

International ecumenical conferences

ent of the theological committee of the Patriarchate of Moscow (left); metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia (right)

At the beginning of June the 7th International Liturgical Conference, organized in collaboration with the National office of the patrimony of the Church, on “**Church and city**” was held in Bose. The theme was treated from the anthropological, sociological, historical, liturgical, theological points of view, as well as under the aspects of architecture and urban planning.

Specialists in the various fields, looking both at the rich architectural patrimony inherited from the past and at today's and tomorrow's challenges, asked themselves, for example, what style of Christian presence is manifested by the churches that have been or are being built in our cities; how to plan new churches in today's cities, which are deeply marked by mobility and by multiculturalism; how best to utilize, responding to today's challenges, the patrimony of churches and of church structures inherited from history; what it means to plan, build, and celebrate in countries and cities where Christians are a minority. Among the participating speakers were the sociologists **D. Hervieu Léger** and **M. Gauchet**, the architects **M. Galantino**, **Rob Brouwers**, **D. Forconi**, **A. Longhi**, the theologians **S. Dianich** and **F. Mennekes**, and the liturgist **K. Pecklers**. Present at the sessions were archbishop **Piero Marini**, president of the pontifical committee for the international Eucharistic congresses, bishops **Arrigo Miglio** of Ivrea, **Giovanni Giudici** of Pavia, the Anglican bishop of Salisbury **David Stancliffe**, various monks from Italy and from abroad, as well as numerous participants from fifteen foreign countries.

At the end of summer, then, we had again the traditional International ecumenical conference on Orthodox spirituality, this year in its **17th edition**, dedicated to the theme of “**The spiritual struggle in the Orthodox tradition**”. The conference opened with an inaugural talk by br Enzo and with a presentation by metropolitan **Filaret of Minsk**, patriarchal exarch of Belarus and president of the theological commission of the Patriarchate of Moscow; these two talks highlighted a profound convergence between the Biblical approach and the Orthodox understanding of this fundamental theme of its ascetical tradition. The other papers presented at the conference explored the multiple valencies of the spiritual struggle in the fathers, in the various Orthodox traditions and in their millenary history, but also in the difficult situations of the contemporary world, as in the final speeches of metropolitan **Georges of Mount Lebanon** on “Struggle for the unity of the Church” and of metropolitan **Kallistos of Diokleia** on “Spiritual struggle in the contemporary world”. Within the conference a special place was reserved for several testimonies about introducing young persons in Orthodox monasteries to the spiritual struggle, among them those of bishop **Porfirje of Jegar**, igumen of the Kovilj monastery (Novi Sad) and of fr **Iakovos Bizaourtis**, igumen of the Petraki monastery in Athens.

As always, the conference is an occasion to meet Christians of various confessions in a climate of profound fraternal exchange. Among the participants were numerous monks and nuns from Orthodox monasteries (Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Mount Sinai, Georgia, Armenia), Catholics and Reformed (Belgium, France, Ital, Switzerland, Hungary), and bishops and official delegates of the Catholic Church, the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow, and of the Orthodox Churches of Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine (Patriarchate of Moscow), of the Apostolic Armenian Church and of the Church of England, and of the World Council of Churches.