

The Mission of the Joint Committee of Orthodox and Catholic Bishops

In response to our Lord's prayer to His Father regarding His disciples "that they be one as you and I are one" (John 17:22), the Joint Committee of Orthodox and Catholic Bishops was established in 1981 by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America, now the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States, and by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This committee was the first formal gathering of Orthodox and Catholic bishops blessed and supported by both churches.

The committee will contribute to the restoration of full communion between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, which had existed for the first one thousand years of Christianity, by:

- providing opportunities for the bishops to discuss together issues related to the pastoral life and witness of the churches;
- publishing statements of common concern which address issues of significance for our churches and our society;
- encouraging members of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, both clergy and laity, to contribute to the restoration of full communion through prayer, theological reflection, and common witness in the society.

The committee will consider the pastoral implications of the work of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation which was established in 1965 and the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church which was established in 1979.

Lastly, the committee will forward to the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States and to the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops the result of its work for review and appropriate response.

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