

Press release

19th International Conference on Orthodox Spirituality

Bose, 30 August 2011

The 19th International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox spirituality (Bose, 7–10 September 2011), at which will gather some of the major Biblical scholars and the most authoritative exponents of the various Orthodox Churches

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Bose, Wednesday 7 - Saturday 10 September 2011

in collaboration with the Orthodox Churches

THE WORD OF GOD **IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE**

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In the tradition of the undivided Church Sacred Scripture and the Word of God that it contains have always been the living fount of the spiritual life of the faithful. In the tradition of the Eastern Churches reading the Bible is always a reading in the Spirit, hence also in the community of believers gathered together by the same Spirit, in a living unity of fulfilling the commandments, prayer, and thanksgiving in the liturgy.

The 19th International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox spirituality (Bose, 7–10 September 2011), at which will gather some of the major Biblical scholars and the most authoritative exponents of the various Orthodox Churches, will have for its theme this essential unity of Sacred Scripture and exegesis in the Spirit, the Word of God and spiritual life, in forms and ways different in East and West, but converging on the pneumatic reality of Scripture.

Without claiming to exhaust all the wealth of this tradition, the conference will concentrate on three principal points. The first regards the Biblical hermeneutics elaborated by the church fathers. Another will deal with the ecclesial dimension of the Word of God. Not only will the tradition of the past be considered, but also the present of the various Churches, from liturgical celebration to the importance of the Bible for Orthodox theology, from the relation between historical-critical exegesis and ecclesial reading of the Bible to that between exegesis and spiritual life. The third part is the reality of the presence of Scripture in the life of the faithful, including the testimony of contemporary monasticism. How does Scripture mold spiritual life? How does it inspire personal and communitarian decisions? How does Scripture question life? How does life question Scripture?

On the opening day the **prior of Bose, Enzo Bianchi**, and metropolitan **Chrysostomos of Messenia** (Orthodox Church of Greece) will speak on *The Bible in liturgical celebration*. The work of the conference will be concluded by metropolitan **Elpidophoros of Bursa** of the Patriarchate of Constantinople (*Sacred Scripture in the spiritual life*) and metropolitan **Ilarion of Volokolamsk**, president of the department for external relations of the Patriarchate of Moscow (*The importance of the Bible for Orthodox theology*).

In addition, among the participants there will be metropolitans **Georges of Mount Lebanon** and **Paul of Aleppo** (Patriarchate of Antioch), bishops **Kliment of Krasnoslobodsk** and **Serafim of Sendai** (Patriarchate of Moscow), archbishop **Oleksandr of Perejaslav-Khmel'nyts'kyj** (Ukrainian Orthodox Church), bishops **Porfirije of Jegar** (Serbian Orthodox Church), **Boris of Agatonica** and **Grigorij of Veliko Tŕnovo** (Bulgarian Orthodox Church), cardinal **Angelo Sodano**, dean of the Sacred College, cardinal **Achille Silvestrini**, former president of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, bishop **Mansueto Bianchi** of Pistoia, president of the commission on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue of the Italian Bishops' Conference, bishop **Gabriele Mana** of Biella, the diocese in which Bose is located, and bishop **Arrigo Miglio** of Ivrea, secretary of the Bishops' Conference of Piedmont, don **Andrea Palmieri**, of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, father **Constantin Preda** (Romanian Orthodox Church), delegate of Patriarch Daniel, father **Ruben Zargaryan** (Armenian Apostolic Church), delegate of the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, archimandrite **Athenagoras Fasiolo** (Orthodox Archdiocese of Italy and Malta), canon **Jonathan Goodall** (Church of England), delegate of the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, and **Michel Nseir**, delegate of the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches Olav Fikse Tveit.

Prominent is the presence of monks and nuns, who come from Orthodox (Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Mount Sinai, Armenia, United States), Catholic, and Reformed monasteries (Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, Hungary). An entire section of the conference will be dedicated to *The Bible in today's monastic experience*, with contributions by igumen **Iakovos of Petraki**, archimandrite **Sergij of New Valaam**, igumen **Petr Mešŕerinov** of the Danilov monastery in Moscow, father **Cesare Falletti**, prior of the Cistercian monastery Dominus Tecum, father **Christopher Savage** of New Skete in the United States. In addition, we may note the presence of the scholars **Sebastian Brock** of Oxford, **John Fotopoulos**

of Notre Dame, **Anatolij Krasikov** of Moscow, **Gelien Prochorov** of St Petersburg, **Spyridon Kontoyannis** of Athens, and **Pantelis Kalaitzidis** of Volos.

The program has been prepared in collaboration with the Orthodox Churches by a scientific committee presided by the prior Enzo Bianchi and which includes father **Hervé Legrand** (Paris), father **Michel van Parys** (Chevetogne), and **Antonio Rigo** (University of Venice); it wishes to trace an itinerary of encounters among the various Christian Churches, of communion and sharing of their multiform spiritual traditions.

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