

Article

# Logos' Centrality and Expression in Martyria as a Superior Form of Dialogue

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**Abstract:** This paper describes some motivations and outlines some limits regarding the possibility and necessity of interreligious, interconfessional, and interideological dialogue, in an attempt to improve our understanding of Orthodox Christianity's role in these important aspects of domestic and foreign politics. This study aims to resolve the divergent opinions that exist in the Orthodox Church regarding the possibility of remaining in this kind of dialogue. The ancient philosophical mode of dialogue and the modern one are analyzed: dialogue as debate and negotiation. The study begins from the analysis of some technical terms describing the social and spiritual dimensions of dialogue; from the perspective of these spiritual and social dimensions, the possibilities, the potential positive results, and the risks of remaining in dialogue with someone of another confession, belief, or ideology are analyzed. It reveals the evolution of the dialogue's content, its enrichment with the spiritual dimensions of martyrism and exomologesis, and the efficient centrality of the Logos in it, as suggested by the etymological definition of dialogue. It also emphasizes the necessity of a deep understanding of all these spiritual dimensions of dialogue for achieving efficient and fruitful communication with representatives of other social or religious groups. This communication can be seen as a guarantee of peace and social stability.

**Keywords:** theory of dialogue; politic; ecumenical dialogue; martyrism; exomologesis; inter-religious dialogue



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## 1. The Divergent Opinions in the Christian Orthodox View on Ecumenical Dialogue

The efforts in our modern period to enrich the dialogue between religions (Pătru 2014, p. 701), confessional groups (Heller 2019, pp. 464–72), and groups of political ideologies have been continuous as a guarantee for maintaining and promoting social and political peace and stability. Even with these intense efforts, the desired results of these dialogues are far from being realized, with the world, countries, and religions being full of discord, divisions, confessional groups, and conflicts.

Many considerations exist regarding the kinds of dialogue (bilateral, multilateral, dialogue, triologue (Swindler et al. 2013), etc.) and theorizations about how to remain in dialogue (Heller 2019, pp. 472–8). Under the World Council of Churches patronage, open dialogue has occurred of the Christians with Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and Muslims, resulting in the 1971 Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies program; the experience cumulated here served as a framework for a redaction of the Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies (World Council of Churches 1979), first published in 1979, as a basis for various bilateral and multilateral interfaith encounters of the churches that were members of the WCC (Pătru 2014, p. 702). Dialogues of the religious leaders of some countries have been ongoing with those opposing the religious political regimes and rulers of peoples; also debates and even dialogues of the representatives of all kinds of feminist, transgender, revolutionary, extremist, etc., ideologies with the official and common representatives of social and political life around the world.

Even with such an intense effort and endeavor for dialogue, in 1996, the Greek Christian philosopher Christos Yannaras stated:

Today we need a new ecumenism, an ecumenism which will not have as its goal a “dialogue” between traditions and confessions, but rather will manifest a new “coming together” through the encounter of people of any and every tradition and confession. It would be the ecumenism of concrete encounter between those who share a thirst for the life which can conquer death, people who are looking for real answers to the “dead ends” of the civilization in which we live today. This kind of ecumenism is of great importance for us because we Christians are responsible for these dead ends. The ecumenism of the sixties was something very different. It was an ecumenism whose goal was to give the various traditions and confessions a chance to know each other. Each tradition, each Church, affirmed its convictions and its “theories” in order to develop this mutual knowledge. (Yannaras 2004)

It seems that there is a need for something more, something of other quality: a real spiritual encounter between people in dialogue.

Some other voices found the cause of this crisis and inefficiency of dialogue in euro-centrism and, consequently, in the Christian culture, which imposes and induces some false content in the criteria and concepts used in interreligious dialogues (Alatas 2013, pp. 94–105). Heller analyzed the methodology applied in inter-confessional Christian dialogue (Heller 2019, p. 472); the subject content, efficiency, and methodology of the dialogue are real and complex.

In my opinion, although all these researchers are correct in their suppositions, it must be observed and emphasized that the cause of the continued division and partition of the world is that all the theorists of dialogue avoid seeing the Logos and the logic manifested in Creation as compulsory in any dialogue. Christ said, “That they all may be one” (John 17:21) in Him as He is one with Father and with Holy Spirit. Some similar reflections regarding the presence of Christ the Logos in every dialogue are found in the Guidelines on Dialogue mentioned above. It is recommended here that, in dialogue, Christians should search for “a deeper encounter, an opening up, in more than intellectual terms, of each to the concerns of the other”, and “to speak the truth in a spirit of love”, not naively “to be tossed to and fro, and be carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14–5), and thus to provide “expression of love engagement in dialogue which testifies to the love experienced in Christ”. Personally, as a Christian Orthodox Scholar, I felt an urge to write on the topic of interreligious dialogue after reading some clear and straightforward statements of His all Holiness Bartholomew, the current ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople in his encyclical dated 21 February 2010, as these statements below prove the actual crisis of the ecumenical dialogue:

Orthodoxy must be in constant dialogue with the world. *The Orthodox Church does not fear dialogue because truth is not afraid of dialogue.* (our underlining) On the contrary, if Orthodoxy is enclosed within itself and not in dialogue with those outside, it will both fail in its mission, and no longer be the ‘catholic’ and ‘ecumenical’ Church. Instead, it will become an introverted and self-contained group, a ‘ghetto’ on the margins of history. This is why the great Fathers of the Church never feared dialogue with the spiritual culture of their age—indeed even with the pagan idolaters and philosophers of their world—thereby influencing and transforming the civilization of their time and offering us a truly ecumenical Church . . . .

Orthodoxy has no need of either fanaticism or bigotry to protect itself. Whoever believes that Orthodoxy is the truth, does not fear dialogue, because truth has never been endangered by dialogue. In contrast, while all people in our day and age strive to resolve their differences through dialogue, Orthodoxy cannot proceed with intolerance and extremism. (Patriarch Bartholomew 2010)

Although I disagree in many respects with the actual politics of Patriarch Bartholomew, I choose his affirmation regarding the dialogue because of its reference to the ancient Fathers

of the Church who practiced dialogue with all kinds of peoples; I find these statements to be right given the perspective of philosophical and Patristic Tradition, which developed in and through dialogue. This is why I provide my explanation below, principally, in favor of continuing dialogue, while remembering the thoughts of the theologian Olivier Clement, expressed altogether in a dialogue with the ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Therefore, I state that the Orthodox Church “must invent a new style of martyrria (testimony, witness) in society” (Clément 1997, p. 23) in which, “if it is authentic, Christianity must confront man with what is useless but spreads light everywhere, a mysterious reality in its own evidence, which we cannot explain, nor buy but only admire and contemplate. Then existence becomes a celebration, a feast” (Clément 1997, p. 23). Trying to describe this new type of martyrria inspired my study further elaborated below.

Prior to starting my communication, a few statements and arguments must be evoked, similarly righteous, regarding the falsity of the belief of the uselessness, incorrectness, and even malevolence of remaining in dialogue with representatives of other religions and religious confessions, found in a few other sources.

The unwilling attitude toward ecumenical dialogue of some more traditional (Palea 2010; Seraphim of Pireus 2016) groups and churches is relatively well-known. We find the following statement, for example, in a study written by Cosmin Tudor Ciocan, (Ciocan 2016, pp. 307–18) from the Faculty of Theology in Constanța, to be legitimate from the point of view of gnosiology, out of which the author discusses the topic:

On the one hand, Roman Catholic theology would propose the admittance of truth regarding this human knowledge, “without the support of grace”, in conclusion, a natural knowledge of the world and, last but not least, of God, while the theology of our Church, pursuing the Palamite tradition of uncreated energies, finds itself in the impossibility to accept such a proposal. According to the authentic Orthodox theological learning, “ecumenical” dialogue is neither possible nor acceptable, because any dialogue starts from the theory of discovering a meta-truth (to the participants); while, as long as Orthodox theology is conscious of Christ’s unique Truth it possesses and defends, can she ever accept a negotiation of “truth” with third parties?

The context in which we must understand the statement above is one of scientific gnosiology, as the author dedicates his study, saying clearly that:

Similarly—proposing the Palamite teaching of *Deus absconditus*, of God hidden in the darkness of the ineffable and Whom the human mind not only cannot search, but neither can understand in case it finds Him—Orthodox theology is, in the immediacy of science, in the same position with ecumenism: it cannot accept dialogue with the science from its Palamite position. Because this means that it would be a promotion of an alternative way to reach God, outside revelation. This revelation, according to the Palamite teaching can be only “super-natural”, namely beyond anything supposed by the natural (reason, research, experiment, philosophical meditation etc.). (Ciocan 2016, p. 313)

However, although perfectly correct in the limits and the inability to naturally know at the human level, “without the support of grace”, we consider certain expressions from the above statement to be provocative and essential (meta-truth: the truth outside of the world, the truth of Orthodoxy as different from that of other ideologies or religions) for understanding the real content and state in which knowledge and the dialogue can be realized. I chose Fr. Ciocan’s considerations because the conclusions he draws regarding the dialogue between science and theology can open a new understanding and openness for inter-religious and interconfessional dialogue. After he overviewed the complex rapports between science and theology regarding the natural and supernatural possibilities of knowledge and dialogue between them, he concluded that:

... in the dialogue with science, theology should seriously promote not so much patristic ideas (sometimes out of date with the indisputable discoveries of current

technology and science, and to “adapt” them to scientific ideas), but the principles of where they always started—i.e., God is behind creation as *perpetum movens* . . . . (Ciocan 2016, p. 317)

Fr. Ciocan is emphasizing the necessity to search for what is essential in a natural phenomenon researched by science; I also consider that what is essential in the inter-religious and interconfessional dialogue is the Logos, the deep meanings of the reasons (logoi) affirmed and how we are affirming them, as the Creation also plasticizes, hides, and reveals these reasons.

In the two opposing statements mentioned above, we have two different perspectives on dialogue as a logical debate of ideas in accordance with the envisaged purposes, mainly (1) that of demounting foreign doctrines (pagan, philosophical, heretic, etc.) in order to ensure Christian doctrine prevails, the way the Holy Fathers used to practice dialogue with ancient culture, etc.; or (2) that of agreeing on some doctrinal points that may be common to realize a synthesis expressed by a meta-truth: the way dialogue was and is practiced as negotiation in ecclesial, social doctrine disputes or in disputes with modern science. The first type of dialogue is more similar to the type seen as a species of ancient culture; the other type is more of being about discussion and negotiation. Nevertheless, in religion, several other aspects and spiritual dimensions must be considered to understand the nature and the finality of dialogue. There are, firstly, the dimensions of theological virtues and their content and the way participants practice them in dialogue; thus, it is the difference between ancient and modern dialogue. Keeping to the essential principles with the conscience that these principles are grounded in a metaphysical realm and having a real personal life as God or gods were specific to the ancient method of dialogue in contrast with the modern one in which the truth(s) is/are relativized.

Dialogue, such as the *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Against Celsus*, etc., pursued the ancient philosophical and patristic tradition and did not only suppose “a negotiation of truth”, but was also understood as a means of birthing (maieutic) and confession of truth (martyria), of revealing the meta-truth to others (mythical in the case of ancient philosophy) or revealing the mystically unique truth of Christ that Orthodoxy supposes. The first formulas of doctrinal Christian Tradition were conceived by means of this practice. Certain species of ancient culture and literature were adopted by Christianity as well; these adopted elements constituted the foundation for the later manuals of doctrine in which the formulas comprised in the Creed were expressed; they also evoked cataphatical knowledge, “in mirror and in part” (1 Co 13:12). This dialogue presents an encounter between the supernatural and natural knowledge of Christ offered to the people when they were christened and through which they lived in the Church as the imitators of Christ, the incarnate Logos. If the Holy Fathers of the Early Church had been limited and blocked only within the apophatical doctrine of *Deus absconditus*, the theory that states that God is hidden in the ineffable darkness and Whom the human mind not only cannot search, but cannot understand in case it finds Him, there would not have been a dialogue in the least with the culture and philosophy of the époques through which the Church had passed throughout its history. Likewise, there would not have been any writings about God. The Church would have remained an agnostic self-isolated and self-excluded denomination due to an autistic faith in a God totally transcendent and ineffable.

Thus, to avoid this perspective and to more precisely understand what dialogue represents, how it is an instrument, and how it is a means of communication, we must contextually analyze some constitutive elements of dialogue, including how it used to be understood in ancient philosophy and in the patristic tradition. This is provided to more clearly elucidate what each of these two traditions, evoked by the texts of the authors quoted above, reference. The incompatibility between palamite and ecumenical knowledge through dialogue can be solved through the parallel between the incompatibility of scientific and theological gnosiology solved elegantly by Fr. Ciocan, revealing God as the essential principle in Creation. The scientific methodology I use in my communication is conceptual and principial. I do not provide many examples but I present the etymological

analysis of some philosophical and juridical terms (dialogue and *martyria*) to reveal other spiritual dimensions needed as the content for a fruitful and edifying dialogue, i.e., the divine Logos and His complete *martyria*. Based on this analysis, I expose a few personal thoughts regarding the need, possibilities, and limits of dialogue.

## 2. Dia-Logos

More exactly, on the one hand, we have dialogue as a species and modality of maieutic of the truth found in literature and philosophy. His Holiness Bartholomew refers to this when he says that “great Fathers of the Church never feared dialogue with the spiritual culture of their age—indeed even with the pagan idolaters and philosophers of their world”. On the other hand, we have dialogue that can be understood as a conference of debates and negotiations of some doctrinarian points. Participation in this type of dialogue is not recommended due to the futility and even harmfulness of dialogue with someone who is evil-disposed, wrongly oriented in logics, and narrow-minded in overcoming or transcending their own doctrines or beliefs. However, the second form of dialogue includes the first, which offers the real content and the procedures or necessary elements to define dialogue. The difference is only evident in the fact that in dialogue-conference, the participants already have their own doctrinarian positions very clearly and rigidly specified; the acceptance, even partial, of the opponent’s position is impossible unless the dialogue partners retrieve or position themselves within a mutual logic that ensures, in the end, common grounds for better understanding each other’s point of view.

David Bohm explains the etymological meaning of the word “intelligence”, which comes from Latin; by this definition, we must understand the effort of the human mind to reveal the rationalities of the Logos disseminated in Creation. These rationalities are interlinked in a complex unity entirely organized through the logic of the Logos. Through dialogue, its participants are trying to understand the Logos, to pass through the Logos, through Its specific logic.

The word intelligence is the present tense of *inter-legere*. *Legere* means ‘to choose’ or ‘to speak’. It is derived from the root *leg*, which is Greek for ‘to gather’. So, intelligence (*inter-legere*) is ‘the act of gathering from between,’ and the intellect, being in the past tense, is ‘what has been gathered from between.’ However, *legere* also implies the notion of ‘to speak’. I am taking this more generally as meaning ‘to express.’ When we combine the notions of gathering and expressing we get the picture of an intelligence that is constantly gathering from between and expressing itself. What is it that is being gathered and why does it need expressing? ([van den Heuvel 1996](#))

In other words, central and essential to dialogue is, as its name is understood when explained by great thinkers such as David Bohm and William Isaac:

the Logos or logics, because, ‘dialogue’ comes from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Logos* means ‘the word’, or in our case we would think of ‘the meaning of the word’. And *dia* means ‘through’—It doesn’t mean ‘two’ . . . The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through and between us. ([Bohm 2004](#), p. 1)

In the most ancient meaning of the word, *logos* meant ‘to gather together,’ and suggested an intimate awareness of the relationships among things in the natural world. In that sense, *logos* may be best rendered in English as ‘relationship.’ The Book of John in the New Testament begins: “In the beginning was the Word (*logos*)”. We could now hear this as “In the beginning was the Relationship. ([Isaacs 1999](#))

In ancient philosophy, there was another understanding of the cosmos, of the world that was conceived as being originated through the Word; there was an identification of the natural reason with the Logos or the Mind of God. Thus, dialogue is understood as

the means of deciphering or discovering this Great Logos, having in it some mystagogical functions that are uniting us in His cosmic and holistic dimensions.

I see a cosmic order (the whole) that is selecting and collecting things and throwing them up to see if they fit somewhere. When something fits, we have a new meaning. The new meanings emerge by thinking and talking about the things that bubble up during the dialogue. The whole, therefore, acts as a source; it constantly comes up with something for us to look at. That means, we are an essential part of this cosmic order. During dialogue we are in direct contact with the whole, which (to us) is unknown. A dialogue is a dance with the unknown. That means, dialogue is part of a cosmic process, which is potentially creative but unpredictable (at least from our perspective). So, it's not surprising that we get unpredictable results. What appears chaotic and meaningless to us, is in fact the operation of a very high order of intelligence. Out of this "chaos" could emerge creative (but possibly subversive) insights and understandings, but only when we don't expect anything. (van den Heuvel 1996)

The ancient philosophical or patristic dialogue, far from being founded only on the grounds of natural reason, involves, as synthesized by Norman D. Livergood (n.d.), a "phenomenon of maieutic psychagogy": "Socrates' purpose (through his dialogues) is to move the participants—and us readers/listeners—beyond the ordinary world of meanings and experiences to a higher state of awareness." To the participants in the dialogue, Socrates is saying:

we've experienced that the knowledge required for helping to improve human souls—our true goal—cannot be attained by trying to define a word such as 'courage,' is not a technical knowledge attained by being taught by self-appointed experts such as the sophists, and is not even gained by being able to demonstrate it in specific behaviors. The knowledge we seek can only be attained by the dialectical process we're engaged in: opening ourselves to inspiration from our Higher Consciousness, admitting and acknowledging our false presumption of knowledge, and persevering in a genuine search for experiential understanding of a Higher Idea. (Isaacs 1999)

We can affirm the same about the patristic dialogues, which, in their apologetic or exegetic intentions, conduct the soul and the mind to find and participate in the mystery of the incarnated Logos.

Through antique and patristic dialogue, we are confronting a situation of consciousness opening to the higher domain of Ideas and Forms, even if this is not sometimes identified directly with the Christian Logos. It is also an undefined and indeterminate situation, yet of some rigid doctrine, which provides for the participants of the dialogue a real spiritual edification in their path to discover the Truth. As Hermann (1839) states about this situation:

We find the seeds of all philosophical systems in Plato's thought, without being itself one of these systems; it is the idea of philosophy, the crucible in which the different forms of philosophy are born, the unchanging sun in the middle of philosophy's planetary movements and formations. . . . Plato philosophizes where others indoctrinate, he lifts one's spirit to the pure essence of the Idea where others degrade and confine it to the letter of a system. This is why Platonism is the very spirit of philosophy or Philosophy Itself. (Hermann 1839)

The art of questioning, or the *maieutic* or the *elenchus*, as the principal method of persuasion in the platonic dialogues, is not only a "form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presumptions" (Socratic Method n.d.). It also has an axiological, cathartic, and self-edifying function for the soul, because it:

reveals self-contradictions in the participants' positions to guard against taking another person as an expert when he wasn't. It also reveals beliefs the participants

didn't know they had; it involves purging the soul of internal and external obstacles that interfere with learning; it helps the participant become aware of his ignorance and redirects him towards a virtuous life, beneficial to his soul. (Livergood n.d.)

Thus, dialogue implicitly provides a function of spiritual formation, putting the soul in communion with the domain of the divine Ideas and Forms that transform someone inner structure and spiritual life. This was also assumed by the first Christian apologists, who saw the active and efficient presence of the Logos in all aspects of human life. They understood the presence of the Logos in their apologies and dialogues with the pagan world and culture as the constitutive factor of being human, person, and Christian. They were exactly referring, in this regard, to the great Greek thinkers in ancient philosophy, who were excelling in the art of dialogue as expression of their "life with the Word" before the Word had incarnated Himself as human in the world.

St. Justin the Philosopher alleged the need to live, to be in communion, in synergy with the Logos in order to define the identity of being a Christian. However, the ancient philosophers used to live according to the Logos, being in synergy with the seminal reasons (logoi) of the Logos spread in the entire Creation before the incarnation of the Logos. These ancient philosophers defined their own self as a person or personality potentiated by these seminal reasons; they defined themselves as persons also living in communion with the Logos:

Christ is the One born of God, His Word, to which every human being takes part; that is what we learned and what we stated. Those living according to the Word are Christians, even if they were considered atheists. Such were the Greek Socrates and Heraclitus and those alike . . . and many others whose names and facts being too many to enumerate here, we give up. Similarly, those who lived more against the Word were depraved and enemies of Christ and murderers of those who lived with the Word. And those who lived and live with the Word are Christians. (Justin 1867, Apology I, chapter 46 p. 474)

St. Justin, therefore, identifies human reason with the Logos, Christ the Savior, and considers those who lived righteously before Christ to be Christian, explaining in detail the process and the degrees of real transformation of old, pagan humanity through the Logos, mainly mediated in ancient philosophy by dialogue.

In his second Apology, St. Justin speaks about a divine law given by God to all things and phenomena in nature. He somehow identifies it with "the righteous reason", with the moral one, provided by the "Logos spermatikos (*sperma tou logou*)" (Justin 1867, II:8, p. 511). This Logos is innate in all humankind, for which philosophers and poets had to suffer and were persecuted as much as the Christians. Those who did not know Christ "endeavored in all ways to live according to the Word", although they participated only in part in this Logos spermatikos, "contemplating only in part the Word" by effort, formulating "some partial truth" that used to contain "many times things which were contrary" (Justin 1867, II:10, p. 513). This Word being "spread in the world" as Logos spermatikos was "inside them innately" through this certain nature "being able to see the truth only very lightly" (Justin 1867, II:13, p. 516). Those who knew Christ "possesses the knowledge and contemplation of the Word, Christ, entirely". "And our things exceed any other human learning by the fact that we have in Christ the Word entirely, Who revealed Himself incarnated, as Word and soul" (Justin 1867, II:10, p. 513). Therefore, "one thing is to possess a seed and a likening with personal talents, and another thing is the object itself, whose participation (metousia) and imitation (mimesis) derive from His grace" (Justin 1867, II:8, p. 511).

In this communication, a gradual, widespread, and transformative presence of the Logos spermatikos in humans and in Creation is shown. It also provides a logical demonstration and foundation of the possibility and necessity of being in dialogue with the pagan and unchristian world because we have, as Christians, Christ the Logos in His wholeness and integrity. It is our duty to try to share His integral presence to the others that do

not know Him, even if this knowledge is expressed in a rational and partially cataphatic descriptive way through dialogue, and is not shared in a mystical or sacramental mode. In addition, expressed here are the mediation of and the participation in the grace or the uncreated energies of Logos through this kind of dialogue, even in the partial presence of the Logos through His seminal reasons.

### 3. Martyria

In the patristic Christian dialogues, the spiritual functions accomplished by the Logos' presence and through His unfolded logic in the philosophical dialogues would be more enriched with some other means of spiritual transformation, for example *martyria* (witness, testimony) and *exomologesis* (confession) (Cressy 1983). If the *maieutic* or the *elenchus* method mainly reveals the logic of the Logos, these other two elements of dialogue principally reveal the meta-logic of the Logos exposed in the supernatural revelation.

The patristic authors, and especially Origen, mentioned nine different kinds of *martyria* as the content of the dialogue in the ancient world; the meaning of the word *martyria* migrates from the legal or juridical domain to other more general and theological realms:

The first category concerns those instances in which a court or legal proceedings are explicitly mentioned, which many believe to be the original usage of the root. This category focuses on how *martyria* provides proof, eyewitness testimony, and even false witness in legal settings. The second category concerns extensions of this legal use, and can also be divided into the three subsections distinguished in the legal category: (1) proof or confirmation, (2) eyewitness, and (3) false witness. While similar to the legal proceedings, these uses show how the root comes to be applied to non-legal scenarios and life more generally. The third and final category considered here concerns those instances in which the authority of *martyria* is derived from a divine source. This category can also be divided into three subsections: (1) *martyria* from direct divine action, (2) prophetic *martyria*, and (3) scriptural proof text *martyria*. (Smith 2008, pp. 24–5)

This classification reveals the changing method of argumentation in the philosophical and religious dialogues brought about in the world by the Church and Christianity, leaning especially on the scriptural proofs (also understood as *martyrias*) engaged in dialogue with all kinds of *testimonia* or *martyria* from other pagan or Judaic religions and doctrines. The new content of the dialogue is offered by the possibility of invoking God and His teachings and miracles as witnesses and guarantors in the human religious and philosophical debates and dialogues, as was stated, for example, by Philo from Alexandria, in the Bible and by other ancient authors (Philon D'Alexandrie 1975).

Philo writes, "for what is better than to practice a lifelong veracity, and to have God as our witness thereto" (*De Specialibus Legibus* 2.10). In Hebrews 2:4, Paul explains, "God added his testimony (synepimartyrinton) by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will". Here, God's miracles are taken as *martyria* to confirm Jesus' teaching on salvation and to persuade others to accept these teachings. God and the Holy Spirit are also frequently cited as either the subjects of *martyria* or its guarantors (Acts 13:22; Hebrews 11:2–5, 39). Origen cites God as an ultimate authority that cannot be denied. More specifically, God witnesses the true testimony (*FragmPs* 118.57.20) (Origen 1883), and His witness is for all life (*Selecta in Psalmos* 12.1080.6) (Origen 2008). Acts 15:8 explains, "And God, who knows the human heart, testified (martyrisen) to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us". In this case, God does not use a human to provide His *martyria*, as is the case with the prophetic *martyria* below, but rather another divine agent, the Holy Spirit. Finally, in 1 Peter 1:11, we have the comment "that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance (promartyromenon) to the suffering destined for Christ and the subsequent glory". Origen is affirming, "For all of the evil thought, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses (pseudomartyriai), and slanders are plants not planted by the heavenly Father" (*HomJr* 1.14.41) (Origen 1976). (Smith 2008, pp. 48–9).



The debates are now occurring between true and false martyrria and the dialogue is now a dialectical dispute not of the extracted and exposed logical construct from myths or other kinds of ancient knowledge, but, principally, of the deduced logical and sometimes meta-logical constructs from revelatory texts used as martyrria in the doctrinarian debates. The aim of these debates is usually the conversion to the belief in God, and they suppose conformity of the moral and spiritual life of the witness (martyr: sufferer for a cause) with God and His moral law. Thus, the dialogue acquires a personalistic dimension that requires from the witness a personal identification with their God and His knowledge and wisdom.

The Holy Scripture is a supernatural revelation that forms a strong source of *martyria* in these debates, which transposes the participant to the dialogue into the logic of faith, as Origen affirms: “If we seek to bring these words up to the Savior according to the worthiness of the Word and according to the truth, it is necessary to take the Scriptures as witnesses (*martyrae*). For without witnesses (*amartyroi*), our interpretation and exegeses are unfaithful” (*HomJr* 1.7.28) (Origen 1976). Additionally, the proof texts could be obtained from the classical philosophical dialogues, as Jordan Smith summarized, or they could be produced, as Origen points out in his dialogue *Against Celsus*, from false and unreasonable witnesses and arguments to negatively influence others. These kinds of arguments must be opposed by providing a stronger and more reliable martyrria. Origen tells us that Celsus “has often already been found guilty of false witness (*pseudomartyriòn*) and of unreasonable accusations (*alogon katigoriòn*)” (*ContCel* 6.38.30) (Origen 1965) (Smith 2008, pp. 48–9).

Clement also refers to the writings of the Greeks as sources of martyrria and cites them in his writings. In *Stromata* 5.2.14.1 (Clement of Alexandria 2004), Clement refers to several of Plato’s dialogues, including the *Crito* and *Phaedo*, as well as to other Greek poets as support (*martyria*) for his point about faith, love, and hope. Thus, on some points, Christians can cite other authoritative texts to support the positions described in the Scripture. The distinction between these two is that prophetic martyrria concerns passages in which humans provide the testimony, whereas Scriptural prooftext martyrria concerns cases in which the written text is the focus (Smith 2008, p. 54).

Finally, the debate and the logic of testimonia or martyrria are transforming the participants in dialogue into confessors or witnesses of their God and of their faith, the dialogue exactly being the intellectual tool and the spiritual environment to realize this personal metamorphosis of humans. Thus, through martyrria as the means and scope of the dialogue, we are effectively entering into another semantic sphere of the spiritual transformation, the means derived from this word largely expressing the possibilities supposed by this content of dialogue. The interlocutor of the dialogue could become a *confessor of his faith*, a *martyr sacrificed for his faith*. Likewise, there are other means of spiritual transformation through the inner dialogue of every believer; a *confessor (exomologitis) of his proper conscience* in his prayers and ascetic practices or in spiritual writings, such as Augustin’s *Confessions*, *Retractiones*, and *Soliloquies*; John Cassian’s *Conlationess*, Siluan of Athos’ *Spiritual Confessions*; or, generally, any other spiritual work [8] of the great faithful believers that exposes their life of faith, offering themselves as models of spiritual transformation through faith.

Here, I must emphasize these other kinds of transformations and dimensions implied by martyrria because, in their understanding reposes the success of the dialogue as an act of conversion and spiritual transformation, and the necessary and compulsory limits in someone’s spiritual transformation through dialogue.

In addition to invoking the proof texts from authoritative sources as a *confessor of his faith* could do, a *martyr sacrificed for his faith* or a *confessor (exomologitis) of his proper conscience*, are identifying themselves completely with their faith, but are also sacrificing themselves completely for their faith. The dialogue in which they are implying themselves totally is acquiring much deeper spiritual and sacrificial dimensions, speaking not only through external words but, mainly, through their existential deeds. This kind of confessor was, and this kind of martyrria has brought, Jesus Christ in dialogue with His unlawful interlocutors, or other saints and martyrs in the existential dialogue with their judges and

murderers. These kinds of confessors are those who expose their hidden life full of failures, temptations, and spiritual trials in their dialogue of faith with the world.

The most persuasive example of this other type of nonverbal language by which martyria and, implicitly, the martyr existentially expressed themselves is the Savior's Sacrifice on the Cross as total communication. Christ, the Logos is expressing Himself, within the ontological dialogue of salvation, as reordering and reorganizing the reason of the world decomposed by sin. The follow-up of this communication or offering by means of this language of acts with significance and content that structured the world is the fact that the world is reorganized as Church, the Jews are spread as positive leaven in the formation of the new Church; the Roman Empire is transformed into *oikumene*—a space of dwelling for Christ; what is false being replaced by Truth.

Only Christianity, having as precursors the prophetic language of the Old Testament, and of a Diogenes that would look attentively for the real human within the walls of a citadel, could confer to non-verbal language the significations of such radical transformations of the world and cosmos. Thus, the dialogue is being enriched by the Christian martyria with its efficient endowments of theurgia.

But, even in this kind of factual and existential dialogue, the confessor could be despised by the other interlocutors, as Jesus Christ was despised, and this must be considered carefully by those who engage in dialogue.

#### 4. The Immediate or Ultimate Purpose of Dialogue: Accomplishing Dia-Logos through Martyria

This short philosophical and etymological demonstration of the intrinsic connection between dialogue, martyria, and exomologesis is a rich argument regarding the need for and utility of dialogue, including the inter-religious and interconfessional one, especially underlining how this dialogue must be performed, namely by centering it through love in Christ the Logos.

Real dialogue, with profound and efficient results at the communion level, may be performed not only through Christ the Logos, according to the definition of dia-Logos, but also in Christ exclusively, in His body the Church, who is founded by the extension of intratrinitarian love as a pattern of real communion. In the first case, classical dialogue as the production and logical development of arguments and confessions supposes the Logos as an intermediary. The second case, dialogue as exomologesis, supposes the settlement of participants in the Logos, and the dwelling of the Logos in the participants.

These two types of dialogue correspond to the two possible purposes of any dialogue, as described by the modern philosopher Martin Buber within his existential philosophy that explores the Me–You–That relationships, to emphasize the necessary conditions of conducting any dialogue sincerely and efficiently.

The *immediate* purpose of any dialogue is the convergence of opinions, and the acquirement of knowledge, mutual trust, and cooperation in different fields of common interest. The *ultimate* purpose of any dialogue is ideological, spiritual, and sacramental communion, even ontological-graceful, sometimes sacramentally mediated through one another's love, through an identity, proximity, and spiritual intimacy, which transform the participants of different dialogue groups into members/limbs of the same body, of the same community that shares the same faith and ideals.

Understanding that it is not possible to reach this ultimate purpose without the effort and the necessary actions of the immediate purpose—this would cancel, to a large extent, the role of dialogue itself—the distinction is still important because, in the immediacy of achieving the ultimate purpose, the partners of dialogue live a Me–You relationship, contrary to the Me–That relationship within the dialogue that aims only at immediate, practical, material, relational, and worldly purposes.

As Martin Buber expressed it:

the relationship I—It (Ich-Es) indicates the relation between a knowing subject and the object of his knowledge, between a person that possesses and the thing

possessed. The relationship I—Thou is an interchangeable relationship. The difference between these two types of relations—on the one side I-Thou, on the other side I-It—dedicates to the essential duality in which the world—nature and society—present themselves to man: in one case, as a presence, as existential engagement, as a really experienced embracement of complementarity in spirit; in the other case, as experience, knowledge and rational possession. (Buber 1992, p. 15)

However, the means to fulfill “existential engagement” is the spiritual dimension of confession as martyrria and exomologesis practiced within dialogue. The lack of this dimension, amongst other things, which continues to be absent in a desacralized and de-Christianized society (Christianity is the one that brought this spiritual dimension of personalized dialogue as confession (martyria) of truth and as exomologesis) (Cressy 1983), maintains the subjects of dialogue in the triviality of some superficial relationships far from the real communion and salvation.

The usefulness, efficiency, and opportunity of dialogue are therefore defined in the context of the immediate or ultimate purposes of its participants. From the perspective of the *distance* or *intimacy* existing between the dialogue participants, a distant, impersonal relationship with a principial, cold-blooded, trust- and love-lacking dialogue maintains an experimental, acknowledgeable, and even usable relationship, a mutual reification of participants, whose utility is relative and even damaging. Contrarily, an intimate, personal relationship with a warm, dialogue full of trust, hope, and mutual love introduces a relationship of “mutual participation, of mutual expression and replying, that makes possible the ontological event of authentic meeting” (Buber 1992, p. 17) between two people, whose utility is the maximum efficiency for the internal and external missions of the Church and, in general, for the unity in diversity and plurality (Buber 1992, p. 18) of the world’s existence.

However, the two general purposes of dialogue are those envisaged in part by one of the contradictory situations evoked at the beginning of this study. Dialogue is necessary and must be practiced as an exercise of logic and of evoking confessions, leading to what may be called the immediate purpose of dialogue. This leading purpose facilitates the reciprocal, reasonable knowledge of different groups. This is how His Holiness Bartholomew, the actual ecumenical Patriarch, saw and understood dialogue, and recommended how it should be carried out. From this perspective, dialogue is preferred and useful because it shares and facilitates mutual knowledge from the distant, but still existent, perspective of full communion; it facilitates the exchange of knowledge and information that may become an exchange of energies and grace, because the passage from one purpose to another is facilitated by the Logos Who works *between*, but more especially *within*, participants in dialogue, with the dialogue being the movement or the external action equivalent to the transformation and mutual internal shaping experienced by participants in the dialogue.

## 5. Conclusions

If we wish to obtain substantial results in ecumenical dialogue, we must enrich the true presence of Christ the Logos in all the members of the Christian community, in all the spiritual dimensions and levels of the dialogue as I attempted to describe in this study. We see, as did the first Fathers of the Church, that dialogue is necessary, unavoidable, and compulsory for the Church and the life and existence of humanity. In this way, the actual hierarchy of the Church, such as His all Holiness Bartholomew, the current ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, will not be considered wrong in asking for dialogue, and dialogue would be a constructive means for the evolution of the Church and humanity, if Christ could be understood as Logos in the center of this compulsory dialogue of existence.

Yet, due to this transforming activity (that *logosifies*) induced by the Logos over those that stand in dialogue, we must not exclude the possibility of dialogue with those of other denominations, of other historical Churches, of other religions or ideologies, because every

confrontation and temptation-suffering is allowed by God so that people are tempted and clarify their conscience through it.

Regarding Fr. Ciocan's position, who only mentions and meditates on the incompatibility of any possible equivalence of scientific and palamite gnosiology as well as of palamite orthodoxy and ecumenism regarding dialogue, I disagree only with this somehow abrupt conclusion. However, his emphasis on the essential principle (the central place of God in Creation), which must be cultivated in gnosiology, provides the real and symmetric solution, also for dialogue (the Logos as central in dia-Logos). The positive outcomes resulting from here are important and special, and I intend to write a study about the central and medial role of the divine Logos in Saint Trinity as a model and ordered manifestation through Logos of the divine reasons in Creation and Church.

The apophatic and incomprehensible nature of God and the limited capacity of humankind to know and explain any revelation of God, cannot be real causes hindering the possibility of dialogue. Conversely, the access to the richness of the ineffable and undefined ocean of the uncreated energies transforms the participant in dialogue within an infinite source of wisdom and spiritual light and love to share in dialogue, as Saint Paul practiced in his missionary activity. Thus, I affirm the possibility of dialogue with other confessions and religions as ancient apologists practiced, and I reject only the radical position mentioned by Fr. Ciocan, because we are finding an authentic example of a similar position in practicing inter-religious dialogue, if we are daring to see a correct hermeneutical logical argument in the vision of God by Saint Paul, which was a palamite experience of uncreated energies of God in the beginning of the Christian era. Saint Paul said that his "knowledge is in part" and in mirror (*speculum, ainigmata*) (1 Co 13:12), even if he had the experience of the divine light for over fourteen years (2 Co 12:1–4). He stayed in dialogue with the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:16–34), with the pagans in Lystra (Acts 14:11–8), and all the time with the Jews after he had that divine vision. This means that for Saint Paul there was compatibility between palamite gnosiology and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. In that dialogue, there was a development of arguments from the poet Arethas as well as from the supernatural revelation. The positive outcome from this authentic example is the necessity of having instructed and spiritual peoples to remain in interreligious, interconfessional, and interideological dialogue, and to have serious and genuine agendas and motivations to debate and argue in dialogue.

In their often-cited study (*The Kingdom strikes back*), Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Winter and Hawthorne 1999, pp. 195–213) revealed that every time the Church, in its historical evolution, has avoided undertaking missions toward the pagan and unchristian nations, in the next historical period, these pagan and unchristian tribes and nations came as invaders to the Christian parts of the world, forcing them to mix with them and, finally, convert them to Christianity. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Co 5:6) of the world. This means that throughout history, there have been places and times of compulsory dialogue and of defining the peoples and nations in their encounter with the Logos through the forced, if not desired, confrontation, martyrria, and confession of faith.

It is Christ's mediatory quality and position as Logos of Creation, of the entire world, that evolved or regressed disjunctively from His knowledge as Logos or the absolute Reason of Creation, which allows engagement in the inter-religious and interconfessional dialogue aiming toward the logical, philosophical, and metaphysical demonstration of the absolute superiority of Christ's truth in His Creation, the Church, even in comparison and competition with other non-Christian religions or Christian denominations. The Logos shares grace and life all the time with the entire Creation, and only those who refuse life implicitly refuse grace and truth.

All Christians have to share something more about Christian truth than the pagan or unchristian. Saint Justin the Martyr expressed a mindset of being Christian in an epoch where the sects and confession were not those to represent Christianity and the Church in front of pagan emperors, but the philosophical style of dialogue was cultivated as a means of presenting someone's identity in front of the Roman Empire society. The necessity

of dialogue was perceived as compulsory in that epoch because every Christian, as a member of the Orthodox Catholic (kat holon: conform with the wholeness) Church, had received potentially Christ in His wholeness and integrity, but if they were not struggling to fulfill the virtues and the truth of Christ, they could be far away from Christ's wholeness and integrity. Conversely, a Christian of another confession, or even a pagan, fulfilling the commandments and virtues described in the Holy Scriptures or in the natural moral law could be closer to Christ's wholeness and integrity, although these qualities are not shared to them sacramentally through baptism. This is why Jesus said after presenting and explaining the parable of the sower: "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Lk 8:18). The seed of the Word of God must be shared through preaching and dialogue to not disappear and leave alone and empty those who hear but not share it; humans must have a doxologic attitude: they must constantly search to preach and glorify God. This perspective is hard to accept and practice in our secularized world. Thus, the "lighted candle" remains "covereth with a vessel, or putteth under a bed", and the secret or the mystery of the Word shall not be made manifest (Lk 8:16–7). This is why Saint Paul said that "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Co. 10:12–3) because the believer's foundation is the virtuality of the uncreated energy (the faith is the *hypostasis ton aoraton*, the substance of the unseen things (Heb. 11:1) and must be actualized from and through the uncreated energies of God; and in other places: "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him" (1 Co 8:1–3). Only love puts humans in the real state of martyria and exomologesis that is needed for a real dialogue in which the participants could know each other through love. "Wholeness and integrity" represent generic names for the uncreated energy, or glory, of Christ, and all the Creation of God shares in these uncreated energies, but differentiated in function of their openness and love for God the Logos. All the kingdoms and species from Creation share in providential and sustaining energies, but only those who love God share in His filial grace or in His personal energies. It is God who looks at the hearts of believers or even unbelievers to see their love. This is also affirmed by some exponents of the extreme oriental spirituality:

Prayer is a dialogue with the ultimate truth within. It is the realization of the truth that God exists everywhere and in offering a prayer one experiences His presence all-round. Through meditation one realizes that a prayer becomes a bridge between a human being and the ultimate truth. Rishis practiced meditation to feel the presence of that super power which keeps the universe going in harmony. (Mahajan 2007, p. 1658)

This means that through prayer and attention dedicated to God, everyone can share His uncreated energies that reveal His wholeness and integrity and the ultimate truth. Although the Orthodox Church preserves the treasure of the Truth, wholeness, and integrity of Christ's doctrine, only those who love Christ the Logos are saved as children of God. It is also possible to be saved as a sinner, as an employee, as a slave, and as a fulfiller of the natural moral law, etc. St. Justin the Martyr expressed this fact: all the peoples, even the pagan philosophers and poets, partially share the uncreated energies and rationalities of Logos as they "endeavored in all ways to live according to the Word", and we, as Christians, as we sacramentally receive Christ, are more indebted to share with others these uncreated energies and rationalities, remaining in dialogue with other peoples from other religions and ideologies.

Proving this theory in the modern world as a follow-up to interconfessional and inter-religious dialogue, although it remained static for a century in percentage ( $\approx 30\%$  of the world population), Christianity still increased in the geographical spaces where people did not refuse life, preserving themselves in the logics of life (Africa, Asia, and Latin America where inter-religious and interconfessional dialogue provided an essential contribution to missions). Christianity decreased in percentage where, through idolatry, luxury, and

modernism—the refusal of Christ’s Truth—catastrophic demographic situations occurred (in Europe, North America, etc.). In this case, dialogue, in all its forms, is becoming sterile, sophistic, and even destructive, leading to a general confusion amongst the untutored people that have been trying to preserve themselves in the logics of life.

Practicing the dialogue on the superior levels of confession and exomologesis, the spiritual dimensions will intensify the presence of the transforming the uncreated energies of the Logos in those involved in dialogue. It aims to realize the ultimate purpose of dialogue, “the ontological event of meeting” and spiritual communion only if all the participants are centering themselves in Christ the Logos as the center of the dialogue, as suggested by the etymology of the word dialog (dia-logos). Notably, in the case of interreligious dialogue, the representatives of other religions are abiding in their soul other gods, deities, or spiritual entities or energies, as the Christians who are abiding Christ through the Sacraments of the Baptism and the Eucharist. This could decisively influence the result of the dialogue, because only the spiritual dimensions of martyria and exomologesis practiced in dialogue could help in changing and converting the participants to Christ the Logos, convincing and expelling these other gods, deities, and spiritual entities and energies from their soul. Those who are participating in interreligious dialogues must remember that Christ, and generally gods, do not easily renounce to what belongs ontologically to them: “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Is 42:8, 11).

Despite the restraint and retention toward dialogue that is justified when the dialogue partners do not want to preserve themselves in the elementary logics (of the Logos) of rationality, love, and a desire to learn from another’s experience, dialogue is still necessary and desired instead of an open conflict and war. At this level, the ultimate Truth is not yet compulsory, requested from each of those involved in dialoguing, because this is the One searched by dialogue, but honesty, wisdom, lack of villainy, logics, and enough competence are required to engage in a fruitful dialogue that should achieve the immediate and, possibly, ultimate targeted purposes. If these qualities of benevolence and wisdom do not exist, general misunderstanding will persist and conflict, schism, and war will be inevitable.

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