

Our thirst for unity

The quest for peace and unity *begins* with [*metanoia*](#).

Ecumenism and Spirituality

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In November, 2001, Vassula was invited to an official symposium on ecumenism at a place called Farfa, outside Rome. It was held by the sisters of St. Birgitta. Vassula was to represent the point of view of unity from a lay person. Each participant had to speak for an hour to be followed by a debate with questions. The whole committee consisted of Roman Catholics and Lutherans. The Catholic Bishop of Sweden was there as well as many professors of theology and Monsignors and different clergy. The four day symposium had many speakers all of whom were theologians and clergy apart from Vassula.

When Vassula had finished her talk and was waiting for questions to come in and a debate to start, the theologian who led the symposium was weeping. He then said: *"This sermon on unity we have just heard was the most fervent sermon I have ever heard in my entire life. Therefore, I do not want any questions to be raised here, because this was a prophetic voice speaking and when it comes to prophecy, we listen and carry out what is asked from us."*

God's Calling to His People by Vassiliki Rydén

Lord, I pray as you have prayed: may we all be one, as the Father is in you and you in him, so that the rest of the world may believe it was the Father who sent you. For this we pray too for the sheep who are not of your fold, that they too will listen to your voice. We pray that the world may come to love you from today onwards. Amen.

Introduction

First and foremost, I thank our Lord for this spiritual gathering, because it is a grace given by God for all of us, giving us opportunities to expand his Kingdom, bringing us closer into reconciliation. So any delicacy from our part to restore the tottering house of Christ touches the Lord profoundly. Any step towards a spiritual unity and all heaven rejoices! Any prayer offered for the restoration of Christ' Body, and the Father' wrath diminishes. Any gathering in his Holy Name for unity and his blessings are poured out on those sharing these meetings. For this I give glory to God who never fails us.

In this hour I would like to share with you an introduction of the role of a lay person in the Church and then three themes. The first theme is on metanoia, fruit of humility that leads to reconciliation and unity, the second one is about our sin of division and the third one is on the role of the Holy Spirit in leading us to unity. .

When I received this invitation to speak about an ecumenical spirituality I was reluctant to put into words my particular experience with God. I do not dare to formulate a classified "spirituality" out of my own intimate "conversations with Christ." Rather, I will leave the freedom of God who lifted the prophets and who spoke and revealed himself "in many and various ways" (Heb 1,1) to convey again His message through a weak hand, a member of Christ' Body. In this sense, what follows is a different kind of testimony of the mystical tradition of the Church. Therefore, what you will hear in this hour is not an academic theology discourse, simply because I am not a theologian, but rather a lived example of a lay witness to unity when called by God for his service.

I, myself come from the Greek Orthodox Church. In our book for the doctrine of the Orthodox Church, book I, published in 1997 by Mr. Trembelas, on p. 79, it reads: "Revelations are defined as an act taken by God by which he notifies his reasonable creatures about the mysteries of his existence, nature and will, according to their limited intellectual capacity..." etc. It will be worth reading

p. 78 where it describes the necessity of God himself guiding his people. There are many more references on the role of the laity in our Orthodox Church, but limited time prevents us to study them in detail here.

It is known as well that the second Vatican Council has underlined how important it is that the laity contributes to spreading the Good News through the various gifts God bestows upon his Church. In *Lumen Gentium*, the Council clearly states that the laity participates in the prophetic office of Christ. Christ fulfils this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the sense of the faith and the grace of the word (LG 35). Every lay-person has a part to play in this service of the Gospel according to the charism God has given him and through those gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself, "according to the measure of Christ' bestowal." (Eph 4,7). It is obvious then from what the churches assess, that the laity have a very important role to play in the world and that the charisms the Holy Spirit bestows upon his people always are for the service of the community and for the benefit of the Church.

From the very beginning of this call, our Lord by grace approached me with royal prodigality, addressing me in poetry since religion and virtue were his sweet converse during these last sixteen years with me. Without any merit I was called and I responded; Scriptures say: "I believed, and therefore this is the reason why I speak." (2 Co 13). Then I was asked by the Lord to acknowledge him and by acknowledging him he showed me his Cross of unity.

One of the first words of command of Christ to me were these: "Which house is more important, your house or my house?" I replied: "Your house, Lord." Then he said: "Revive my house, embellish my house, unite my house." I was struck with helplessness and I felt miserable. I lamented: "I do not know how to do all of this. I know nothing!" Christ then said: "Remain nothing; I want a nothing and in your nothingness I will show my authority,

my power and that I Am; so die to yourself and allow my Holy Spirit to breathe in you." From thereon he asked me to walk with him but after having gone through many spiritual fires. In this way I received the seed of God without any merit. It is written: "No one can have anything unless God gives it to him." (Jn 3, 27)

This work of the Holy Spirit is printed in eleven volumes and translated in 40 languages. (published under the general name of: True Life in God). In these spiritual writings we see how God is giving us opportunities to be perfect and be able to reach deification through his divinity and become god' by participation. The fruits of this work are numerous, because they too are coming from the Lord and every good thing comes from the Lord. It is worthwhile mentioning one of them. Today all over the world exist more than a thousand ecumenical prayer groups that were formed through these inspired writings by the name of "True life in God." These ecumenical prayer groups consist of different church denominations that gather together to pray for unity and reconciliation of the churches. From these groups, nine charity houses have opened to feed the poor and the needy. They are called Beth Myriam that means house of Mary. There will be others that will open by the grace of God, in the near future and will become active as well.

Through God' grace I have been invited in sixty countries so far, to testify the great works of the Lord. This was done in more than 700 meetings, to Roman Catholics, Orthodox and to various other churches. I could not refuse either to address our other brothers and sisters who are not Christians. Our Lord opened as well a door for the non-Christians, and so I was called to address the Jews, as well as the Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists, who, after addressing them the Word of God, found their freedom and reconciled with the triune God, asking for the sacrament of baptism. For Christ had prayed to the Father for this and said: "I pray not only for these but also for those who through their teaching will come to believe in me." (Jn 17, 20).

In March 2000, the Lord permitted us to gather in his birthplace, Bethlehem. 450 people came from

far and wide; yes, from more than 55 countries and from 12 different churches to an international meeting of prayer for peace and unity. We gathered as one single family. With us we had 75 clergy also from 12 different churches that came, but also other clergy from the Holy Land, who, hearing of this prayer meeting joined us as well. This ecumenical event was co-ordinated by some Jews and Palestinians who were touched by the inspired writings of "True Life in God". They believed in the redemption of Christ and of his saving plan in our days and volunteered to organize this meeting.

When one knows how in our days, Palestinians and Jews are fighting against each other, their reconciliation is a sign of the power of the Holy Spirit who joined those two nations to work for a meeting for peace between the divided Christians. As Scriptures say: "Peacemakers, when they work for peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness." (Jm 3, 18). This is a lesson for all of us.

To watch all these clergy wearing different vestments, yet all Christians, one beside the other, smiling, sharing, and making no difference at all between them, participating in prayers and Liturgies, was obviously a triumph for our Lord. We lived and had a foretaste of what unity will be like one day between Christians and we give glory to God. Before the speeches and the introductions, we had all the clergy lined up to perform a procession. It was awesome. Some were holding icons, others statues of the Sacred Heart and a statue of the Virgin Mary; actually the Madonna was held by a Lutheran pastor and he was very proud of it. Others had incense, others had candles, Greek Orthodox clergy wearing round their necks rosaries that have been exchanged with their crosses and Panayias with the Roman Catholic clergies' rosaries and they all marched with a Byzantine hymn chanting the Kyrie eleison.

We had speeches given to us from clergy of different churches on unity. Their speech resounded like they came from one voice and one mind. We sensed the great desire of all of us being one, during their talks. Even there was a touching moment when several clergy from different

churches were on the podium and one Roman Catholic priest fell on his knees and went around kissing the feet of all the other clergy, asking to be forgiven. With this spontaneous act of humility, a Coptic priest touched to tears, did the same thing and crawled down to kiss the feet of his brothers in Christ. We saw and we watched the thirst of the laity and the clergy, they have for unity. But we sensed at the same time the great wounds our division has produced on the Mystical Body of Christ and this is the reason we felt so joyful and consoled to experience these sincere acts of humility and reconciliation. Had it been an official meeting and had we been officials of the Church and had we the power and authority, we would have performed unity right there and then declaring it to the world.

The majority of us are tired of this division, because it is not according to our law of love. Christ is even more tired of seeing us divided. The cheers and acclamations of joy of all these nations who were bonded together, appealing for a complete unity among Christians exposed that this division is not only a sin but a crime as well. Yet, I tell you that the biggest crime of all is to have the dates of Easter separated. How good it will be when we all cry out together: "Christos Anesti" in one voice all in one day. We all say, "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." Well then, what is holding the officials of the Church back to do the Will of God and declare their reconciliation if already the laity and priests around the world are living a unity? Unity began yesterday... we saw it... we lived it... we rejoiced in it, and we want it as much as the Holy Spirit wants it. Jesus Christ united us together by his Blood, so how can one deny this unity? "He is the peace between us, and has made the Gentile and the Jew into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actual destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law." (Ep 2, 14-15). How can we say "no" to God, if he wants us to unite? Could it be because our hearts have hardened? Have we forgotten the Holy Father' words when he said: "The elements that unite us are far greater than those that divide us"? So we should take up those elements and use them to smoothen up the way to a complete unity.

The graces we received in those days in the Holy Land were innumerable. A Greek Orthodox Archimandrite from the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, having heard we were there, called all 450 people and invited all of us to the Holy Sepulchre Church and another day to Mount Tabor to be present in the Liturgies and even to partake the pre-sanctified gifts if we wished and believed in the Holy Presence of Jesus in this Holy Communion.

There were so many moments of joy to see Orthodox, Lutherans, Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists etc. praying together the rosary, all near each other and not withdrawn because this prayer supposedly is prayed only by the Roman Catholics. On the contrary, we made no differences. The prayer of the Rosary linked us together, and the exposed Blessed Sacrament for adoration, even more, for in front of our Lord we kneeled and felt in this oneness that we were indeed the sons and the daughters of the Most High because everyone was moved by the Spirit. (Rm 8, 14), and like children belonging to one family, together, side-by-side we were one and not one against the other, for the spirit of differentiation was not among us anymore. In these moments we realized that we were living by grace and not by law. (Rm 6, 14). Our hearts were bound together and in Christ' presence we felt truly united in the spirit and in God' love. Indeed, in these moments we had one mind and one heart all united in Christ' Heart. Later on, all the clergy said that when they will go back home, they will continue to promote this spiritual unity and will testify to their brothers what they lived and what they had seen so that they too rejoice in one Lord.

From what we gathered during our pilgrimage of unity in the Holy Land, we sensed that prayers were more powerful than our speeches and dialogues because hardly did we open our mouths to pray together, and our prayers were already heard and were answered. Just as the Holy Father back in October 1986 invited to Assisi representatives of the great world religions to pray for peace, one beside the other, we should follow that line and promote many more of these encounters of inter-religious dialogue in the future.

And now finally after this introduction I will go into my first theme, which is on metanoia.

God' Calling to a Deep Metanoia, Fruit of Humility that Leads Us to Reconciliation and Unity

We, the people of the churches, must realize that we are living in a constant sin, the sin of our division. "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand." (Mt.12, 25). Even if this division did not come directly from us but from our forefathers, still, we are keeping it alive so long as we remain divided. We cannot say that God is pleased when the shepherds are still separated. We cannot deign to talk about unity without going through a metanoia and put into practice the two greatest commandments of God. It will be as though we want to construct a house without laying down first its foundations. The foundations of unity should be humility and divine love and the conversion of our hearts. For how could we believe that we could reach unity if we do not repent and live fully the two greatest commandments that are based on the law of love? The seeds of unity would be constantly sown in an arid and infertile land and no seedlings will sprout in that sort of aridity, which represents the hardness of our heart. We have to sit down and ask ourselves: "are we maybe looking upon unity according to our own mind, and this is why perhaps we are still separated, or are we seeking it as the Spirit of God wants it, but we do not agree to it?"

This is why, with the fear of the Lord in mind knowing that God knows what we really are, a true metanoia is the first and major step that is required so as to provide us the necessary light to lead us all into a spiritual unity. This metanoia that is necessary is a colossal power in itself that will transfigure us and will be fruitful. So let us be rich in poverty, just like the priest who fell on his knees, weeping and kissing the feet of his brothers belonging to the other churches asking for forgiveness, in this same manner let us repent in humility.

We have to knock down the old bricks inside our hearts, bricks of intolerance, pride, lack of forgiveness, unfaithfulness, disunion, lack of love, and reconstruct Christ' Church inside our hearts by acknowledging each other in our hearts, allowing God to be more in us to bring us his peace. There has to be a kenosis given to God from a deeper metanoia, so that God will fill us lavishly with himself, then we will be "acceptable as an offering, and made holy by the Holy Spirit. (Rm 15, 16)." As we know, God is ceaselessly giving himself to us to maintain our soul alive, but after our metanoia God will manifest himself to us in power and grace while he will be expressing his heart' desires, showing us how to use the key to unity. A metanoia will not only lead us into a conversion of the heart but a total transfiguration will take place, because metanoia is the gate that leads souls from darkness into light. Therefore, to this day we cannot say we are walking in the light since we are still divided and fragmented; if we have not entered the light, how are we to see God' divine Will to progress into unity and to know in which way he desires it? How are we to feel our way and where we are walking if we are still in the dark? If we do not hurry, that little flickering flame that remains in us will become extinguished. We need to hurry and put aside all our prejudices and draw oil instead from the reserves of humility and love to enliven this flickering flame into a living torch.

But then each church should be willing to die to its ego and to its rigidity and then through this act of humility, Christ' presence will be shining in them. Each church has to go through an unceasing repentance and cleave itself on Christ joining in his love of mankind. With this act of humility, the churches' past and present failures will be washed away and unity will be accomplished. Once we lower our voice we will begin to hear Christ' voice. Only when we lower our heads will we allow Christ' head to be seen and not ours, only when we lower ourselves entirely, will Christ be able to lift us to see his glory. It is written: "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (Jm 4, 10). Then, and only then, we will be able to know God' divine Will, for he will demonstrate his power after having brought us to naught, and his holy presence will flow through the desert of our soul like a river,

healing us. Then, when our health is restored, our soul will prohibit us from falling back and absorbing the venom we were absorbing in our pathetic division. We will only have one desire and that is to thirst for the pure vivifying liquid that gives life. Moreover, this pure limpid liquid, not only will it heal us but we will also overflow in mercy and love. Having thus given the Holy Spirit a free passage in us, he will easily invade us lavishing us with his light as well, giving us a total metamorphosis, transfiguring us into a heaven.

The Lord permitted me once to hear him say these words: "If you allow my Holy Spirit to invade you, he can transfigure your soul from a desert into a garden where I can have my rest in you. The Holy Spirit can transfigure your soul into a palace, where I can be king and reign over you. The Holy Spirit can transfigure your soul into a heaven where in this heaven you will glorify me." To reach unity we must go through a transfiguration and so long as we have not achieved sharing one Cup around one altar it proves that this transfiguration has not yet taken place within us since we are still living fragmented. So let us go through a metanoia to allow this transfiguration to take place by the Holy Spirit. Without this transfiguration we will be incapable of penetrating into the depths of God to see God and understand him. This vision of the Godhead will undoubtedly draw our hearts into one. In the experience of the vision of God, our soul as well will realize how much we were offending him in our division. This will be like an act of purification or a minor judgment but the beginning of our new life in the one Christ.

In this transfiguration we will discover that although we would still be among men, our mind will be in heaven; and although our bodies will be moving among men, our soul and mind, captured in the divine Will, filled with the nobility of God' light, will be as an angel' walking in the courts of heaven among the saints and angels, becoming one spirit with the Divine. Then the "Our Father" prayer would be accomplished because his Kingdom would have come and his Will would be done on earth as it is in heaven. From thereon all our undertakings would be perfect and done without any flaw, since they would be divine and

according to God' mind. We have learnt that our mind can never ascend to heaven on its own, but it is God alone who can lift it to heaven unveiling with great delight his mysteries. Had we responded to Christ' supplication that "we may be one," or had we responded to his call by showing obedience to his call, today we would be sharing his Cup around one altar and we would be saying: "I am walking with God and ruling with him now."

The Church needs to be consolidated and unity is the only hope of consolidating the Church. As it is now, the Church is losing its brightness in its weakness to the point that it cannot even stand up and draw by itself the oil and the healing ointment from the Source of Life that is the Holy Spirit. In its fear of losing its treasures but mainly its identity, and I would say, especially our Orthodox Church, it not only barricades its windows, but makes sure that its doors are carefully locked as well, not realizing that its interior has collected mould. Out of its fear, it prohibits grace to flow in it that can lead it fearlessly into unity and reconciliation. Someone who acts out of fear and makes sure that windows and doors are carefully barred is usually afraid of being burgled of their valuables. But it is not only the Orthodox Church; the other churches as well behave in this way too. Why are they fearing and isolating themselves? Why do some barricade their doors still? Has Christ not reconciled Gentile and Jew and put them to worship together one Christ? Has Christ not ripped open the veil in two, which separated God and man, reconciling the creature and the Creator? Has Christ not destroyed the gates of hell and set the spirits free? So what could Christ have done more that he has not done? Why then to this day do the churches still barricade themselves and erect walls to keep alive this division? If only they would lay aside their fears, their rigidity and their suspicions, today we would not be talking about unity because we would already be celebrating the Holy Eucharist around one altar.

If the churches are able to go beyond the negative obstacles that separate them, obstacles that according to Scriptures are against the fulfilment of the unity of faith, love and worship among us, Christ will be faithful to his promise of releasing a

time of peace in the entire world. This peace will draw every being into the Mystical Body of Christ, fulfilling his words given to us in his prayer to the Father, when he said: "may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me," (Jn 17, 21). This supplication of Christ to the Father for us to be so unified clearly intoned that the entire creation will be affected into a spiritual unity and not a unity by a signed treaty. But such a spiritual unity that the whole creation gets affected cannot be made without the Spirit of God endowing his power to mankind. The Holy Spirit then must raise new apostles to go and evangelise the world and draw the whole world' faith in Christ. Considering our remaining division, I would say that the Church has shown its weakness in this respect.

Still, in spite of our wretchedness, the Holy Spirit of grace will not stop there because of our human failures, ambitions and our incapacity to reduce ourselves and reconcile to attain unity. Christ' love of mankind compels him in our days to bend from the heights all the way to us with his precious Blood to conceal these imperfections. The Holy Spirit knows of our weaknesses and failures, so one cannot say that the Holy Spirit stopped pouring out his graces; he is out there, making a lot of noise so that in the end even the deaf who barricaded themselves will hear him and finally open the doors of their hearts; and those that were dead will come to life. From having ceased to be they will once more be.

One of the graces that the Holy Spirit is giving us in our times are new apostles who are prepared by God to pour out of their lips the words of God echoing them. But if our minds and hearts cannot be touched easily and hear them it is perhaps that we have become too technical and unfortunately too rationalistic. In this technical environment Christ' mercy is blemished as well as the simplicity of a spiritual life in God. This is why it is important that the Orthodox Church especially, but as well as the other churches, allow the Holy Spirit free to blow within them a resurrection breath. In this resurrection they will stand up and realize that evangelising is a necessity to reconcile the world that is so estranged from God. Evangelizing a

dechristianized society is also a means of allowing people of every race and creed to return to God and start seeking God' face. Every creature on earth could benefit and having thus surrendered to God the Holy Spirit will do the rest and extirpate all obstacles that hinder the way to a complete spiritual unity.

God is asking from us a change from within. There would be some who would say: "But we always kept the law of the Church and obeyed it..." It is not enough to keep the law of the Church and obey it. Our rigidity is condemning us. A lot of times we talk of the law but we do not carry it in our heart. The heart of the law is love; but so many times we live the letter of the law but neglect to live the heart of the law. We are often neglecting the weightier matters of the law, which are love, mercy and good faith.

We should be willing to pray more together because prayers are heard and answered whereas dialogues are just spoken words and formulas. That does not mean that we should eliminate our conferences and discussions, as I mentioned before, not at all. But what is more important for us, the letter, or the Spirit? If we say, the letter, than we will work like administrators when dealing with God' affairs and we will not be justified nor will we ever achieve anything, because it will be like saying to the Spirit, "I am not a child any longer and I can walk by myself." The letter thus will kill the Spirit and we will become truly administrators shifting papers only and leaving every meeting empty-hearted.

So what is more important, the law or the Spirit? If we say the law then already we will be judging our brother sitting near us belonging to the other church, while he will be already judging us and we will hear from each one of us: "We are in the full truth and we are the ones who are right." And again we will be fragmenting Christ and again we will achieve nothing. If we start with the doctrine and its contents, there again we will end up perhaps even more separated and fragmented, never reaching the essential. I do not mean by that, that we should violate the doctrine since the doctrine is the very existence of the Church. But, if

we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, instead of us leading the Holy Spirit for once, then the Spirit will enliven the letter and the law and he will show us the true doctrine, that Jesus Christ is the only active principle in us despite our differences in doctrinal terminology. For this act of charity, we need intense poverty of the spirit and an overflow of generosity. So let our doctrinal dialogues begin with the Holy Spirit. Let him be the one who leads us by our sleeve to show us in our heart that the essence of doctrine should be based on love, sacrifice, redemption and a total dispassion.

Our Sin of Division

If we have become divided and torn asunder, it is because of our intolerance with each other and our spirit of pride. We have chased the distinctive sign of faith, which is divine love, as Christ said about the virtue of love, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." Yet, Christ' love compels him to deploy limitless mercy on our division, this division that brought upon us this aridity and hardness of heart devastating the Church and bringing a general apostasy in the Christian world. The world now, apostatised as it is, has no place for God, since it is occupied with a sort of self-realization. The world today refuses to give glory to God and we are living in a time when every good is transformed into evil. The Christians are ceaselessly being dechristianized because of our division, either that, or they are constantly falling into error. Look around you and see: one section of the Church has been blinded because of their rationalistic mind. So long as they make recourse to their own spirit they will continue to walk in the dark. They will continue to proclaim their laws instead of God' law. They will try to change the Tradition of the Church to human frills and analogies, without the Truth that is in Christ. We should pray for those Christians who easily undermine Christ' Divinity, by plundering the Church not only from its icons, statues and valuables, but also from the real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. If they proclaim Christ as King and glorious affirming his might, proclaiming his fearful power, singing praises to him, acknowledging his Omnipotence and his mighty wonders, we should ask them why does Christ become to them a

stumbling stone when it comes to measure the magnificence of his Divinity in his Presence in the Eucharist? Unless they see his Divinity with spiritual eyes, they will continue to be like a drowsing man who never grasps anything you tell him.

The Lord allowed me to hear from him these words: "I am the Supreme High Priest over all my house, this house that men pitilessly divided in their lack of love; so, am I to keep seeing my house being divided and in such rebellion and not intervene? My Eucharist is given less and less importance. May every race know that my flesh and blood comes from my Mother; My Body comes from the most Holy Virgin, from pure blood..."

Pretence and lip service never deceived Christ, but whenever we adopted a mutual love that led to peace and a mutual understanding, his Spirit rejoiced. How can we today expect his Spirit to rejoice when every feast of Easter that passes by, the dates of Easter are not unified, and are still not unified officially unless it happens by coincidence like this year? How can his Spirit rejoice when the members of his Mystical Body are still scattered like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision? We are audaciously rebelling against God and all the heavenly powers. We are fearlessly transgressing his law of love in front of his Throne. Scriptures say: "Everyone who knows what is the right thing to do and doesn't do it commits a sin." Jm 4, 17). Scriptures do not lie and cannot be rejected.

Furthermore, how do we expect the Church to be credible in front of the rest of the world's eyes when it preaches peace, love, unity, brotherhood and reconciliation to countries that are massacring their people, when we, at the same time, in our own centre, are massacring the Body of Christ by throwing ever so often venomous arrows on one another? We, the royal household of Christ, have bartered our glory for shame. God is calling all of us, and inviting us to be one, so that the world may believe. (Jn 17, 21). So only when the Church will be healed by uniting and regain her strength, would she be able to reconcile the world to God. At the same time, consolidated as she would be, she will be able to overturn all the dark powers that

darkened the world and the dominion of the evil one who keeps us scattered.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Leading Us to a Spiritual Unity

It is the Holy Spirit of grace alone that can progress the Church rapidly into unity making us overcome our fears of going forward. The Holy Spirit is there to burn to the roots all that keeps us divided and delays us from uniting. The evil one of course is aware of this and keeps raising upheavals there where they normally should not be, grievously obstructing the work of the Church and delaying unity. This is why I think it is very important to submit to the Holy Spirit and pay more attention on the charisms he gives to the Church. We should stop extinguishing the fire of the Holy Spirit that can brighten up the interior of the Church. Therefore, it is important to let our self be directed by grace and not by fear. Let the Holy Spirit be like a Parousia within the Church.

The Body of Christ, the Church, as we know, always increases through the Holy Spirit and will keep on increasing until the last Day, because Christ is the rock, the builder of the Church as well as the Shepherd of his people. Christ is the supreme High Priest over all his house, this house that men pitilessly divided in their lack of love. The beauty and glory and the fruit it gave once in the beginning of its existence, has now fallen down like rotten fruit. If this is wrong, where is that Apostolic Church in its eagerness to witness to the Christ, to lay itself down on the altar of martyrs, to humble itself in the arena of shame and pain rather than deny the Christ? Where is that discipleship fervour of faith and burning with desire to global evangelization? Oh Christ, how much more must Your Precious Body be pierced and lanced and fragmented before we realize that we may have divided your Body as tools of the "divider" himself. We have done it unwillingly and unwittingly. Help us to find and preserve that remnant so sacred called your Church. Help us to put it together again. A Church unity determined to bring your Second Coming as a revelation globally.

Although we know that there is an ontological abyss between the Holy Spirit and us, it can be removed by the Holy Spirit and he can reach us to show us that the real Christian is the one who is inwardly a Christian, and the real spiritual unity is and will be in the heart. Unity will not be of the letter but of the Spirit.

Indeed, regardless of how much we expect from the Church, regardless of how we see its failures but triumphs as well, regardless of the Cross of unity we place on her shoulders, in the end, we know out of experience that this Cross will be carried by the pure in heart. If we are to decide now for unity, then we must open our hearts and receive those souls that are gifted by the Holy Spirit. When we will finally trust the poor in spirit who are willing to carry the Cross of unity on their shoulders, then we will have a completely open field in which we could begin to sow the seeds of a true Christian unity that will convert the world and fragrance it. The churches should allow the Holy Spirit who is the inner source of Christian unity, to renew and fragrance them first, then in their turn they will fragrance nation after nation, bringing them all to be one in the Truth, thus perfuming the Mystical Body of Christ. So the churches, especially our Orthodox Church, should be careful not to extinguish the Spirit and persecute the variety of gifts he distributes for the well being of the Church, but allow his flame to purify and enliven the interior of the Church to progress it into a spiritual unity.

The Holy Spirit calls out to his Bride for unity too and says:

Pray, that I, the utter fullness of God, the utterance of your spirit, the light in your eyes, descend in your midst to show the world how wrong it was, to show to the churches their iniquity of their division and how, although they declare daily that there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all, are uncharitable with one another. We cannot say: "You have done everything to preserve the unity I offered you in the beginning when you were still a child and in my arms. Today you say: "I am not a child any longer and I can walk by myself. And since

then you stepped out of my embrace and accustomed your steps to walk your own way ... O child of the Father! Fruit of the Son! My City and my Bride! Your fragrance left you... are there going to be any survivors left in you when I will descend in full force? ([9.11.94](#))

I think it is also about time that we stop creating new Gethsemanes for our Lord. Instead, let us place garlands of love on our Lord' Head. I will conclude by saying that unity will come only when all of us will truly begin to love Jesus Christ.