

1st meeting.

EDITORS: The following story is predated for Thursday, Sept. 9, 1965

CATHOLICS, ORTHODOX HOLD FIRST CONVERSATION 9/3/65 - F.

WORCESTER, Mass. (NC)--Roman Catholics and Orthodox held a day of "exploratory" discussions here (Sept. 9), ¹⁹⁶⁵ the first ecumenical encounter between the two on a national level in the United States.

The Catholic delegation was a subcommission of the U.S. Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs. It was led by Bishop Bernard Flanagan of Worcester.

The Orthodox body represented the Ecumenical Commission of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops of the Americas. It was led by Archbishop Iakovos of New York, chairman of the standing conference.

The setting was St. Spyridon's Greek Orthodox Church here. Each communion sent 12 representatives.

For both bodies, it was an expansion of ecumenical engagement. The Catholic bishops' commission, whose overall chairman is Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore, has engaged in conversations through subcommissions with Lutherans, Episcopalians and the United Presbyterians in the U.S.A. The Orthodox are engaged in a continuing theological dialogue with the Episcopalians.

The one-day session was in the spirit of the renewed friendship between Catholics and Orthodox on the international level.

The most significant of the international encounters was the January, 1964, meeting of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Istanbul in the Holy Land, the first encounter between the heads of the two communions in five centuries.

The initiative for the Worcester meeting was taken by the conference of Orthodox bishops. It stems from an agreement at the most recent Rhodes Conference, which is an assembly of Orthodox bishops from around the world, to encourage national branches of the Orthodox Church to arrange theological discussions with local Catholic leaders.

(MORE)

Members of the Orthodox commission, in addition to Archbishop Iakovos, are: Father Paul Schneirla, general secretary of the standing conference; Fathers George Bacopulos, Panteleimon Rhodostulos, John Romanides and John Tsoumas of the Greek archdiocese; Fathers John Meyendorff and Alexander Schmemmann and Prof. Serge Verkhovskoi of the Russian metropolia; Prof. Veselin Kesich of the Serbian diocese; Father Seraphim Surrency of the Russian exarchate; and Father Florian Galdau of the Romanian episcopate.

In addition to Bishop Flanagan, Catholic representatives are: Msgr. William W. Baum, executive secretary of the bishops' commission; Msgr. Myles M. Bourke, St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y.; Msgr. Francis Dvornik, Byzantine Research Institute of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington; Msgr. John Jadaa, B.S., St. Basil's Seminary, Methuen, Mass.; Father Charles K. Von Euw, St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass.; Father Paul Mailleux, S.J., John XXIII Center, Fordham University, New York; Father Maurice B. Schepers, O.P., Washington, D.C.; Father George A. Maloney, S.J., John XXIII Center; Father John T. Feeney, Auburndale, Mass.; Father Edward F. Malone, M.M., Maryknoll Seminary, Ossining, N.Y.; and Thomas E. Bird of Princeton University, a scholar of Eastern theology and contributor to theological journals.

* * * *

FIRST CATHOLIC-ORTHODOX MEETING IN U.S. HELD

Sept. 11
9/11/65 - S.

By Owen Murphy
(N.C.W.C. News Service)

took place Sept 9, 1965

WORCESTER, Mass.--The first official meeting in the United States between representatives of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches was occupied for the most part with "ironing out procedural difficulties."

The meeting was described as "friendly," however, and further talks are expected after the close of the fourth session of the ecumenical council, according to spokesmen.

Representatives of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs and of the Ecumenical Commission of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America met (Sept. 9) for informal discussions at St. Spyridon's Greek Orthodox church.

The meeting was held on the initiative of the Orthodox Churches in the United States, based on a resolution of the third Pan-Orthodox Conference in Rhodes in 1963. The resolution encouraged Orthodox Churches in various countries to engage in ecumenical dialogue with Roman Catholics.

Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan of Worcester, chairman of the Catholic group, is a member of the U.S. bishops' commission. Archbishop Iakovos, Greek Orthodox Primate of North and South America, is chairman of the Orthodox delegation, which includes representatives from the various Orthodox denominations in the United States. He was unable to attend the meeting here, however.

The Orthodox delegation was headed in his absence by Father Paul Schneirla, secretary of the Orthodox Ecumenical Commission.

At a press conference following the meeting, spokesmen for the two commissions said that the delegations will report back to their respective ecclesiastical authorities. Procedural details must be resolved before more formal meetings of delegates of the two church bodies could take place, they said.

The same groups will meet later, but time, place and circumstances will not be decided until the close of the Vatican council's fourth session.

(MORE)

It was felt, however, that future meetings could take place no more than once a year, because of limitations of time and the preparation necessary for each meeting.

"Points which Roman Catholics and Orthodox hold in common or differ on would be introduced at each meeting," Father Schneirla said, "probably by the reading of prepared theological papers to the group, one from each side."

Doctrinal matters will be treated in future meetings, but no topics have been decided.

"Roman Catholics and Orthodox are fairly united on all doctrines implied by the Incarnation of Christ," according to Father Schneirla, "but would differ in those doctrines implied by the experience of Pentecost -- the nature of the Church, grace, and so on."

Some probable topics include the universal jurisdiction and infallibility of the pope, and doctrines concerning the Blessed Virgin, Father Schneirla said.

But, he added, "We cannot just take a series of propositions and discuss them, since most doctrinal differences are rooted in the theologies of the two traditions."

Father Edward F. Malone, M.M., of Maryknoll Seminary, Ossining, N.Y., said, "We are also attempting to determine if differences are real, or only differences in statement and emphasis."

Father Charles K. Von Euw of St. John's Seminary, Boston, secretary of the Catholic group, said, "We must face up to the differences that really exist and remove some of the cultural and historical clouds surrounding them."

Father Schneirla added, "To us on the commissions, all the differences are theological, but to the average person, many appear to be merely cultural. There are serious differences between the Churches, aggravated by centuries of separation.

(MORE)

"What we are trying to do is to bring the two traditions face to face with one another, without stressing either the differences or the things we have in common."

The group expects to explore issues relevant to faith and life in the general community of the United States, according to Father Von Euw, and "does not expect any proposals for reunion of the two Churches to grow out of the meetings."

Definitive approaches between the Churches will have to be made in their centers of activity, such as Rome, Greece, and the Near East, it was stated.

The meeting in Worcester, however, was "the first friendly theological contact between the two Churches since 1438," according to Father Schneirla.

The meeting was begun and ended with prayers read by Bishop Flanagan, and selected from a booklet prepared for the laity of the Worcester diocese for use in a special program called the "Evenings of Christian Friendship."

The evenings, held in homes throughout Worcester County, are sponsored by an interfaith committee established earlier this year in the diocese.

The meaning of the meetings was summed up by Father Malone, who said that they are "not only hope for the future goal of reunion, but a real expression of the deep unity already present between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions."

* * * *

EDITORS: The following story is prewritten for Sunday, Sept. 12.
 CARDINAL ASKS 24-HOUR PRAYERS FOR COUNCIL 9/11/65 - S.
 BOSTON (NC)--Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston left (Sept. 12); for the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, after asking contemplative communities in the archdiocese to take part in round-the-clock prayer during the council. The cardinal also asked all pastors to organize special prayers for the council's success.

* * * *

NURSING HOME FOR ELDERLY PLANNED 9/11/65 - S.
 NEW HOPE, Minn. (NC)--A three-story Catholic nursing and boarding home for the elderly is being planned for construction next spring in this Minneapolis suburb. The 200-bed home will be financed by individual contributions and staffed by Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Paul's Priory, Maplewood, Minn.

* * * *