

COMMON DECLARATION
OF THE
HEADS OF THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

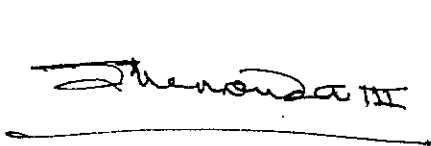
St. Mark Centre, Nasr City, Cairo
November 22-23, 2006

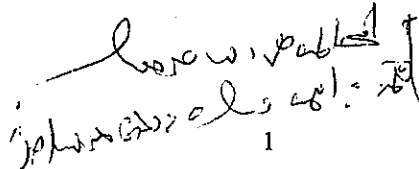
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

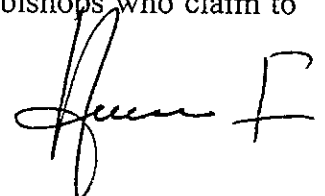
We, **Pope Shenouda III**, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, **Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I**, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, and **Catholicos Aram I**, Catholicos of the Armenians of the Great House of Cilicia, were planning to hold our ninth meeting in Saint Mark Centre, Nasr city, Cairo, November 22-23, 2006, but the latest developments in Lebanon prevented Catholicos Aram I to attend the meeting. Catholicos Aram I delegated Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian and Bishop Nareg Alemezian to represent him.

Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I and Catholicos Aram I, with the members of the Standing Committee, take this opportunity to warmly congratulate Pope Shenouda III on the 35th Anniversary of his enthronement and on his recovery from a recent operation.

As we meet together once again, it is necessary to express our deep concern and clear position regarding the so called ordination of the "reader" Max Michel as bishop for Egypt and the Middle East by some schismatic and non-canonical bishops who claim to be orthodox.







This person, who was a "reader", left the Coptic Orthodox Church in 1976 and started his schismatic activities outside the Church. He got married and has two daughters. Later, in 2005, he claimed that he was ordained by the name Maximos in Nebraska, U.S.A., as bishop of Egypt and the Middle East, calling his church St. Athansius Church. In 2006 he declared himself archbishop of Egypt and the Middle East taking the name Maximos I.

We reject the false ordination of this person, because he was ordained by bishops who are not recognized by any Orthodox Church. According to the canon of Orthodox Church, the patriarch, the archbishop or the bishop of an Orthodox Church should not be married, but be celibate.

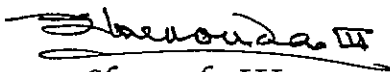
Therefore, we reject the ecclesiastical and sacramental validity of the ordination of this "reader" Max Michel. Also we reject all the ordinations conducted by him.

By establishing a separate church he separated himself and all his followers from the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria has also formally affirmed its position on 20 September 2006.

Once again we affirm our unity of faith that for centuries has been the basis of our common doctrinal positions and theological teachings, which are deeply rooted in the Holy Scriptures, the Apostolic Faith and Tradition, the three Ecumenical Councils (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381 and Ephesus 431) and the teachings of our Church Fathers.

We pray for the peace of the world, especially in the Middle East, and for the well being of our peoples.



Shenouda III

Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See
of St. Mark

Ignatius Zakka I

Patriarch of Antioch
and all the East



Aram I

Catholicos of
the Great House
of Cilicia

