A Renewed Understanding of Petrine Ministry and Local Churches

'Petrine Ministry' and 'Local Churches'. I am speaking on this subject as a Roman Catholic. I draw in particular on an interpretation of the Second Vatican Council which I consider to be well-founded and fairly widely shared within the Catholic Church today, though not by everyone.

From this perspective, what do I mean by 'local Churches'?

In several passages of the Council's teaching, we find a genuine theology of the local Church – albeit in its early stages – which would subsequently be developed and systematised by Catholic theologians[1].

1. *The Church: local and universal*

I believe it is all the more necessary to recall these key affirmations of Vatican II for a Catholic theology of the local Church and its relationship with the universal Church, given that some of these affirmations, as I indicated above, are met with resistance within the Catholic Church itself and that they form the very basis of the understanding of the so-called Petrine ministry proposed here.

The foundations of this ecclesiology are particularly well expressed in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) 41, §2 (1963), *Lumen gentium* (LG) 23, §1, 26, §1 (1964) and *Christus Dominus* (CD) 11, §1 (1965)[2].

SC 41, §2

'All should hold in the greatest esteem the liturgical life of the diocese centered around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church. They must be convinced that the principal (*praecipuam*) manifestation of the Church consists in the full, active participation of all God's holy people (*plebis*) of God in the same liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist,

[1] See, in particular, J.-M. R. TILLARD, *Église d'Églises. L'ecclésiologie de communion* (Cogitatio Fidei 143), Paris, Éd. du Cerf, 1987 ; *Chair de l'Église, chair du Christ. Aux sources de l'ecclésiologie de communion* (Cogitatio Fidei 168), Paris, Éd. du Cerf, 1992 ; *L'Église locale. Ecclésiologie de communion et catholicité* (Cogitatio Fidei 191), Paris, Éd. Du Cerf, 1995.

[2] I am using the following translation: *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, General Editor, Austin Flannery, o.p., New revised Edition (Ninth Printing) 1992, Dominican Publications, E.J. Dwyer PTY, LTD.

in one prayer, at the one altar, at which the bishop presides, surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers."

[It is interesting that such an ecclesiological assertion should be found in the constitution on the liturgy: *lex orandi, lex credendi*, the *locus theologicus* par excellence. Moreover, it was the first document to be promulgated (1963): it sets out the fundamental orientation of the Council (cf. SC 1). The statement is very strong: the principal manifestation of the Church is (ideally) the entire local diocesan Church (or at least a representative part of it), in its various components, gathered around its bishop for the common celebration of the Liturgy; it is the local diocesan Church in prayer, or rather in liturgical and sacramental action. The Church best manifests what she is in this local assembly: a people organised ministerially and gathered in unity to celebrate God's gift to his Church for the salvation of the world.]

LG 23, §1

'The individual bishops are the visible source and foundation of unity in their own particular Churches, which are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in these and formed out of them (*in quibus et ex quibus*) that the one and unique Catholic Church exists. And for that reason precisely each bishop represents his own Church, whereas all, together with the pope, represent the whole (*totam*) Church in a bond of peace, love and unity."

With regard to the diocesan Church, the Council wavers between the two terms 'local' and 'particular'. Along with other Catholic theologians, I much prefer the term 'local', which clearly emphasises the territorial nature of the Church and avoids the notion of a 'part', which is easily inferred from the adjective 'particular'; just as I prefer to avoid the expression 'universal Church' for the same reason, favouring instead that of 'the whole Church'[3]. Whatever one's preferences regarding vocabulary may be, the meaning is not at issue here. The local or particular (diocesan) Churches are the image of the whole or universal Church; simultaneously (and reciprocally), it is within these local Churches and from them that the one and only Catholic Church, or the whole (universal) exists. There is therefore no question of the universal Church taking precedence over the particular Churches, nor of the latter taking precedence over the universal Church. There is a mutual interiority or perichoresis between the particular Churches and the universal Church, in the image of the Holy Trinity, in which there is a simultaneity of unity and trinity (or diversity): unity within the trinity, trinity within unity, unitrinity, unidiversity. Such is the model and source of the Church: *Ecclesia de Trinitate* (cf.

[3] See H. LEGRAND, *La réalisation de l'Église en un lieu*, in B. LAURET – F. REFOULÉ (dir.), *Initiation à la pratique de la théologie*, t. 3 : *Dogmatique II*, Paris, Éd. du Cerf, 1983, p. 143-345.

LG 2–4). It is in the local Churches (concrete, situated in a particular place)—the very model of which is the diocesan Church in communion with its bishop—that the whole Church exists, and nowhere else, neither above nor outside nor prior to it, **[**contrary to the assertion in the Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Communionis notio*[4] (I refer to the critical and detailed commentary on the document as a whole written by Fr Damien Sicard in 1993[5])**]**. The whole Church is nothing other than the communion of the local Churches, or the local Churches in communion with one another, and in particular with the local Church of Rome, which presides over this communion and watches over it. The role of the local Church of Rome is therefore strictly internal to this inter-ecclesial communion and in its service. To put it even more clearly, the local Church of Rome is no more the Church than the other Churches, even though it has a particular responsibility, as the Church of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, for the preservation of this *communio Ecclesiarum* in faith and charity, but this particular authority can only be exercised within the framework of true synodality and ecclesial collegiality, since the one Church is nothing other than the communion of local Churches. Each local Church is therefore fully and completely the Church (the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church), even though it is not the whole or complete Church, and must therefore always take care to remain in communion with the other local Churches. **[**In practice, it is always and necessarily through a local Church that one enters (simultaneously) into the whole Church; if we belong to the Church as a whole, it is never in an abstract sense, but always by belonging in a concrete way to a local Church, situated in a specific place and culture (we are necessarily situated somewhere within the Church).**]**

One might add here a passage from LG 26, §1. From the Eucharist celebrated by the bishop himself or under his direction, life and growth flow continually to the Church. 'This Church of Christ is really present (*vere adest*) in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, which, in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches

---

[4] *Communionis notio*, 9 in *Doc. Cath.* 2055 (2 and 16 August 1992) 729–734, here 731 (translated into English): '(the universal Church) is, in its essential mystery, a reality that ontologically and chronologically precedes any single particular Church'. Apart from the fact that in this No. 9 the concept of the universal Church is used successively in two different senses (the present-day universal Church in history and the universal Church-mystery which precedes creation from a patristic perspective), it is not clear how the quoted sentence is consistent with LG 23, §1 and expresses that 'mutual interiority' between particular Churches and the universal Church, as articulated by Pope John Paul II himself in an Address to the Roman Curia (20 December 1990), 9 (AAS 83 [1991] 745–747), cited just previously in this same issue No. 9 of *Communionis notio*. Here we have a typical example of a universalist reinterpretation of Vatican II, a reinterpretation which has not yet embraced the ecclesiology of the *communio Ecclesiarum* with all that it implies in terms of genuine reciprocity between local Churches, including that of Rome. What, then, are we to make of paragraph 13 of the same Letter?

[5] See D. SICARD, *Quelques commentaires sur l'Église comprise comme communion*, in *L'Église comprise comme communion* (Coll. Documents des Églises), Paris, Éd. du Cerf, 1993, pp. 37–121, 64–76, regarding paragraph 9 of the Letter.

in the New Testament [Cf. Acts 8:1; 14:22–23; 20:17 and *passim*]. For these are in fact, in their own localities, the new people called by God, in the power of the Holy Spirit and as the result of full conviction (cf. 1 Thess 1:5)." LG 26 and SC 41 very clearly outline a Eucharistic ecclesiology of the local Church.

CD 11, §1

One final quotation, from a decree which aligns its reflection 'on the pastoral office of bishops in the Church' with *Lumen gentium*.

'A diocese is a section (*portio*) of the People of God entrusted to a bishop to be guided by him (*pascenda*) with the assistance of his clergy so that, loyal (*adhaerens*) to its pastor and formed by him into one community in the Holy Spirit through (*per*) the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes one particular church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is truly present (*vere inest*) and active (*operatur*).'

[Definition of the constituent elements of the local Church, and by the same token of the Church of Christ as such, which is truly present and active within it: the Holy Spirit, the People of God, the Gospel, the Eucharist, and the pastoral ministry. All these elements are simultaneous and mutually interlinked, even if some take precedence over others, without the latter thereby becoming secondary.**]** The local Church in the strict sense (diocesan in this instance) is therefore a portion of the People of the Baptised gathered in the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel and the celebration of the Eucharist under the pastoral responsibility of the bishop. These are the fundamental elements of a local Church. This Church, being local (it is only a portion of the People of God, whilst truly being the Church of Christ in a particular place), must remain in communion with the other local Churches, in each of which the Church of Christ is truly present and active, and, in particular, a Catholic would add, with the local Church of Rome. It is here that the College of Bishops, presided over by the Bishop of Rome and rooted in the communion of the local Churches, comes into play, in its collegial ministerial role in the service of the communion of the Churches, for 'each bishop represents his own Church, whereas all, together with the pope, represent the whole (*totam*) Church in a bond of peace, love and unity' (LG 23, §1).

2. *The 'Petrine' Ministry and the Local Churches*

From the ecclesiological perspective just outlined (the Church as a communion of local [diocesan] Churches, each of which is fully the Church of Christ in a particular place provided

it ensures it remains in communion with the other local Churches), the description of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome as 'Petrine' appears too vague. This particular function, inherited from history, is linked not only to the Apostle Peter—more precisely, to his martyrdom in Rome—but also to the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul[6]. But before this prestige—historically linked in particular to the supreme witness of the Apostles Peter and Paul within the territory of the local Church of Rome—could be reflected upon its bishop (when there was one in the strict sense[7], no doubt in the last quarter of the second century[8]), this 'apostolic' prestige belonged to the local Church of Rome as a whole and to its collegial or synodal government.

It is therefore, first and foremost, a local Church as such that has historically inherited this 'apostolic' prestige and, by the same token, the ministry of ecclesial communion in faith and charity[9], linked to those two great figures of unity within the diversity of early Christianity: Peter, the Apostle to the Jews, and Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. Admittedly, subsequently, the Bishop of Rome himself has also been invested with the prestige and office that belonged to his local (diocesan) Church.

It therefore seems to me necessary that the entire local Church of Rome should, in one way or another, be restored—at the very least spiritually and theologically—to this role which is its own, through consultation (at least with its representatives), through the convening of a 'diocesan synod ' (the form of which would be to be determined)[10], through participation in discernment through prayer… in short, that the whole local Church of Rome should once again feel a sense of involvement in this special bond with Peter and Paul!

At a time, however, when distances are shrinking and the world is becoming a global village, the synodality that governs the decisions sought from the Bishop of Rome for the whole Catholic Church (and which should be rare, as I shall explain below) cannot be merely local (diocesan). This synodality must also embody a representative character of the various parts of the Church, which is now spread throughout the world.

---

[6] See IRENAEUS OF LYON, *Adversus haereses*, III, 3, 2 ; J.-M. R. TILLARD, *L'évêque de Rome*, Paris, Éd. du Cerf, 1982.

[7] Or an episcope, exercising the 'monepiscopate', that is to say, the personal episcopate, the personal (rather than merely collective) 'supervision' of the entire local Church.

[8] Previously, the governance of this Church was collective – or, to be more precise, synodal. See K. SCHATZ, *Papal Primacy : From Its Origins to the Present*, Liturgical Press, 1996; the International Orthodox-Catholic Dialogues of Ravenna and Chieti.

[9] IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Letter to the Romans* (Salutation), in which he already refers to the local Church of Rome as 'the Church which presides over charity (*agapè*) in the region of the Romans'.

[10] We recall the insight and initiative of John XXIII, who convened a diocesan synod in Rome at the very same time as he convened the 'ecumenical' Second Vatican Council, with the diocesan synod intended to serve both as a model and as a testing ground: synodality is indivisible; the whole Church is synodal, both at the local and universal levels.

To put it in Eastern terms, the Pope or Bishop of Rome should be supported and assisted by a Holy Synod comprising a certain number of members (to be determined and renewed) representing the whole of the Catholic Church in its major 'parts'. This was already a proposal put forward by the Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV at the Second Vatican Council, which was taken up and supported during the Council by several other Council Fathers. No universal papal decision would be taken except by mutual agreement between the Roman Primate and the synod or universal council of bishops[11] (or at least a group of them, renewable, truly representative and with *deliberative* powers vis-à-vis the Pope[12]).

Within a dynamic of communion at all 'levels' of ecclesial life, the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, on behalf of his local Church, can only be exercised synodally with the other bishops, each of whom represents their own Church, and all of whom, together with the Pope, represent the whole Church.

To this end, the Pope would be assisted, following the example of the Eastern patriarchs, by a Holy Synod or permanent Supreme Council of the universal Church, which would be composed of several diocesan bishops (the number and geographical proportions to be determined) elected by the entire Catholic episcopate for a limited term. These bishops would necessarily be at the head of actual local Churches and could therefore genuinely represent them. They could be re-elected or replaced. The Holy Synod would have deliberative powers and would assist the Pope, who presides over it, in formulating decisions necessary for the entire Catholic Church. The Pope would take such decisions only with the agreement of a large majority of his Holy Synod, ideally with the unanimous consent of its members acting in the Spirit, in accordance with Canon 34 of the Apostles, already cited. Such decisions of universal scope would be rare[13] and would concern ecclesiastical discipline or doctrinal matters where the faith itself is not at issue. When the faith is at stake, and for the most important disciplinary matters, a general council of

---

[11] In accordance with the 'mutual' or 'unanimous' decision-making process between a primate and his synod (comprising suffragan bishops, each representing their local Church), as required by the 34th Canon of the Apostles.

[12] This, then, was the wish expressed by Maximos IV Saigh, Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, at the Second Vatican Council in his address of 6 November 1963; see *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Œcumenici Vaticani II*, II/4, Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1972, pp. 516–519; *Histoire du concile Vatican II (1959-1965)* sous la direction de Giuseppe ALBERIGO, tome III : *Le concile adulte. La deuxième session et la deuxième intersession (Septembre 1963-septembre 1964)*, version française sous la direction d'Étienne FOUILLOUX, Paris, Éd. du Cerf – Louvain, Peeters, 2000, pp. 141–142.

[13] These cases would no doubt need to be clarified by a general council.

the Catholic Church should be convened. All matters not requiring universal agreement would be decided by particular councils or episcopal conferences[14].

[As noted above, such a Roman Holy Synod had therefore been proposed on 6 November 1963 at the Second Vatican Council by Maximos IV, with the agreement of several Fathers. For the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, this synod was to be a select group of bishops from all over the world, representing their colleagues in the task of assisting the Pope in the general governance of the Church. It was to be a 'true Sacred College of the universal Church', comprising the residential and apostolic patriarchs, the residential cardinal-archbishops or bishops, and bishops chosen from the episcopal conferences of each country. A few members of this Sacred College would take turns to stand alongside the Pope, who would always have the final say; it would be the permanent supreme council of the universal Church, executive and decisive, to which the Roman Curia as a whole would be subject; it would be, by definition, a centre open to the whole world and not closed in on itself, seeking to control everything[15]**]**. The Roman Synod of Bishops established by Paul VI on 15 September 1965 (motu proprio *Apostolica sollicitudo*) did not meet this expectation of a Roman Holy Synod as proposed by Maximos IV: it was completely subordinate to the Pope, described as permanent (*perpetuum*) by its very nature, although its ordinary assemblies are normally held every three years, and consultative unless the Pope grants it a deliberative voice and ratifies its decisions[16].

3. *The local Church of Rome and other local Churches*

Having reflected on the particular historical role of the local Church of Rome as the guardian of the memory of the martyr Apostles Peter and Paul – which implies a synodal commitment on the part of that entire Church, and more broadly a synodal commitment on the part of all the local Churches of the Catholic Church, given its universal character – we must now consider specific cases where certain local or regional Churches appeal to the local Church of Rome. Can the local Church of Rome intervene in the internal life of another local or regional Church (OE 9), even at the latter's request?

History can here inspire our present.

---

[14] J. FAMERÉE, « What Might Catholicism Learn from Orthodoxy in Relation to Collegiality?», in P. D. MURRAY, dir., *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning. Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. (211-225) 220-222.
[15] *Acta Synodalia* II/4, 516-519.
[16] *AAS*, 57, 775-780.

Drawing inspiration from the first millennium undoubtedly implies, for Catholics first and foremost, rediscovering more effectively—and not merely on a theological level—the whole or universal Church as a communion of equal local or particular Churches, each one being fully the Church of Christ in a particular place, in union with its sisters. From this perspective, 'Rome' sees itself first and foremost as a local Church—that of Rome, to be precise—on an equal footing with the others in theological terms, even though it presides over charity and ecclesial communion by virtue of its particularly strong apostolicity, linked to the martyrdom of Peter and Paul[17]. It is therefore not a question of power 'over' the whole Church or 'over' the local or particular Churches, but of an authority or power 'at the service of' the Church and the Churches, and always internal to ecclesial communion. This modest yet highly significant form of universal service to unity could well be in keeping with the conciliar canons of Sardica (343): in the event of a challenge to a provincial synodal judgement, an appeal may be lodged by mutual agreement with Rome as a court of cassation; acting as arbitrator, the Roman Church (represented by the bishop and his council) could, without itself re-adjudicating the original judgement, either confirm it or order a new trial in a province neighbouring that in which the dispute was first settled. Roman primacy and synodality (local and regional) would thus be exercised in a spirit of mutual respect[18]. More broadly speaking, as we have seen, no universal papal decision would be taken except by mutual agreement between the Roman Primate and the universal synod or council of bishops[19] (or at least a group of them, which is renewable, truly representative and has *deliberative* powers in relation to the Pope[20]). Logically, the dogmatic formulation of the papal ministry set out at the First Vatican Council, which deeply offends non-Catholic sensibilities, should give rise to an official and updated commentary, and even to a change in terminology, in keeping with the ecclesiology of communion[21]. Contrary to any form of archaeological nostalgia, this reshaping of the exercise of papal primacy should not, however, allow certain positive aspects of the second millennium and the present day to be lost, such as the independence of local Churches from civil authorities—sometimes secured

[17] See IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Letter to the Romans* (Salutation); IRENAEUS OF LYON, *Adversus Haereses*, III, 3, 2 : potentior principalitas.
[18] See H. LEGRAND, *Brève note sur le synode de Sardique et sur sa réception: Rome, instance d'appel ou de cassation*, et CONCLUSIONS DU COMITÉ MIXTE, in COMITÉ MIXTE CATHOLIQUE-ORTHODOXE EN FRANCE, *La primauté romaine dans la communion des Églises.* Présentation par le métropolite JÉRÉMIE et Mgr A. QUÉLEN (Coll. Documents des Églises), Paris, Cerf, 1991, respectively pp. 47-60 and 113-125.
[19] In accordance with the 'mutual' or 'unanimous' decision-making process between a primate and his synod, as required by the 34th Canon of the Apostles.
[20] Let us recall once again that this was the wish expressed by Maximos IV Saigh, the Melkite Patriarch of Antioch, at the Second Vatican Council.
[21] See GROUPE DES DOMBES, *Le ministère de communion dans l'Église universelle*, in *Doc. Cath.* 1929 (7 décembre 1986) 1122-1142.

thanks to the Holy See—, the Holy See's moral authority on the world stage, as well as its effective diplomatic activity in the service of justice and peace...

Conclusion: a renewed understanding of the Petrine ministry in relation to the local Churches

1) The 'Petrine' ministry is, first and foremost, the ministry of a local Church—that of Rome—rather than that of its bishop by 'reflection' and 'representation'. Indeed, the local Church of Rome, which already enjoyed a certain prestige as the Church of the capital of the Roman Empire, would become the site of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, the Apostle to the Jews and the Apostle to the Gentiles, the two pillars of early Christianity representing the entirety of the Christian mission in its earliest days. This supreme dual witness increasingly brings to fruition the unique apostolic prestige of this local Church and confers upon it the foremost position amongst the principal Churches of Christian antiquity[22], as well as a role as a point of reference, arbiter and authority in matters of faith and ecclesial communion[23].

2) The term 'Petrine ministry' is therefore incomplete. It is with reference to the witness of Peter and Paul that the Church of Rome exercises its service to ecclesial life. As this service or ministry is that of the local Church as such, it must therefore be carried out synodally, so that the whole of that Church—or at least a suitable representation of it—is involved.

3) The synodal exercise of this ministry therefore begins in the local Church of Rome, but must extend to all other local Churches—or at least to an effective representation of them—particularly in the case of the rare doctrinal or disciplinary decisions issued by Rome that are valid for the entire Church. It is here that, from a synodal perspective, a permanent Roman Holy Synod of bishops – to be renewed periodically – should be established, representing the diversity of the local or regional Churches (the number of members, method of selection and term of office to be determined), to advise the Pope in a deliberative capacity on the few papal decisions of universal significance.

4) If these matters concern the faith itself and its direct implications, they require the convening of a general council comprising all the residential bishops of the Catholic Church (or an ecumenical council, in the case of a fully reunified Church). For all other matters that do not require full universal unity of view, the decision rests with the local Churches and their various 'levels' of organisation: diocesan, regional (regional communion of several dioceses) and continental. Within the Catholic Church, there are institutions serving this synodality,

[22] See Nicaea I, can. 6 ; Cst I, can 3.
[23] See already CLEMENT OF ROME, *Ep. Ad Corinthios*; IRENAEUS OF LYON, *Adv. Haer.*, III, 3, 2: convenire.

whose autonomy within the communion should be given greater recognition: particular councils, episcopal conferences, diocesan synods… in the Latin Catholic Church; the patriarchates (or major archdioceses) with their patriarchal (archiepiscopal)[24] synods, the eparchies… in the Eastern Catholic Churches.

5) **[**All local Churches are, on an equal footing, fully the Church of Christ in a particular place, insofar as they are in communion with the other local Churches. *Without being more of a Church than the others, the Church of Rome has, since antiquity, been recognised as having a special status (first among the ancient patriarchates [see Nicaea in 325]). This is the status of the Church of Rome as a whole.* Consequently, the Bishop of Rome must preside over the ministry of communion incumbent upon his local Church, in synodality with it.]

6) *As all local Churches are equal in terms of their ecclesial nature, a local Church should not normally intervene in the internal affairs of another local Church, unless a role of appeal and arbitration has been recognised for it by ecumenical councils; even then, this role must always be exercised as synodally (conciliarly, communionally) as possible*. A local Church, or a group of local Churches, may, however, freely appeal to another major Church or to a council, first at a regional level, and ultimately at the universal level (Rome, an ecumenical council). I would recall the decisions of the Council of *Sardica* in 343, which were, admittedly, received differently in the East and the West. A local Church (a bishop) that considers itself to have been treated unjustly by a regional synod may lodge an appeal or make a complaint to the Church of Rome. The latter cannot decide the case itself, but, acting as a court of final appeal, it may overturn the original judgement and order that the case be retried by a new synod in a neighbouring Church. *This functioning of the Roman primacy would respect the synodal communion between local Churches, their legitimate autonomy and the synodal, regional settlement of inter-ecclesial disputes, before resorting, rarely and as a last resort, to the ministry of universal communion, which itself operates in Rome synodally* (*synodaliter*).

Joseph Famerée
UCLouvain

[24] See OE 9, where 'the inalienable right of the Roman Pontiff to intervene in any particular case [within a patriarchate]' poses a problem for the Orthodox Churches from the perspective of *communio Ecclesiarum*, as each patriarchal Church must be fully respected in its ecclesial autonomy, which naturally implies communion with the other patriarchal or autocephalous Churches; likewise, is it not somewhat surprising to reserve "to the Ecumenical Council or to the Apostolic See the right to establish, transfer or abolish feast days common to all the Eastern Churches" (OE 19)? Could a particular council of the Eastern Churches of each tradition or family (with a view to the communion and autonomy of these particular Churches of the Eastern rite) be envisaged for this purpose? It is true that we are dealing here with all the Eastern Churches in the diversity of their traditions (Byzantine, Coptic, Syriac, etc.) and unions with Rome.