

The XVth Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality

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The annual conference on Orthodox spirituality was held in Bose from 16 to 19 September; beginning with this year there is one common session prepared in collaboration with and under the patronage of the patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow. We were pleased to see that this innovation was favorably received; although it increased somewhat the number of participants staying at any one time in Bose, it has also created greater opportunities for Orthodox Christians from different traditions to meet and to exchange views. The theme chosen, "The transfigured Christ in the Orthodox spiritual tradition", was examined from the Biblical, patristic, liturgical, historical, and iconographic aspects, as reflected in the tradition of the various Orthodox churches, as also at certain times of the Western tradition. This year the Patriarchate of Constantinople was represented, in addition to our Emilianos Timiadis, by metropolitan Kallistos Ware of Diokleia; the Patriarchate of Antioch by metropolitan Georges Khodr' of Mount Lebanon; the Patriarchate of Jerusalem by Timotheos of Vostra; the Patriarchate of Moscow by Aristarkh of Kemerovo, by bishop Ilarion Alfeev of Viena, and by several members of the Moscow Theological Academy and of the Department of external affairs; the Patriarchate of Serbia by fr. Gajo Gaji?; the Patriarchate of Romania by Seraphim of Germany and by fr. Constantin Preda; the Ukrainian Orthodox Church linked to the Moscow Patriarchate by Antonij of Boryspil';

the Exarchate of Belarus of the Moscow Patriarchate by Serafim of Bobrujsk; the Patriarchate of Bulgaria by several lecturers of the Theological faculty "St Clement of Ohrid"; the Church of Greece by arch. Iakovos Vizaourtis, igumen of Petraki monastery, by fr. Konstantinos Karaisaridis, and by Pantelis Kalaitzidis of the Volos Academy of theological studies; the Greek Orthodox archdiocese of Italy by fr. Athenagoras Fasiolo; the Armenian Apostolic Church by fr. Ghukas Zakaryan; the Coptic Church by fr. Antony of the Amba Shenuda monastery of Lacchiarella (Milan) and by Joseph Faltas; the Church of England by canon Jonathan Goodall and canon Hugh Wybrew; the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity by its secretary Brian Farrell and by fr. Milan Žust; the World Council of Churches by dr. Teny Pirri-Simonian. Present were also cardinal Achille Silvestrini and Antonio Mennini, apostolic nuncio to the Russian Federation. In summing up the conference in the name of the scientific committee, fr. Michel Van Parys ably expressed the aim of this initiative and the style in which we strive to make it an occasion of meeting and of getting to know one another:

"The Italian word convegno (from the Latin convenire, to come together) aptly expresses what the Bose conferences are: meetings. They are characterized by friendship among Christ's disciples. We get to know each other. We listen to each other with sympathy... The Western Churches come to the school of Christ, the beloved Teacher of Orthodox spirituality. The Orthodox Churches come to the school of Christ, the beloved Teacher of the spiritualities of the Christian West. In more theological terms: we must intensify with discernment our reception of the marvels of holiness and of love of Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit has worked and continues to work in our respective spiritual traditions."