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Putin, the Pope, the Schism, Franks and Romans (UPDATED)

The Saker

13-17 minutes

So the Pope met with Putin. And the media (corporate and free) is full of all sorts of opinions, analyses, interpretations, etc. Frankly, I have no interest in commenting either on the visit (though I have an opinion about it, of course) or, even less, on the mostly sophomoric and ill-informed about it. What I propose to do is to expose you to a dramatically different point of view to the one you are typically exposed to. So let's go on that trip into the "far elsewhere":

Today's so-called "Christian world" includes several "branches" or "denominations" of Christianity who differ from each other in dogma, rite, traditions, culture, history etc. Contrary to what a lot of people like to declare, these differences are far from trivial, especially the dogmatic ones. In fact, they are huge. To the point that the only politically correct meaning of the word "Christian" is "*anybody who claims to believe in Christ, whatever that means*". Kinda vague, no?

That ambiguity or opacity is quite deliberate. The ideology *en vogue* now demands that we all nod our heads in agreement when we hear the cliché about "irrelevant and obscure points of fine

theology”. Fine. Though I totally disagree with that, I won’t argue about this today (maybe some other day). Today I want to look into something different: the collective/corporate memory of some, but not all, Orthodox Churches.

Most modern Christian Churches have a very short collective memory, a century or so, max. Even the Latin Christians who claim to be “The Church” usually have no idea about Vatican I, nevermind the Middle-Ages or Antiquity. Most Orthodox Christians, who also claim to be “The Church”, don’t fare much better. Most Russians will have some pretty good notions about the history of the Russian Orthodox Church, most Greeks about Greek Orthodoxy, most Serbs about Serbian saints, etc. In fact, the sad reality is that most so-called “Orthodox” Churches are no less cut-off from the roots of Christianity than their Protestant or Latin counterparts. To make things worse, most “mainstream” or “official” Orthodox Churches participate in the so-called “Ecumenical dialog of love” with the other Christians, and sometimes even non-Christian, denominations/religions out there. As a result, if you just walk or drive to the nearest putatively “Orthodox” church nearby you are most likely to find a parish very similar to any Latin or Protestant parish, with a “Father Bob” in charge, and maybe some exotic singing or rituals, but very little difference in *ethos*. The folks attending that church will be just like their non-Orthodox counterparts: trying to live by Christians ethics, generally respectful of what they think are “Orthodox traditions” (which in some case are less than a century old!) and often very focused on their national/ethnic identity. One term to describe this kind of “Orthodoxy” is “world Orthodoxy”. This designation fits not only because this kind of “Orthodoxy is very worldly”, but also

because it is accepted, endorsed and even protected by secular world powers which have correctly identified that this kind of “Orthodoxy” presents no threat to their rule.

But there is another Orthodoxy still out there. Much smaller, much poorer, recognized by nobody (at least in this world), completely marginalized and often ostracized. I call it “Traditional Orthodoxy” or “Patristic Orthodoxy”.

This is the Orthodoxy whose cultural and historical roots go directly into the first centuries, whose idea of what is Christian and what is not, is the same one as the one of the Church Fathers of the first 10 centuries of Christian history and whose daily life (the *ortho-praxis*) tries as hard as possible to emulate the one of the early Christians. There are numerous differences between this “Traditional Orthodoxy” and “World Orthodoxy” of “Father Bob”, and I won’t go into them right now. But one such difference is the collective/corporate memory of these ancient Christians. Today I want to share with you one such aspect: the understanding and interpretation of the so-called “Schism of 1054” by traditional Orthodox Christians.

Since the Pope and Putin have met, there will be a lot of (totally vapid) discussion of the Schism, of how to “reconcile” “East and West” and all that kind of nonsense. So I think that it is important for you, my readers, to know why this is all rubbish and how genuine Orthodox Christians view this topic.

First, I want to share with you a video produced by the [Greek Orthodox Christian Youtube Channel](#), a channel organized by members of the [Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians in America](#), which is a part of the [Church of the Genuine Orthodox](#)

[Christians of Greece](#). This Church is one of the four traditionalist Orthodox Churches who united most, but not all, traditionalist Orthodox Christians worldwide (the other three are the [Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Romania](#), [the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad](#) and the [Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria](#)).

This is a series of nine short videos entitled “[Franks and Romans](#)“. To make the viewing easier, I have collated all these short videos into one which I am now posting below.

The panel discussion, lead by Father Christodulos, centers on the book “*Franks, Romans, Feudalism, and Doctrine*” by [Fr. John Romanides](#). I have made this book – along with another of this books, “*Introduction to Romanity, Romania, Roumeli*” – available for download here:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1NvJMqDM9JKRNibJ1xd6yDyEDwKqnaozP>

This is one zipped file which contains both of these books by Father John in three formats: PDF, DOCX, ODT and FB2 along with several videos on the topic of “sickness of religion”.

Here is the video itself:

You might think that reading a book (or two) and watching a 80min long video is too much work, but that this really the minimum to give you even a first indication of how different the worldview and collective memory of “Traditional Orthodox Christians” is from the mainstream “Christianity” you see everyday, including from the representatives of “World Orthodoxy”. In fact, if you go to your local “official” parish Orthodox parish and ask “Father Bob” what he thinks of the views presented here, he will either denounce

them as “zealotry” or, most likely, he will tell you that never have heard of them. And yet, things are not quite as simple.

Above I said that Traditional Orthodoxy forms a small subset of the much bigger Orthodox world out there. This is true, and it is also not true. The reality is that inside the “official” Orthodox Churches you will find a lot of people who are spiritually much closer to their traditionalist brothers than to their modernist clergy. Not only that, but even inside the clergy of the “official” Orthodox Churches you will sometimes encounter clergymen who have remained personally very close to ancient Orthodoxy. The best example is Father John Romanides who not only was part of the (very “wordily”) Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the (“official”) Church of Greece. He was even a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Hardly the typical bio of a traditionalist, to say the least!

The reality is that the border between “world” and “traditional” Orthodoxy can be very porous and that while the “visible” traditionalists are a small minority in the Orthodox world, there are a lot of traditionalists inside the “official” Orthodox Churches too. Not only that, but the presence of a highly educated and motivated traditionalist minority forces the (often modernist) majority clergymen to “look over their shoulder” and be very careful of what they say or do lest they be accused of apostasy.

Which brings me (finally!) to Putin and the Pope.

Putin and the Pope can meet as much as they want, and the Pope can also meet with Patriarch Kirill, the current head of the “official” Russian Orthodox Church. This is nothing new, similar meetings have happened many times in the past, and not only with

Russians, but also with Greek and other Orthodox bishops and Patriarchs. In 1993 some Latin and Orthodox clergymen signed what can only be considered a “union”, the so-called “[Balamand Declaration](#)“. Heck, in the 15th century, Latin or Orthodox bishops even signed an official union between the two Churches, this was the so-called “[False Union of Florence](#)“. Only one Orthodox delegate, [Saint Mark of Ephesus](#), refused to sign. And yet even this project rapidly collapsed. Why?

Because the reality is that in matters of faith, Orthodox bishops do not have the exclusive responsibility of maintaining the “*which the Lord gave, was preached by the Apostles, and was preserved by the Fathers. On this was the Church founded; and if anyone departs from this, he neither is nor any longer ought to be called a Christian*” (St. Athanasius). This is the personal responsibility of each Orthodox Christian, including laypeople, women and even children! To use an image borrowed from Iran, each Orthodox Christian is a “guardian of the faith”. And on many occasions in the history of the Church it was a small minority, or even one single person (like Saint Mark of Ephesus or Saint Maximos the Confessor) who upheld the truth.

Sure, there will be apostate and lapsed bishop (the history of the Church is full of them), and the big leaders will be corrupted and bought. From that point of view, the situation in Orthodoxy is very similar to the one in Islam, where a lot of so-called “leaders” are corrupt and have been long paid for, but where the masses, the flock, remains incorruptible even when the “elites” are. So it is possible that most (or even all) of the “official” Orthodox Churches will one day sign some kind of “surrender” document in which they will basically trade their Roman heritage for a neo-Frankish one,

but even that is rather unlikely. Usually, as soon as the modernists try to pull off some ugly deed behind the back (or over the head – pick your metaphor) of their flock, it ends up with a revolt of the “base” against the rulers, which is exactly what happened in 1923 when some Orthodox Churches decided to switch to the Papal Calendar (aka “Gregorian Calendar”). I very much doubt that the current “official” Russian Orthodox Church (the “Moscow Patriarchate”) would accept any kind of union with Rome, but if that happens I can absolutely guarantee that a huge backlash from many, and even maybe most, of the bishops, priests and laymen. So it is really simple: since the people will never accept a union with Rome what their “leaders” do matters very little. And if the Russians don’t go there, then it is most unlikely that he others will dare to go at it alone.

In the case of Putin, I have no doubt that his meeting with the Pope has nothing to do with any plans for a “union”, but since that “union” is discussed every time a senior Russian politician or clergymen meets the Pope, I figured I might as well explain here why it ain’t happening.

If you take the time to watch the video above or, better, read Romanides’ books, you will immediately see why all this empty talk about “reconciliation” is not only devoid of any substance, as it *totally misses the point* of what really separates today’s East and West and which was yesterday’s North and South:

The “West”, the so-called “Western civilization” has absolutely nothing to do, no connection whatsoever with ancient Rome or, even less so, ancient Greece. “Our” modern civilization does in no way originate in ancient Greece. Modern Europe, the “West” is a product of the Frankish civilization and modern Western Europe it

was built on the ruins and blood of the Roman civilization. It took the Franks *centuries* to fully root-out the (Orthodox) Roman civilizations of southern Europe and to substitute themselves as the “new Romans”. In contrast, Russia is still today the direct heir to the Roman civilization and while Orthodoxy is weak in Russia, especially traditional Orthodoxy, it is already powerful enough to make any attempts at submitting Russia to the neo-Frankish world absolutely futile. So all these Latin dreams about “dedicating Russian to the Virgin Mary” and all the other ways to subjugating Russia to the Pope (which is, of course, the real objective here) have absolutely zero chance to succeed, at least long as a sufficient part of the Russian Orthodox people (not just clergy!) keep their traditional “collective/corporate” memory about the true history of the Church of Christ and the roots of Russian Orthodoxy.

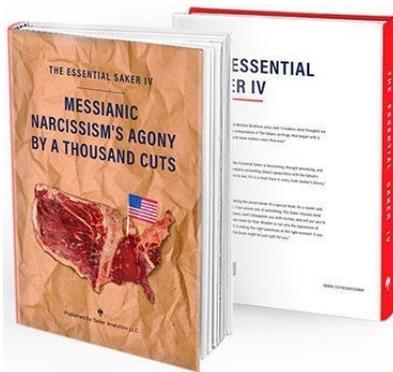
In conclusion, I want to tell you that I have no intention of entering into any polemics with those who will be outraged by what I wrote above. I realize that what I wrote is in direct contradiction with what most of us have been told since our childhood. That is why I said that today I wanted to take you to a trip into the “far elsewhere”. That “far elsewhere” is, quite literally, “not of this world” and this is why Saint Paul wrote that “*worldly wisdom is foolishness to God*“. My sole purpose it to share with you what was handed down to me because I strongly believe that it is highly relevant for a true understanding of modern Russia. While I am offering to share with you a point of view admittedly very different from the one of the mainstream, I am not trying to make converts or sell anything. I want to give you the tools which I believe are crucial to the understanding why this constant talk about some kind of “reconciliation” is nonsensical, but if you prefer the

mainstream version, by all means – ignore every word I wrote about. I hope that for the rest of you this post will be helpful.

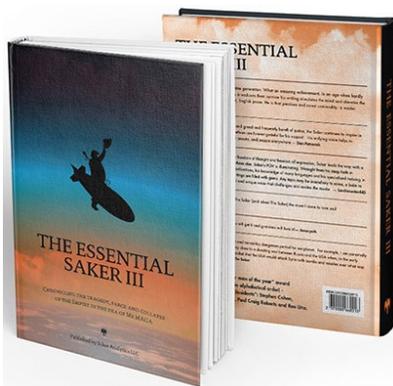
Kind regards,

The Saker

UPDATE: I took a look at some of the comments this post has elicited and I have decided to introduce a merciless trashing of ignorant and stupid comments. I don't know how much the mods will send to trash, but I want to you know that this time around I will do some of the garbage collection myself :-P



The Essential Saker IV: Messianic Narcissism's Agony by a Thousand Cuts



The Essential Saker III: Chronicling The Tragedy, Farce And Collapse of the Empire in the Era of Mr MAGA