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THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SCHISM

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Before discussing the historical circumstances and vicissitudes of various church divisions or ecclesiastical schisms and the reasons for their origin, it is necessary to determine what is the nature and characteristics of the schism itself. Also, in particular, when and how religious divisions used to take place? By what signs can the split be recognized, and what criteria can exist for its detection? The harmful influence of the ecclesiastical divisions also extended to the political, social, and cultural spheres because, in the past centuries, they had a particularly close connection with each other.

There may be various criteria, characteristics, or signs to determine divisions in the Christian Church, on the basis of which it is possible to reveal and identify these schisms. I think there is a need to crystallize them more, put them in the right order, and clearly define them.

The first sign of church division can be differences or contradictions between important doctrinal ideas. The second criterion of schism is the creation of a parallel hierarchy. There is another sign of real church schism. This is the antagonistic mood of the people towards those from whom they are religiously separated. This kind of attitude of the people further strengthens the division and gives it an irreversible character. Perhaps, this is not accidental because, according to the definition, the members of the church are not only clerics, representatives of the hierarchy, but also all believers.

There is another important criterion of schism, which, unfortunately, is often ignored. This is a 'sacramental relationship', that is, the participation of members of formally separated churches in each other's sacraments. This kind of relationship between Latins (Catholics) and Greeks (Orthodox) was not always broken.

Even after such a full-fledged schism has been formed, there may be positive facts that some historians might think soften the reality of the schism, or that no such schism has actually been formed yet. But, I think, such an approach to the issue should not be justified.

In this context, one of such positive events is considered, for example, when in 1095, Pope Urban organized a crusade "to help Eastern Christians". But such military cooperation was more a matter of politics than of religion. In other words, the joint liberation of the Holy Land from the Muslims had nothing to do with the reality of the church schism.

It means nothing to name some famous thinkers of this era who had a loyal attitude towards the Latins (for example, St. George the Hagiorite, St. Theophylact of Ohrid and Peter of Antioch). Certainly, there will always be individuals who may have a different position than the majority, especially when it comes to such a vast geographical area as the Byzantine Empire and the Latin West. It is, therefore, logical that, both before and after the

Great Schism, there were exceptionally bright figures who were distinguished by a more tolerant attitude. However, they could not influence the general situation. Therefore, it is reprehensible to simplistically portray the Greco-Latin conflict in general by highlighting such exceptional figures who were a deep minority in the era of the Great Schism. In addition, St. George the Hagiorite was a representative of the Georgian and not the Greek Orthodoxy. In general, Georgians did not share the anti-Latin position of the Greeks.

It is not relevant to cite an issue of mentioning the Pope's name in the diptych as well. There were cases when the name of the first hierarch was temporarily excluded from the diptych due to his election being considered non-canonical or due to questionable theological views. There were also quite long periods of time (e.g. the era of Arabian expansion) when the patriarchates of the East were disconnected from each other. Accordingly, the diptychs were also lacking due to the lack of proper information. Thus, not being mentioned in the diptych did not necessarily mean schism.

These are the main criteria of church schism. It could be argued that, for example, the Great Schism of 1054 finally met all these criteria to be considered a full schism. Naturally, all the signs did not appear immediately. Their appearance took different periods of time.

Thus, the Great Schism finally had all the real signs of a schism (distinctions in doctrine, the development of parallel hierarchies, the antagonistic mood of the believers, the severing of sacramental relations), but in certain regions, some of these "alienating" signs, due to historical circumstances, used to disappear (e.g., restoration of mutual participation in the sacraments). But since such events were temporary and unstable, they could not eliminate the general and permanent reality of church schism. In this context, it is completely irrelevant to appeal to such "mitigating" factors, namely, crusade cooperation, individual exceptional figures who did not share the radical positions of the supporters of the schism, the issue of mentioning or not mentioning in the diptych or mixed marriages.