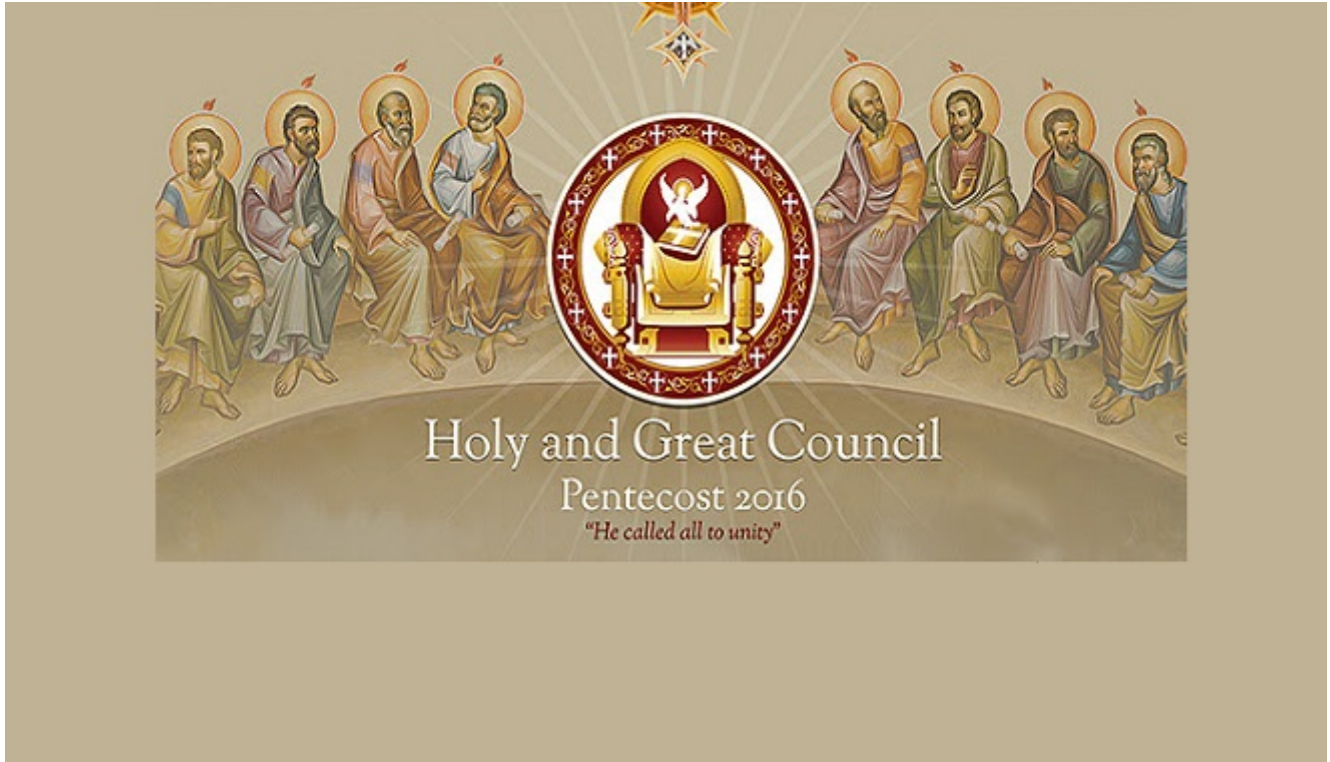


## Official Documents of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Metropolitan of Toronto Sotirios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Today we celebrate the Great Feast of Holy Pentecost. Today, the tenth day after the Ascension and the fiftieth day after Pascha, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit, Who showed “the fishermen as supremely wise” and Who called all men into unity.



Today's

Feast also marks the one-year anniversary of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, which was convened by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the historic island of Crete in Greece last year on Pentecost (June 19th).

As we recall this historic meeting of Orthodox primates and hierarchs, our Holy Metropolis is re-publishing all eight official documents of the Holy and Great Council in one convenient and easily accessible document. While some of the texts (e.g., on Autonomy and the Diaspora) focus more on Church administration and organization, the majority of the documents are relevant to all Orthodox.

Issues such as fasting and the institution of the family and marriage are topics that concern all Christians. Moreover, the Encyclical and Message of the Council address challenges facing contemporary society. These include developments in the fields of biology and genetics, the ecological crisis, and the phenomenon of extreme violence and migration.

Like all of the documents, the Message highlights that the key priority of the Council was to proclaim the unity of the Orthodox Church. It also references the need for Christians to give witness of faith, the great importance of dialogue, and the significance of respecting the particular characteristics of individual peoples. The Message also spoke specifically to our youth:

The Orthodox Church addresses herself to young people who seek for a plenitude of life replete with freedom, justice, creativity and also love. She invites them to join themselves consciously with the Church of Him who is Truth and Life. To come, offering to the ecclesial body their vitality, their anxieties, their concerns and their expectations. Young people are not only the future, but also the dynamic and

creative present of the Church, both on a local and on a world-wide level.

The Holy and Great Council was a historic event, consistent with the Traditions of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. It continued the synodal system of the Church and helped to highlight the considerable untapped potential of Orthodoxy to address today's societal challenges. As we remember this venerable event, we hope and pray that the official documents of the Council edify the faithful, for regardless of national, linguistic or any other differences, we are all one in Christ Jesus, as St. Paul wrote to the Galatians.

[You can read the Official Documents of the Holy and Great Council here](#)