

Symposium for Peace, Malta 12-16 February 2003

“Peace has a price” (SUMMARY)

“Kinonia”-(**“communication”**) as the ideal peace for Orthodox Church. Helps- Hindrances.
(Archim. Gregorios Stergiou)

War is the result of a deeper reason, of human selfishness and egocentricity whether it stems from a specific person, or from a group of people, from a nation or even from a religion. The word **«αμαρτία»** “amartia” (sin) in the Greek language derives from the verb **«με ρομα»** “mirome”, which means: I have broken away, I do not participate, I do not commune/communicate with anyone. Sin is our self-destructive severance and our unsociability. As a result of each person’s severance from others and their unsociability, they are unable to make the best of what they are capable of and thus they commit some crime against God, against their fellow man, and even against themselves, even if they do not violate any law. In the Orthodox Church, God is known to all as Love and Freedom. As long as human beings participate in God’s **“love and freedom”** which were given us gifts from God, they become bearers, apostles and donors of this love and freedom. The presence of war and various types of discrimination, for instance national, racial, community, religious, cultural and their clashes, means that there is a problem of engagement, on the human side, with the pacifying and unifying words of God as reasons and acts of love and freedom. For the Orthodox faith the Ecclesiastical - Community way of life is not simply the way and place of expression of religious life but it is, mainly, the place where by participating in the life of God in the person of Jesus Christ, people join in and become apprentices at God-humanity morality. The essential prerequisite for this **“communication”** is love, as in the example of Christ’s love. In this **“communication”** we develop, of course progressively, from communication with ourselves, we return to **“communication- contact”** with our neighbors, and brothers and from there we go on to **“communication- contact”** with all the world and all creation. Thus this **“communication”** becomes a model for life and unity, which will supposedly be able to surpass its boundaries and unfold continuously into the private world of each of our neighbors. This is extremely basic for the Orthodox Church because it does not mean, in anyway, an **“individual”** relationship with God, except if this relationship passes our neighbors way. Participation in the **“communication”**, in our own and the entire world’s quest is, essentially, an effort of exertion on our part from the excludes of our own being to the limits of our fellow human’s world, a world which hurts, destroys and dies precisely because it does not want to locate the cause of its pain. The desire, from the side of the Orthodox world, for peace and absolute reprobation of war is not identified as a barren pacifism, which in the name of peace tolerates all other oppression and trespass of the rights of other nations. But, in the Orthodox Church, we stress that Peace is a Person and this Person is Jesus Christ. Usually, all of us, the religious liturgists become entrapped in the historical conditions of our religions and in our effort to transmit the salvation message of God, we limit it either to a barren literature about the religious duties, or to a moralistic teaching and we lose the contact with today and utmost. And in this way, we always lose the thread. This is, also, the main reason that leads people to an externally typical religiosity and essentially, to a deep indifference, that is to say, where the **“spirit of world”** leads them. Subsequently, without having sought this, we drive people away from the very place we should be leading them. One of the ascetic Fathers of the Orthodox Church and leader of modern monks and anchorites, Abbot Isaac from Syria, very succinctly determines what the place of monks and all ecclesiastical liturgists of each age should be: **“When you are absent from the everyday routine of this world, you commit a sin”**. This saying of Abbot Isaac also determines the place of shepherds and modern monks. So the subject is **“to be/ I am”**, **“we are”** and that **“to be”** and **“we are”**, works only when **“I am”**, and **“we are”** are in front of one **“you”**. In the Christian world we know that we are creations of a Dialogue between the persons of Saint Trinity. We are the essential difference that exists between the first days of Creation which are characterized by the command **“Let there be...”** (Gen.1, 3) and the dialogue **“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”** (Gen.1, 26). These words exactly and the incarnation of the Second person of the Holy Trinity extend this dialogue to the outer limits of Divine Human history, consequently, for all of us, it is a holy duty to talk together about God and about the Human beings and in this way, penetrate life’s mystery, the ultimate mystery of life and creation. Today, however, If we wish for real progress to exist in the dialogues, we should take care that in the future, another different generation will exist to be able to discuss with different experiences of their own.