

## **Extract from the “Opening Statement by the President”**

8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly ‘Worship in a Secular Age’, Boston, USA. 18/07-24/07 1971

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[...]

*Conclusion*

Your Eminence, in this meeting of SYNDESMOS, I will be personally finishing two terms as President, and two terms as vice-president and I think it will be time for me to retire from active services of SYNDESMOS. I would like on this occasion to say how much it was a gratifying work to be in contact constantly with the Orthodox youth of all the countries to see the wonderful things that the grace of God has been doing and is doing among and through these young people. How much I thank God for having seen that the Orthodox youth are not simply those who have started these movements, but all the younger generation that come - generation after generation - to bear the flame of unity, of renewal and of service, witness and mission of the Orthodox Church among the young people. And I would like as I am here, to address myself to those of you who will continue to have a responsibility in SYNDESMOS and for your movements. Do not be discouraged by the obstacles. The spirit of God is always present in the Church, in the sacrament of the Church we receive. We receive it as something that is given to the entire body, but we also receive it as a personal gift to each one of us and this personal gift is a personal responsibility. Each one of you is called by the Spirit to be committed to the word of the Church under the guidance and supervision of our hierarchs where we will continue in spite of the obstacles, wherever the obstacles come from. Whether they come from inside, whether they come from above, whether they come from below, whether they come from the North, the South, the West or the East, we will overcome these obstacles with the grace of God, not because we are strong, not because we are powerful, but because in humility and in faith we are committed to the Cross of the Lord and because we have from the Church and in the Church received this great power of becoming the sons of God, for those who have accepted Him it is said in St. John: "He has given them the power, the might to be sons of God", and it is in this prayer for all of you and for all the members of your movements that I tell you to take courage, continue to be bold, continue to hear in humility what the Spirit has to tell to the Churches and to speak with boldness the message that you have received in humility. And let this humility and this boldness be forever derived from the Church and be at the disposal and the service of the Church because it is in the Church that Christ is forever glorified with His Father in the Spirit. Amen.