

## Discussion on Unifying The Dates of the Feasts (5)

### **- Why do you say that unification of the date of resurrection feast is very difficult?!**

+ First, Easter celebration is related to the "Epact" calculation which was implemented at the Council of Nicaea 325 AD, and the recent proposal made by our church means the abolition of the "Epact" calculation which will be rejected by some major churches as the Russian and Greek Church as they have severe sensitivity towards old traditions.

Second, because Easter is linked to the celebration of the Holy Week and the appearance of the light of the Holy Sepulcher so celebrations that take place over there must be at a certain date that all the churches agreed upon without exception, hence I said that the proposed amendment is very difficult in implementation.

### **- But I have heard that we are celebrating Easter with Catholics every four years, and we can build on that. Is this true?**

+ This information is not true either, because "Epact" calculation in our church is linked to the old calendar (Coptic and Julian) , and "Epact" calculation at the Catholic church is linked to the new Gregorian calendar, therefore sometimes we celebrate together after one year, some other times we celebrate together after five years, and so on. For example, in recent years we celebrated together in the years: 2001 - 2004 - 2007 - 2010 - 2011 - 2014 , and in the future we will be celebrating together in 2017, then celebrate at different times in years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

### **- But I heard that His Holiness the Pope of Rome had an understanding about unifying the Easter holiday with our Pope His Holiness Pope Tawadros, and he does not have any objection on a unified and fixed Easter date?**

+ Yes. But the Pope of Rome represents only his church and does not represent the rest of the churches of the world, in my opinion the objections will be more from some Orthodox churches, I'll give you just an example: a few months ago when the Patriarchate of Russia heard that the Pope of Rome has said that he would like the celebration of the Resurrection to be unified between Churches, Father Nikolai Balashov, Vice Chairman of the Department of External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church said: "We welcome the proposal if the church in Rome wants to give up the Easter date according to the Gregorian calendar, which was implemented since the sixteenth century and return to the old Julian calendar, which was used during the union of the Churches of East and West. But if the goal is to set a fixed date which is not linked to the completion of the moon for the first time after the vernal equinox, which was developed by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD to be followed by the Western and Eastern churches (Epact calculation), then this proposal is totally unacceptable from the Orthodox Church."

### **- Does this mean that having an understanding with the Pope of Rome is easier than having it and convincing some Orthodox churches?!**

+ I think so, which made me tell you that this subject is very difficult, and may need new generations of leaders who can understand and feel the needs of their people in those churches.

### **- This is very frustrating, but I generally think that the Copts in the West did not care much about the unification of the date of Resurrection celebration in comparison to unifying the date of Christmas celebration.**

+ Yes, it's true, but we will not lose hope about the Easter holiday unification.

(To be continued)

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