

FIRST WITHOUT EQUALS

A Response to the Text on Primacy of the Moscow Patriarchate

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In a recent synodal decision,¹ the Church of Russia seems once again² to choose its isolation both from theological dialogue with the Catholic Church and from the communion of the Orthodox Churches. Two points are worth noting from the outset, which are indicative of the intent of the Church of Russia's Synod:

First, its desire to thwart the text of Ravenna,³ claiming seemingly theological reasons to justify the absence of its delegation from the specific plenary meeting of the bilateral commission (an absence dictated, as everyone knows, by other reasons⁴); and

¹ Reading and citing from the English text. "Position of the Moscow Patriarchate on the problem of primacy in the Universal Church," as published on the official website of the Patriarchate of Moscow:

<https://mospat.ru/en/2013/12/26/news96344/>

² Characteristic examples of other instances of such isolation include the absence of the Patriarchate of Moscow from the Conference of European Churches, as well as the now established strategy of the representatives of this Church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy separately from the other representatives of Orthodox Churches by closing themselves within the local Embassies of the Russian Federation whenever there is an opportunity for a Panorthodox Liturgy in various contexts.

³ His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Messina has dealt with this matter in a recent article published on December 30, 2013, on the website:

<http://www.romfea.gr/diafora-ekklisiastika/21337-2013-12-30-03-52-35>.

⁴ As for what exactly occurred in Ravenna in 2007, and the painful impressions recorded by Roman Catholic observers, see the analysis of Fr. Aidan Nichols in his book *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press,

