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LE ROLE DE LA TRADITION ET L'EXPRESSION DE LA FOI DANS LE MONDE D'AUJOURD'HUI

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THE ROLE OF TRADITION AND THE EXPRESSION OF FAITH IN TODAY'S WORLD

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It is only our habitual involvement in the life of today's world and criticism toward it peculiar of the Christian that weakens the impression to be evoked by an amazing and unflinching advance of sience, technology and social life which is usually called progress. But the changes in the world are so rapid that a secular man considersit anachronism to appreciate religious and specifically Christian traditions. So tradition itself seems to be an obstacle on the way of progress. Of course, the Christian world cannot share this opinion. But within the Christian world itself there have been different approaches to tradition since the Reformation.

The problem of tradition in Christianity is so serious and profound that we would be too self-confident if we should try to solve it here and now. It would still seem useful to exchange our views on the problem and discuss in general term the following subject: tradition and faith in the modern world.

The term tradition is very polysemantic. It has plenty of meanings, beginning from rutine to the sacral meaning of the Holy Tradition; but all these different meanings are expressed by the same word - tradition. The unity in this diversity of meanings is that by tradition we mean an inheritance, the movement of an entity from the past to the future, from generation to generation. Tradition considered in such a broad sense can be almost identified with culture, becoming universal. And in this case its role today does not differ from that yesterday: tradition is a necessary condition of culture.

Culture today becomes increasingly European, directed towards actuality, the knowledge of actuality and mastering actuality. The development of technology and natural siences is a major positive feature of the modern civilization. But neither technology nor sience can exist without firm traditions. Nobody today would start devising bicycle. Man inherits bicycle from previous generations, saddles it and goes on. Moreover, he perfects it without halting to give a car to the generation to come. Nobody would start rediscovering Newton's laws of mechanics. Man inherits the knowledge of them from the society. He perfects this knowledge and hands it over to the generation to come in the form of the theory of relativity. There is a tradition working constantly in the sphere of rational knowledge and the utilization of the actual physical world, and the positive role played by it is evident. But it is not this kind of tradition that we are intrested in now.

The Christian anthropology is far from the idea that human existance is limited to the physical actuality. The anthropological model representing man as an object of rational knowledge is nothing more than a mere shadow of real man. Immediate intuition points to the aspect of human being that cannot be an object of natural sience. There is something in man that cannot be seen or measured or discovered by physical instruments. But this invisible aspect of human being is also cognizable. Martin Heidegger in his time pointed to the fact that human knowledge has two orientations, two differents functions which he called <u>rechnendes Denken</u> (i.e. calculating, rational thinking) and <u>besinnliches Denken</u> (i.e. contemplative, meditative thinking). In the first case the thought is directed to the knowledge of actuality. This is <u>ratio</u>, a thought directed to

definable objects. The instrument of such a thought is formal, discursive logics. In the second case, the thought is directed to the aspect of human being that cannot be definable object. The instrument of this thought is intuitive symbolics. The simplest example of this symbolics can be given by the word "I" (Ego). "I" is not an abstract conception, nor is it a concrete one denoting an actual object. Personal being of man which is inseperable from his actual being, though not integral to it, constitutes that aspect of man which cannot be an object of rational sientific knowledge. Events in personal being can be designated onl by symbols which interact according to the laws different from the laws of formal logics, that is by love, good, suffering, evil, sin, conscience etc. The cultural and historical experience gained by all peoples in the past - a great psychological laboratory - has always been directed to the knowledge of the personal in man, attaching to this knowledge a great practical importance. People did not set themselves the task of separating rational knowledge from the contemplative thinking with its symbolics. As a result of such integration numerious mythological systems and different natural religious cultures emerged.

A natural religion is characterized by a rationalization of the personal experience on the one hand and a mythologization of actual experience on the other. The both spheres of human thought merge to create in a particular nation a unique traditional form of being. The ambivalent role played by natural religious traditions is evident. First of all, it is an experience of harmonizing natural human being handed down from generation to generation, the experience of not only knowledge and mastering actuality but also of the knowledge of personal sphere and "mastering" it by means of religious practice such as prayer, sacrifice, fasting, mystery, developed system of ritual actions. But in referring to natural religious national traditions we usually recollect a story from the Book of Genesis about the Tower of Babel and the dispertion of peoples speaking different languages and unable to understand one another. The mythological and ritual traditions are the walls which divided humanity into separate nations. National culture was identified in human consciousness with religious tradition. The Holy Scriptures integrates the notions of people, language and natural religious pagan tradition into one and the same term - language ([illegible]).

Attempts to overcome mythological and religious barriers between nations were naturally undertaken already in antiquity. One of these attempts was made by great philosophers of ancient Greece who created a universal symbolic language - the ancient philosophy. Whereas Socrates accused of breaking traditions and sentenced to death by the city court, in answer to the question: how to worship gods, replied with his usual wisdom, "according to the city regulation", the philosophers of the Hellenistic period were no longer concerned with the preservation of local traditions. The artificial philosophical religion of Neo-Platonism - an esperanto of its time - could not claim to be a creator of any traditions. The philosophers destroyed old traditions while offering nothing insread.

Another attempt to integrate "languages" in the ancient world was of political nature. It consisted in the formation of a centralized empire (incidently, this process was going parallel to the philosophical movement). Such superficial unification of nations resulted in the demolition of customary norms of life, the

relativization of all spiritual values, the oblivion of natural religious traditions and the feeling of the purposelessness of life. Neither philosophical abstractions nor religious tolerance within the Roman Empire could give people a feeling that they actually possessed the highest value. Of course, all the natural religions could not give such a feeling either. The reduced their task to establishing a certain permanent harmony in human being. They disappeared leaving a disharmony and unfilled vacuum in the Roman world.

Modern history shows us a new heroic attempt to overcome natural barriers dividing traditions. Considering the diversity of natural religious traditions as a result of the primitive ignorance, rationalism drew a distinctive line between the symbolical and logical knowledge. The former was provided with a modest place in poetry while the latter was recognized as the only perfect knowledge. Thus, a universal rational language of the modern sientific and technical civilization was gradulally emerging, knowing of no limits and having its own traditions which we have already mentioned. Such aspects and events of human being as personality, religious intuition, visions, dreams etc. were sometimes called subjective, therefore illusory and consequently unreal. But the reality of personal world invisible from outside was sometimes recognized, yet at the same time attempts were made to describe this reality by categories rationally describing actuality. In this case human being was represented as a kind of electromechanical system, a robot. Rationalism could not but treat the natural religious practice as an illusionary one. Prayer becomes no more than a mirage, an attempt to escape actuality. The rite ahs only an aesthetical value; the church is a museum; sacred images are no more than exhibits in this museum; religious music is performed in concert halls.

Indisputable are the merits of a civilization that recognizes only one tradition, that of rational scientific knowlege. However, the disappearience of traditions on the sphere of natural religious human needs proves to be an apparent drawback of the modern civilization. The first to raise an alarm were romantisists of the early 19th century with their interest in folklore, mythology and the irrational. Later it was psychology that pointed to the limits of the rational in a human being. Finally, psychiatrists and criminologists were to confront with a disharmony in a human being caused by the loss of spiritual traditions. It is worth noting that an interest in non-traditional mystisism appeared from time to time in the course of the development and spreading of rationalism. Mystical traditions were disappearing and people tried to compensat this lost. The 18th century is not only the age of Kant and Voltaire but also the age of Svedenborg and Mesmer. In the 19th century the interest in spiritism was pathologically enormous. The 20th century is marked by the artificial transplantation of exotic mystical forms (yoga, zen), the emergence of new spiritual doctrines of theo- and anthroposophy, the spread of mild meditation so-called autotraining, the search for hallucinations through various devises beginning from music to chemical drugs. Fortunately, all these articficial means do not generade a tradition but their appearence is symptomatic for today's world.

Thus all understandable attempts to create a one universal tradition both in antiquity and in modern times failed since they were unable to simultaneously embrace both the actual and personal

aspects of human being. It proved to be that with man it was impossible, but with God all things were possible. People ([illegible]) divided by God after the famious Babilonian construction were called on the Pentecost to unite through the fire tongues ([illegible]) of the Holy Spirit's gift.

The Christian anthropology does not reduce man to physical actuality only. Moreover, it does not reduce man to his natural empirical being having life and death as its basic symbolical characteristics. Man should go beyond this dilemma of natural life and death and find that new reality which Christian symbolic language calls salvation, eternal life, the Kingdom of God, Celestial Jerusalem. No science, no natural religion can set man such a task. But man is called to attain the highest and absolute goal of salvation by the image of God given to him in creation. But man shall not live by bread alone, for no physical nourishment, no natural religious attempts to create a stability in human being cannot meet his aspiration for the absolute, for salvation. Human soul can find rest only in God, only in Christ. It is in him that man finds the truth of his life, the firm support, the foundation of his entire life (allthat is symbolized in Hebrew by the root 'mn, i.e. amen, faith, faithfulness, solid foundation, truth). Christian faith is very far from any rational knowledge. But the relation of this faith of revelation to the faith of natural religions is almost equal to that of the actual to the potential. In the light of Christian Revelation any other "faith" or "religion" can be designated by the same words mentally put in inverted commas. Faith is not a necessary function of human nature in its sinful state. Faith is something supplementary for natural man, a beneficial gift of the Holy Spirit, a condition for understanding the Word of God.

The term tradition also acquires in Christianity a special meaning. It denotes the communication of the plenitude (pleroma) of the supernatural Revelation and differs accordingly from a simple natural tradition as the Holy Tradition. The essence communicated in this way can be expressed only by symbols, images, likenesses. What is communicated by the Holy Tradition? The Kingdom of Heaven is. What is the Kingdom of Heaven? It is like a grain of mustard seed which gradually becomes a big tree; it is like leaven in three measures of meal (cf. Mt. 13:31,33).

Tradition is present only in the process of learning and inner assimilation. The last commandment of the Saviour was the commandment of the Holy Tradition: "Go you therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Gost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). But what is it that the Saviour commanded? "If they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (Jn. 21:25). Even this sermon which was later recorded in the New Testament often has, as we can see, a mystical character of a symbol: a mustard seed, a leaven... Evidently, the Holy Tradition is essentially different from an uttered word (a written word, liturgical symbols, dogmatical formilae, iconographic images). According to Vladimir Lossky, a Russian theologian, the Revelation contains a sort of silent zones which cannot be heard by "outsiders": "he that has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mt. 11,15). This silence is conveyed by the Church together with the words of

the Revelation as a condition for understanding and assimilating the uttered words. If the Scriptures and all that is expressed by the outer signs are various ways to express the truth of the Revelation, then the Holy Tradition is the only way to conceive the truth of the Revelation. Without the Holy Tradition living in the Church the Scriptures become just an outstanding ancient peace of literature; rites become a set of magical actions, iconography mere painting and so on.

The Holy Tradition in its essence is the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the life which give every member of the Body of Christ an ability to hear and know the Truth not in the natural light of human knowledge but in the life of the Truth itself. The Holy Tradition cannot be dependent on either science or philosophy or history - all that lives "after the tradition of man, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ" (Col. 2,8). Pointing to the supernatural, divine nature of the Holy Tradition, it would be wrong however to separate it from its natural expression, from its manifestation in word, deed and gesture (a kind of Nestorianism). or even to limit the Holy Tradition to its divine essence (a kind of monophysitism). The divine and human features of the Holy Tradition belong together; and one can only theoretically point to these two aspects of one and the same reality, calling them (also theoretically) the Holy Tradition and tradition (or the Church tradition).

The human nature of the incarnate God was conditional but not accidental. His human words and actions were also conditional rather than accidental. The humanity of Jesus Christ was the unique way to express the Divine Revelation. The Church Tradition is not accidental either, for it is the mustard tree and no other that grows from a mustard seed. If the Holy Spirit is truly works in the Church of Christ than it is not an accidental word that would bear the Divine Truth. Rejecting "profane and old wives' fables" (I Tim. 4,7), the Holy Spirit chooses as the words of the Lord only those which "like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12,7). The same is true not only for a verbal but also any other expression of the Truth in the Church (all the richness of the church liturgical and dogmatical life), for any witness to the faith in the Tradition of the Holy Spirit. The reverence with which the Orthodox Church treats the Tradition is well-known. In this way she expresses her profound conviction that she can bear witness to the Truth before the world in any of its historical stages only within the Tradition which is <u>absolute</u> in essence but <u>conditional</u> in expression.

At this point we come to face several questions bearing a direct relation to the evaluation of the role played by the Tradition as a witness to faith in today's world. 1/ What are the natural conditions in which the Holy Tradition is to be expressed? 2/ How the unity of the Holy Tradition relates to the fact that the churches are divided? 3/ What are the limits for the invariability of the Tradition? These questions are so challenging and difficult theologically that we would not try to give simple answers to them now. Our task is to identify problems and arouse interest in them.

So, the Tradition is conditioned by human expression. But what can and must be the natural medium which becomes the flesh of the Tradition? Tertullianus in his time pointed to a broad gap existing between the Christian faith and the pagan culture.

He asked rotorically, "What do Athens and Jerusalem have in common? And the Academy and the Church?" Of course, the apologist was right in his own way. Essentially, faith and natural philosophy has nothing in common. But faith finds its expression in the natural environment, in particular, in the midst of those who visited the Athens Academy and used the language of the academic philosophy. Of course, the peoples who inhibited the Mediterranean and who were the first to hear the preaching of Good News, were, in the 1st century A.D., hellenized; and their cultures were radically different. Stil the difference between a Galilean fisherman and a member of the royal family and an inhabitant of Corinth or Ephesus was big enough. The earliest church history shows us that the Holy Tradition forms the Church Tradition in different natural media. It has been confirmed by the subsequent development of the Church, by the spread of gospel into very remote parts of the world. The Holy Spirit, transforming an individual, brings him into unity with other members of the Church in the mystery of likening to Christ, without depriving him at all of his own identity. What is more, the true identity planned by God for this particular man in Christ becomes gradually manifest through his incidental and often sinful actions. The diversity of transformed and purified natural properties form the organic unity of the Body of Christ in which every member is essential because of his identity. Evidently the same should be applied to the Tradition. The diversity of local traditions cannot break the unity of the Holy Tradition. Local tradition have in themselves several strata. Some of them are common for the entire Church regardless of local conditions, others for a particular place on the geographical map and the chronological table, still others for this or that cultural historical region. The ancient and universally accepted formula by St Augustin reads, "in necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas". The point is what in the Tradition is necessaria, and what is dubia, - which is a controversial question. We are not concerned with it. We have only to mention that there is a tendency in the Church to narrow the sphere of necessaria in modern times. But it is necessary to emphasize that the discretion we observe in this process is fully justified.

What we said about the past of the Church is true for the present. The Tradition of the Church can become manifest in new cultural forms. No nation, no natural religious tradition can be excepted. Nor can be excepted the culture of today's world which has fed on rationalism of the last centuries. What can seem impossible for us is possible for God. Where, when and in what forms will the Holy Tradition find its expression is not our course, but the course of the Holy Spirit. The only thing we can do is to bear worthy witness. But we can bear witness only in the concrete form of our own Tradition. In the process of winessing two very dangerous extremes should be avoided. The first one is an absolutization of our own Tradition. It is not to be forgotten that the Tradition, though not accidental, is still relative. It is well-known what great hardships missioneries of the last centuries had to confront in seeking to affirm in a new cultural soil their own Tradition with all its peculiarities and to neglect the local cultural traditions. The universal Truth of Christ was often received as European or even French or German or English truth. The other extreme is limitless mimicry, the lost of identity. But we understand our Tradition not as an accidental historial mask which can be put on or taken off according to our wish. The Tradition is the flesh of the life of the Church sanctified

by the Holy Spirit; and this flesh can change to a certain limits but not at individual will, and it, of course, cannot disappear. Christians today are often ashamed of their Tradition, they are afraid to appear anachronistic, to be misunderstood. They give in to the world around them, and the world recognizes them as their own but do not see in them the light of Christ. The light of the truth of Christ is in the Tradition of the Church. "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick" (Mt. 5,15). One should not be ashamed of the Tradition, but should only remeber what it is for and thanks to what people can see the Truth in it: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5,16).

As has already been mentioned, the Holy Tradition can find its expression in any natural tradition, but some things in natural traditions are far from being bearers of the Word of God. Unfortunately, there are many things in them that are sinful, though customary for people. Let us have patience. Do not let us forget that before the Word of God was incarnated from the Holy Virgin Mary Israel elected by God had to go a long way of purification till this nation formed the purified flesh which could hold God the Word. It follows from the above that our Christian preaching to the world should not be a monologue, an adjustment (hence a silence), but a living and understanding dialogue with the world. We can carry out this dialogue only in the form of the living Church Tradition, but we should not impose its particular forms. We cannot be tolerant of those aspects of the worldly traditions that are condemned by the Word of God as sinful and false ethically. But we should not condemn falsehood just verbially, we should rather bear witness to the Truth by our own good works in accordance to our Church Tradition.

In what way the unity of the Holy Tradition relates to the fact that the churches are divided? The fact that the division between churches is taken seriously shows that no theology has found a satisfactory solution of this problem. Should we be stopped by this fact as an incomprehensible mystery? Are we to continue the search for a theological solution of this problem? It is not our point at the moment. It is evident that the question of the Tradition is closely bound up with the division in the Church. At the present time these questions may seem identical. Be it successes or failures that ecumenical movement experiences, Christians should not forget that the world is looking at them. Each of the divided churches reveals to the world the Truth of Christ in the form of her own Tradition. Each of the churches should be concerned above all with bearing the true witness of the Truth. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Cor. 13, 1; Deut. 19,15). When several witnesses give one and the same evidence in court, their witness is recognized as true. Witnesses are fifferent, they can speak different languages, but in order to be trusted they should bear essentially the same witness. Even if the spheres of necessaria are different in the Traditions of different Churches, there must by some sphere of necessarissima obligotary to every Tradition which calles itself Christian. Though the Traditions are different, and the forms of bearing witness are different, the truth of every Tradition and witness is known only by their fruits brought forth by the deeds and preaching of those who bear witness (cf. Mt. 7,16).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (Gal. 5,22). We are given no other criterion for identifying the true witness.

As far as the division between churches is concerned, unless the perfect eucharistic communion is achieved, the ecumenical contacts so characteristic of our time cannot differ in principle from that dialogue for understanding which has been already mentioned. The process of bringing divided churches into the unity of faith is not to be understood as an incorporation of churches, as a complete unification of the Traditions. Truly organic unity cannot be reached through rejecting one's own Tradition, through putting no limits to influence from outside. Nor can it be reached by a full isolation of the Tradition, by its conservation. Unity in diversity is reached through both keeping faithful to one's own Tradition and thoughful to other Traditions. It is not either capture or consession but rather mutual complimentarity and enrichment. Conditions for it are created by a patient dialogue in love (in omnibus caritas). Of no small importance here is the demonstration of the limitless richness of the Tradition - this living word of the Truth. Bias against a foreign Tradition should be replaced by consideration with interest.

Considerations such as above sooner or later led to the following question: What are the limits of the invariablity of the Tradition? Are there any limits at all? The Orthodox Church answers this question in the affirmative: for us there are such limits. In antiquity already a part of the verbial Tradition took the shape of the canon of the Holy Scriptures which formed the complete corpus of books whose volume and contents were to be kept intact. In the field of the doctrinal Tradition the Orthodox Church has always preserved carefully the dogmata set forth by the seven Ecumenical Councils of the early undivided Church. But the doctrinal Tradition as opposed to the canon of the Holy Scriptures can be, if necessary, broadened to include new expressions of the Truth revealed by God and formulated by the Church. There are such limits as above in the liturgics, in the sacramental practice of the Church. It would be strange to believe that a new Gospel may be written instead of the four Gospels of the New Testament canon,(though such attempts were actually made outside the Church. It is impossible to suppose that at the present time somebody could describe the early Church better than it was done in the Acts or the Epistles of St.Paul. One can read up dozens of volumes on the dogmatic theology , but his knowledge of the mystery of the All-Holy Trinity or the mystery of God-Man Christ would not be more perfect than the knowledge possessed by the Holy Fathers who formulated the respect dogmata at the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon.

One should not beleive however that the Tradition is something stiff and static. It is known that it took some time and hesitation to establish the canon of the New Testament. The history of the dogmatical movement at the Ecumenical Councils is full of dramatic tension. All this shows that the Holy Tradition does not work michanically but rather selectively , through the free personal consciousness of members of the Church. If the Tradition has const ant elements, then they are not dead and static but rather living, conscious and dynamic. In the other words, the constant stratum in the Tradition is not absolute but dependent upon living consciousness of the Truth in the Holy Spirit. The practice of the Church

in history shows however that harmful elements often penetrated into the Church under the cover of the Tradition and kept in it for a long time. Historically justified conservatism which appeared in the Church in the times of trial, though aiming at safeguarding the Tradition against individual arbitrariness, did not realised that together with the Tradition it safeguarded the natural traditions "after the rudiments of the world". Another danger threatens the Church from the side of excessive renewal, "ajornamento", which becomes a challenge to social awareness of the Church. Demands for liberty as regards the Tradition becomes a temptation for those who are weak (cf. 1 Cor. 8,9). This is the case about which wise and careful St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "We all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies. And is a man thinks that he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8, 1-2). These two extremes - excessive conservatism and excessive rennovation - are obstacle not only within the Church but also on the way of the great mission of enlightment carried out by the Church in the world.

Traditionalism and innovation, the invariability of the Holy Tradition and the relativity of the Church Tradition, the social awareness of the Church and aspirations for a free individual creativity - these and other similar antitheses in the life of the Church cannot be resolved in the formal logical terms. The fathers of the 5th century tried to resolve a similar problem. The Church then faced the question: how the absolute and the relative, the divine and the human can be united in Jesus Christ. No logically satisfactory solutions could satisfy the living religious consciousness but led to the heresies of Nestorianism and monophysitism. These heresies were characterised by the narrow view of reality, by a sort of rationalism. The fathers of the Council of Chalcedon came out of this difficult situation with credit, having formulated the dogma which was to become one of the greatest achievements of human thought - the doctrine of the indivisible and unconfused unity of the two natures in one Person of God the Word - an example of the realistic approach towards most complicated intellectual problems. Digressing from our subject I would like to note that the greatest difficulty which confronted physics in the 20th century - the corpuscle-wave dualism - was resolved by the discovery of the quantum of energy (Planck' constant). The solution of this problem - the greatest achievement of modern science - is structurally identical to the Chalcedonean doctrine. The eternal and the transient, the absolute and the relative, freedom and predestination, the divine and the human - all these co-exist in the reality of the Incarnation of God, live side by side in mysterious living dialoque, forming the one organic reality of God-Man provided only that the two natures are united in one Person of Logos. By the way, at this point another inastimated role played by the Tradition in modern world becomes evident - the reachest experience of the realistic thought. Philosophers and scientists took no notice of the Chalcedonean doctrine, Father Pavel Florensky, a great Russian theologian (also a prominent natural scientist) pointed out as far back as the turn of our century that a Christian doctrine may become a clue for the solution of most burning problems of modern physics.

The ecclesiological problems appears to be a continuation of the Christological ones; and they are not to be solved by means of formally accepted logical solutions (the Chalcedonean doctrine is not a logical formula, but a certain establishment of super-logical

reality). Traditionalism and innovation can co-exist in the Church in a living complementary dialogue without entering into antagonism, under the condition of the faithfulness to the Holy Tradition, of continual seeking for the Holy Spirit, of constant ethical renewal of members of the Church effected within the Tradition, not without it.

The Holy Spirit, arranging his household on earth, choses for his expression natural features of this or that culture, sanctifying them to be bearers of the Word of God. I would like to mention here a great role played by the liturgical tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian people seem to posses naturally a special sensitivity in regard to the contemplative liturgical action, jesture and symbol. Divine Providence has created in this country a unique and unparallelly rich rite of the greatest aesthetical value. Throughout centuries the devoted Russian people kept accumulating liturgical treasures in their churches. These treasures were handed over to the future. It was not the church authority and the theological departments of universities that was for centuries the source of the knowledge of the Truth revealed by God. The truth has shone forth from the churches, from the rite of worship service. Yet "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country" (Mt. 13,57). Rationalism of the last centuries with its contempt for the contemplative forms of learning started an attack against the ancient liturgical traditions. Fortunately, the process of the destruction of these traditions has not gone too far. We should thank God for that. The practice of our Church today shows that the church liturgical tradition attracts great attention of the outside world. The identity of the Church is recognized in its liturgics, in her sacred buildings. Preaching and teaching are effected through the rite. This reality compells us to take more care of our own liturgical tradition, to emphasize its essential elements and to seek to clear it of casual elements.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the role of the moral tradition of the Church. Though today's world brought up on the rationalistic traditions is largly non-Christian, non-church world, one should not forget that rationalism did not come to the world from outside. It was born in Christian Europe. It took the course of the Christian ethical education. The best characteristics of ethical traditions in modern world have come of the Christian school. The pre-Christian world did not know of such moral imperatives as humane relationships among people, respect, equality, fraternity and peace among people. These appeared only occasionally and lacked the universal nature. It is only natural that the world that left the Church should forget its alma mater. But what is important for us now is that today's world traditionally preserves the Christian ideals of the godd and justice, seeking to find an expression for them. We should not forget that human goodness, love, peace, justice, even just aspirations for these virtues attract the Holy Spirit whatever the cultural background of these aspirations may be. Having her own ethical tradition and the gift of discerning the spirits, the Church in her living dialogue with the world cannot stay indifferent to the positive ethical movements in the world, but should support these movements according to her human abilities. It is insufficient sensitivity of the church society towards its own ethical tradition, insufficient strictness on observing this Tradition that has recently caused the outside world to identify Christianity with obsolete social positions. Revolutionary changes

that took place in the social structure of the world involved the mass break from the Church.

Time rectifies the wrong. Today the Church bears witness to the world in accordance with her Tradition, expressing her readiness to struggle with the physical, social and economical evil in all its manifestations. At the present time, the ethical aspect of the Tradition expressing the Christian faith in the absolute good and justice is probably the most important factor in fulfilling the last commandment of the Saviour. Our aspiration is to unite people divided by the barriers of natural traditions. to unite them in one Holy Tradition of the divine love so that humanity united in Christ may glorify the source of this Tradition - the Holy Spirit together with the Father and the Son. Amen.