

On the Veneration of Images

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi and researched by Augustine Paul Stuja

There are two things to consider, images and the veneration of images. As you will see, it is a dogma that God approves of holy images, either of pictures of statues. But what, then, is the purpose of holy images if not to venerate them. Even non-Christians have pictures and statues of their loved ones and kiss them and talk to them because they represent their loved ones. And this veneration is good, as long as they do not believe the picture or statue is the loved one or give the loved one worship which is only due to God.

I will show you several examples from the Bible, Church Fathers, and Anti-Church Fathers where they promote the veneration of holy images.

During the Old Covenant era, God, speaking through Moses, commanded his chosen people to venerate a brazen serpent by looking upon it in order to be healed:

“Upon which they came to Moses, and said: We have sinned because we have spoken against the Lord and thee. Pray that he may take away these serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to him: Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign; whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign; which when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed.” (Num. 21:7-9)

And Jesus said that this serpent was a symbol and figure of himself who would be lifted up in order to heal men of spiritual death by remitting their sins:

“And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish but may have life everlasting.” (Jn. 3:13-15)

Bowing before someone or something is a form of veneration, honor, or obeisance. Bowing before someone or something does not always mean you worship the person or thing, as the Bible has many examples of holy men bowing before men and things. For example, Jacob bowed down before Esau:

“And he [Jacob] went forward and bowed down with his face to the ground seven times until his brother [Esau] came near.” (Gen. 33:3)

If bowing down before someone is intrinsically evil, then God is the author of sin for not condemning Jacob for bowing down before Esau.

In Joseph’s dream that God gave him, his brothers bowed down before his sheaf:

“And my sheaf [Joseph’s] arose as it were and stood, and your sheaves [Joseph’s brothers] standing about, bowed down before my sheaf.” (Gen. 37:7)

And in fulfillment of this dream, many years later, Joseph’s brothers bowed before him when he was a ruler in Egypt:

“Then Joseph came into his house, and they offered him the presents holding them in their hands, and they bowed down with their face to the ground. (Gen. 43:26)

However, God’s chosen people are forbidden to bow down or venerate in any other way images of idols, false gods, and devils.

“The makers of idols are all of them nothing, and their best beloved things shall not profit them. They are their witnesses that they do not see nor understand that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god and made a graven thing that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all the partakers thereof shall be confounded, for... the residue thereof he made a god and a graven thing for himself; he boweth down before it,

and adoreth it, and prayeth unto it, saying: Deliver me, for thou art my God.” (Isa. 44:9-11, 17)

Therefore, some acts of veneration, such as bowing, are ordained by God and others are not. If an idol, false god, or devil is venerated, then it is idolatry. But if a holy man or other holy thing is venerated (but not as God), then that is good. Even pagans venerate images of men of renown, which is good, as long as they do not venerate them as God.

It must also be noted that images are not the things themselves so that if someone believed that an image of God is God or an image of Mary is Mary, then he an idolater and also insane.

It must also be understood that an image of any holy thing that is not God must not be looked upon as an image of God or else that would also be idolatry. For example, if a man venerates an image of St. Peter as if St. Peter were God, then he is an idolater. But if a man venerates an image of God knowing it is an image of God and thus worshipping God, then that is not idolatry.

At times some of God’s chosen people bowed down before an angel thinking him to be God and were corrected by the angel who told them that he is not God but to worship God only. For example, on two occasions, the apostle St. John bowed before saints in heaven thinking them to be God and was warned not to do so, not for bowing but for worshipping them as if they were God:

“And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith to me: See thou do it not. I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” (Apoc. 19:10)

“And I, John, who have heard and seen these things. And after I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed me these things. And he said to me: See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets and of them that keep the words of the prophecy of this book. Worship God.” (Apoc. 22:8-9)

But God’s chosen people were allowed to bow down before an angel because they knew he was not God and thus gave him a lesser adoration, veneration, honor, or obeisance than that which is given to God. For example, Tobias and his son were allowed to bow down before St. Raphael the Archangel because they knew he was not God and thus gave him a lesser veneration and obeisance than that which is given to God:

“For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord. And when they had heard these things, they were troubled, and being seized with fear they fell upon the ground on their face. And the angel said to them: Peace be to you, fear not.” (Tob. 12:15-17)

(See RJMI article [On Worshipping, Adoring, and Bowing Down.](#))

Augustine Stuja will now give some examples from the Church Fathers, Anti-Church Fathers, and schismatics regarding images and the veneration of images. Hence the veneration of holy images is an ordinary magisterium dogma from Pentecost Day onward (held by the unanimous consensus of the Church Fathers) and a dogma of the Solemn Magisterium (infallibly defined by popes).

Tertullian, the heretic

On Modesty, Heretic Tertullian (c. 155-c. 230), Ch. VII & IX: “You shall have leave to begin with the parables, where you have the lost ewe re-sought by the Lord, and carried back on his shoulders. Let the very paintings upon your cups come forward to show whether even in them the figurative meaning of that sheep will shine through (the outward semblance, to teach) whether a Christian or heathen sinner be the object it aims at in the matter of restoration.”

Origen, the apostate

Contra Celsum, Apostate Origen (c. 185-c, 234), Book VIII, Ch. XX: “For as if in some cities a dispute should arise as to which had the finest temples, those who thought their own were the best would do their utmost to show the excellence of their own temples and the inferiority of the others — in like manner, when they reproach us for not deeming it necessary to worship the Divine Being by raising lifeless temples, we set before them our temples, and show to such at least as are not blind and senseless, like their senseless gods, that there is no comparison between our statues and the statues of the heathen, nor between our altars, with what we may call the incense ascending from them, and the heathen altars, with the fat and blood of the victims; nor, finally, between the temples of senseless gods, admired by senseless men, who have no divine faculty for perceiving God, and the temples, statues, and altars which are worthy of God.”

Seven Martyrs of Samosata

Acts of the Seven Martyrs of Samosata (297): “Five intimate friends, much younger in years, named James, Paragrus, Habibus, Romanus, and Lollianus, coming to visit them at the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, found them in this private chamber praying before the cross, and asked them why they were in mourning, and prayed at home, at a time when, by the emperor’s orders, all the gods of the whole city had been transported into the temple of fortune, and all persons were commanded to assemble there to pray. They answered, that they adored the Maker of the world. James said: “Do you take that cross for the maker of the world? For I see it is adored by you.” Hipparchus answered: “Him we adore who hung upon the cross. Him we confess to be God, and the Son of God begotten, not made, co-eternal with the Father, by whose deity we believe this whole world is created, preserved, and governed.”¹

Hence the holy martyrs of Samosata were worshipping Christ through that cross and hence in the process venerating it.

St. Methodius of Olympus

Discourse on the Resurrection, St. Methodius of Olympus (c. 260-c. 311), Pt. II: “For instance, then, the images of our kings here, even though they be not formed of the more precious materials, gold or silver are honored by all. For men do not, while they treat with respect those of the far more precious material, slight those of a less valuable, but honor every image in the world, even though it be of chalk or bronze. And one who speaks against either of them, is not acquitted as if he had only spoken against clay, nor condemned for having despised gold, but for having been disrespectful towards the King and Lord himself. The images of God’s angels, which are fashioned of gold, the principalities and powers, we make to his honor and glory.”

St. Methodius acknowledges that when one speaks against an image it is not the image itself that is being spoken against but the person portraying it and also tells us that there are images of God’s angels. He is simply teaching the dogma of God’s approval of holy images.

¹ Published in Chaldaic by Stephen Assemani, *Act. Mart.* t. 2, p. 123, AD 1748.

Eusebius of Caesarea, the heretic

Church History, Heretic Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-c. 340), Book VII: “For there stands upon an elevated stone, by the gates of her house, a brazen image of a woman kneeling, with her hands stretched out, as if she were praying. Opposite this is another upright image of a man, made of the same material, clothed decently in a double cloak and extending his hand toward the woman. At his feet, beside the statue itself is a certain strange plant, which climbs up to the hem of the brazen cloak, and is a remedy for all kinds of diseases. They say that this statue is an image of Jesus. It has remained to our day so that we ourselves also saw it when we were staying in the city. Nor is it strange that those of the Gentiles who, of old, were benefited by our Savior, should have done such things, since we have learned also that the likenesses of his apostles Paul and Peter, and of Christ himself are preserved in paintings, the ancients being accustomed, as it is likely, according to a habit of the Gentiles, to pay this kind of honor indiscriminately to those regarded by them as deliverers.”

Hence public statues that are set up in the cities are usually honored; hence these images of Christ and the Saints were venerated by the multitude of Catholics.

Life of St. Constantine, Heretic Eusebius, Bk. III.48-49: “And being fully resolved to distinguish the city which bore his name with especial honor, he embellished it with numerous sacred edifices, both memorials of martyrs on the largest scale, and other buildings of the most splendid kind, not only within the city itself, but in its vicinity, and thus at the same time he rendered honor to the memory of the martyrs, and consecrated his city to the martyrs’ God. Being filled, too, with Divine wisdom, he determined to purge the city which was to be distinguished by his own name from idolatry of every kind, that henceforth no statues might be worshiped there in the temples of those falsely reputed to be gods, nor any altars defiled by the pollution of blood: that there might be no sacrifices consumed by fire, no demon festivals, nor any of the other ceremonies usually observed by the superstitious. On the other hand one might see the fountains in the midst of the market place graced with figures representing the good Shepherd, well known to those who study the sacred oracles, and that of Daniel also with the lions, forged in brass, and resplendent with plates of gold. Indeed, so large a measure of Divine love possessed the emperor’s soul, that in the principal apartment of the imperial palace itself, on a vast tablet displayed in the center of its gold-covered paneled ceiling, he caused the symbol of our Saviour’s Passion to be fixed, composed of a variety of precious stones richly inwrought with gold. This symbol he seemed to have intended to be as it were the safeguard of the empire itself.”

Note how the heretic Eusebius mentions that an image of the Cross of Christ was set up as “intended to be as it were the safeguard of the empire itself”. This is also a form of veneration.

Basil of Caesarea, the apostate

Epistle CCCLX, Apostate Basil (c. 330-379): “I acknowledge also the holy apostles, prophets, and martyrs; and I invoke them to supplication to God that through them, that is, through their mediation, the merciful God may be propitious to me, and that a ransom may be made and given me for my sins. Wherefore also I honour and kiss the features of their images, inasmuch as they have been handed down from the holy apostles, and are not forbidden, but are in all our churches.”

Commentary on Isaiah, Apostate Basil: “For the lawless mock the temple, mock the neighbor, mock the one created in the image of the Creator, and through the image reproach ascends to the Creator. For just as the one who desecrates the royal image is judged on an equal footing with the one who sinned against the king himself, so, obviously, the one who desecrates the one created in the image is guilty of sin.”

Gregory of Nyssa, the apostate

Eulogy to the Great Martyr Theodore, Apostate Gregory of Nyssa (c. 386): “Should a person come to a place similar to our assembly today where the memory of the just and the rest of the saints is present, first consider this house’s great dignity to which souls are lead. God’s temple is brightly adorned with magnificence and is embellished with decorations, pictures of animals which masons have fashioned with delicate silver figures. It exhibits images of flowers made in the likeness of the martyr’s virtues, his struggles, sufferings, the various savage actions of tyrants, assaults, that fiery furnace, the athlete’s blessed consummation and the human form of Christ presiding over all these events. They are like a book skillfully interpreting by means of colors which express the martyr’s struggles and glorify the temple with resplendent beauty. The pictures located on the walls are eloquent by their silence and offer significant testimony; the pavement on which people tread is combined with small stones and is significant to mention in itself. . . These spectacles strike the senses and delight the eye by drawing us near to [the martyr’s tomb] which we believe to be both a sanctification and blessing. If anyone takes dust from the martyr’s resting place, it is a gift and a deserving treasure. Should a person have both the good fortune and permission to touch the relics, this experience is a highly valued prize and seems like a dream both to those who were cured and whose wish was fulfilled. The body appears as if it were alive and healthy; the eyes, mouth, ears, as well as the other senses are a cause for pouring out tears of reverence and emotion. In this way one implores the martyr who intercedes on our behalf and is an attendant of God for imparting those favors and blessings which people seek.”

The apostate Gregory of Nyssa speaks about various images being set up in the resting place of a martyr and that “These spectacles strike the senses and delight the eye by drawing us near to [the martyr’s tomb] which we believe to be both a sanctification and blessing”. He also writes how those pilgrims to that site experience as if the body of the martyr was well and alive and how the pilgrims come with tears to pray for the intercession of that martyr. The holy images there were venerated in this regard.

Theodoret of Cyrus, the apostate

Life of Symeon the Stylite, Apostate Theodoret of Cyrus, XI: “Of Italy it is superfluous to speak. It is said that the man became so celebrated in the great city of Rome that at the entrance of all the workshops men have set up small representations of him, to provide thereby some protection and safety for themselves.”

Having images, then, for protection is a form of veneration.

Pope St. Gregory the Great

Wikipedia: “The image [of the Mother of God] is held to have arrived from Crete in the year 590 AD during the Pontificate of Pope St. Gregory the Great, who

welcomed the image in person on its arrival borne with a floral boat from the Tiber river. For centuries it was placed above the door to the baptistery chapel of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore (considered the third of the Roman patriarchal basilicas) where in the year 1240 it began to be called Regina Caeli (English: "Queen of Heaven") in an official document."

Salus Populi Romani, University of Dayton, Ohio : "During the pontificate of St. Gregory the Great (590-604) a plague viciously attacked the people of Rome, killing entire families. The pontiff fervently prayed to the Blessed Mother. During the Easter festivals he carried her image in solemn procession. Arriving at Hadrian's Mausoleum (now called San Angelo), an angelic choir was heard singing the joyful Resurrection hymn: Regina coeli laetare, alleluia; Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia; Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia."

Golden Legend, on St. Gregory the Great: "And because the mortality ceased not, he [Gregory] ordained a procession, in the which he did do bear an image of our Lady, which, as is said, S. Luke the Evangelist made, which was a good painter; he had carved it and painted after the likeness of the glorious Virgin Mary. And anon the mortality ceased, and the air became pure and clear, and about the image was heard a voice of angels that sung this anthem: 'Regina caeli laetare, etc.' and S. Gregory put thereto: 'Ora pro nobis deum, alleluia.'"

Pope St. Gregory, then, promoted an image of the blessed Mother of God and used it for his procession, which is also a form of veneration.

Hence beware of people who take his following statement out of context in regards to holy images to mean that he was against the veneration of holy images. He was only against worshipping images of the saints and angels as if they were God or looking upon an image of God as if it were God.

Epistle XIII, St. Gregory the Great, Book XI: "For indeed it had been reported to us that, inflamed with inconsiderate zeal, you had broken images of saints, as though under the plea that they ought not to be adored . And indeed in that you forbade them to be adored, we altogether praise you; but we blame you for having broken them. Say, brother, what priest has ever been heard of as doing what you have done? If nothing else, should not even this thought have restrained you, so as not to despise other brethren, supposing yourself only to be holy and wise? For to adore a picture is one thing, but to learn through the story of a picture what is to be adored is another. For what writing presents to readers, this a picture presents to the unlearned who behold, since in it even the ignorant see what they ought to follow; in it the illiterate read. For the dispersed children of the Church must be called together, and it must be shown then by testimonies of sacred Scripture that it is not lawful for anything made with hands to be adored, since it is written, "You shall adore the Lord your God, and him only shall serve". And then, with regard to the pictorial representations which had been made for the edification of an unlearned people in order that, though ignorant of letters, they might by turning their eyes to the story itself learn what had been done, it must be added that, because you had seen these come to be adored, you had been so moved as to order them to be broken. And it must be said to them, If for this instruction for which images were anciently made you wish to have them in the church, I permit them by all means both to be made and to be had. And explain to them that it was not the sight itself of the story which the picture was hanging to attest that displeased you, but the adoration which had been improperly paid to the pictures. And with such words appease their minds; recall them to agreement with you. And if any one should wish

to make images, by no means prohibit him, but by all means forbid the adoration of images. But let your Fraternity carefully admonish them that from the sight of the event portrayed they should catch the ardour of compunction, and bow themselves down in adoration of the One Almighty Holy Trinity.”

Note how St. Gregory says that they should rather “bow themselves down in adoration of the One Almighty Holy Trinity”. So “adoration” in this context means the worship due to God and hence he is condemning people that give images the worship that is due to God. This cannot refer to simple veneration since Gregory allowed it in this very next quote. And he lived in Rome where it was common to venerate relics, martyrs and saints, yet we have no track record of him condemning these things. Instead, we have several teachings of his in which he promoted these things.

Pope St. Gregory the Great, Book IX, *Epistle 52*, to Secundus and Reclusive, 598-599: “We also give you the images that you requested through the deacon Dulcidus. That is why your request has pleased us very much, because you are seeking with all your heart and willpower the one whose image you wish to have before your eyes, so that what you look at daily with the eyes of the body may make you well trained in spiritual things, so that at the sight of his image you may glow with love in your soul for the one whose image you wish to have before you. We do nothing improper when we represent the invisible through the visible. So does a man who wishes to see another vividly, or a lover who wishes to see his bride: if she goes to the bath or to church, he puts himself in her way in order to return home cheered by the sight of her. I am well aware that you do not desire the image of the Savior in order to worship it as God, but in order to glow with love for him through the memory of the Son of God by desiring to see his image. We also prostrate ourselves before the image, not as if it were God, but to worship the one of whose birth, suffering or glory the image reminds us.”²

St. Gregory also taught in another epistle that images and the cross are worthy of reverence:

Epistle VI, St. Gregory the Great, Book IX: “But, since by not having at all mixed yourself up in these wrong doings you show that what was done displeases you, we, considering the bent of your will in this matter, and still more your judgment, hereby exhort you that, having removed thence with fitting reverence the image and the cross [from the synagogue].”

St. Sophronius of Jerusalem

Miracles of Cyrus and John (died c. 304 or 311), St. Sophronius of Jerusalem (d. 628): “We shall speak further on the strengthening of the body, giving an account in a few words. After a few days, he slept and again saw the martyrs standing before and commanding him to accompany them. He most eagerly followed them, for he knew that to go with the saints was not without reward. We came then to a perfect church, awesome and dazzling in form, in its height touching the heavens, and on entering we saw a very great and wonderful icon, having in the middle the Master Christ painted in colors, on the left our Lady the Mother of God, on the right John the Baptist, who acknowledged [Christ] beforehand by skipping while he was in the womb, since being within his speech could not be heard, and certain of the glorious chorus of the apostles and prophets and the assembly of the martyrs. Among them were the martyrs Cyrus and John, who stood before the icon, and fell down on the

² Ausgewählte Briefe In: Des heiligen Kirchenlehrers Gregorius des Grossen ausgewählte Briefe. Übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen von Theodor Kranzfelder. (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, 1 Serie, Band 27), Kempten 1874. [English Translation: Selected Letters In: Selected Letters of the Holy Doctor of the Church Gregory the Great. Translated and annotated by Theodor Kranzfelder. (Library of the Church Fathers, 1 series, vol. 27), Kempten 1874.]

knees before the Master, touching the ground with their heads, interceding for the healing of the young man. These were the words of their petition: ‘Master, Lover of mankind, do you command that we may give healing to him?’ Many times they bowed down to the ground, and uttered the words of their petition... And, coming to the icon a third time, they used the same gestures and words as before. And after they had prayed for a full hour, prostrating themselves and crying out only, ‘Master, will you give the command?’ Christ, in his pity, was compassionate and nodded his assent, and he uttered ‘Grant it him’ from the icon. And getting up from the ground the martyrs first gave thanks to Christ our God who had heard their prayer.”³

Life of St. Mary of Egypt (344- 421), St. Sophronius of Jerusalem: “And so I stood weeping when I saw above me the icon of the most holy Mother of God. Not taking my eyes off her, I said, ‘O Lady, Mother of God, who gave birth in the flesh to God the Word, I know, O how well I know, that it is no honour or praise to thee when one so impure and depraved as I look up to thy icon, O ever-virgin, who didst keep thy body and soul in purity. Rightly do I inspire hatred and disgust before thy virginal purity. But I have heard that God who was born of thee became man on purpose to call sinners to repentance. Then help me, for I have no other help. Order the entrance of the church to be opened to me. Allow me to see the venerable Tree [Cross] on which he, who was born of thee, suffered in the flesh and on which he shed his holy Blood for the redemption of sinners an for me, unworthy as I am. Be my faithful, witness before thy son that I will never again defile my body by the impurity of fornication, but as soon as I have seen the Tree of the Cross I will renounce the world and its temptations and will go wherever thou wilt lead me.’ Thus I spoke and as if acquiring some hope in firm faith and feeling some confidence in the mercy of the Mother of God, I left the place where I stood praying. And I went again and mingled with the crowd that was pushing its way into the temple. And no one seemed to thwart me, no one hindered my entering the church. I was possessed with trembling, and was almost in delirium.”

Maximos the Confessor

Disputation between Maximos and Theodosius, Maximos the Confessor (580-662): “And at this everyone rose with joy and tears and made a reverence, and prayer took place, and each of them kissed the holy Gospels and the precious Cross and the icon our God and Savior Jesus Christ and of our Lady, the all-holy Mother of God, who bore him, placing their own hands as a confirmation of what had been spoken.”⁴

John Moschos

This following quote shows how the devils hate the veneration of holy images and thus testifies to the power they have over devils:

The Spiritual Meadow, John Moschos (550-619): “The demon said to him: ‘Desist from venerating this icon here and I will call off my war against you.’ The icon in question bore the likeness of our Lady Mary, the holy Mother of God, carrying our Lord Jesus Christ.”

³ JP Migne PG 87.3557C- 3560C

⁴ JP Migne PG 90;156

Pope Hadrian I, the Second Council of Nicaea

From the information I have, the first time the ordinary magisterium dogma of the veneration of images was made a solemn magisterium dogma was in 787 when Pope Hadrian I infallibly defined it at the Second Council of Nicaea.

Pope Hadrian I, *Second Council of Nicaea, 787*:

Definition:

We decree with full precision and care that, like the figure of the honoured and life-giving cross, the revered and holy images, whether painted or made of mosaic or of other suitable material, are to be exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways, these are the images of our Lord, God and saviour, Jesus Christ, and of our Lady without blemish, the holy God-bearer, and of the revered angels and of any of the saintly holy men.

The more frequently they are seen in representational art, the more are those who see them drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these images the tribute of salutation and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that given to the figure of the honoured and life-giving cross, and also to the holy books of the gospels and to other sacred cult objects. Further, people are drawn to honour these images with the offering of incense and lights, as was piously established by ancient custom. Indeed, the honour paid to an image traverses it, reaching the model, and he who venerates the image, venerates the person represented in that image.

Anathemas concerning holy images:

If anyone does not *confess* that Christ our God can be represented in His humanity, let him be anathema.

If anyone does not *accept* representation in art of evangelical scenes, let him be anathema.

If anyone does not *salute* such representations as standing for the Lord and His saints, let him be anathema.

The schismatic oriental and Assyrian churches accept veneration of holy images

Schismatic oriental churches known as Miaphysites and the schismatic Assyrian church of the east known as Nestorians did not attend the Second Council of Nicaea and they still accept the veneration of holy images, which shows that it was not an invention of the Second Council of Nicaea but a part of Apostolic Tradition which they had before they broke off:

“In September 1990, in the Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to Churches approved by the Joint Commission of the bilateral Official Theological Dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the Oriental Orthodox Churches in Chambésy (Geneva), it was stated that: ‘In relation to the teaching of the Seventh Ecumenical Council [Nicaea II] of the Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox agree that the theology and practice of the veneration of icons taught by that Council are in basic agreement with the teaching and practice of the Oriental

Orthodox from ancient times, long before the convening of the Council, and that we have no disagreement in this regard.’ ” (Chaillot, Belopopsky 1988: 63f.)”⁵

Icons in the Church of the East, Rev. Tower Andrious: “From a liturgical point of view, the Church of the East not only respects and venerates the icons, it even considers it equal to The Holy Cross and the Bible and this makes Icons one of the most loved and precious things in the Assyrian Church, not just a secondary worship.”

The invalid and heretical Council of Trent

Even though the Council of Trent was invalid and heretical, it teaches the dogma regarding the veneration of images:

Heretical and invalid *Council of Trent*, Sesson. 25, Decree on Sacred Images: “Moreover, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints are to be placed and retained especially in the churches, and that due honor and veneration is to be given them; not, however, that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them by reason of which they are to be venerated, or that something is to be asked of them, or that trust is to be placed in images, as was done of old by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols; but because the honor which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which they represent, so that by means of the images which we kiss and before which we uncover the head and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ and venerate the saints whose likeness they bear. That is what was defined by the decrees of the councils, especially of the Second Council of Nicaea, against the opponents of images.”

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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Mary’s Little Remnant

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⁵ The Role of Pictures, the Veneration of Icons and the Representation of Christ in Two Oriental Orthodox Churches of the Coptic and Ethiopian Traditions, This article initially was a lecture given during the Meeting of the Association Dialogue between Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox at the Institute of Theology of Saint-Serge in Paris, on November 19, 2013