

# Press release 07.09

John and Prochorus, fresco - Mount Athos

## XVIth International Ecumenical Conference

This year the Conference treats the topic of *“Spiritual Paternity in the Orthodox Tradition”*, which will be investigated in its biblical, spiritual, liturgical, theological and anthropological aspects

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ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE – PATRIARCHATE OF MOSCOW  
MONASTERY OF BOSE

Piedmont Region – University of Turin

### ***Spiritual Paternity in the Orthodox Tradition***

Monastery of Bose, 18-21 September 2008

The 16th International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality will be held at the Monastery of Bose (Province of Biella, Piedmont, Italy) from Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 September 2008. Organized by the Monastery in cooperation with and under the joint auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Moscow, the Conference offers an occasion for a fraternal exchange of views and shared reflection on essential topics of spiritual life, where Eastern and Western Christian tradition meets the profound questions that beset modern man.

This year the Conference is dedicated in a particular way to the memory of **Emilianos Timiadis, Metropolitan of Silyvria** (1916-2008), illuminating witness of the spiritual tradition of Orthodoxy in the contemporary world, and treats the topic of *“Spiritual Paternity in the Orthodox Tradition”*, which will be investigated in its biblical, spiritual, liturgical, theological and anthropological aspects, evoking the entire Orthodox spiritual tradition in all its harmonious voices. “Spiritual Paternity” lies at the very heart of Orthodox spirituality; it is indiscutably one of its cardinal points and a means of essential growth in the interior life of man.

The topic, far too broad to be exhausted in the framework of a single conference, will be approached in two complementary stages. At first, the floor will be given to Orthodox witnesses (in the Byzantine, Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian and Romanian traditions) and also in part to Latin monastic tradition; the second stage, on the other hand, will try to show how spiritual paternity, and therefore obedience to a spiritual father, was concretely experienced not only in monastic environments but also by lay men and women committed to their contemporary society. Finally it will be useful to examine some examples of “failure” on the part of the spiritual father, denounced by major witnesses of the Orthodox tradition in such way as to render more salient the positive qualities of true spiritual paternity.

About four hundred participants are expected to attend the Conference; they are exponents of the academic, cultural and religious world from France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Russia, Serbia, Bielorrussia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Lebanon, Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, Luxembourg, Portugal, Estonia, Czech Republic.

The International Conference on Orthodox Spirituality intends above all to be an occasion for a fraternal encounter of the divided Christian Churches. Along with the members of the Scientific Committee (**Nina Kauchtschischwili**, Bergamo; **Hervé Legrand**, Paris; **Michel Van Parys**, Chevetogne, Belgium; **Antonio Rigo**, Venice; and **Giorgio Cracco** and **Roberto Salizzoni** from the University of Turin), all major international experts will be present, along with numerous high ranking representatives of the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and of the Reformed Churches.

The Catholic Church will be represented by Cardinal **Achille Silvestrini**, prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, Mons. **Brian Farrell**, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Fr **Milan Žust**, S.J., of the same Council; during the Conference proceedings, there will be interventions from a number of bishops of the Piedmont Episcopal Assembly, among them from its secretary, Mons. **Arrigo Miglio**, Bishop of Ivrea, and Mons. **Gabriele Mana**, Bishop of Biella responsible for the local diocese.

The Patriarchate of Constantinople will be represented by Bishop **Athenagoras of Sinope**, with his important intervention: *“A Contemporary Spiritual Father: Remembering Emilianos of Silyvria (1916-2008)”*; the Patriarchate of Moscow by Bishop **Savvatij of Tbeboksarsk**, head of the official delegation which also includes Fr **Pavel Khondzinsky** and Fr **Georgij Sergeev** of the Department of Foreign Relations, by Fr **Gerasim Djachkov**, assistant to the Rector of the Theological Academy of Moscow, and by ieromonk **Daniil Vasilenko** of the same Academy.

This year the Church of Greece will be represented by Bishop **Ioannis of Thermopylae** and Archimandrite **Iakovos (Bizaourtis)**, Abbot of Petraki Monastery; Bishop **Meletios of Preveza** will also be present. There will also be important representations from the Orthodox Churches of Antioch; Ukraine (Bishop **Filipp of Poltava and Kremen?ug** and Fr **Mykola Makar**); Serbia (Bishop **Grigorije of Kahum and Hercegovina**, Fr **David Perovic** of the Theological Faculty of

Belgrad, delegate of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archimandrite **Andreij Cilerdzic** and Fr **Vasilje Grolimund**); Romania (Metropolitan **Serafim of Germany**, who will make the concluding intervention); Bulgaria (Bishops **Grigorij of Veliko Tarnovo** and **Kiprian of Traianopol**); Georgia (Fr **Khakaber Kurtanidze**); Armenia (Fr **Karen Karamyan**, Delegate of the Supreme Katholikos of Etchmiadzin H.H. Garechin II); of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Orthodox Archdiocese of Italy (Archimandrite **Athenagoras Fasiolo**); of the Church of England (Canon **Hugh Wybrew**); and of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

Furthermore, the presence of numerous monks and nuns from monasteries in the East (Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Mount Sinai) and West (Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland) will contribute in creating alongside the proceedings of the Conference a fraternal climate of communion and sharing of respective spiritual traditions.

Among participants one should particularly note the presence of Fr **André Louf**, Fr **Gabriel Bunge**, Fr **Georgij Ko?etkov** of Moscow, Mr **Gavriila Gluchova** of Grodno, Fr **Damaskinòs Gavalas** of Santorini, Mr **Anna Maria Canopi** of Isola S. Giulio d'Orta, the renowned philosopher and Orthodox theologian **Christos Yannaras**, Prof. **Spyridon Kontoyannis** of the University of Athens, Prof. **Gheorghios Martzelos** of the University of Thessaloniki, Prof. **Nikitas Aliprandis** of the University of Thrace, Prof **Ljudmila Savova** from Sofia, Prof. **Anatolij Krasikov** from Moscow and Prof. **Gelian M. Prochorov**, of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

The Conference will open with an Introduction by Fr **Enzo Bianchi**, Prior of the Monastery of Bose, who will present the topic of spiritual paternity on the basis of biblical texts.

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tel. (+39) 015.679.185 - fax (+39) 015.679.294