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Remarks at the Closing Dinner for the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

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His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros
Remarks at the Closing Dinner for the
International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue
October 10, 2024
Maliotis Cultural Center
Brookline, Massachusetts
Most Reverend and Right Reverend Metropolitans and Bishops,

Reverend Clergy,

Dear and Respected Members of the International Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue,

Friends in our Lord Jesus Christ,

I am delighted that I am at last able to be with you, at least for this closing dinner, and to able to express to you my gratitude and pleasure that this oldest ecumenical dialogue convened here at our beloved Seminary.

I am particularly grateful to my brothers in Christ, the Co-Chairs of this Dialogue – His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium and Bishop Michael Lewis of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East – for their leadership in bringing this all-important meeting to the Huffington Ecumenical Institute here at Holy Cross. Many thanks and congratulations are due to Archdeacon John Chryssavgis, its Executive Director, and the family of Hellenic College and Holy Cross, for their careful preparations in bringing these days together to their successful conclusion.

In the thirty years that I have had the privilege to be clergyman of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, I have always appreciated and promoted ecumenical dialogue as a vital ingredient to our interconnected world. This longest-running theological

conversation of the Orthodox Churches and Anglican Communion has yielded many helpful clarifications, and more importantly, it has yielded relationships of trust and friendship that have endured.

And it is in our relationship with one another that we establish the contours that lead us all heavenward to God, His Only Begotten Son, and Life-Creating Spirit. By our encounter of love and mutual understanding in this setting of consultation, or in the simple yet divine fellowship of this shared meal, we move beyond the Dyad of "self and other," and complete our own Triad in communion with God.

I am especially pleased and proud that this Ecumenical Encounter has taken place here at our Seminary, and specifically under the aegis of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute, which is a tremendous resource for our School.

Often, Orthodox Christianity in the West is seen as some antique, conservative version of the Gospel that exists to absorb those dissatisfied and demoralized in their own tradition.

Such a "Golden Age" mentality does not serve our task of manifesting the unity in Christ that He Himself prayed to His Father for on our behalf, in the night in which He gave Himself up for the life of the world.

As He prayed:

I in them and You in Me, that they might be perfected in one, so that the world might know that You have sent Me, and that You love them even as You love Me. *

As I'm sure my brother in Christ Metropolitan Athenagoras would agree, we are looking forward to the Eschaton, not backward to a past that likely never existed.

Therefore, I thank and congratulate all of you once again for this historic meeting here, and pray that you may always experience the marvelous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the tender love of God the Father, and the enduring fellowship of the All-Holy Spirit in your work now and into the future. Amen!

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