

= Elias Zoghby =

Elias Zoghby (January 9 , 1912 ? January 16 , 2008) was the Melkite Greek Catholic Archbishop of Baalbek and a leading advocate of Catholic @-@ Orthodox ecumenism . He is best known for his ecumenical interventions during Vatican II and his 1995 Profession of Faith , known as the Zoghby Initiative , which attempted to re @-@ establish communion between the Melkite Greek Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church while maintaining communion with the Roman Catholic Church .

Zoghby 's views on topics such as Catholic ? Orthodox " double communion " and dissolution of marriage were controversial . Critics labeled him the enfant terrible of his church , while supporters lauded him as an energetic visionary who sought to re @-@ unite the Eastern Churches .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life and ministry in Egypt = = =

Elias Zoghby was born on January 9 , 1912 in Cairo . His mother , Hanne Ishak Yared , was a Melkite Greek Catholic and his father , Abdallah Mikail Zoghby , was an Antiochian Orthodox convert and former Maronite Catholic . The couple had recently immigrated from Lebanon and settled in Cairo 's Arb @-@ el @-@ Guenena neighborhood . The area had a Melkite church nearby which his parents attended . Elias and his siblings were baptized into the Melkite faith and raised in a devout household , attending liturgy daily , reading the bible together as a family and praying the Office every afternoon .

Zoghby related in Memoires that he first received a vocational call at age sixteen . With his parent 's blessing he left for seminary in the summer of 1928 , going to Jerusalem to study with the White Fathers at the Melkite seminary of Saint Anne . He was ordained a priest at Saint Anne Melkite Basilica in Jerusalem on July 20 , 1936 , following which he was appointed a professor of Arabic Literature and Mathematics at the seminary . He later returned to Cairo as a parish priest .

While in Egypt , Zoghby considered the issues of ecumenism and the schism between the Melkite Catholic and Antiochian Orthodox Churches . As he began to study both the historical roots of the separation and the modern divisions of Middle Eastern churches he came to the opinion that the schism was unjustifiable . He also began to question the domination of the so @-@ called Uniate churches by the See of Rome . Zoghby , along with other Melkite priests in Egypt such as George Hakim and Joseph Tawil , were influenced by Father Oreste Karame , who advocated the need for the Melkite Church to return to its proper traditions and work for communion with the Orthodox Church .

In 1951 he was elevated to archimandrite while serving in Alexandria . While there he was threatened with arrest for preventing the execution of a sentence passed by a Sharia tribunal . On August 27 , 1954 he was named auxiliary bishop of Antioch ; then , on September 2 , 1954 he was appointed Titular Archbishop of Nubia . Zoghby was formally consecrated bishop on November 21 , 1954 when he was elevated to Patriarchal Vicar for the See of Alexandria , Cairo and the Sudan .

As the leader of the Melkite church in Egypt Zoghby was a vocal proponent of rights for Christians , and opposed the limitations placed on them by that country 's Law of Personal Statutes . The Nasser regime imprisoned him on December 20 , 1954 for his public opposition to the statutes . Released shortly afterwards , he continued to serve as patriarchal vicar in Egypt .

= = = Vatican II and Baalbek = = =

Zoghby was one of the most active eastern Catholic bishops to participate at the Second Vatican Council , where he offered eleven interventions . While some of the interventions were pastoral in nature , a good number were ecumenical , focusing on the Eastern churches and their relationship with Western Christianity . Zoghby 's efforts helped shape the formation of *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* ,

although , to his disappointment , it did not adequately address the needs of the Eastern Catholic Churches or bridge the gulf between Orthodoxy and Catholicism . While *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* encouraged Eastern Catholics to uphold their traditions and values , Zoghby felt that it " turn [ed] a blind eye " to true intercommunion (*communicatio in sacris*) .

Following the Council he opposed the acceptance of a Roman cardinalate by Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV Sayegh , stating that the leader of an Eastern Catholic church should not hold a subordinate Latin @-@ rite office . In protest , Zoghby resigned his position as patriarchal vicar of Alexandria . Maximos IV died in 1967 ; his successor , Maximos V Hakim , was a friend of Zoghby 's and a fellow Egyptian . In August 1968 the Melkite Synod elected Zoghby archbishop of Baalbek to replace the recently deceased eparch , Joseph Malouf . Installed as archbishop there on September 9 , 1968 , he led the small eparchy during the Lebanese Civil War . During 1982 he was kidnapped by pro @-@ Iranian terrorists .

Zoghby retired on October 24 , 1988 at age 76 . He remained an active proponent of ecumenism following his retirement , urging the reunification of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church and the Antiochian Orthodox Church . He died on January 16 , 2008 in Lebanon ; his funeral was held January 19 at St. Paul Basilica in Harissa .

= = Ecumenism and the Zoghby Initiative = =

Zoghby 's ecumenical initiatives gained visibility in May 1974 with the exchange of visits between the Melkite Catholic and the Antiochian Orthodox synods , which met simultaneously in Lebanon .

During the visit of the Melkite Catholic delegation to the Orthodox synod Zoghby drew attention to the fact that the original causes of separation between the groups had ceased to exist and the way was open for the " creation by stages of a real union between the two Churches , without waiting for the union of the Church of Rome and the Orthodox Churches . "

Afterwards , the churches agreed to form separate commissions for dialogue . Zoghby outlined his views on the topic in his book *Ecumenical Reflections* , which was characterized by Vsevolod , the Orthodox Bishop of Scopelos , as an invitation " to ecumenical metanoia ... to recognize that where there is the fundamental common faith , held alike by Catholics and Orthodox , there is no defensible impediment to Eucharistic Communion . "

= = Views on dissolution of marriage = =

While attending Vatican II Zoghby spoke to Council on September 29 , 1965 about the trauma of the innocent spouse in cases of adultery . Zoghby suggested a solution which considers adultery and abandonment as causes for the dissolution of marriage :

" We know how much the Fathers of the Eastern Church tried to dissuade widowers and widows from a second marriage , thus following the Apostle 's advice , but they have never wished to deprive the innocent spouse who has been unjustly abandoned of the right to remarry . This tradition , preserved in the East , and which was never reproved during the ten centuries of union , could be accepted again and adopted by Catholics . Progress in patristic studies has indeed brought to the fore the doctrine of the Eastern Fathers who were no less qualified exegetes or moralists than the Western ones . "

The following month , Melkite Patriarch Maximos IV declared that , while " Archbishop Zoghby , like all Fathers of the council , enjoys full freedom to say what he thinks ... [Zoghby] speaks only for himself personally . With respect to the heart of the problem , the Church must hold fast to the indissolubility of marriage . "

= = Publications by Elias Zoghby = =

We Are All Schismatics (Tous Schismatiques ?) . ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 56125 @-@ 019 @-@ 6

A Voice from the Byzantine East . ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 56125 @-@ 018 @-@ 9 . This work of

ecumenical theology and ecclesiology focuses on the role of the Eastern Catholic Churches in furthering the cause of Christian unity .

Ecumenical Reflections . ISBN 978 @-@ 1 @-@ 892278 @-@ 06 @-@ 7 . Translated by Bishop Nicholas Samra , 1998

St. Mathiew , lu par un Eveque d 'Orient . Two volumes

Le Credo de l 'Amour . Anthology of poetry

Pour vivre notre foi . Anthology of poetry

Memoires . Un Eveque peu commode , dit @-@ on . Autobiographical reflections

Une Experience de Vie en Christ .

Quand la Tendresse divine se fait Mere .

Orthodox Uni , oui ! Uniate , non ! . Reproduced in Eastern Churches Journal , 2 : 3 (1995)