



CHURCH LEADERS, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, head of the world's Orthodox Churches, embrace at door of St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

It was the first visit of an Orthodox patriarch to a Pope in more than 900 years. (AP)

Pope Hails Patriarch as Envoy of Unity

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY—Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras prayed side by side in St. Peter's Basilica today, repeatedly embraced in the kiss of peace and pledged unceasing efforts to reunite Christianity.

Never in the history of the two churches had such a meeting occurred—the leader of the world's half-billion Roman Catholics and the head of the 150 million Orthodox praying together inside the largest church in Christendom.

It was the first visit by a leader of Orthodoxy since the Church split apart in 1054 and marked a giant step toward future reunion.

Before cardinals, Orthodox metropolitans and the 200 bishops from around the world here for the Vatican synod, Pope and patriarch vowed anew to do all in their power to make reunion a reality some day.

In a speech to the patriarch, Pope Paul declared God "demands with greater in-

sistence than ever that we be one that the world may believe."

The Pope said the renewal going on in the Catholic Church "is in fact the most fundamental prerequisite for our drawing closer to one another."

He added: "If in our efforts for renewal we see a sign of the action of the Spirit urging us on to re-establish full communion with one another and preparing us for it, does not the contemporary world, filled with unbelief in many forms also give us a peremptory reminder of the need we have for unity with one another?"

This marked their third meeting. Athenagoras came to Rome to repay the visit the Pope made to him in Istanbul last July. They met

first in January, 1964, in Jerusalem, when Pope Paul made the first trip outside Italy by a modern pontiff.

"I bring you a message of peace and joy," Athenagoras told Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, dean of the College of Cardinals, who with two other cardinals greeted the patriarch at the airport.

The Orthodox Church, with 150 million members, is closer in doctrine and spirit to the 500-million member Roman Catholic Church than any other Christian faith.

Because of this, the growing rapport between the Pope and the Patriarch is expected to produce the most fruitful developments in the drive to reunite the world's Christian churches.

Although Pope Paul and Athenagoras were expected to give priority in their talks to advancing the reunion of their churches, the new flare-up between Israel and Egypt appeared likely to command their attention also.

Athenagoras came to Rome after a tour of Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria. He conferred with heads of the Orthodox Churches in those countries seeking support for his unity efforts.

Unlike the Pope, Patriarch Athenagoras does not have absolute command in his church. The various branches of orthodoxy are independent, and he has only the prestige of being first among the peers.

But his contacts with the Pope have had favorable repercussions. Even the Greek Orthodox Church, which has been the most tenacious Orthodox opponent of better relations with the Vatican, has softened.

The new primate of Greece, Archbishop Ieronymos, recently said he favored the visit of Athenagoras to the Pope and declared that he himself would welcome a meeting with the pontiff.

Athenagoras told the Pope that in this historic moment he heard "the voice of the church of the catacombs and the martyrs of the Colosseum calling us to use every means and method to accomplish the sacred work that has begun—that of the union of the divided church of Christ—not only because it carries out the will of God but also that the world may see shining again what is the first principle of the church—unity."

Bishops Ask Pope Speak Out

VATICAN CITY—A special committee of Pope Paul's consultative synod of bishops today recommended that he issue a clear-cut document on matters of doctrine and morals, including birth control.

This follows a resolution passed by a Congress of 3000 Roman Catholic laymen here last week asking the Vatican to leave the choice of birth control methods to married couples.

The month-long Synod, drawing to an end, suggested that the Vatican put out a positive and pastoral declaration to meet demands for a new rule of faith in the ferment following the 1962-65 Vatican council.

The declaration would include church teaching on moral problems and therefore birth control. A Vatican spokesman said.

Demands for a new rule of faith were aired in the Synod to establish what the world's 550 million Catholics should believe and what

they should not following the spread of clashing interpretations of modern church teaching.

The Pope has been studying the birth control issue for over a year now after receiving a report from a special commission of experts.

He has not closed the door to a possible relaxation of the Catholic ban on contraceptive pills.

The spokesman said the suggestion for the document was announced during discussions today on a report by a synod committee summarizing the bishop's views on doctrinal issues.

Fr. Edward Dhanis, a Jesuit and special secretary for Synod discussions on doctrine, has reported that many

suggestions for a new rule of faith had been made and the best method to comply with all these demands is for the Vatican to put out a positive declaration.

He said the Pope would eventually decide on the final procedure.

Boston's Newest Restaurant
THE AQUARIUM
on the waterfront
523-4000