

By: Fr. Kyrillos Fakhouri

# POST CHALCEDON

# Ecumenical Councils

- 1<sup>st</sup> – Nicaea, 325 AD called by Emperor Constantine
  - Attended by 318 bishops (310 from the East)
  - Pope Alexandros and his deacon Athanasius
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – Constantinople, 381 AD called by Emperor Theodosius the Great
  - Attended by 150 bishops from the East
  - Most prominent are Pope Timothy of Alex., Melatius Bishop of Antioch, Gregory The Theologian, and Gregory Bishop of Nyssa

# Ecumenical Councils

- 3<sup>rd</sup> – Ephesus in 431 AD called by Emperor Theodosius II
  - Attended by 200 bishops
  - St. Cyril The Great accompanied by 50 bishops, St. Shenouda the Archimandrite and St. Peter, abbot of Monastery of Faw
  - To discuss 2 heresies:
    - Nestor: Jesus was 2 persons, and St. Mary is mother of Jesus
    - Pelagius: Original sin did not taint human nature
  - During the Council:
    - They read St. Cyril messages, his 12 Anathemas, Nestor's responses, and the Canons of Provincial Councils in Alex and Rome; then they discussed Nestor's teachings
  - The Council approved these Canons, anathemizing Nestor and Pelagius, with their supporters
  - They adapted St. Cyril expression of Christ's nature as, "*The One Nature of God the Incarnate Word*"
  - Introduction of the Nicene Creed was formulated and approved, calling St. Mary "Theotokos"

# Continuation of Nestorianism

- Nestorianism was not ended; and its continuation shattered the church in Chalcedon
- Eutyches (380-456 AD), while fighting Nestorianism, fell in another heresy
- Eutychianism (Monophysitism) is that Christ had only one confused mixture of human and divine
- Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum, while correcting him, fell in another heresy that separates the 2 natures in Christ after the union (Dyophrisis)

# Council of Chalcedon 451 AD

- Attending bishops counted between 330 to 630
- Prominent attendees are Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria and his bishops, Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem, Maximus of Antioch and Anatolius of Constantinople
- Bishop Leo of Rome sent 2 bishops and a priest
- Emperor Marcian and his wife Pulcheria attended all sessions with their guards, army leaders and judges
- The Emperor sent Pope Dioscorus into exile to Island of Gangra, where he spent 5 years in preaching and healing the sick then reposed in the Lord 456 AD.
- This council was the beginning of the schism of the Christian Church until now
- The council had also passed a canon over the objections of Leo which gave the archbishop at Constantinople official oversight over the whole east

# *THE SITUATION AFTER CHALCEDON*

- When Emperor Marcianus approved the Council's verdict and banished Dioscorus, he sent a message to the Alexandrian people informing them of this verdict and telling them that he had appointed a man by the name of Proterius to occupy his chair. He also warned them against any disobedience.
- Proterius was sent to Alexandria accompanied by imperial troops who had orders to punish all who refused to submit to him. But the Egyptians, far from being cowed, rose in rebellion, as was their custom when they felt strongly about anything.
- The Bishops met in an emergency council and decreed their unanimous support of Abba Dioscorus, and their excommunication of Leo and his Tomos, the Chalcedon decrees, and Proterius. To counteract this measure, the imperial troops went to each bishop alone ordering him to sign the Chalcedon decrees. But they all refuse to sign. And regarded Proterius as a foreigner who seized a See he had absolutely no right to occupy.
- Clergy and people held a meeting after the death of Pope Dioscorus, and unanimously elected Timothy, one of the Secretaries of Abba Dioscorus, to be the twenty-sixth successor to St. Mark. Abba Timothy and his Bishops, together they re-affirmed their excommunication of the Council of Chalcedon, and of all who accepted its decrees.
  - Emperor Marcianus ordered the exile of Abba Timothy and his brother to the very same island of Gangra where Dioscorus had been exiled.

# *THE SITUATION AFTER CHALCEDON*

- The Egyptians felt more outraged at this imperial arrogance. They pursued Proterius and killed him
- In A.D. 474, Emperor Marcianus died heirless, the new Emperor, whose name was Basiliscus ordered the return of Abba Timothy who took the chance to bring with him the body of Abba Dioscorus.
- Pope Timothy requested from the emperor the return of the exiled bishops. He called for a council that was attended by 500 bishops. In the council he confirmed the anathema against the Eutychian heresy and the rejection of the Tome of Leo.
- Reconciliation among the churches of Jerusalem, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria was established and lasted for a number of years.

# *THE HENOTIKON (Act of Union)*

- On the 28th of July A.D 482, The emperor Zeno issued the "Henoticon," presenting a description of the religious situation in the East. It was a realistic report stating the condition of the church following the Council of Chalcedon.
  - His daughter Hilaria became a monk in Egypt later!



# *THE HENOTIKON (Act of Union)*

- *For it happened that throughout the previous decades (years), time has witnessed generations pass away, some deprived of the baptismal renovation, others without participation in the divine communion to the point of departure, and tens of thousands of death have been recklessly inflicted to the extent that not only the earth, but the atmosphere has been polluted. Who would not pray that such things may be substituted for better ones?*

- In that proclamation Zeno ignored the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo. In the meantime he took the positive side to confirm the unity of the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ without reference to any particular text.
- The "Henotikon" contained:
  1. The Nicene Creed is the only creed approved by the 150 Fathers of Constantinople and by the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus; aiming to taking the church back to pre-Chalcedonian theology.
  2. Both Nestorius and Eutyches are anathematized and 12 articles (anathemas) by St. Cyril were accepted.
  3. He positively confirmed : [We confess that the Only Son of God, God Himself, who really became incarnate as our Lord Jesus Christ; He who is consubstantial with us as to the manhood; He who came down and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of Mary the Virgin "Theotokos;" He is one Son and not two. For we affirm the Only Son of God both the miracles-Worker and the suffering which He endured voluntarily in the flesh. We do not at all accept those who make a separation, or introduce in confusion or fantasy. Since the true and sinless incarnation did not introduce any addition to the Son, the Trinity continued to be Trinity even when God the Word, one of the Trinity, became incarnate.
  4. After the "Henotikon" had called for the reform of the church, an anathema was imposed on [all who have held or now hold or at any time, whether in Chalcedon or in any other synod whatsoever, any different belief], and in particular Nestorius and Eutyches and their followers.

- The Pope of Alexandria signed that proclamation explaining to the clergymen and the people in Alexandria the theological concept it bears. Some people had requested that the Henoticon should be clear with regards to the anathema against the Tome of Leo and the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon and assuring the one nature of Jesus Christ.
- In fact the Henotikon did not return to the persecuted non- Chalcedonians their rights. It only allowed them the freedom of practicing their spiritual and ecclesiastical activities without being obliged to accept the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon. Therefore they welcomed it, not for the theology it bears, but because it gave them the freedom to work regardless of the clear tendency it bears towards the thought of those who believed in one nature.
- This Henotikon gave an opportunity for the four main Sees of the East to unite. The See of the west in Rome didn't occupy itself with that matter. The delegates of Rome expressed their line of thought in the meeting of the Council of Chalcedon held on the 22nd of October A.D 451, saying that the East should accept Rome's point of view or else withdraw, leaving Rome on her own.
- The Fathers of the Council didn't stand passively, but expressed their discontent.

- On the 28th of July 484, Felix III of Rome called a synod of 27 bishops and excommunicated Pope Peter of Alexandria and Patriarch Acacias, yet they didn't give the matter any attention.
- In spite of the death of Acacias in 489, Pope Peter III in 490 and Zeno in 491, Emperor Anastasius I (A.D 491-518) held to the Henotikon.
- The Patriarchs of Constantinople had to sign it when they were being ordained. This continued until the death of the emperor in 518. In that period St. Severus of Antioch (512-518) appeared as one of the most famous theologians on the subject of the one nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Church of Alexandria lived in peace together with the other Sees in the East, and had a loving relationship with Emperor Anastasius.
- This lasted until the enthronement of Justinian when the troubles newly began.

# *THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA IN THE REIGN OF JUSTINIAN I*

- In the year Pope Timothy was ordained (A.D. 519), Anastasius died and Justinian became emperor. He inclined towards Chalcedonianism, yet his wife, Theodora the pious, played the role of trying to appease him at several occasions. Thus his era was characterized by periods of trouble and periods of rest.
- Once, as Justinian entered the church with bishop John the Cappadocian, some Chalcedonians shouted against St. Severus of Antioch and demanded his trial, while others shouted with applause as a reaction to the former disapproval. The emperor then convened a council to settle the matter.
- When the Pope of Alexandria learned about the emperor's intention, he didn't go to that council. The emperor commanded that he would be put under arrest, and sent him to exile. A troop of soldiers entered the church by force while the people gathered in support of their pope.
- The matter developed into a battle between the armed soldiers and the unarm congregation. The soldiers killed many of the people then arrested the pope and sent him to exile. The emperor imposed an alien patriarch named Apollinarius. Later on the Pope came back but he was hiding and running from a city to another running from Justinian.

# *THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA IN THE REIGN OF JUSTINIAN I*

- Same strategy was adopted by Justinian with pope Theodosius (the 32nd pope) He ordered him to endorse the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon, promising to appoint him a pope all over Africa. The Pope considered these promises devilish and refused to sign. The emperor then summoned him and received him with a great welcome and tempted him six times but the Pope refused. The emperor then imprisoned him in Constantinople and ordained an alien patriarch (Paul El-Tanisi) and sent him with an entourage of soldiers. The alien bishop remained for a whole year without any of the congregation to pray with him except the ruler and the soldiers. He often heard slogans like, "down with the traitor! down with Jude the alien!," so he asked the emperor to relieve him. The Pope remained in prison for 28 years until he died in A.D 567.

# *THE SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (553 AD)*

- Emperors used to interfere in the theological discussions and resorted to violence in handling them. The Easterns, meanwhile, were concerned with the discussions because they affected their faith and life and created an atmosphere of tension that prevailed the empire. There existed three groups that could not be under-estimated:
  1. ***The non-Chalcedonian group.*** Who didn't bear any authority yet they represented a theological power that could not be resisted. According to Prof. Meyendorff the Chalcedonians didn't have enough theologians capable of arguing with them. This group gained strong popularity particularly in Egypt and Syria. The people and their pastors suffered the bitterness of persecution which created tension against Byzantium and a national tendency to liberate their countries at least to be free in choosing their patriarch and bishop.
  2. ***The Chalcedonian group.*** who represented the authority, were supported by the royal court and the rulers.
  3. A third group who wanted the church to go back to pre- Chalcedon, not to be asked to accept the Chalcedonian resolutions or to anathematize them, but just to ignore them. Because of this tense atmosphere, emperors even those who were Chalcedonian tried to find solutions for the sake of unity of the empire and internal peace. One of these efforts was Zeno's Henoticon which Anastasius bound himself by.



# *THE SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (553 AD)*

- Yet Justinian I thought that he was capable of bringing back the unity to the empire by condemning the "Three Chapters (*Tria Kephalaia*).\" These chapters were the writings of the semi- Nestorian authors and were included in the documents of the Council of Chalcedon [the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa.]
- In A.D 553 the Council convened in Constantinople and affirmed the anathemas of the "Three Chapters". It also affirmed the emperor's anathema against the Origenists and Origen's writings. But this council failed and didn't achieve what it was targeting especially that this council did not provide comfort to the people of Alexandria while their legitimate Pope spent the greater time of his papacy in a prison in Constantinople.
- Even when Paul El-Tenaisy, the alien patriarch, died, another named Apollinarius was ordained by the emperor's command. This man entered Alexandria in the uniform of a military commander and gave his orders to the people to assemble in the church. He then took off the military clothes and put on the priestly clothes and read to them the imperial decree.
- At that time cries of protest were heard aloud as the alien patriarch ordered the soldiers to use force and many were martyred. People called that day "The Massacre"... at that time the emperor was about to depart. Some historians assure that Justinian acted in good faith, but what happened to the Copts stirred them up against Byzantium.



# *THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA AFTER THE JUSTINIAN ERA*

- Emperor Justinian died on November 14th, 565. He was succeeded in turn by Justin II (565-578), Tiberius (578-582), Maurice (582-602) and Phocas (602-610).
- They all followed in the line of Justinian I in supporting the alien patriarch who represented the Byzantine authority not the ecclesiastical ministry. The tension between the Egyptians and the aliens was rather slight during the days of Justin II and Tiberius, though the legitimate pope was unable to enter Alexandria. Yet no sooner was Emperor Maurice seated on the throne of Constantinople than the tension became more severe, this matter pushed the Egyptians to rebel against the emperor.
- Three Egyptians, Mina and his two brothers Abuskhayron and Jacob led a revolution that triumphed over the Roman forces. The emperor then asked the alien patriarch Eulogius to negotiate a reconciliation with the leaders and with a deceptive plan he could be able to arrest and behead them.

# *THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA AFTER THE JUSTINIAN ERA*

- This picture shows the ecclesiastical, psychological and national situation of the Copts. They were under pressure from Byzantium as a result of interference in their faith and deposal of their legitimate popes.
- Emperor Phocas was so much more oppressive than other emperors that the bishops were obliged to escape from the cities to the deserts to practice their worship and minister by letters.
- In spite of that Pope Anastasius, the son of a noble family in Alexandria was ordained during his reign. The ruler was unable to send him away from Alexandria and the Pope faced the threats with indifference. He was able to ordain a large number of priests and regain some Churches from the Chalcedonians.
- The alien patriarch Eulogius sent a message to Emperor Phocas informing him that the Pope had held a council in which he condemned the Council of Chalcedon and excommunicated its supporters. So he emperor commanded the ruler to confiscate the church of "SS. Cosman, Damien, their mother and sister" and to put more pressure on the Egyptians. The ruler acted by entering the church accompanied by Eulogius and a battalion. The congregation revolted and many fell dead, so the Pope was obliged to withdraw to the desert of Shiheet.