

THE ARCHBISHOP ATHENAGORAS-CARDINAL MCINTYRE LETTERS - 1957

Twenty years ago, in 1957, a series of letters were exchanged between the then Cardinal-Archbishop of Los Angeles, Cardinal McIntyre and the then Orthodox Archbishop of Los Angeles, Archbishop Athenagoras Kokkinakis. In one of the letters Archbishop Athenagoras pointed out to the Cardinal the existence of The Basilian Fathers, citing the Order's background and purpose of being. It is well to include in this informational guide the entire wording of Archbishop Athenagoras' letter to Cardinal McIntyre citing the existence of the Basilians:

"I imagine that Your Eminence is cognizant of the fact that something similar to the Western Uniate Movement has made its appearance in the Orthodox Church. This is the Latin Rite Orthodox, corresponding to the Uniate Greek Rite within the Roman Catholic Church. In France and Belgium this movement, a product of the Studies of Patristic Theology, began to take proportion. Recently I read in the paper of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 'Apostolos Andreas,' that the Latin Rite Orthodox people of France had submitted to the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, a report in regard their activities and progress. The Basilian Fathers in New York and in other States are leaders of this movement in this country. They have their own Bishops and priests united with the Orthodox Church. They perform the Holy Sacraments according to the Latin Rite, professing the Faith of the Seven Ecumenical Councils. For more information I send Your Eminence the periodical and selected tracts of the Latin Rite Orthodox Basilian Fathers whose Monastery is located in Mount Vernon, N.Y., 72 Kingsbridge Road West." (Editor's note: The Basilians no longer have their headquarters in Mount Vernon, they are now located at Nashville, Tennessee and suffragan to this Archdiocese.)

The letter continues: "In regard to this movement nothing official has been said by the Orthodox Church concerning hope and possibility that through it (The Basilian Fathers & Latin Orthodox Movement) the Western Church might be influenced to return to that position she held before the Great Schism. For this reason, we consider this Movement rather a free effort initiated by Roman Catholic students of true Ecclesiastical History and Patristic Theology. In their desire to evaluate doctrinal differences of the two Churches (Western & Eastern) freely they were converted to Orthodoxy and rejected all dogmas added by the Western Church since her separation from the Eastern. The Orthodox does not seek to place this Movement under submission or change its liturgical rite in order to recognize it or to offer it financial assistance. Simply, the Orthodox Church accepts the existence of this group of adherents to the Doctrines which were common to East and West since the beginning, holding each other in the unity of the Faith."