

Opening ceremony of Theological Dialogue between Orthodox & Roman Catholic Churches in Alexandria



In the morning of June 1, 2023, the official opening ceremony of the International Joint Theological Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches took place at the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

24 Orthodox and 18 Catholic participants, Cardinals, Metropolitans, Elders and lay theologians were welcomed by His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa.

The Patriarch said: "It is with deep love and great joy that we welcome the Co-Chairs and the members of the International Joint Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches at the seat of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, which has a long history and a promising future. We wish a very warm welcome to you all!"

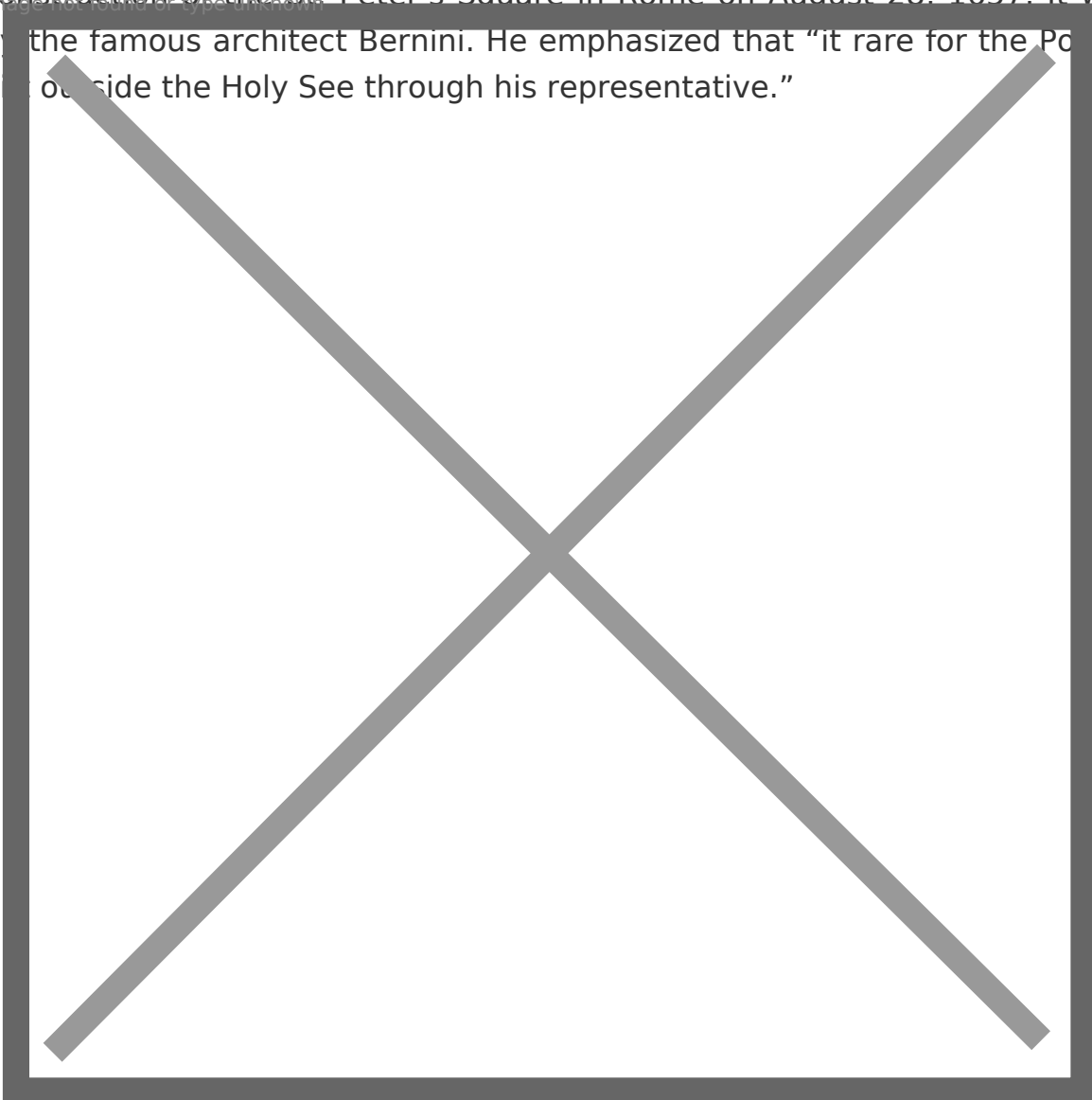
"It is universally acknowledged that theological dialogue needs to be cultivated, advanced and brought to fruition at all levels with sincerity, honesty and mutual respect. Contacts, conversations, mutual understanding and dialogue are an integral part of the Orthodox Church. The course of the theological dialogue between the two Churches to date has shown us that in order to start a dialogue, conditions of mutual trust and good will must be created. Conditions of freedom and love. This is very important.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, as 'Primus inter pares' (first among equals) had rightly argued that the issue of union was great and most sacred and that it was not a matter of persons, but of Orthodoxy. It is, therefore, imperative to create a meaningful cooperation with all the local Orthodox Churches, avoiding any hasty action," he said.

In addition, he expressed his brotherly love and respect for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which bears the responsibility of coordinating the Theological Dialogue within the Orthodox Church. The same goes

for Pope Francis [within the Roman Catholic Church], he added. The Consul General of Greece, Mr. Athanasios Kotsionis, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Greek State for assisting in the gathering at the Patriarchate.

The Roman Catholic Co-Chairman of the Commission, Cardinal Kurt Koch, gave a valuable gift on behalf of Pope Francis to Patriarch of Alexandria - a copy of the foundation stone, which was laid by Pope Alexander VII at the start of the construction of the St. Peter's Square in Rome on August 28, 1657. It was created by the famous architect Bernini. He emphasized that "it rare for the Pope to send a gift outside the Holy See through his representative."













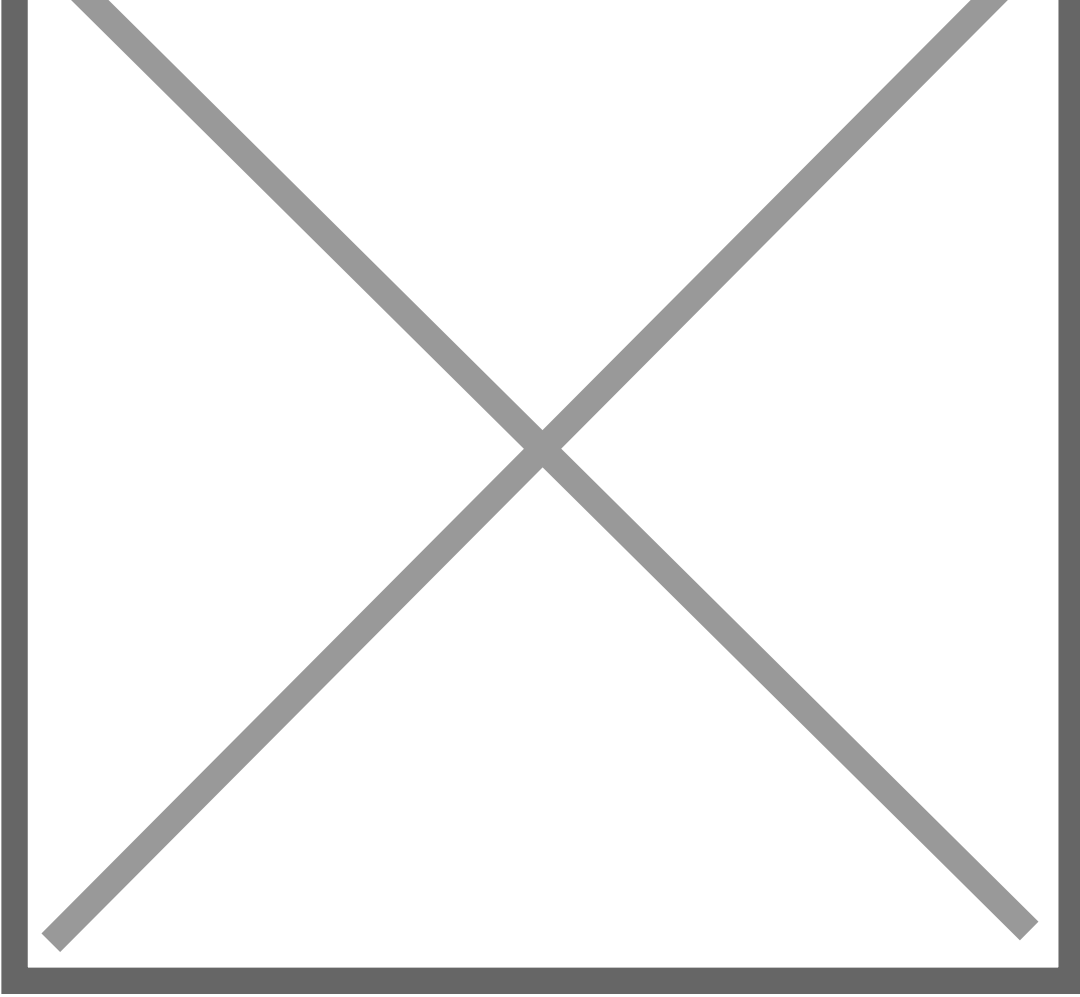
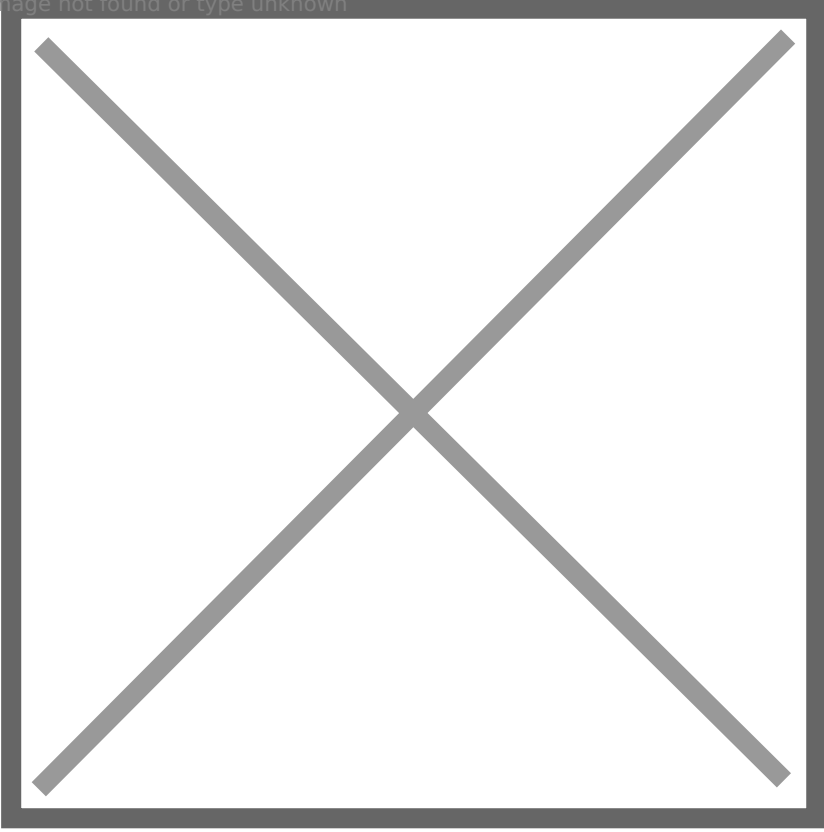






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