

The Contemporary World and Post-Conciliar Orthodoxy

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In January 2020, the Ecumenical Patriarchate recently published a document entitled “For the Life of the World: Towards a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church”. The “Social Ethos” document can be described as an omnibus of positions on the Church’s stance with regard to today’s socially significant questions. The purpose of this document is to offer a reference on vital issues and challenges in the world today in ways that are consistent with living as Orthodox Christians. It addresses important issues of our contemporary society in categorical form, such as: Ecumenical Relations, Church and State, Dialogues with other Faiths, War, Democracy, Science and Technology, Consumerism, Women, Poverty, Human Rights, Justice, Sexuality and so on.

It is not the first attempt, though, of the Orthodox milieu to express and construct an Orthodox social theology. In 2000, the Moscow Patriarchate composed a document regarding “The Basis of the Social Concept”. The Holy and Great Council of Crete, which convened in 2016 issued a document entirely dedicated to contemporary social issues, entitled “The Mission of the Orthodox Church in Today’s World”. The same kind of references are to be found also in the 2016 Council’s “Encyclical”. The theological approach of different social themes resembles some of the documents of the Second Vatican Council (ex. *Gaudium et spes*) or the ones belonging to the post-conciliar popes (ex. *Evangelii Gaudium*) who tried to continue what began in the Catholic Church in 1962. Several other Catholic or Protestant documents have a similar content.

This coming issue of RES aims to explore and reflect on the construction of an Orthodox social theology in the multi-confessional context of a post-conciliar era departing from the “Social Ethos” document published by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and also by comparison with extant documents on social issues from all confessional backgrounds. Is this document consistent with the patristic tradition? Does it bring something new? Is it born out of the encounter of the Orthodox identity with other Christian confessions or religious identities? Is this document inspired by other documents on social issues? Is its approach acceptable or relevant for all the parts of the Orthodox world? In this sense, we welcome studies on the sources, context, themes, relevance, and ecumenical resemblances regarding the “Social Ethos” document of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as well as studies on previous attempts of the Orthodox milieu to construct a social theology.

Submission deadline: December 1, 2020

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