

## **IVth SYNDESMOS International Orthodox Youth Festival**

Alexandroupolis, Greece, August 26<sup>th</sup> – September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1991

We, 150 young Orthodox Christians, some of whom come from the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and observers from the Conference of European Churches (CEC), Focolare, and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), from 24 countries participated in the IVth International Orthodox Youth Festival, organized by SYNDESMOS, The World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, August 26th-September 1st, 1991, in Makri village, near Alexandroupolis, Greece.

The Festival was made possible by the generous hospitality of the Church of Greece, His Eminence Anthimos, Metropolitan of Alexandroupolis, and the Southern European Regional Secretariate of SYNDESMOS.

The Festival gathered under the theme "For the Life of the World", we worshiped together in daily services and heard four presentations during the week: 'Orthodox Unity', by Fr. Heikki Huttunen, Finland and Fr. K.M. George, India; 'Challenges for Orthodoxy in a Changing World', by H.E. Daniel, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina, Romania; and 'The Survival of the Planet', by Mrs. Barbara Metallinos, Greece. We met in discussion groups, Bible studies and workshops and through cordial fellowship we were able to reflect and share our ideas with our brothers and sisters from all over the world.

The Festival emphasized the challenge of unity, which should be expressed on all levels of Christian life. In this spirit we are grateful to the hierarchy of our Churches for the official dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. We rejoice in the fact that our Churches have, by God's will, in the official dialogue "clearly understood that both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic "Orthodox Christological faith, and the unbroken continuity of the Apostolic Tradition, though they may have used Christological terms in different ways. It is this common faith and continuous loyalty to the Apostolic Tradition that should be the basis of our unity and communion". (Second agreed statement of the joint commission of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Churches, Chambésy, Switzerland, September 23rd-28th 1990). We, young people, are eagerly looking forward to the ecclesial realization of the official theological agreed statements.

In May 1991, SYNDESMOS held a "Consultation on Co-operation between Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Youth Movements" in Egypt. On the basis of this Consultation we are recommending the following:

- That all Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox youth movements meet their hierarchs and discuss this concern in order to prepare their members for the imminent renewal

of communion between our Churches by means of information, common activities and close co-operation;

- That SYNDESMOS publish and distribute information about the official theological dialogue, actively encourage close co-operation on a local and regional level of youth movements and initiate a program of contacts and exchanges between students and teachers of theology from both families of Churches;
- That during its next General Assembly, SYNDESMOS amend its Constitution to allow Oriental Orthodox youth movements and theological schools to become full (affiliate) members of SYNDESMOS in order to enable and promote unity.

We also declared our support of and solidarity with His All-Holiness Dimitrios I and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople during the difficult confrontation experienced by the Patriarchate at the time. Our message assured the Patriarch of our constant prayers and thoughts for a speedy and peaceful solution to the conflict.

We also rejoice in the fact that recent changes in Eastern Europe are allowing young Orthodox people to participate more fully and openly in SYNDESMOS activities, and we look forward to future cooperation with them, but we worry with them about the dramatic consequences of all forms of proselytism exercised, particularly by the Uniates. We are also concerned about the difficulties and struggles of the local emerging Churches, such as the Orthodox Church in Korea, and we wish to assist them practically, especially in the area of translation of liturgical texts.

We want to affirm our continuing concern and realize our personal responsibility for Creation. We concluded our Festival with the celebration of the Orthodox Day of Prayer for Creation, fixed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate for September 1st, and we thanked God, who has guided us in an atmosphere of hope and love.

September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1991

Makri, Alexandroupolis, Greece

SYNDESMOS, The World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth  
IVth International Orthodox Youth Festival