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**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ONE GOD, AMEN.**

**Message of the Holy Synod of Eritrea to International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches (IJCTCOOC)**

First and foremost, we thank God for this special occasion and pray the meeting would be blessed and successful. We are pleased to be part of the current meeting of the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches (IJCTCOOC) taking place in Egypt, at Logos Center, from January 31 to February 5, 2023.

It is known that we were one of the founding members of this dialogue and participated few of the early meetings, but the internal situation of the church did not allow us and were unable to attend for the last 14 years.

Even though we were not among you all these years, we are aware of the great job done by the commission and we do appreciate encouraging progress achieved so far. On our side, we are going to appoint scholar committee who is going to study the detail of the two agreed documents with annual reports of the commission. The committee will have a task of reviewing the documents and briefing to the Holy Synod of Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church (ErOTC) as part of the preliminary effort to understand better and catch up with your progress.

We are here to greet our beloved brothers in Christ and join you on the common journey for restoration of the Communion the church enjoyed during the early apostolic time till the middle of the 5th century. God willing, from the next meeting on, we hope to be not only members but also active participants in contributing humbly our share on the journey.

Let us conclude our message by the word of God and note from the late fifth Patriarch, HH Abune Kerlos I, (ErOTC) regarding communion and ecumenical relations under the theme of "My children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but indeed and in truth". (1 John 3:18).

On his note, HH was calling for common ecumenical goal, fraternal relations and real cooperation among churches to challenge and overcome the current unjustified and hazardous world. He mentioned that the Christian world had lost its children too much and are losing too fast whom supposed to be in Christ Love, and requests everyone to feel and bear the responsibility for whereabouts of them.





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He also added that as we can't survive alone and in isolation and as our common responsibility is huge, he recommended to work together and be unified for our mission to save the world as the Ark of Noah. Let us follow the path of the Good Samaritan rather than the priest or the Levite to the stripped and wounded world. As we have only one and no other world to live, we need to care more for our common future as much we care for our history. Better not to use the early history as a tool to separate, but rather means of good examples for a real communion and experience to learn. HH also mentioned that we need focusing to our early communion in order to move forward and solve our differences till we become one body in Christ and beinspired to say "let us go to the altar of the Lord in midst of the Land of Egypt".

As everyone remarks, HH in his short reign, galvanized the Church to accomplish so much. In consultation with the Holy Synod, prioritized key areas of intervention and set out to accomplish some major apostolic tasks in several pastoral fields. One of his focus was Normalization of relations with the sister Coptic Orthodox Church which is the most important for the church. Strengthening of ties with other Oriental Churches and other eastern orthodox was also his intention and succeeded some of it. He commended the ErOTC to be also part of the Study visit of Oriental Churches at the Vatican See. He has invested much time and effort to enhance the Church's role in ecumenical relation and participation, as well. Under His Holiness' guidance, the Church's participation at various national, regional and international ecumenical activities has been significantly revitalized.

Thank you all for your condolence letters in his departure and remember us in your pray for the election of the next Patriarch.

At last but not the least, we thank you for your invitation and our special gratitude goes to co-Chairmen of this commission, HG Bishop Kyrillos and HE Cardinal Kurt Koch.

We are always grateful to HH Pope Tawadros II for his warm welcome and love who we have always felt very much at home.

We pray and eager one day in the near future such dialogue will take place in Eritrea, and our people blessed by your pray and footprints.

May God Bless our Journey and Intercession of the Theotokos Saint Virgin Mary be with us.



Office of the Holy Synod of Eritrea

