



## WITH ORTHODOX: "LITTLE STEPS, THE RIGHT DIRECTION"

### Cardinal Kasper Evaluates 11th Joint Meeting

ROME, OCT. 29, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Vatican's official for promoting Christian unity has characterized the most recent session of dialogue with the Orthodox as "little steps forward in the right direction."

This was the estimation given by Cardinal Walter Kasper to Vatican Radio today as he evaluated the 11th plenary session of the International Mixed Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. The weeklong session ended Oct. 23 in Paphos.

Cardinal Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said the steps forward are "small and slow," precisely because the topic under discussion is "very complex -- a theme that has carried an emotional weight for many centuries."

The commission was discussing "The Role of the Bishop of Rome in the Communion of the Church in the First Millennium."

"What is important, nevertheless," the cardinal continued, "is that -- despite some demonstrations by a few protestors, above all from the Church of Greece -- all of the Orthodox representatives have decided that the dialogue should continue."

"The relationship between the Catholic and Orthodox members of the commission has been very good, friendly and tranquil," he added.

The next commission meeting will be held Sept. 20-27, 2010, in Vienna, hosted by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn.

For his part, the Orthodox co-president of the commission meeting, Metropolitan Ioannis

Zizioulas of Pergamum, noted that the "question of primacy is an ecclesiological problem," and thus "a question of faith."

Metropolitan Zizioulas acknowledged that for Catholic-Orthodox relations, the question of primacy "has had the most tragic of roles" and has "created the greatest problems."

He further observed that Catholic-Orthodox dialogue is the most important of the official dialogues undertaken by the Orthodox Churches, "but at the same time, because of certain situations, the most laborious."

The Orthodox prelate urged "work without ceasing" to bring about the "daily prayer of union among all of us."