

GRAMMATA ON ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN UNITY

WE pray for patience and mutual understanding, for brotherly care of all who declare Jesus Christ as Lord; for faithful witness to those who seek Him and cannot yet name Him, and peace with those who reject Him and continue in persecution of Christians around the world. We seek wisdom to distinguish between the differences of faith in Christendom, which weakens the power of the Gospel. Yet we seek the healing power of Christ's Church and the distinctions that are merely cultural but unfortunately cause division due to lack of education. Our aim has always been to mutually coming to understand, to recognize and to accept the Orthodox Christian and apostolic revelation, tradition and faith.

Because our approach is a positive, uplifting attitude towards God and neighbor, we place the strongest emphasis on the development of the human consciousness through the refinement of ethical behavior. Thus, one's behavior toward other beings, whether towards fellow men or towards creation as a whole, is the outer indicator of one's inner spiritual development.

WE ask wisdom and courage to be honest and not to make any demands of another, but to allow the Holy Spirit a place of teaching and conviction, as the Father draws all to the truth which is the revelation of God in Christ by the same Holy Spirit.

WE commit ourselves to search for a unity that is Christ-like, unity that will be reflected in brotherly relations and in more true unity within the Church, which is unity in truth.

WE commit ourselves to progress in finding the common witness of the Holy Gospel as delivered to the Church throughout the ages. We seek wisdom and understanding to recognize Christ's presence as well as the Holy Spirit's work inside and outside the Church.

WE commit ourselves to the personal work of seeking the truth by the synergistic and creative life in the Holy Spirit, so that we may become peacemakers and create paths of understanding and new avenues of unity. We commit ourselves to real unity, its foundation on spiritual truth, and reject any false unity based on religious and spiritual delusions or ecclesiastical elitism. We hold to Christianity not *churchianity*.

WE commit ourselves to overcoming the pride of human rationalism, the sin and rebellion against God that has created the walls of separation and broken the Body of Christ. We pledge to seek awareness of the same and the guidance of the Holy Spirit toward removing the walls that separate us.

WE do all this with confidence in the Holy Spirit, who comes to help our weakness (Romans 8:26); we trust in God's love and his promise of faithfulness to us (Romans 8:39). Foremost, we continue to hold to the maxim:

***Unity in essentials
Diversity in non-essentials
Above all charity***

WE pray that we will not allow the negative or fanatic state of others to transform our hearts, but rather trust that we be consumed by the love of Christ. May we always recognize the love of God in and among us, and stand firm in our opposition to any form of fanaticism and bigotry.

In the challenges of life, let us always remember that our struggle is spiritual. It is not flesh and blood that we wrestle against, but principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness in this world. We fervently pray that we may be gentle, yet firm ministers as servants to others, and that God will protect us from all evil.

✠ +Melchizedek
Eparch of Nebraska
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