy church of God named after Wisdom, following the tradition of the catholic church, has decreed what is here laid down.

(2) The one who granted us the light of recognizing him, the one who redeemed us from the darkness of idolatrous insanity, Christ our God, when he took for his bride his holy catholic church, having no blemish or wrinkle, promised he would guard her and assured his holy disciples saying, I am with you every day until the consummation of this age. This promise however he made not only to them but also to us, who thanks to them have come to believe in his name. To this gracious offer some people paid no attention, being hoodwinked by the treacherous foe they abandoned the true line of reasoning, and setting themselves against the tradition of the catholic church they faltered in their grasp of the truth. For they followed unholy men and trusting to their own frenzies they calumniated the holy church, which Christ our God has espoused to himself, and they failed to distinguish the holy from the profane, asserting that the icons of our Lord and of his saints were no different from the wooden images of satanic idols.

(3) Therefore the Lord God, not bearing that what was subject to him should be destroyed by such a corruption, has by his good pleasure summoned us together through the divine diligence and decision of Constantine and Irene, our faithful emperor and empress, we who are those responsible for the priesthood everywhere, in order that the divinely inspired tradition of the catholic church should receive confirmation by a public decree. So having made investigation with all accuracy and having taken counsel, setting for our aim the truth, we neither diminish nor augment, but simply guard intact all that pertains to the catholic church.

(4) Thus, following the six holy universal synods, in the first place that assembled in the famous metropolis of Nicaea {1- Nicaea 1}, and then that held after it in the imperial, God-guarded city {2- Constantinople 1} “We believe in one God...”[the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed follows]. We abominate and anathematize
- Arians and those who think like him; we also confess our Lady, the holy Mary, to be really and truly the God-bearer, because she gave birth in the flesh to Christ, one of the Trinity, our God, just as the first synod at Ephesus [3-Ephesus] decreed; it also expelled from the church Nestorius and those with him, because they were introducing a duality of persons. Along with these synods, we also confess the two natures of the one who became incarnate for our sake from the God-bearer without blemish, Mary the ever-virgin, recognizing that he is perfect God and perfect man, as the synod at Chalcedon [4-Chalcedon] also proclaimed, when it drove from the divine precipice the foul-mouthed Eutyches and Dioscorus. We reject along with them the Three Chapters of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyr, and Ibas, as did the fifth synod, that assembled at Constantinople [5-Constantinople II]. Further we declare that there are two wills and principles of action, in accordance with what is proper to each of the natures in Christ, in the way that the sixth synod, that at Constantinople [6-Constantinople III], proclaimed.

(5) To summarize, we declare that we defend free from any innovations all the written and unwritten ecclesiastical traditions that have been entrusted to us.

(6) One of these is the production of representational art; this is quite in harmony with the history of the spread of the gospel, as it provides confirmation that the becoming man of the Word of God was real and not just imaginary, and as it brings us a similar benefit. For, things that mutually illustrate one another undoubtedly possess one another's message.

Given this state of affairs and stepping out as though on the royal highway, following as we are the God-spoken teaching of our holy fathers and the tradition of the catholic church -- for we recognize that this tradition comes from the holy Spirit who dwells in her-- we decree with full precision and care that,

like the figure of the honored and life-giving cross, the revered and holy images, whether painted or made of mosaic or of other suitable material, are to be exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways, these are the images of our Lord, God and savior, Jesus Christ, and of our Lady without blemish, the holy God-bearer, and of the revered angels and of any of the saintly holy men.

(7) The more frequently they are seen in representational art, the more are those who see them drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these images the tribute of salutation and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration [latria] in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that salute and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration {latria} in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that
salutation and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration {latria} in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that

Anathemas concerning holy images

1. If anyone does not confess that Christ our God can be represented in his humanity, let him be anathema.
2. If anyone does not accept representation in art of evangelical scenes, let him be anathema.
3. If anyone does not salute such representations as standing for the Lord and his saints, let him be anathema.
4. If anyone rejects any written or unwritten tradition of the church, let him be anathema.

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It is essential to our salvation that every Christian should observe these things, but more especially those who have been invested with priestly dignity. Therefore we decree that

3. Any election of a bishop, priest or deacon brought about by the rulers to be null and void in accordance with the canon that says: "If any bishop, through the influence of secular rulers, acquires responsibility for a church because of them, let him be suspended and let all those who are in communion with him be excommunicated".

It is necessary that the person who is to be advanced to a bishopric should be elected by bishops, as has been decreed by the holy fathers at Nicaea in the canon that says: "It is by all means desirable that a bishop should be appointed by all [the bishops] in the province. But if this is difficult because of some pressing necessity or the length of the journey involved, let at least three come together and perform the ordination, but only after the absent bishops have taken part in the vote and given their written consent. But in each province the right of confirming the proceedings belongs to the metropolitan".

7. In the train of the impious heresy of the defamers of Christians, many other impieties appeared. Just as those heretics removed the sight of venerable icons from the church, they also abandoned other customs, which should now be renewed and which should be in vigor in virtue of both written and unwritten legislation. Therefore we decree that in venerable churches consecrated without relics of the holy martyrs, the installation of relics should take place along with the usual prayers. And if in future any bishop is found out consecrating a church without relics, let him be deposed as someone who has flouted the ecclesiastical traditions.

20. We decree that from now on no more double monasteries are to be started because this becomes a cause of scandal and a stumbling block for ordinary folk. If there are persons who wish to renounce the world and follow the monastic life along with their relatives, the men should go off to a male monastery and their wives enter a female monastery, for God is surely pleased with this.
Monks and nuns should not live in one monastic building, because adultery takes advantage of such cohabitation. No monk should have the license to speak in private with a nun, nor any nun with a monk. A monk should not sleep in a female monastery, nor should he eat alone with a nun.

**The Donation of Constantine**  
(c.750-800 AD)

This is perhaps the most famous forgery in history. For centuries, until Lorenzo Valla proved it was forgery during the Renaissance it provided the basis for papal territorial and jurisdictional claims in Italy. Probably at least a first draft of it was made shortly after the middle of the eighth century in order to assist Pope Stephen II in his negotiations with the Frankish Mayor of the Palace, Pepin the Short. The Pope crossed the Alps to anoint the latter as king in 754, thereby enabling the Carolingian family, to which Pepin belonged, to supplant the old Merovingian royal line which had become decadent and powerless and to become in law as well as in fact rulers of the Franks. In return, Pepin seems to have promised to give to the Pope those lands in Italy which the Lombards had taken from Byzantium. The promise was fulfilled in 756. Constantine's alleged gift made it possible to interpret Pepin's grant not as a benefaction but as a restoration.

In the name of the holy and indivisible Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The emperor Constantine in Christ Jesus, the Lord God our Savior, one of that same holy Trinity; to the most holy and blessed father of fathers Sylvester, bishop of the city of Rome and to all his successors the pontiffs, who are about to sit upon the chair of St. Peter until the end of time - also to all the most reverend and of God beloved catholic bishops, subject to this our imperial decree throughout the whole world to this same holy, Roman church, who have been established now and in all previous times -- grace, peace, charity, rejoicing, long-suffering, mercy, be with you all from God the Father almighty and from Jesus Christ his Son and from the Holy Ghost. Our most gracious charity desires, in clear discourse, through the page of this our imperial decree, to bring to the knowledge of all the people in the whole world what things our Savior and Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the most High Father, has most wonderfully seen fit to bring about through his holy apostles Peter and Paul and by the intervention of our father Sylvester, the highest pontiff and the universal pope. First, indeed, putting forth, with the inmost confession of our heart, for the purpose of instructing the mind of all of you, our creed which we have learned from th

And so, on the first day after receiving the mystery of the holy baptism, and after the cure of my body from the squalor of the leprosy, I recognized that there was no other God save the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; whom the most blessed Sylvester the pope doth preach; a trinity in one, a unity in three. For all the gods of the nations, whom I have worshipped up to this time, are proved to be demons; works made by the hand of men; inasmuch as that same venerable father told us most clearly how much power in Heaven and on earth He, our Savior, conferred on his apostle St. Peter, when finding him faithful after questioning him He said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock shall I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Give heed ye powerful, and incline the ear of, your hearts to that which the good Lord and Master added to His disciple, saying: and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven." This is very wonderful and glorious, to bind and loose on earth and to have it bound and loosed in Heaven.

And when, the blessed Sylvester preaching them, I perceived these things, and learned that by the kindness of St. Peter himself I had been entirely restored to health: I, together with the whole senate and the nobles and all the Roman people, considered it advisable that, as on earth he (Peter) is seen to have been constituted vicar of the Son of God, so the pontiffs, who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles, should obtain from us and our empire the power of a supremacy greater than the earthly clemency of our imperial serenity is seen to have had conceded to it. And, to the extent of our earthly imperial power, we decree that his holy Roman church shall be honored with veneration; and that, more than our empire and earthly throne, the most sacred seat of St. Peter shall be gloriously exalted; we giving to it the imperial power, and dignity of glory, and vigor and honor.

And we ordain and decree that he shall have the supremacy as well over the four chief seats Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem, as also over all the churches of God in the whole world. And he who for the time being shall be pontiff of that holy Roman church shall be more exalted than, and chief over, all the priests of the whole world; and, according to his judgment, everything which is to be provided for the service of God or the stability of the faith of the Christians is to be administered. We have also constructed the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul, chiefs of the apostles, which we have enriched with gold and silver; where also, placing their most sacred bodies with great honor, we have constructed their caskets of electrum, against which no force of the elements prevails. And we have placed a cross of purest gold and precious gems on each of their caskets, and fastened them with golden keys. And on these churches for the endowing of divine services we have conferred estates, and have enriched them with different objects; and, through our sacred imperial decrees, we have granted them our gift of land in the East as well as in the West; and even on the northern and southern coast; namely in Judea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa and Italy and the various islands: under this condition indeed, that all shall be administered by the hand of our most blessed father the pontiff Sylvester and his successors.

To those same holy apostles, my masters, St. Peter and St. Paul; and, through them, also to St. Sylvester, our father, the chief pontiff and universal pope of the city of Rome, and to all the pontiffs his successors, who until the end of the world shall be about to sit in the seat of St. Peter; we concede and, by this present, do confer, our imperial Lateran palace, which is preferred to, and ranks above, all the palaces in the whole world; also the banners and different imperial ornaments, and all the advantage of our high imperial position, and the glory of our power.

In imitation of our own power, in order that for that cause the supreme pontificate may not deteriorate, but may rather be adorned with power and glory even more than is the dignity of an earthly rule: behold we, giving over to the most blessed pontiff, our father Sylvester the universal pope, as well our palace, as has been said, as also the city of Rome and all the provinces, districts and cities of Italy or of the western regions; and relinquishing them, by our
inviolable gift, to the power and sway of himself or the pontiffs his successors, do decree, by this our godlike charter and imperial constitution, that it shall be (so) arranged: and do concede that they (the palaces, provinces etc.) shall lawfully remain with the holy Roman church.

Emperor Charlemagne:  
Letter to Pope Leo III (796)

Just as I entered into a pact with the most blessed father your predecessor, so I desire to conclude with your Holiness an unbreakable treaty of the same faith and charity; so that with Divine grace being called down by the prayers of your Apostolic Sanctity, the Apostolic benediction may follow me everywhere, and the most holy See of the Roman Church may always be defended by the devotion which God gives to us.

It is our part with the help of Divine holiness to defend by armed strength the holy Church of Christ everywhere from the outward onslaught of the pagans and the ravages of the infidels, and to strengthen within it the knowledge of the Catholic Faith. It is your part, most holy Father, to help our armies with your hands lifted up to God like Moses, so that by your intercession and by the leadership and gift of God the Christian people may everywhere and always have the victory over the enemies of His Holy Name and that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified throughout the whole world.

Emperor Lothair I:  
The Roman Constitution (824)

We have made a decree that all who have been taken under the special protection of the Pope or under our own shall enjoy a just and indestructible defense whenever they ask for it; if anyone presumes to break this law in any way, let him know that he stands in peril of his life. For we have decreed that they shall observe lawful obedience to the Pope in all matters, so also to his dukes and judges in things pertaining to the administration of justice.

We desire that no one, free or unfree, shall dare to take part in Pontifical elections, to make any hindrance to the Romans themselves to whom the custom of electing the Pontiff was conceded in ancient times by the decision of the holy Fathers. If anyone shall dare to contravene this command of ours, he shall be banished. Last of all it is to be made clear that every man, if he desires to have God’s grace and our own, should show obedience and reverence in all things to the Pontiff.

“The Oath of the Romans”

I promise by God Almighty and the four holy Gospels and this cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and the body of the most blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, that from this day for all the future days of my life I will be faithful to our lords the Emperors, as far as my strength and knowledge permit, without deception and evil intention, saving the faith which I have promised to the Pontiff; and that I will not consent, as far as my strength and knowledge permit, that the election of a Pontiff to this Roman See should be made otherwise than canonically and legally; and that he who shall be elected with my consent shall not be consecrated Pontiff until he shall have taken this oath in the presence of the Emperor’s inspector and of the people, together with the oath which Pope Eugenius put into writing of his own free will for the preservation of all these things.

Letter of Pope Nicholas I to Emperor Michael (865)

The judge shall be judged neither by Augustus, nor by any cleric, nor by the people. The First See shall not be judged by any. Where have you read that the emperors your predecessors intervened in synodal assemblies, unless it may be, in those which were concerned with the faith, which is universal, and the business of all, and which is of importance not to the clergy only, but also to the laity and to the whole body of Christians? The higher the authority of the courts against whose judgments a complaint is laid, the greater must be the eminence of that court whose decision is sought, until by stages that See is reached whose decision is either amended by itself, the deserts of the case so compelling, or is reserved for the judgment of God alone, without further question.

Furthermore, if you do not listen to us, it remains that you be held by us as our Lord Jesus enjoins us to hold those who refuse to hear the Church of God; especially since the privileges of the Roman Church, confirmed in St. Peter by the words of Christ, ordained in the Church itself, observed from of old, proclaimed by the holy universal synods and ever venerated by the whole Church, can by no means be diminished, infringed, or altered, since no effort of man has power to remove a foundation which God has laid, and what God has established stands firm and unshakeable. These privileges, then, were bestowed on this holy Church by Christ: they were not bestowed by the Councils, but were merely proclaimed and held in veneration by them.

It is immediately clear that the judgments of the Apostolic See, than which there is no greater authority, cannot be handled by any other tribunal, nor is it permissible for any to sit in judgment upon its decision. Appeals are to be made to that See from any part of the world; such is the meaning of the canons. But no appeal is allowed from that See.

Letter of Patriarch Photius to the Archepiscopal Sees of the East (866)

Encyclical letter to the archiepiscopal sees of the East, that is, Alexandria and the rest, in which the solutions of certain doubtful conclusions are considered, and that it is not permissible to say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, but from the Father alone.

The heresies of Arius, Nestorius, Euthyches, and Dioscorus, although at one time very prominent, have been consigned to silence and oblivion; bright and solid hope that there would be a time in the near future when no fresh contriver of impieties would spring up. Moreover, now the barbarian tribe of the Bulgarians, who were hostile and inimical to Christ, has been converted to a surprising
degree of meekness and knowledge of God. Beyond all expectation they have in a body embraced the faith of Christ, departing from the worship of devils and of their ancestral gods, and rejecting the error of pagan superstition.

But what a wicked and malignant design, what an ungodly state of affairs! Here is the story: The previous assumption of good news has been turned into dejection, delight and joy are changed into sadness and tears. That people had not embraced the true religion of Christians for even two years when certain impious and ominous men emerged from the darkness (for they have arisen out of the West). These in a tribe so recently established in piety, which joined the Church just a short time ago — like a wild boar greedily leaping into the much loved and newly planted vineyard of the Lord with feet and bared teeth — on paths of dishonorable administration and corrupted doctrine, thus boldly dividing up the country for themselves, have brought ruin on the people. They have villainously devised to lead them away from the true and pure doctrine and from an unblemished Christian faith and in this way destroy them.

They taught them to despise the priest living in lawful matrimony and by rejecting matrimony spread the seed of Manichaeism, while they themselves practiced adultery. They did not shrink from reconfirming those who had been anointed by priests with the chrism, and presenting themselves as bishops, they declared the confirmation administered by priests to be useless and invalid. They claim that bishops only have the right to confirm. But who made this law? Which apostle, which father of the Church, which synod made it? If the priest is not allowed to confirm, then neither is he allowed to baptize or to offer sacrifice. He may as well return to the house of the Lord.

Besides these offences that have already been mentioned, they have attempted to adulterate the sacred and holy creed, which has been approved by the vote of all the ecumenical councils and has unconquerable strength, with spurious arguments, interpolated words, and rash exaggerations. They are preaching a novel doctrine: that the Holy Spirit proceeds not from the Father alone, but from the Son as well.

This is the impiety which those bishops of darkness (at least they call themselves bishops) have spread among the Bulgarians. When the report of these things reached my ears it struck a mortal blow to my heart. I felt like a father who sees his own children torn to pieces. For our sufferings and labors and sweat laid the foundation for their regeneration and initiation. I will give my eyes no rest until I have lifted up the deceived and returned them to the house of the Lord.

These new forerunners of apostasy, these servants of the anti-Christ, who have deserved death a thousand times, these deceivers and enemies of God, we have by the resolution of a holy synod declared as already condemned. We consider these men banished by public proclamation from the company of Christians. The fourth canon of the Synod of Gangra, against those who have a horror for marriage, says, “If any priest who is married thinks that this forbids him from partaking in the offering when he officiates at the sacred liturgy, let him be anathema.”

But the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, or rather against the whole Trinity, has nothing to compare with it, and if all the other false teachings were not present, this alone would be enough to bring ten thousand anathemas upon them.

Letter of Pope Nicholas I to Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims and the Bishops of the West (867)

Nicholas, bishop and servant of the servants of God, to the worthy and Most Reverend Hincmar and to our brothers, archbishops and bishops, ruling the churches established in the kingdom of glorious King Charles:

You know that the most blessed Peter, who protects and defends us, the heirs of his ministry, bears the burdens which weigh down all of us. In fact he bears them in us. Assuredly among the difficulties which cause us great concern are those which the Greek emperors, Michael and Basil, and their subjects inflict on us, and truly on the whole West.

Inflamed with hate and envy against us they attempt to accuse us of heresy, for we condemned by deposition and anathematization the advancement attained by Photius, a neophyte, usurper, and adulterer of the Church of Constantinople. The ejection from this church of Ignatius, our brother and co-minister, perpetrated by his own subjects and the imperial power, did not receive our approval. And with envy, because they learned that the king of the Bulgarians and his people received the faith of Christ and now desired St. Peter’s See to provide teachers and instruction for them.

Instead they try to lead the Bulgarians from obedience to blessed Peter and to subject them shrewdly to their own authority under the pretext of Christian religion. They preach such things about the Roman Church, which is without spot or wrinkle, that those ignorant of the faith who hear these things avoid us, shy away, and almost desert us as criminals spotted with the filth of various heresies. They strive to find fault with our church and with every church which speaks Latin, because we fast on Saturdays and profess that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, whereas they confess that He proceeds merely from the Father. Besides this, they claim that we detest marriage, since we do not allow priests to marry. They try to blame us because we prohibit priests from anointing the foreheads of the baptized with chrism.

They try to blame us because we do not fast, according to our custom, from meat during the eight weeks before Easter. They also lie when they say that we bless and offer a lamb on the altar, after the Jewish custom, together with the Lord’s Body on the feasts of Passover. They are certainly content with fault finding!

It is certainly right, brothers, that you exert yourselves to the utmost in this affair, and put your other cares aside. All together who are raised to the divine priesthood ought to fight to keep the ancient traditions from being exposed to such derogation. It is shameful to allow the holy Church of God to be falsely charged, or its ancient customs to be disparaged at the pleasure of those always erring. Then, while we gain your adherence in the common conflict as you also enter into our struggles, we will be seen to esteem you with an
affectionate heart and to honor you as a brother. And you will be known as not being separated in any way from the See of Peter, the head of the Church.

With what great malice and foolishness these Greek leaders and their henchmen are armed against us, because we did not consent to their evil ravagings. Their charges, with which they try to stain us, are either false, or against what has been guarded in the Roman Church, indeed the entire West, from the earliest times without contradiction. Is it even strange that they should allege such things since they even glory in the assertion that when the emperors moved from Rome to Constantinople the primacy of the Roman See also went to Constantinople, and with the royal dignities even the privileges of the Roman Church were transferred? So this same Photius, a usurper in the Church, even titles himself in his writings, “archbishop and universal patriarch.”

Therefore, consider whether these men have the right to inflict derogations of this kind on the Roman Church. From the time the Christian religion began to be spread she has held immutable and taught uncorrupted throughout the world the doctrines which she once received from her patron and founder, St. Peter.

Constantinople IV: the 8th Ecumenical Council (869-870 AD)

[Definition of the holy and universal eighth synod]

The holy, great and universal synod, which was assembled by God’s will and the favour of our divinely approved emperors Basil and Constantine, the holy friends of Christ, in this royal and divinely protected city and in the most famous church bearing the name of holy and great Wisdom, declared the following.

It was our God and Lord of infinite power alone who, just like a farmer of supreme wisdom and power, uprooted and scattered and rightfully obliterated many others from an earlier time and from long ago who, given over to lies and in opposition to the truth, were sowing -- to use the gospel image -- evil tares in his field, that is, in the church, and were trying to overwhelm the pure grain of divine justice. He always prepared his manner of deliverance so as to give warning, he established his justice and revealed it with greater clarity.

But nevertheless, in our time too, the sower of tares is trying to make the field of the church useless through some utterly depraved and impious people. With that one and the same providence, he has shown that this field is worthy of compassion and snatched it from the filth of iniquity and called it back to its ancient purity. For, to destroy injustice and reinforce divine justice, he has raised up, as an unwavering follower of his commandments, a person proved to be incorrupt in both his knowledge and his maintenance of the truth, our most devout and serene emperor, who is a friend of divine justice and an enemy of injustice. He, by means of the divine help and the overall favor of the church, has gathered together architects from the ends of the earth into this royal city, which must be built up by God, and has assembled a universal synod which, while guarding the strong defenses of the gospel sanctions, the laws of Moses and the prophets together with the commands of the apostles and fathers as well as of the councils, has revived the established forms of right conduct and proclaimed truth and justice in the courts of the church.

{Now the customary recapitulation and reassertion of all previous ecumenical councils}

Consequently, all of us bishops who have come to take part in the synod and to strengthen the true and undefiled faith of Christians and the teaching of orthodox religion, we declare our belief in one God, in three persons consubstantial, divine and autonomous…

For this reason the church, recognizing the seven, holy and universal synods already enumerated by us, has gathered together this eighth universal synod through the grace of our all-powerful Christ and God and the piety and zeal of our most serene and divinely strengthened emperor, to cut down and destroy the shoots of injustice that have sprung up against those synods, together with the evil stirrings and influences, in order to bring about peaceful order in the church and stability in the world.

{Now the council strikes out on its own}

This is what happened in recent times through the folly, cunning and evil machinations of the wretched Photius. He entered the sheepfold not through the door but through a window, and, like a thief or a robber, a destroyer of souls, as the Lord's words indicate, has tried, on every occasion and by every means, to steal, slaughter and destroy the right-thinking sheep of Christ and, by engineering all manner of persecution, he has not ceased from contriving numerous arrests and imprisonments, confiscations of property, protracted periods of exile and, in addition to these, accusations, charges, false testimonies and forgeries against all who worked for true religion and fought for the truth. For he engineered the expulsion of the most just, lawful and canonically appointed high priest of the church of Constantinople, namely the most holy patriarch Ignatius, and like an adulterous robber, breaking into his see and repeatedly submitting him to a thousand charges involving dethronement and as many anathemas, he roused continuous turmoil and storms for all the churches of Christ our saviour, in a multiplicity of ways.

But with greater force and particular significance, Nicholas, the most blessed and aptly-named pope of old Rome, was sent from above as another cornerstone for the church, preserving as far as possible the figurative likeness, as from an exalted and pre-eminent place, to confront the carefully organized opposition of Photius. By the missiles of his letters and speeches, he struck down the powerful leading supporters of Photius.

Following these directives and decrees, the most religious friend of Christ, our emperor, whom the heavenly Emperor and Lord of majesty has raised up for the salvation of the world, has consigned Photius to a suitable place and recalled the most holy patriarch Ignatius to his rightful seat. Furthermore, for the perfect discernment and definition of what is agreed to be good and is beneficial, he has gathered together vicars from all the patriarchal seats and the whole college of bishops which is under his authority. Those of us who came together have celebrated this great and universal synod and, with much examination, testing and discussion, with due care and consistency, we have cut out with the sword of the spirit the roots of scandals and weeds along with their shoots, as we establish the truly innocent and most holy patriarch Ignatius in the controlling seat,
while we condemn Photius, the interloper and illegal occupier with all his supporters and promoters of evil.

For Photius was lifted up to the heights of arrogance in attacking the most blessed pope of old Rome, Nicholas, and he vomited out the poison of his evil. He gathered together false vicars from three supposedly eastern sees, set up what was thought to be a synodical council, and had the audacity to anathematize the aforementioned most blessed pope Nicholas and all those in communion with him. Therefore, as regards the man who has acted in this way and has disturbed and shaken the whole holy, catholic and apostolic church with so many brazen attacks of this kind, has utterly refused to be converted and repent, and has refused to submit to the decrees and judgment of the holy patriarchal sees, just as long ago the most blessed pope Nicholas anathematized him, so too this holy and universal synod has reproved him and put him under an ever severer anathema. We command that those who do not share this view, but give Photius their willing support, if they are bishops or clerics, must be deposed forever; we anathematize monks or lay people, until such time as they are converted from their false ways and wickedness.

**CANONS**

2. Having the most blessed pope Nicholas as the instrument of the holy Spirit, we declare and order that everything which has been expounded and promulgated by him in a synod at various times, both for the defense and well-being of the church of Constantinople and of its chief priest, namely Ignatius, its most holy patriarch, as well as for the expulsion and condemnation of Photius, the upset and usurper, should be maintained and observed together with the canons there set forth, unchanged and unaltered, and no bishop, priest or deacon or anyone from the ranks of the clergy should dare to overturn or reject any of these things.

3. We decree that the sacred image of our Lord Jesus Christ, the redeemer and savior of all people, should be venerated with honor equal to that given to the book of the holy gospels. For, just as through the written words which are contained in the book, we all shall obtain salvation, so through the influence that colors in painting exercise on the imagination, all, both wise and simple, obtain benefit from what is before them; for as speech teaches and portrays through syllables, so too does painting by means of colors. It is only right then, in accordance with true reason and very ancient tradition, that icons should be honored and venerated in a derivative way because of the honor which is given to their archetypes, and it should be equal to that given to the sacred book of the holy gospels and the representation of the precious cross.

If anyone then does not venerate the icon of Christ, the savior, let him not see his face when he comes in his father's glory to be glorified and to glorify his saints', but let him be cut off from his communion and splendor; similarly the image of Mary, his immaculate mother and mother of God, we also paint the icons of the holy angels just as divine scripture depicts them in words; we also honor and venerate those of the highly renowned apostles, prophets, martyrs and holy men as well as those of all the saints. Let those who are not so disposed be anathema from the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit.

4. We condemn, with a just decree, him who boldly, cunningly and unlawfully, like a dangerous wolf, leapt into the sheepfold of Christ; we are speaking about Photius, who has filled the whole world with a thousand upheavals and disturbances. We declare that he never was nor is now a bishop, nor must those, who were consecrated or given advancement by him to any grade of the priesthood, remain in that state to which they were promoted. Moreover, we debar from this kind of preferment those who received from Photius the customary rescripts for promotion to special office.

21. We believe that the saying of the Lord that Christ addressed to his holy apostles and disciples, ‘Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever despises you despises me,’ was also addressed to all who were likewise made supreme pontiffs and chief pastors in succession to them in the catholic church. Therefore we declare that no secular powers should treat with disrespect any of those who hold the office of patriarch or seek to move them from their high positions, but rather they should esteem them as worthy of all honor and reverence. This applies in the first place to the most holy popes of old Rome, secondly to the patriarch of Constantinople, and then to the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Furthermore, nobody else should compose or edit writings or tracts against the most holy pope of old Rome, on the pretext of making incriminating charges, as Photius did recently. Whoever shows such great arrogance and audacity, after the manner of Photius, and makes false accusations in writing or speech against the see of Peter, the chief of the apostles, let him receive a punishment.

If, then, any ruler or secular authority tries to expel the aforesaid pope of the apostolic see, or any of the other patriarchs, let him be anathema. Furthermore, if a universal synod is held and any question or controversy arises about the holy church of Rome, it should make inquiries with proper reverence and respect about the question raised and should find a profitable solution; it must on no account pronounce sentence rashly against the supreme pontiffs of old Rome.

22. This holy and universal synod declares and decrees, in agreement with earlier councils, that the promotion and consecration of bishops should be done by means of an election and decision of the college of bishops. So it promulgates as law that no lay authority or ruler may intervene in the election or promotion of a patriarch, a metropolitan or any bishop, lest there be any irregularity leading to improper confusion or quarrelling, especially since it is wrong for any ruler or other lay person to have any influence in such matters. Rather he should be silent and mind his own business until the election of the future bishop has been completed with due process by the ecclesiastical assembly. But if any lay person is invited by the church to join in the discussion and to help with the election, he is permitted to accept the invitation with respect, if he so wishes. For in this way he may be able to promote a worthy pastor in a regular manner, to the benefit of his church.

If any secular authority or ruler, or a lay person of any other status, attempts to act against the common, agreed and canonical method of election in the church, let him be anathema.

**Sentence of Excommunication (1054)**

Delivered by Cardinal Humbert against Patriarch Michael Cerularius

As for Michael, who has improperly been given the title patriarch, and those who share in his folly, they sow an abundance of
heresies each day in their midst (in the city of Constantinople). Like the Simonians, they sell the gift of God. Like the Nicolaitans, they allow ministers of the holy altar to be contracted in marriage. Like the Pneumatomachi (those who fought against the Spirit) they have suppressed the procession of the Holy Spirit a filio in the Creed. Like the Manichaens, they declare that fermented bread is alive. Moreover, allowing beard and hair to grow, they refuse communion with those who, following the custom of the Roman church, cut their hair and shave their beard.

That is why, being unable to bear these unprecedented injuries and these outrages directed against the chief apostolic see, we sign against Michael and his supporters the anathema that our most revered pope has pronounced against them if they do not return to their senses.

May Michael the neophyte, who improperly bears the title of patriarch, and all those who follow him in the above-mentioned errors, may they fall under the anathema, and all the heretics, and indeed with the devil and his angels, unless they return to their senses. Amen, Amen, Amen!

**Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I (Dec. 7, 1965)**

Following is the text of the joint Catholic-Orthodox declaration, approved by Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople, read simultaneously (Dec. 7) at a public meeting of the 2nd Vatican Ecumenical Council in Rome and at a special ceremony in Istanbul. The declaration concerns the Catholic-Orthodox exchange of excommunications in 1054.

1. Grateful to God, who mercifully favored them with a fraternal meeting at those holy places where the mystery of salvation was accomplished through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and where the Church was born through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I have not lost sight of the determination each then felt to omit nothing thereafter which charity might inspire and which could facilitate the development of the fraternal relations thus taken up between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople. They are persuaded that in acting this way, they are responding to the call of that divine grace which today is leading the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, as well as all Christians, to overcome their differences in order to be again “one” as the Lord Jesus asked of His Father for them.

2. Among the obstacles along the road of the development of these fraternal relations of confidence and esteem, there is the memory of the decisions, actions and painful incidents which in 1054 resulted in the sentence of excommunication leveled against the Patriarch Michael Cerularius and two other persons by the legate of the Roman See under the leadership of Cardinal Humbertus, legates who then became the object of a similar sentence pronounced by the patriarch and the Synod of Constantinople.

3. One cannot pretend that these events were not what they were during this very troubled period of history. Today, however, they have been judged more fairly and serenely. Thus it is important to recognize the excesses which accompanied them and later led to consequences which, insofar as we can judge, went much further than their authors had intended and foreseen. They had directed their censures against the persons concerned and not the Churches. These censures were not intended to break ecclesiastical communion between the Sees of Rome and Constantinople.

4. Since they are certain that they express the common desire for justice and the unanimous sentiment of charity which moves the faithful, and since they recall the command of the Lord: “If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brethren has something against you, leave your gift before the altar and go first be reconciled to your brother” (Matt. 5:23-24), Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I with his synod, in common agreement, declare that:

A. They regret the offensive words, the reproaches without foundation, and the reprehensible gestures which, on both sides, have marked or accompanied the sad events of this period.

B. They likewise regret and remove both from memory and from the midst of the Church the sentences of excommunication which followed these events, the memory of which has influenced actions up to our day and has hindered closer relations in charity; and they commit these excommunications to oblivion.

C. Finally, they deplore the preceding and later vexing events which, under the influence of various factors — among which, lack of understanding and mutual trust — eventually led to the effective rupture of ecclesiastical communion.

5. Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I with his synod realize that this gesture of justice and mutual pardon is not sufficient to end both old and more recent differences between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Through the action of the Holy Spirit those differences will be overcome through cleansing of hearts, through regret for historical wrongs, and through an efficacious determination to arrive at a common understanding and expression of the faith of the Apostles and its demands.

They hope, nevertheless, that this act will be pleasing to God, who is prompt to pardon us when we pardon each other. They hope that the whole Christian world, especially the entire Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church will appreciate this gesture as an expression of a sincere desire shared in common for reconciliation, and as an invitation to follow out in a spirit of trust, esteem and mutual charity the dialogue which, with God’s help, will lead to living together again, for the greater good of souls and the coming of the kingdom of God, in that full communion of faith, fraternal accord and sacramental life which existed among them during the first thousand years of the life of the Church.