Final greetings

The time we have shared these last few days has been, we can say, a true experience of common work, of a way taken together, where each one of us has listened to the thoughts and preoccupations of the other, so as to discern together the Lord's will.

XXVIth International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality
DISCERNMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Monastero di Bose, 5-8 September 2018
in collaboration with the Orthodox Churches

Follow us ?

Beloved bishops!
Dear fathers, monks and nuns, dear friends and gusts!

The time we have shared these last few days has been, we can say, a true experience of common work, of a way taken together, where each one of us has listened to the thoughts and preoccupations of the other, so as to discern together the Lord's will.

The conference this year has been centered on "discernment… as an element proper to the life of the Church, a precious gift of God, her founder", as His Holiness Bartholomeos of Constantinople defined it in his greeting.

In our times of acceleration, in which the past and the future are more and more subjected to the tyranny of the moment, "authentic discernment", Pope Francis wrote in his message to the conference, "demands that we train ourselves in the patience of God and His times, which are not ours". It is hence necessary to search together those "criteria of personal and communitarian discernment necessary to come to God's knowledge and will, in which resides every plenitude of life" and of salvation (Pope Francis).

Although the exercise of discernment touches first of all a Christian's personal life, this operation, which is often difficult and hard, today must extend above all to church life, to relations between the Churches, and to the times in which we live. For this reason we have wanted to examine the ways of discernment in Sacred Scripture, in the tradition of the Christian East and of the fathers of monasticism, in the constant interrelation between these two dimension, personal and communitarian, and relating it to human studies and to the events of history.
The essential human condition is that of choosing. Discernment is the art of choice, to discern the present time, the time in which God acts and speaks, to discern the signs of the times, but also the signs of places, so as to come to the moment of decision. To discern the time is above all to place one's trust in life and not in death; it means opening up to the future, not condemning oneself to the past. To learn the art of discernment means learning to hope and to have confidence, in God and in man. This need is becoming ever more urgent, and if the Church in the past meditated above all on personal discernment, today is the time to operate community discernment in the Church.

The time that we have shared, these days of fraternal sharing, are also an opportune and good time to meet in the Lord's name, a time when we are called to discern in the Holy Spirit his presence among us. For this reason we have to render thanks. Recognizing the living Lord in our midst and his action is the condition for the Holy Spirit to act in our lives, personal and in the Church, and to guide us towards that unity in love that He wants for his Church.

The moment has come to thank the Lord and all of you. Above all, to thank the Lord, who makes possible these our meetings in peace and charity, in listening to one another, in silencing all our prejudices, and in being disposed to see in our brother the face of the risen Lord. So we truly thank the Lord and confess that we expect everything from Him, awaiting the day of his Coming, when we shall see Him face to face and the risen Lord will be everything in all of us.

I also thank the bishops and the representatives of the Churches who are present here, who have followed us and still follow us with fidelity. I would like once again to assure them of the constant prayer of my community for their ministry and their Churches. A fraternal greeting to the monks and nuns, who often come from afar, from the East and from the West, not rarely from countries that know war and where Christians are persecuted. These monastic presences give us great joy with their faithful friendship. Thanks also to the members of the scientific committee, and above all to the speakers and their work of research, which has made this our meeting fruitful. Of course, this work of research will be

available to all when the Acts are published, as always, for next year.
We hope with God’s help to be able to live this experience of conferences again and will try to keep it in the first week of September. We will decide on the theme together with the scientific committee, but we wish to take into consideration the suggestions and desires that you may express, also in writing and giving us indications. Our conference wants to be at the service of the Churches, so listening to you and your suggestions is essential for us.

Thank you also to the interpreters and the technicians, to all who have helped us to live these days in a profitable manner. Thank you all, who encourage us with your presence to offer this service to all the Churches. This is a monastic service, which desires to be offered always in humility and obedience to the Lord, without protagonisms and without a desire of appearances. And I wish to thank also all my sisters and brothers of the Bose monastery, because they truly offer their forces for hospitality, for the service that is given in a way so that your stay may take place in peace, in joy, and in charity. Thank you all, and our gratitude will be shown especially in the Eucharist that we will celebrate together. Once again, thank you!