

EASTERN CHURCHES

News Letter

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CONTENTS

Obituary
The Transfiguration
Modern Frescoes
News and Causerie

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THE ANGLICAN AND EASTERN CHURCHES
ASSOCIATION
founded in 1864

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The Ecumenical Patriarch

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The Bishop of London

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ANGLICAN AND EASTERN CHURCHES
ASSOCIATION

Annual Festival, 1972

Saturday, 7th October

noon

SUNG EUCHARIST

in St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, Fleet Street, E.C.4.
(by kind permission of the Revd. H. R. T. Brandreth, OGS)

Preacher:

The Right Reverend
THE BISHOP OF FULHAM AND GIBRALTAR

BUFFET LUNCH

(for those who order in advance from Secretary)

followed by

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

at 2.30 o'clock in

ST. ANDREW'S COURTHOUSE,
ST. ANDREW STREET, E.C.4.

(off Holborn Circus)

Speaker:

The Reverend A. M. ALLCHIN, MA, B.Litt.

IN MEMORIAM
ATHENAGORAS I,
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

With great thanksgiving for God's gift of leadership to His Church, mingled with deep sorrow at the departure from among us of a universally beloved father-in-God, we salute the passing of His All-Holiness Athenagoras I, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch.

The term *ecumenical* has not escaped the common fate of words in this transitory world, of undergoing changes of meaning; and yet, unlike many other words to express great concepts, it has not suffered debasement—rather has it gained overtones, since those halcyon days of the Byzantine Empire when it was first applied to the Patriarch of Constantinople. In every sense of *ecumenical*, Athenagoras I added lustre to his unique title: he lived and worked for the spiritual unity of the Eastern Orthodox Church, he lived and worked for the good estate of the whole Church of Christ, he lived and worked for the good of all mankind.

The years which preceded his elevation to the Ecumenical Throne afforded him unusually wide experience. Born in Epirus, in Northern Greece, he studied theology at Halki (Constantinople) and then worked for nine years in Manastir before that diocese became part of the Serbian Church. After six months residence in a Cell on Mount Athos, with the former Bishop of Pelagonia whose arch-deacon he had been, Archbishop Meletios of Athens and All Greece brought him to Athens to join the permanent staff of the Holy Synod there.

In 1922, although still a deacon, he was elected Metropolitan of Corfu, then thronged with refugees from Asia Minor, including 7500 Armenians, whose spiritual as their material needs he worked to satisfy. In 1930 he was translated to the Americas as Archbishop of North and South America: there he was to labour for eighteen years as a beloved pastor for the unity and the strengthening of a great Orthodox community; and it is some measure of his success in that great nation that, when in 1948 he was chosen for his ultimate high office, the President of the United States of America (Mr. Truman) put his personal aircraft at his disposal for the journey to Istanbul.

The last 24 years has been a period of unstinted toil: on behalf of his immediate (and oppressed) flock in Turkey; on behalf of the unity of Orthodoxy, notably by initiating and continuing the series of Pan-Orthodox Conferences; on behalf of unity with the separated brethren of the non-Chalcedonian Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, in both of which fields he achieved notable success; and on behalf of the unity of all Christians, both through

bilateral dialogues and through the World Council of Churches, whose headquarters in Geneva he visited in 1967.

For us Anglicans he showed deep love; and his visit to London in 1967 was both historic and heart-warming. We who were privileged to meet him then will never forget the charisma of his presence.

For us all in the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, it was most fitting that we should have been represented at the funeral by no less than our own Primate and the Ecumenical Patriarch's fellow-Patron of our Association, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The latter's decision to fly out, immediately, at a very difficult time, was a wonderful gesture—but no less than was demanded by the memory of a genuinely humble prince amongst men.

It is impossible to do justice to such a man as Athenagoras I in a short memorial notice. Let us, then, use the language of Scripture: we give thanks to the Divine Wisdom which "from generation to generation passing into holy souls, makes men friends of God and prophets"; and with one such there has "gone with him the host whose hearts God has touched". Small wonder, then, that at his Memorial Service in Geneva, his representative there preached on the text: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith".

Harold Embleton

THE SAVIOUR'S TRANSFIGURATION

The miracle of the Transfiguration has an exceptional place in the Orthodox Church: great importance is accorded to it not only in theology but also in popular devotion.

The Transfiguration happened six days after Jesus had announced to his disciples that he must go up to Jerusalem, where he would suffer death by crucifixion.

According to the Synoptists, after he had taken his disciples Peter, James and John, he came with them "to a high mountain apart" where "he was transfigured before them".¹ However, he took only the three disciples because they were different from the others in faith and in devotion and love towards him.²

During the Lord's Transfiguration, at that very moment of the divine majesty, there appeared two prominent characters of the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah. But why did they appear? Firstly, because many thought of the Lord as Elijah or one of the great prophets. Then, as representatives of the Old Covenant, they come to affirm that Christ is not only not opposed to the Law of Moses and the Prophets, but that he is the Lawgiver both of the Old and of the New Testaments. Christ, who was foretold in the first by means of types, symbols and prophecies, is presented in person in the

second. A further reason was to demonstrate that Christ had authority over life and death, over things above as well as things below. Finally, it was for the reason noted by the Evangelist Luke: "he spoke of his departure which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem" i.e. they were talking together about the Lord's death on the Cross.

Furthermore, in the Transfiguration we have the manifestation of the Holy Trinity. The Father, who calls the Lord the beloved son, the God-man Jesus who is transfigured, and the Holy Spirit who shines with the Lord through the bright cloud.

Peter hastened to ask whether they should build there three "tabernacles" one for Jesus and one for Moses and one for Elijah; but whilst he was speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice spoke from the cloud: "this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased" (St Matthew xvii 5). Seeing the light of the Transfiguration and also hearing the words of God, the disciples "fell on their faces and were extremely frightened" (verse 6). The Lord lifted them up; and as they were going down from the mountain he told them to "say nothing about the vision until the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (verse 9).

* * *

What, then, happened during the Transfiguration? What is its deeper significance?

Christ, whom his disciples saw every day and with whose appearance they were familiar, appeared suddenly before them transfigured: clothed in light, radiant. His garments became "gleaming, as white as snow, as no fuller on earth could bleach them" (St Mark ix 3). The vision of God is inexpressibly connected with the impression of light, of whiteness.

"Light appeared to Moses from the fire, when the bush burned but was not consumed, in order that God might disclose His nature and make known His power. Light from the pillar of fire guided Israel and thwarted the wilderness: light carried off Elijah in the chariot of fire, but did not burn him to ashes: light shone around the shepherds when the timeless light united with the temporal: light was the beauty of the star which went before the Magi to Bethlehem, to lead them and to safeguard for us the light which was made with us, that divinity which was manifest to the disciples on the mountain, almost too strong to look at: light was the vision which shone around Paul and wounded his sight, whilst healing his soul's darkness . . ."³

Indeed, during the Saviour's Transfiguration were demonstrated his majesty and his power, some rays of his divine glory. Nevertheless, God is invisible and inaccessible to human nature. "God is supreme light, unapproachable and inexpressible, neither comprehensible to the mind nor expressible in words".⁴ But although the

light is unknown to human experience, it is made known in a mysterious and thrice-blessed way. "But the *light* which does not belong to the realm of the material world is spiritual light; and the *cloud* which is not a meteorological phenomenon, like all things, is something which we are not in a position to say. It is a matter of a holiness which is hardly perceptible: it is something heavenly, which is manifested and yet remains incomprehensible"⁵.

On Mount Tabor, according to the divine economy, the brilliance of divinity appeared only partially and comparatively to the physical senses of the disciples, who would have been in danger of losing their lives had they been exposed to absolute brightness. "He was transfigured before them, showing the comeliness of archetypal beauty, yet not completely: it assured them but it also spared them, lest in beholding they should also lose their life; yet they could not refrain their bodily eyes from wandering"⁶.

Our Church's hymns, in their brief and epigrammatic way, teach us about the Transfiguration. The kontakion of the Feast refers also to the manner in which the Lord's disciples saw the miraculous event. "On the mountain thou wast transfigured and as thy disciples *drew back* they beheld thy glory, O Christ our God". It tells us that the disciples saw the Lord's divine glory "as they drew back", as much as they could. Since they were men, the Apostles could not see the divine brightness in its fullness. "The best of vantage-points, still, for observing this present life and which looks towards the light of the beautiful vision, is always relative and transitory, faint and unsubstantial, like looking in a glass or speaking in riddles. Only when the tabernacle of this world has passed away and eternity has opened forth, will the divinely-formed spirits of the saints be able in full measure to be united with the blessed light of the thrice-sunned glory"⁷.

The disciples saw in the person of Jesus more than human nature: that was something outward and tangible, whereas the divinity was revealed in the Saviour's miraculous works and supernatural powers. But in the divine Transfiguration the synthesis of Christ's two natures is asserted "partially" and "outwardly". "This, then, we celebrate today: the deification of nature, the change for the better, the transformation and the raising of the natural to the supernatural", says Andrew of Crete⁸. In his sermon on Holy Baptism, St Gregory the Theologian concludes: "in the light of the Lord you will see light, in the Spirit of God you will behold the Son, the threefold and undivided light"⁹.

This light or brilliance can be defined as the visible character of the divine nature, of the energies or the grace by which God is made known. This theme, moreover, in the middle of the 14th century was the cause of certain famous theological controversies. The words of St Gregory Palamas¹⁰, in a hymn on the Lord's Transfiguration,

show the writer's surprise when faced with the light of Tabor. The light of the Transfiguration is a foretaste of the elect's future splendour. This was seen, says St. Gregory Palamas "by the chosen disciples, even as you hear the Church singing . . . ; they saw the essence and the eternal appearance of God on Tabor . . . , the surpassing brilliance of archetypal beauty, this invisible form of the divine beauty, whereby man is deified and deemed worthy even of the divine words addressed to him, this eternal and everlasting kingdom of God, this incomprehensible and unapproachable light, heavenly light, extraordinary, timeless, eternal, light which radiates immortality, light which gazes at its spectators . . ."

The Lord's Transfiguration was not a phenomenon which can be defined in time and space. "Christ underwent no change at that moment, even in his human nature, but a change occurred in the awareness of the Apostles, who for a time received the power to see their Master as he was, resplendent in the eternal light of his Godhead"¹¹.

In order to see the divine light with our bodily eyes, as the disciples saw it on Mount Tabor, we must "participate in this light and be transformed by it, to some degree. Mystical experience implies some change in our nature, its transformation by grace"¹².

The greatest aid, however, to our understanding of what constitutes this awareness of our union with God is a passage in the *Revelations* of St Seraphim of Sarov, written at the beginning of the 19th century. One winter morning, on the edge of the forest, a disciple of St Seraphim, the author of the book, said to his master:

"I don't understand how I can be sure that I am in the Spirit of God. How can I recognise for certain his manifestation in me? . . ."

"My child, we are both at this moment in the Spirit of God . . . Why won't you look at me?"

"I cannot look at you, father", he then replied. "Your eyes flash; your face has become brighter than the sun and my eyes cannot bear to look at you".

"Have no fear", he said, "at this moment you have become as bright as I have. You are also at present in the fullness of the Spirit of God: otherwise, you would not be able to see me as you do see me".

The disciple of Sarov went on: ". . . Imagine in the middle of the sun, dazzling in the brilliance of its moonlike rays, the face of the man who is speaking to you. You see the movement of his lips, the changing expression of his eyes; you hear his voice, you feel his hands holding you by the shoulders; but you see neither his hands nor his body—nothing but the blaze of light which shines around, lighting up with its brightness the meadow under its covering of snow and the white snowflakes which fall ceaselessly"¹³.

The specific aim of the Saviour's divine Transfiguration was the revelation of the Lord's infinite power and divinity. Moreover, it was essential that the disciples should see God's majesty and power, albeit "partially", in order to be able to stand up to the hour of the final humiliation on the Cross. Thus the Transfiguration was the radiation of the approaching Resurrection.

The Transfiguration was also the pledge of our own resurrection, because that other life will dawn for us too. Salvation means sharing in the life of Christ: we too shall be raised, and our own body will be changed. "Man's deification through Christ's Resurrection is excellently foreshadowed by the Saviour's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor. There the visible flesh is worn by the infinite dimensions of Godhead; and shining forth in the indescribable diffusion of divine light, it allows us to have some slight awareness of what its splendour and glory will be after the illuminating resurrection of the dead. Even the eschatological deification of nature is foreshadowed miraculously by the Transfiguration: that which nature has lost through sin, viz. its capability of deification, it regains through the Saviour and will attain to it permanently and completely at the consummation of the ages"¹⁴.

St Makarios the Egyptian is the author of the following reflection in his eschatological vision: "the heavenly fire of the divine nature, which Christians receive in their hearts now in this present life and which ministers in the heart, will minister from without when the body is dissolved and will reassemble the members and cause the resurrection of the dismantled members"¹⁵. Then, everything which the soul has gathered into its inward treasury will be manifested outwardly in the body. All will become light: all will be filled with the uncreated light.

"The bodies of the saints will become like the Lord's glorious body, as it appeared to the Apostles on the day of the Transfiguration. God will be all in all; and divine grace, the light of the Holy Trinity, will shine forth in the multitude of human hypostases, in all those who have acquired it and who will shine forth as new suns in the kingdom of the Father, like the Son, transfigured by the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Light. St. Symeon the New Theologian sings:

*The grace of his most Holy Spirit
Will shine like a star on the just,
And in the midst of them thou wilt shine forth,
O Thou, inaccessible Sun!
Then all will be enlightened
According to the measure of their faith and their works,
Of their hope and their charity,
In the measure of their purification
And illumination by thy Spirit,
O Thou only God, infinite in loving kindness.*¹⁶

Meanwhile, the renewing power of the divine Transfiguration is not confined simply to the illumination of human nature but extends to the whole natural creation. This fact is extolled most beautifully by the hymn-writer in the *Exapostilarion* (Dismissal Hymn) for the Feast of the Transfiguration: "today on Tabor in the manifestation of thy light, O Word, thou unaltered Light from the Light of the unbegotten Father, we have seen the Father as Light, and the Spirit as Light, guiding with light the whole creation".

On this subject Professor Andreas Theodorou writes: "the natural creation through Adam's transgression has likewise been brought to ruin, desiring its transformation for the better, which it will achieve eschatologically, as new earth and new heavens and as conformed to the new glory of the children of the Kingdom of God. The brilliant illumination of the world on Tabor, and the sanctification and gladdening of the whole creation, is the happy prelude to the final Transfiguration of all things, wherein God will be all in all"¹⁷.

After his Transfiguration, then, Jesus taught each of the faithful how, if he would turn away from sin, he could see him even more resplendent on that day when he would be seated "on the throne of his glory". Christ is the light of the world: eternal and universal light, the light which enlightens "every man" (St John i 9). But in order to enjoy this light, man must cease to be bound to the lower feelings of his nature, which peer dimly in the direction of things spiritual until they are blotted out and blinded.

If anyone would reach the illuminated land of the Spirit, he must be free from the bonds of sin, "purified in the twofold man, soul and body". "Thus arrayed, man can fly bodilessly in the incorporeal realm of spiritual light, to be configured by flashes from the inaccessible beauty of the Person of the Incarnate"¹⁸.

FOOTNOTES

1. According to tradition, dating from the time of Origin, this mountain was Tabor.
2. "Peter, of such as loved him so much; John, of such as were so much loved; and James, of such as could drink of the cup which the Lord drank of", according to the Hagiographer.
3. Migne P.G. 36; 365
4. Migne P.G. 36; 364
5. Romano Guardini, *The Lord*; tr Archim. Hieronimos Kotsonis; II, p 46.
6. Idiomelon verse at the Lity (Great Vespers).
7. Andreas Theodorou, *Soteriological Exposition of the Saviour's Transfiguration*, Athens 1968, p 11.
8. Sermon VII on the Lord's Transfiguration, Migne P.G. 97; 933.

9. Migne P.G. 36; 408.
10. Migne P.G. 150; 818 ff; 151, homilies 34 & 35.
11. Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*; tr. Stellas Plevraki, Thess/niki 1964, p 266.
12. Lossky, op cit, p 266.
13. Lossky, op cit, p 271/2.
14. Theodorou, op cit p 9.
15. Migne P.G. 34; 544.
16. Lessky, op cit, p 280.
17. Theodorou, op cit, p 8.
18. Theodorou, op cit, p 11.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY IN BULGARIA

During our Anglican Patron's visit to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in June 1972, Dr Ramsey delivered the following address to the St Clement of Ochrid Academy of Theology.

Christ is risen from the dead, Alleluia. The joy of the Resurrection fills our hearts as we greet one another in Christ's name.

Your Beatitude, dear brother in Christ, I thank you with all my heart for the warm greeting with which you have received me. I come here, as your guest, to visit the Holy Orthodox Church of Bulgaria, and I come bringing with me the friendship of the Anglican Communion throughout the world. The bonds of friendship between the Holy Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion have long been very great, and Your Beatitude's invitation to me, my visit to you, and your welcome to me today are signs that this friendship stands firm and will advance in the coming years.

Everywhere in the world Christianity faces great difficulties. This is not surprising, as our divine Lord himself said to his disciples "in the world you have tribulation". In different ways, in all countries there is unbelief, there is materialism, there is ignorance of man's true status as one who is created in God's own image with heaven as his true goal. Tribulation is for Christians never new and never strange. But we remember that when Christ had said "in the world you have tribulation" he went on to say "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world".

Faced as they are with the conflict with unbelief, materialism and apathy, it is right that Christians everywhere are striving to express the unity in truth and holiness for which Christ prayed on the night before his Passion. Today we are thankful that the most

powerful trends in Christendom are not towards division, as was the case in some periods in the past, but towards unity. Within the total movement of Christian unity the relations between the Holy Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion have a very significant place.

The leaders of the Holy Orthodox Church have in recent years worked hard to foster relations with the Anglican Communion; and during the years since I became Archbishop of Canterbury I have striven with all my power to reciprocate their efforts. Within the first year after I came into my present office I had the joy of visiting both His All-Holiness Athenagoras, the Ecumenical Patriarch, and His Beatitude Alexi, the Patriarch of All Russia, and there followed a series of mutual visits between Canterbury and a number of the Patriarchates of the East. What do we seek to encourage? We seek to encourage not only official visits, but many personal contacts of bishops and priests and lay people, and most of all contacts of students and young people. We seek to encourage personal friendship between the members of the Churches, mutual knowledge of our different kinds of Church life, theological dialogue and spiritual unity in prayer, for souls who are near to Christ in the way of holiness are, in Christ, near to one another. That is the road of unity, and we must tread it without ceasing.

When Orthodox Christians and Anglican Christians visit one another's countries and Churches they are aware of differences in religious customs and atmosphere. But they are also aware of a deeper inner unity. In both Orthodox and Anglican Churches the Holy Scriptures are read and loved, and the ecumenical creeds are believed and recited. In both there is the succession of bishops going back to the holy apostles. In both there are the rites of Holy Baptism, Confirmation, the Absolution of sinners, the Holy Eucharist, Ordination, Holy Marriage, the anointing of the sick. In both the writings of the ancient Fathers are studied and revered. The big differences in historical experience and in culture between the East and the West do not destroy this deep inner unity. Already there is unity in prayer. One day, and may it be soon, one day there will be the full union of sharing together in the heavenly food of the Body and Blood of Christ.

It is greatly hoped that the International Theological Commission of the Holy Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion, whose membership is drawn widely from the respective Communions, will soon be meeting. Already the members on both sides have been appointed, and preliminary consultations have taken place. If centuries of different historical and cultural experiences cause us to express the Christian faith in ways which appear to be different, we need to discover how far misunderstanding may be removed when we learn together from Christ who, true God and true Man, is himself the way, the truth and the life.

Your Beatitude, I pray that Almighty God will keep you and all the people of your Holy Orthodox flock in peace and safety, and enable you and them to witness with power and love to Almighty God. May God bless the people of Bulgaria and all who have great responsibilities in the country. May God give to all countries in the world peace with one another, compassion for all those who are in need and distress, and the spirit of justice and brotherhood. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.

* * *

Three days later, the Archbishop of Canterbury was speaking in the St Alexander Nevsky Patriarchal Cathedral in Sofia: an excerpt from his address, which was on the theme of peace, follows.

... There is also the peace of the Church. Jesus Christ created his holy Church to be the home of peace and the messenger of peace. Today the sad divisions among Christians are being healed, and the restoration of Christian unity has begun, the unity in truth and holiness for which Jesus Christ prayed on the eve of the Crucifixion. In the field of Christian ecumenism a notable part has been taken, and is being taken still, by the Holy Orthodox Church. The friendship between the Holy Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion has an important role within the whole ecumenical movement. It is a friendship which helps to create a bridge between the East and the West. The Anglican Communion started in the West, and has been involved in Western history. But it has many similarities to the Holy Orthodox Church, and a deep spiritual union is growing between them. We Anglicans, like you Orthodox Christians, love the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Creeds; like you, we are linked with the days of the apostles by the historic apostolic succession; like you, we have the real presence of Jesus Christ in the holy sacrament of his Body and Blood; like you, we are united in the liturgy with angels and archangels and all the saints in heaven. It is our hope that the International Theological Commission representing the Holy Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion will meet soon and make great progress in theological understanding. But besides the work of theologians, there is the work of love and the work of prayer in which every Christian can share. Such is the road to unity.

... May we so faithfully serve Christ as peacemakers in this world, spreading the peace of Christ around us, that we shall know that the glory of heaven is near to us. To that glory, where Christ is with his Blessed Mother Mary and all the saints, may God one day bring us all.

TRADITION AND MODERNITY
IN FRESCOES

On Sunday 23 April, the Feast of St George, His Beatitude the Patriarch Elias IV of Antioch and Mgr Georges Khodr, Metropolitan of Mount Lebanon, celebrated a solemn Liturgy at Deir el-Harf to dedicate the frescoes of the monastery church.

That important date marked the second anniversary of the first monastic vows taken in the monastery which has since become an important centre of monastic renewal and influence: eight monks currently live there, publishing the periodical *Cahiers de Deir el-Harf* along with some ten volumes of spirituality (notably the studies of the Revd Andre Scrima translated into Arabic). In addition to the visitors who come for a retreat of brief meditation, the monastery also receives guests for longer periods: among them are Catholics from the West who come to experience eastern monasticism.

But the dedication of the frescoes indicates most of all a spiritual maturity, renewing a tradition which was interrupted some seven centuries ago. Three years ago a spontaneous desire arose among the monks to see their church resume its role as "icon", as a place which elicits prayer by its very atmosphere.

The fresco rather than the icon proper was chosen because it depicts an ancient tradition which is well represented in Lebanon: Saidet ed-Darr near Bechara, the church and chapel of Deir es-Salib in the Qadichat, the grotto of St Marine near Dedde, Saidet er-Rih at Enfe, Mar Phocas at Amioun, Mar Tadros and Mar Nicola at Behdidat as well as the Maad Church in the Jebil region, Dar Beachtar, Ras Kifa, Naous, Bziza, a church of Mar Gerios in a remote place on the Hamat plateau, all have vestiges of more or less well-preserved frescoes. Perhaps they will become better known and more appreciated now that American scholars of the "Dumbarton Oaks Foundation" have discovered and studied the frescoes of Mar Dimitri near Kousba and have prepared albums of the important vestiges which remain in Lebanon.

HELP FROM ROUMANIA

But all of those date from the 12th to the 14th centuries, and after that the secret of the fresco was lost. Fr. Andre Scrima regularly brings his intellectual and spiritual help to the Deir el-Harf Monastery since its "re-establishment". At his initiative, an appeal was made for help from the Roumanian Church in 1971. Patriarch Justinian sent two iconographers, Archimandrite Sofian Beghiu and Mr. Michael Morosan, who were assisted in their work by Fr Daniel, a monk of Deir el-Harf who is now in Roumania to complete his artistic training.

Fresco work is exceedingly difficult. One has to paint *in pariete verde* on a still-moist wall. That is to say, after having covered the entire surface which is to hold an ensemble (many square

metres), the work must be finished within four or five days so that the paint can penetrate the still-humid wall. Thus it both endures the test of time and is incorporated into the edifice.

Although different from an icon proper, the fresco is also traditional as an art and in its motifs. Frescoes are found from northern Russia to the Sinai, including the celebrated monuments in Macedonia and Roumania.

The motifs are indeed determined by tradition. At the top is the Christ Pantocrator, the Risen One, "who holds all" (rather than all-powerful) around which everything is arranged. At the base in the apse is the Virgin Mary, figure of the Church at prayer, with the Christ present in her heart. Above are always the manifestations of Christ's divinity: his transfiguration, resurrection, appearance to Thomas, Pentecost. God received by Abraham, the desert nomad, and the angel announcing to Mary the coming of God with us in person and no longer in image.

On the lower level are the saints, who unite heaven and earth. In addition to the four doctors who also represent the liturgical families—Chrysostom (Antioch), Basil (Constantinople), James the Greater (Jerusalem), and Gregory of Rome—local saints are chosen: Simeon Stylites and St. Maron. Does not the monastery also have a wall in common with the Maronite church of the village?

One sees in this fidelity to tradition that something is left to originality and the modern spirit of ecumenical brotherhood. One also notes lighter tones in keeping with modern taste.

MAN "FANTASMATIC" ANIMAL

In a more profound sense, having thus become image or vision of the world, the church is reunited to the modern world. We have known since Freud that the role of the unconscious imagination is so enormous that man might be called a "fantasmatic" animal who makes images. From that point of view the current taste for unadorned churches is perhaps an error, says Fr Scrima. During prayer we continue to make our own images which risk disturbing our spirit. On the contrary, icons which respond to one another in a dynamic movement create in our unconscious that true image of the world and of the man which Christ came to restore.

Renewing a lost tradition which, let us hope, will again be revived in Lebanon, the dedication of the frescoes of Deir el-Harf constitutes an event which is cultural and above all spiritual. It is at the same time a link with the ancient past: in the 17th century, Patriarch Makarios and Paul of Aleppo paid a visit to the Church of Roumania which was then already printing liturgical books in Arabic for the Church of Antioch. On the occasion of the third centenary of that event, and to thank Patriarch Justinian for his brotherly aid to the Monastery of Deir el-Harf, Patriarch Elias IV Moawad will soon visit Roumania along with Mgr Khodr and

several bishops. Thus, on the levels of both history and art, the present will be united with the past in an always living present.

J. Aucagne, S.J.

(Reprinted, by kind permission, from *Al Montada*, April 1972).

A MIDDLE EASTERN DIALOGUE

A meeting of delegates of the Patriarchs of Orthodox Churches in the Middle East was held in the new School of Theology at Balamand in the Lebanon, from 1st to 5th March 1972. Representatives from the Coptic, Syrian and Armenian Orthodox Churches on the one side, and from the Greek Orthodox Churches of Alexandria and Antioch on the other, felt the need to meet and study ways of overcoming the obstacles which have hindered complete unity among them up to now.

Their separation dates from the Council of Chalcedon (451) where the two natures of Christ, human and divine, were defined: united without confusion, distinct without separation. The Oriental Churches of Egypt, Syria and Armenia, although firmly professing that Christ is truly God and truly man, saw in that definition a dangerous concession to the heresy of Nestorius who distinguished *two persons* in Christ. They repudiated Chalcedon and preferred to retain their allegiance to the definition given at Ephesus (431) which confirmed the formula of Cyril of Alexandria: "the single *physis* of the Word was incarnate". But does *physis* mean nature or person?

To clear up this theological misunderstanding which was hardened at the time by political, sociological and cultural factors, unofficial meetings of theologians have been held at Aarhus (Denmark) in 1964, Bristol in 1967, Geneva in 1970, and finally at Addis Ababa in January 1971.

One notes, in reading the joint declarations published at the end of those four meetings, that the theologians of the two Churches recognised complete agreement on Christological doctrine and took into account the considerable movement of rapprochement brought about by reciprocal visits and by study of liturgical traditions and spiritual writings. This rediscovery prompted them to "ask their Churches for a more complete unity".

The meeting at Balamand is a first step on the way to concrete implementation of this unity at the level of the ecclesiastical life of the region. As stated in the communique given to the press, its aim was:

- (1) "to initiate steps toward the realisation of eastern unity;
- (2) to study the possibilities for taking a common position with

regard to ecumenical problems at the regional and world levels;

- (3) to specify common responsibility concerning vital problems in the Arab world;
- (4) to propose practical steps and necessary administrative procedures for building permanent collaboration.

"The participants studied these different points in detail and in a spirit of understanding, love and prayer. They decided to submit the results of their work to their spiritual heads so that it can be studied by the respective Holy Synods. With their approval, the communique issued at the meeting will be published so that the faithful in the several Churches may take note of it and share in its spirit and responsibilities".

It may be useful to recall that several factors justify this bilateral reunion: first among them is common responsibility for a separation which took place in this part of the world and was one of the first to break unity in the Church.

On the part of the Orthodox Churches which extend over the five continents, the problem of unity with the other great Christian families has been considered on the same level, although special attention has been given to relationships with the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, the Ancient Churches have given priority to relations with the Orthodox Churches.

Meeting at Addis Ababa in 1965, the Patriarchs of the Ancient Oriental Churches declared: "though in our concern for the reunion of Christendom we have in our minds the reunion of all Churches from the point of view of closer affinity in faith and spiritual kinship with us, we need to develop different approaches in our relationship with them.

"This consideration leads us to take up the question of our relations with the Eastern Orthodox Churches as a first step". After 1965, by encouraging theological research, the Patriarchs expressed their agreement that the Churches seek ways to establish stronger relationships and to cooperate in practical ways.

On the other hand, each of the Catholicosates and Patriarchates of the Oriental Orthodox Churches represented at the Balamand meeting has had various kinds of contacts with Rome: the Catholicos of Cilicia (H. H. Khoren I) was received by Pope Paul VI in 1967, and the Supreme Catholicos of all Armenians (H. H. Vaghen I) in 1970. An unofficial meeting on the theological level between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches (among them Anba Shenouda, now Patriarch) and Roman Catholic theologians, was held in Vienna in September 1971. And very recently H. H. Ignatius Yacoub III, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, visited Pope Paul VI.

Reunion in the Christian East will have favourable repercussions in the wider ecumenical movement. "Transcending differences in

theology where the issue at stake is faith in the person of Christ", declared one of the bishops who took part in the Balamand meeting, "is to show the royal road to unity. If in this area where eternal values are at stake we succeed in going beyond divergences of expression by reaffirming a whole faith, there is stronger reason to hope that we will be able to transcend phrases in other less vital areas".

The current problems of the region and the need to respond with fidelity to the Gospel in what the Arab world expects of Arab Christians today was a constant concern at the Balamand meeting. Historical circumstances have had a decisive importance in the drama of the separation: today they contribute to rapprochement. In this, we believe, is one of the signs of the realism of the Incarnation.

Al Montada

NEWS AND CAUSERIE

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

On 16th July, the Holy Synod elected, by an overwhelming majority, the Metropolitan Dimitrios of Imroz and Tenedos to be Ecumenical Patriarch in succession to the late Patriarch Athenagoras I.

The Turkish Government, exercising its rights inherited from the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire, scrutinised the list of candidates for the election and removed from it those names unacceptable to it. In this way, the name of Meliton of Chalcedon, who had been considered a likely successor to the Ecumenical Throne and who is so well-known and so well-loved by Anglicans as by Christians of all confessional groups, was erased.

Dimitrios I became a Metropolitan only five months ago, after being an assistant bishop to the Throne, and so was the most junior member of the Synod: aged 58, he has long been a disciple of Metropolitan Meliton and can be expected to share his strong support for the reunion of the Churches.

The Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate recently announced an "exarchate" for Mount Athos: an extraordinary Commission of bishops to deal with the affairs of the Holy Mountain. Set up a year ago, this Commission has twice had to postpone its departure for Athos; but its members (the Metropolitans Timothy of Maroneia Dionysios of Kozani and Gabriel of Cologne) is expected very soon

to begin its discussions with the monastic authorities. The most important matters to be dealt with are:

(a) the constant reduction of the number of monks there, which has shrunk from 2043 in 1951 to 1145 in 1971, a decrease of 44% in twenty years; and it is felt that the main reason is not one of lack of monastic vocations but simply one of shortage of money to support them.

(b) the refusal of the Athonite authorities to recognise the validity of the Greek Government's Law 124/1969, which was designed to safeguard the Mountain's buildings and artistic treasures but which the monks considered to be an infringement of their traditional independence.

(c) the financial situation which, already bad enough after continuous expropriations of monastic property in Greece and elsewhere, has recently been aggravated by two recent acts of the Greek Government—the stopping of the annual grant in compensation for the expropriations, and the abolition of the monks' exemption from taxation on their monastic revenues.

(d) the serious unrest in the various Monasteries pursuant upon the various local Orthodox Churches' involvement in the Ecumenical Movement.

JERUSALEM

H. B. Patriarch Benedictos of Jerusalem has addressed an appeal to the Bishops of the Church of Greece, asking them to help him find some young recruits for the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre which, as he points out in his letter to them, has always been made up by Greek monks. His Beatitude recalls the honourable position of this most ancient Order, with its unique responsibilities for the Holy Places of Christianity, and gives a solemn warning about the serious effects that its running-down have had and will continue to have on Greek monasticism in the Holy Land.

The Patriarchate constitutes a single diocese under the Patriarch, with some 70,000 faithful served by 65 parishes and 61 married priests; and most of the flock are Arabs. The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre has 116 members, including the 16 bishops of the Throne, 35 archimandrites, 20 priest-monks, 15 deacons and 30 monks: nearly all are of Greek origin, and only one of the bishops is Arab, although all possess Jordanian nationality. Apart from the Holy Places themselves, the Community serves 19 monasteries in Jerusalem and 21 in other places. There are also 46 nuns, divided among four convents.

In passing, it might be noted that a similar appeal for recruits from Greece was made by the St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, earlier this year.

RUSSIA

Although his projected visits to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to Cyprus had to be postponed at short notice, Patriarch Pimen of All the Russias left Moscow on 28th April on a journey which took in Alexandria, Antioch, Bulgaria and Jerusalem.

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Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad and Novgorod has resigned as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Russian Orthodox Church, to be succeeded by his deputy, Metropolitan Juvenal of Tula and Belev: the reason given for this decision is the state of his health—he recently suffered a heart attack and was unable to accompany the Patriarch on his visit to the Middle East.

At the same time, however, Metropolitan Nikodim retains the presidency of the Synodical Committee for Questions of Christian Unity, whose scope is now enlarged under the title of Synodical Committee for Questions of Christian Unity and Inter-Church Relations. The latter will be responsible for “deliberating on problems and deciding on courses of action with regard to matters outside the Moscow Patriarchate, the carrying out of which decisions will be entrusted to the Foreign Affairs Department”. It is also laid down by the Holy Synod that the two presidents of these two Committees will work “in direct liaison” with each other.

Metropolitan Nikodim remains in charge of his present diocese, and also continues as president of the “Christian Conference for Peace”, a post which gives him no little work and occasion for travel: only two days after his resignation on 2nd June he headed a delegation to a “Peace Conference” in Brussels.

Metropolitan Juvenal was born at Yaroslav in 1935, studied at the Leningrad Theological Academy, and joined the Foreign Affairs Department in 1960. In 1964 he was in charge of the Russian Church Mission in Jerusalem; in 1964 he was consecrated as coadjutor to Metropolitan Nikodim; and in 1965 he became the Metropolitan of Tula and Belev.

SERBIA

At the annual Synod of the Hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church in May, it was announced that Bishop Vasilije of Zica had been sentenced to a month's imprisonment by a local magistrate because of a sermon which he had preached in the village of Brezna last October. It appears that he had gone there for the restored church's inauguration and had been shocked to find that the children of the local school had been forbidden by their teachers to attend

the ceremony. The Synod recorded its sadness at the event and resolved to petition the authorities to have the verdict and sentence annulled.

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At the end of May Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens and all Greece made an official visit to the Serbian Church, accompanied by six bishops and three other clergy. They were given a warm welcome, and the religious press gave the event full coverage. The two Primates made it clear that their purpose was to cement the traditional friendship between their two Churches; and the Serbian Patriarch spoke of their desire “to preserve the unity of our holy Orthodoxy”.

During the Divine Liturgy for Pentecost in Belgrade Cathedral, the Greek Primate preached on the meaning of Pentecost for the Church's unity. “Some, unhappily, instead of cultivating love and unity, provoke dissensions. The Church meets their assaults with its own sort of force—that of prayer. Pray, my brethren, that the Church of Christ may abide on the unshakeable rock. Say in your prayers: Lord, stop the schisms of the Churches, quench the anger of the nations, put down speedily the revolts of heresies by the power of thy Holy Spirit”.

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The Synod of the Hierarchy chose the four bishops who, with the Patriarch, will comprise the Permanent Holy Synod for the current term: Bishops Chrysostom of Branichevo, Makarije of Srem, Longin of Zvornik-Tuzla and Stephan of Dalmatia.

RUMANIA

At the invitation of the Ecumenical Committee, Patriarch Justinian of Rumania was in Belgium for a week in May. There he met Cardinal Suenens and the other Roman Catholic Bishops, as well as the Orthodox Bishops in Belgium, Aimitianos and Basil.

GEORGIA

On 8th April (Holy Saturday in the Orthodox calendar) Ephrem II, Archbishop of Metchet and Tbilissi, and Catholicos of all Georgia died at the age of 76. He had been consecrated bishop in 1928, and he spent seven years of his episcopate in exile in Siberia during Stalin's regime: he was elected Catholicos of his native Georgia in 1960. The author of many books on hagiography and hymnography, in 1963 he edited a new edition of the New Testament.

GREECE

Cardinal Willebrands made an official visit to the Church of Greece from 17 to 20 May; and it is clear that contacts between the two Churches have become more frequent—a sign of the improvement in their mutual relations. The following facts are significant in this connection.

(1) Following a decision by the Vatican, Roman Catholics in Greece celebrated Easter on the same day as the Orthodox.

(2) Visits by Roman Catholics to the Church of Greece, especially to the archdiocese of Athens, are becoming more frequent. On 3 May 1972, a large group of clergy and laity, led by the Bishop of Imola (Mgr Gobbi), left Italy for Athens where they were received by Archbishop Hieronymos, who prayed that the Lord would hasten the day of full communion for Christians from the same chalice. Then, on 26 May, The Monastery of Penteli (Athens) gave a lunch in honour of 90 Roman Catholic priests from Germany, who were making a pilgrimage to Greece "in the steps of St Paul".

(3) Recently the Vatican has nominated a "permanent envoy from the Holy See to Greece", Archbishop Pio Laghi, who is also the Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem, Palestine and Cyprus. Mgr Laghi, besides his mission within the Roman Catholic in Greece, will be in charge of liaison with the Orthodox Church and with the Foreign Ministry. Greece has had no diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

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The Orthodox Theological Institute of St Sergius in Paris has conferred an honorary D.D. on Professor Panayiotis Christou, of the Theological Faculty in the University of Thessaloniki. This distinguished Patristic scholar holds degrees from the Universities of Athens, Yale, Harvard and Boston, and he is well-known in many countries, including Britain, due to his books and attendance at conferences. Dr Christou is also the first Director of the new Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies in the Vlatades Monastery at Thessaloniki; and for the academic year 1971-1972 he was vice-Rector of the new Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem.

FINLAND

By a decision of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the two dioceses of Karelia and Helsinki have been elevated to Metropolitan rank: thus the head of the Karelia diocese remains Archbishop of Karelia and All Finland, and the Bishop of Helsinki becomes Metropolitan thereof. Administratively this will cause no change; but in the international field it means that the new usage

corresponds to the general practice of all the Greek-Orthodox Churches. It is, also, a friendly compliment to the small Orthodox flock in Finland.

New novices have appeared in Finland after an interval of five years: three young men have gone to the New Valamo Monastery, which continues the Old Valamo Monastery which was lost to the Soviet Union after the Second World War.

Archbishop Paaveli of Finland made an official visit to Greece in June, to confer with the Holy Synod and to get to know the life of the Greek Church.

AMERICA

The 27th regular meeting of SCOBA (Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas) was held on 20th April, under the presidency of Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Orthodox jurisdiction: all the members were present except the representatives of the Bulgarian diocese.

The Archbishop expressed his pleasure at the large attendance and appealed for a joint effort to ensure not only the survival of the organisation but rather "survival as Christians charged with an historic responsibility, especially in an age of crises and confusion in the world and in the Church".

Decisions were taken unanimously, as to the authority and function of the Executive Committee; and all were agreed that SCOBA had an absolute need of that body.

It would seem that this meeting showed some improvement in the relationships between the various jurisdictions in USA; but since the agenda for the next session in October includes discussion of the Russian request for changes in the statutes of SCOBA, that meeting could well be critical.

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The Russian Metropolia ("The Orthodox Church of America") has conducted an investigation into the attitude of "teenagers" of that Church to their Church, sending a questionnaire to a sample of 500 young people. The main fact emerging was that the vast majority of Russian Orthodox in America (of that generation) were "third generation Americans"—which is not true of all the Other Orthodox jurisdictions.

Although 70% described their parish as predominantly composing Orthodox born in America, only 18% said that their parishes used the English language exclusively in church. Only 60% described themselves as very much at home in their parish church, although 76% attended at least at Easter and on the great Festivals.

JAPAN

The Council of the Orthodox Church in Japan, composed of clerical and lay delegates, met in Tokyo on 19 March. Having been informed by their Metropolitan Vladimir of Tokyo and All Japan that he intended to retire, and also that it was proper that a native Japanese should head the Church, the Council elected Bishop Theodosios of Kyoto to succeed him.

The new Metropolitan was born, educated and ordained in Japan; but he did spend two years as a monk at St Tikhon's Monastery at South Canaan, Pennsylvania. He has an American suffragan Bishop Seraphim of Sendai, who was consecrated last autumn.

NOTICE

The Annual General Meeting of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association will be held in St Andrew's Courthouse, St Andrew's Street, EC4, on Saturday 7th October 1972 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Nominations for the offices of Chairman, General Secretary and Assistant Secretary should be sent to the Secretary, duly seconded and with the consent of the nominee, in good time before that date.

AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The Association exists to unite members of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches for the following objects:

- (a) The principal object for which the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association is established is the advancement of the Christian religion, in particular by means of teaching the members of the Anglican Church and those of the Eastern Orthodox Church the doctrine, worship and way of life of the other.
- (b) The Association exists also to unite members of the two Communion in prayer and work in achieving the principal object, with a view to promotion of visible unity between them.

SOME METHODS OF HELPING THE WORK

1. By joining the Association and getting others to join.
2. By arranging for a meeting in the neighbourhood, when a lecture may be given on the Eastern Churches and Reunion, and the objects of the Association explained.
3. By asking the Parochial Authorities to promise a Sunday collection every year either in the service or afterwards at the doors.
4. By uniting in local centres for the study of Eastern Christendom, and for Intercession for Reunion.

Lectures – with or without visual aids – can be arranged by writing to the General Secretary.

SUBSCRIPTION

The minimum annual subscription is £1, but none will be excluded solely on account of inability to pay this amount, while it is hoped that those who can afford to pay more will do so.

All members receive the *Eastern Churches News Letter* which is published quarterly.