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No responsibility can be accepted by the Committee or by the Editor for the views expressed by the various contributors.

Eastern Churches News Letter

EDITORIAL

Festival 1998

On Saturday 11th July 1998 the Association held its Annual Festival with the kind co-operation of three of the Ancient Oriental Churches. The venue, the Armenian Apostolic church of St Sarkis, Iverna Gardens, London W8 is not, like many of the Eastern churches in London, a Western building adapted for Eastern use, but was built in 1922 at the expense of the famous oil multi-millionaire, Calouste Gulbenkian, in an authentic Armenian style.

The Eucharist was the Holy Qurbano of the Syrian Orthodox Church celebrated by Father Eldhose of St Thomas Syrian church, which worships at St Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside. The Syro-Indian Church is unfortunately divided, and Father Eldhose and his congregation form part of the Church which remains "under the Holy See of Antioch and All the East." It was moving to experience the beautiful Liturgy of St James, the ancient rite of the Church of Jerusalem, and as much of the service was in Syriac, which is closely related to Aramaic, the language spoken by Our Lord and the Apostles, we were brought close to the origins of our Faith.

Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian of the Armenian Church and Mar Seraphim of the Coptic Orthodox Church were present, and the preacher was Father Shenouda of the Coptic Church.

After lunch we had the great pleasure of listening to a talk by William Dalrymple, the author of "From the Holy Mountain," an account of his journey to the Middle East and Egypt in the footsteps of John Moschos, a sixth-century monk who travelled the Byzantine Empire to gather the wisdom of the mystics and desert fathers. The oldest surviving manuscript of the collection of sayings and anecdotes which John Moschos made, "The Spiritual Meadow" is in the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos, and Mr Dalrymple, who has been described as "standing out as one of our most talented travel writers," started his journey by looking at the manuscript, and from Mount Athos travelled to Turkey, Syria, the Lebanon, Jerusalem and Egypt. His slides and his narrative were fascinating. He commented on the cataclysmic decline in the ancient Christian communities of the region, and the attempt in Turkey to obliterate even the memory of them by the destruction of many remains.

Mr Dalrymple was pessimistic about the future, and his talk was a threnody for Eastern Christianity in the Middle East: all the more reason for the Association to strengthen ties of friendship with the Eastern Christian Diaspora in the West.



Fr. John Salter's farewell Mass – St. Dunstan-in-the-West. L-R: Fr John Salter (Chairman of Committee), The Lord Bishop of London (President)

Constantinople Lecture 1998

The Right Revd Christopher Hill, Bishop of Stafford, who was at the centre of the Anglican contribution to Ecumenical discussions in his roles at Lambeth Palace between 1974 and 1989, as successively Archbishop's Assistant Chaplain (Foreign Relations) and Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs, gave the 1998 Constantinople Lecture. The lecture was held at St Dunstan in the West, Fleet Street on 2nd December, and Bishop Hill spoke most interestingly on the subject "Constantinople, Canterbury and Rome: Learning from our present difficulties". It is hoped to print the lecture in a future issue of ECNL.

St Dunstan in the West

The Chairman of the Committee of the Association, Father John Salter, has retired as Guild Vicar of St Dunstan in the West, Fleet Street after 20 years, and on 26th May he was celebrant at a High Mass for St Dunstan's Day in the presence of the Bishop of London, our Anglican President, who preached the sermon.

Father Salter remains as Vicar of St Silas, Pentonville, but has ceased to be a pluralist! In the 18th century pluralism was an abuse which disfigured the Church of England: now it is the only way to keep many rural parishes going. Father Salter's notable ministry at St Dunstan's is another example of the acceptable face of pluralism.

We are hoping that the Association will continue to be able to look on St Dunstan's as our base. It is a church unique outside the Holy Land for the number of different altars for the use of various churches, and is used Sunday by Sunday for the worship of the Romanian community in London.

Festival 1999

To show our feelings of sympathy with the Serbian Church in this difficult year we held our Festival at St Sava's Lancaster Road, W11, on the borders of Notting Hill (an area known throughout the world since the film). The principal celebrant at the Divine Liturgy was the Very Revd Milun Kostic, and one of the concelebrants was Father

Pufulete, a member of the Committee of the Association, hence the use of Romanian as well as Slavonic and English in the Liturgy.

In the afternoon Father John Salter talked about his travels in Syria and the Lebanon, an account of which appears later in this issue.

The New Calendar

The Church of England has had an additional calendar for use since 30th November 1997, and some commemorations of Eastern saints appear. On 2nd January there is an entry for Seraphim, Monk of Sarov, Spiritual Guide (1833) (whose day will not be observed in 2000 as it will be a Sunday). Sergei of Radonezh, Russian Monastic Reformer, Teacher of the Faith (1392) is shown on 25th September, and John of Damascus, Monk, Teacher of the Faith, (c749) on 4th December. 26th July has "Anne and Joachim, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary" which begins to approach the Orthodox description, "the holy and righteous progenitors of God, Joachim and Anna." In the Prayer Book Calendar the entry is "St Anne" and in the Alternative Service Book "Anne, Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

On the subject of calendars, as 2000 will be a leap year in the Gregorian Calendar (unlike 1700, 1800 and 1900), as well as in the Julian Calendar, the old and new styles of dating will not diverge further until the year 2100.

Raisa Gorbachov

Finally a quotation from The Times of 24th September, "Raisa Gorbachov was buried yesterday in Moscow's most prestigious cemetery" (the Novodevichy) "...in a Russian Orthodox Church ceremony that would have been unimaginable during the Soviet era that she helped to end."

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The Armenian Church

We are pleased to report that Archbishop Mesrop Moutafian has been elected and enthroned in the Patriarchal Cathedral in Kumkapi as the Patriarch of Constantinople of the Armenians. The new Patriarch is relatively young (in his forties) and has worked as the ecumenical and foreign relations prelate at the Patriarchate. The enthronement was attended by His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomeos I; His Holiness the Supreme Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin I, was represented by Archbishop Nerses Bozabaljian, the Chancellor in Holy Etchmiadzin, whom many members of the Association will remember as Parish Priest at St Sarkis, Iverna Gardens, following the retirement of Archbishop Bessak Toumayan. The Catholicos Aram I of the Armenians of Cilicia was represented by Archbishop Yeprem Tabakian; the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Torkom II, sent Bishop Sevan Gharibian as his delegate; His Holiness Pope John-Paul II was represented by Archbishop Pier-Luigi Celata, while Archbishop Jean Tcholakian of the Catholic Armenians was also present, along with the Syrian Catholic Monsignor. The Byzantine Patriarch of Alexandria, His Holiness Petros VII, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III of the Copts and His Holiness Ignatios Zakka Iwas of

the Syrian Orthodox, were represented by Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia, Metropolitan Seraphim of Glastonbury and Archbishop Julios, Exarch in Western Europe for the Syrians. The Anglican Apokrisarios in Istanbul, Canon Ian Sherwood, represented the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We wish His Beatitude Patriarch Mesrop II many years!

The late Supreme Catholicos-Patriarch of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin I, on his visit to London, received in audience Fr. John Salter and Fr. Philip Warner. They were also present at the dinner at Lambeth Palace hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Catholicos.

The SS. Martha and Mary Convent in Moscow

Fr. Salter, Fr. Warner, Fr. Welling and Mr. Jonathan Bolton-Dignam visited the SS. Martha and Mary Convent in Old Muscovy, the most ancient part of Moscow, some four or five years ago. It was a great pleasure to attend the Vigil Service at the Russian Patriarchal Cathedral of The Assumption and All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, for the reunion of the Friends of the SS. Martha and Mary Convent, which was hosted by His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony of Sourzh. The convent was founded after the death of her husband, the Grand Duke Sergei, by Grand Duchess Sergei, formerly Princess Elizabeth of Hesse (known in her family as "Ella"), or St Elizabeth of the New Martyrs of Russia. A great niece of St. Elizabeth, the Countess Mountbatten of Burma, gave an address before the reception. Also present were Her Grand Ducal Highness Princess Margarita of Hesse, a great-great niece of the saint, together with the Abbess of the convent and a lady doctor, Dr. Remma, the leading doctor at the clinic founded by the Grand Duchess. Although the Grand Duchess Sergei perished in the Russian Revolution and her convent of nuns was dispersed, nevertheless her other foundation on the convent campus, the old peoples' home and the clinic survived. Today there are sixteen



Reception for SS. Martha & Mary Convent at Ennismore Gardens – Russian Cathedral. L-R: Mr Harry Turnbridge, Mr Robert Golden, Fr John Salter, H.G.D.H. Princess Margarita of Baden, Mrs Audrey Hutchinson, Dr Remma, Mr J. Bolton-Dignam, Countess Mountbatten of Burma, Abbess of the Convent

nuns at the convent. For visitors to Moscow the convent is quite easily reached on foot by walking across the Moskva river from St. Basil's in Red Square and passing over the bridge, from which to the right and below on the banks of the river can be seen the splendid palace which houses the British Embassy. Then keep walking for about twenty minutes until the gates of the convent appear on the right. Members of the Association would be sure of a warm welcome there. There is a very young chaplain who is much concerned with the burns unit which has been established. Wiring in Moscow since the fall of Communism has begun to wear out and burns are commonplace.

Since the reunion of the Friends of the SS. Martha and Mary Convent H.G.D.H. Princess Margarita has visited the convent and was given a Royal welcome and, indeed, a limousine and outriders by the Moscow government.

Whereas some four years ago the convent campus was divided between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Church Outside Russia, it is now entirely under the Patriarchate. A few years ago the chaplain visited the former convent building of the Anglican Sisters of Bethany in Islington where Grand Duchess Sergei had visited with Fr. Fynes-Clinton, a former General Secretary of the Association, in 1913. Her sisters' rule was based to some extent on the rule of the Sisters of Bethany. Her niece, Princess Andrew of Greece, the mother of Prince Philip, based her small sisterhood in Athens on the same rule.

Orthodox and Eastern Catholics' Conference

Before Christmas a conference was held in London between various Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Catholics. The conference ended with Cardinal Basil Hume entertaining the delegates to tea at Archbishop's House, Westminster. Fr. Salter attended as a guest. Archbishop Hilarion Cappucci and Father David White represented the Melkite Church in Western Europe and there were representatives of the Melkite Church in the Middle East; the Assyrian Church of the East including an Assyrian bishop from India who had studied at St. Boniface's College, Warminster, 1961-62; one of their priests from Sweden; the Archbishop of the Chaldeans of Syria and delegates from Rome's Pontifical Institute dealing with Orthodox affairs, as distinct from the Pontifical Oriental Institute which deals with the Eastern Catholics.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church

A grant was made to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in London towards maintaining, for another year, the Orthodox Sunday School.

Dr. Methodie Kusseff thanks the Association for its financial help in this worthy project. Money will be needed for the next year and friends of the Bulgarian Church are asked to contribute towards this work.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Community worship in a chapel converted from a garage in the grounds of the Bulgarian Embassy in Queen's Gate. The Priest-in-charge is Father Simeon.

Visit of Orthodox and Greek Catholic Children from the Ukraine

The Association was able to help towards the costs of the visit of Ukrainian Christian children to the United Kingdom, a project led by Irina Chenetsova from Truscavets in Western Ukraine.

Fr. Salter and Fr. Warner entertained the leaders to lunch at St. Silas's Vicarage, Pentonville, before they left by coach to return to L'viv. Irina has written to thank the Association most warmly for the grant. We got a mention in the Ukrainian equivalent of the "Church Times"! Ecumenical youth pilgrimages such as this are essential if a new era of peace, between the various Orthodox jurisdictions and the Greek Catholic Church in the Ukraine is ever to be inaugurated.

In August Fr. Salter, Fr. Warner, Fr. Welling and Mr. Jonathan Bolton-Dignam entertained Andrei Katchuck, the son of Archpriest John Katchuk and nephew of Father Stephen Katchuk to dinner at the Army and Navy Club. Andrei is at the Ukrainian Greek Catholic seminary near L'viv just beginning his fifth year as a student for the priesthood. There are 250 students in the seminary, one of the largest in Christendom.

Association Grants

The Association's Committee made grants this year to the Romanian monastery of Prodromou on Mount Athos; towards a photocopying machine; to a further visit of Ukrainian children for a summer school in Hastings; and towards the re-furbishment etc. of the Anglican Centre in Rome, which is much visited by Eastern Christians studying in the Eternal City. The treasurer of the Association, Mr. David Powell, attended the re-opening ceremony in the Doria-Pamphilij palazzo in Rome. A further grant was made via Synodesmos for a student from the Malankara Orthodox Church of India to study in Oxford and to Romanian students.

The Czech Republic

I visited the Czech Republic some months ago and called on the Orthodox church in Prague. It is now closed for restoration and will become a place of reconciliation for all peoples. It was here that the Czech Resistance fighters sought sanctuary after shooting the infamous Heidrich, the Nazi Governor of Czechoslovakia. A large village and its inhabitants were destroyed in reparation for the assassination of Heidrich. His assassins committed suicide in the flooded crypt of the Orthodox church. The bishop, the priest and the verger were all tried by the Gestapo and executed.

Metropolitan Dorotheos still heads the Czechoslovakian Orthodox Church, which was autonomous under the Patriarch of Moscow. The Greek Catholic Church has now emerged as a separate entity and has an Exarch in Prague and the church of St. Clement next to the Karl Bridge. The Divine Liturgy is sung there at 5 pm every day. The Anglicans use another church of St. Clement near the Greek Catholic Exarchate.

OBITUARIES

The English National Press have given a very good coverage to the death of His Holiness the Supreme Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I Sarkissian. His Holiness succeeded Catholicos Vazgen I, who had been Supreme Catholicos since 1954. Karekin I had been Catholicos Karekin II of Cilicia before being translated to Holy

Etchmiadzin. He had done a great deal of work to heal the schism between the two Catholicosates, due in large part to the political situation in Armenia under Soviet rule. In some places there still exist today overlapping jurisdictions, which need to be addressed.

Catholicos Karekin I had a great love for England and the Anglican Communion and was delighted to go to Oxford, where he spent some time not only in the University but also at St. Stephen's House, where he upset the then Principal Canon Arthur Couratin by cutting rather unevenly one of his books on liturgy, whose pages had not been separated and which the Canon had obviously not read! The Catholicos when head of the Church of Cilicia or Antelias attended Solemn Evensong at St. Dunstan-in-the-West and after the service laid a wreath in memory of the Armenian Martyrs of the Turkish genocide. His Holiness's grandmother had perished in the massacre.

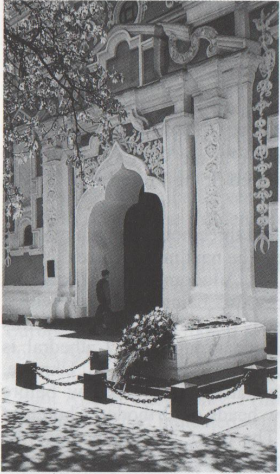
His Holiness had a great memory for names and churches and could easily place the clergy he had met in the churches they served. One of his hobbies was reading foreign dictionaries and constantly improving his vocabularies. His life had not been easy as he had to lead the Armenian people through the Lebanese war and Antelias was at the heart of the bombing. Nevertheless he was a Man of Peace and greatly respected throughout the Churches, so much so that Pope John-Paul II had intended to fly from Poland to Etchmiadzin to see him when he was dying, but it was too late.

His death removes a great figure from the Christian scene. We shall remember him with respect and affection and pray that his memory may be eternal.

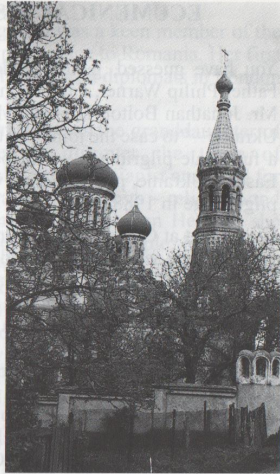
Abbess Elizabeth

A very respected figure in London has passed to her rest. Abbess Elizabeth of the Russian Orthodox Convent of the Annunciation, Brondesbury Park, of the Sisterhood of St. Xenia, died some months ago after a very long illness, but at a very great age. She had had a very difficult life – the Russian Revolution, then the eviction of her and her Arab Palestinian sisters from the Convent at Ain Karim, when the Israeli government handed the property to the Patriarchate of Moscow. The community was under what was known in those days as The Anastasian jurisdiction or the Russian Church Outside Russia today. Led by Abbess Elizabeth the nuns found a home at the house of Baroness Torby in Brechin Place, South Kensington. They later moved to Brondesbury Park, where icons were mysteriously discovered in the attics of the house – one for each member of the community. Abbess Elizabeth took this as a sign they should move there. She always had time for anyone who called at the convent and was a popular figure with her stall at the Russian Bazaar in Chelsea held each year in aid of the Old Peoples' Home in Chiswick. For some time her convent chaplain was Father Cheremeteff, whilst Archbishop John of San Francisco was a visitor. To the end of her life Abbess Elizabeth remained opposed to the Patriarchate of Moscow, but happily she lived long enough to see the collapse of Communism in her country and the prospect of better times for her Russian peoples.

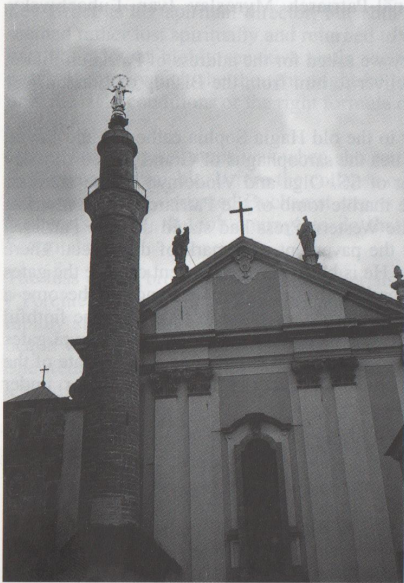
"In Your Kingdom remember Your servant, Elizabeth, O Lord".



Tomb of Patriarch Vlodymyr of Kiev and All Ukraine, Kiev



Old Believer Cathedral – (1906) Byelo-Krinitza Bukovina



A Moslem minaret now a Catholic shrine of Our Lady at Kamyanets-Podilsky, Ukraine



The Pochaev Shrine – Ukraine



Bukovina – Former Rumanian Cathedral at Czernovitza now Ukrainian Orthodox – note the towers are a copy of Curtea de Arges, Romania.

Good built in 1716. The Greek Catholics are nowhere so numerous in Kiev as they are in the Western Ukraine.

We paid a return visit to the Flora Lavra of nuns, which we had also visited ten years ago. The nuns' garden was a blaze of lilacs, jonquils, narcissi, daffodils and grape hyacinths and pilgrims and old ladies from the convent's old peoples' home sat sewing and sunning themselves in the orchards. Lilac trees are a delightful feature of the Ukraine and village churchyards are often surrounded by tall hedges of them in various shades of mauve and purple, an unforgettable sight and scent.

Hitler having allowed the convent to re-open, Stalin hadn't the courage to be less "liberal" than the Nazi dictator, so allowed it to remain open when the Red Army moved into the Ukraine. During the imprisonment of the Greek Catholic Metropolitan, Count Andrei Sheptytsky, in these parts the Orthodox nuns brought him food. When his guards remonstrated with the Abbess and asked why she and her nuns fed a Uniate, she replied: "He is also a Christian". It also helped to repay the hospitality offered by Metropolitan Andrei to Metropolitan Evlogy, the Archbishop of the Russian emigre community in Paris, when Evlogy left Russia at the time of the Revolution via what was then known as Lwow.

Thence to the Dnieper river where we drank Coca-Cola in a dark restaurant before taking the funicular up the hill to Communist Party Headquarters, now no longer so, but to build it the government had knocked down the Great Lavra of St. John the Forerunner, leaving only a large tower and a small church. The church is now exquisitely restored and gleaming white with a wooden slated tower. The campus is also being renovated, whilst Communist Party Headquarters looked very unrefresh. Brightly bescarved and rightly-believing babushkas brushed busily with their besoms in the forecourts – the quiet triumph of Christ over the kingdoms of this world, one sensed. And granny power!

A short walk brought us to the St. Alexander Nevsky Church now restored for Latin Rite Catholic worship. The Rector met us and told us he was from the Latvian capital, Riga. The church obviously caters for foreigners resident in the Ukrainian capital, who have increased enormously since Ukrainian independence and the establishment of embassies in the city.

Across a large square and we were soon at 36, Pushkinskaya Ulitsa (Pushkin Street) where we met Patriarch Filaret. He asked us to return again at 9 am the next morning. We left the Patriarchate to have dinner at the "Monte Christo" restaurant near the Libid Hotel, where the food was good and the vodka flowed!

After an early breakfast we took a taxi back to the Patriarchate. Here we waited in an ante-room where the walls were adorned with pictures of the Patriarchs of Moscow from Patriarch Tikhon, via Sergei, Alexei I, Pimen ... but not Patriarch Alexei II, who has not so far approved the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Patriarchate. His Holiness received us in the grand salon wearing a purple cassock. He kindly gave us books on the Ukrainian Patriarchate and then left the room to put on his white klobuk and veil (the klobuk was of the crash-helmet type worn by the

Patriarch of Moscow and the Catholikos of Georgia with cherubs' heads on the front and on the edges of the veil) and black loose rason, in order for photographs to be taken. We presented His Holiness with a letter from the Bishop of London. Fr. Salter had decided that as there were only two letters and one was for the Cardinal-Patriarch in L'viv, we should give the other letter to the first Orthodox Patriarch we found at home. In effect we never had time to visit the other Patriarch nor the Patriarch of Moscow's representative in Kiev.

Before lunch we set out by car for Chernihiv (as it is now called: our pilgrims there in 1988 will remember it with its Russian name of Chernigov) on the Desna river. It dates from the early years of the 8th century and was the seat of a Kievan-Rus Prince. The Tartars, as was their wont, ravaged it in 1239, but the city was rebuilt in a much grander style with several Byzantine monasteries and churches, a few of which have survived the Lithuanian, Polish and Russian occupations.

At the Troitze Sobor a wedding was in progress and the service was accompanied by a small but competent choir. On our way down to the Ilinsky church and the caves we met an elderly bearded gentleman who looked typically Slav, but who turned out to be an English Anglican priest, Father Tom, from Looe in Cornwall, who having lost his first wife had married a young Ukrainian woman. We went into the troglodyte conditions of the Caves of St. Anthony in which a giggle of schoolgirls were eager to practice their English on us. We four of us stood in recesses in the walls and sang "Glorious things of Thee are spoken, Zion, City of Our God" and "Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer". The caves consist of over 300 yards of passages and five underground chapels constructed out of the living rock (but embellished with some plaster work between the 11th and 13th centuries) as a hideaway from the Tartar raiders. Unlike the Caves of Kiev these are well lit, but have no bodies of monks or saints. Walking back along the Ulitsiya Leo Tolstoi we visited the working convent known as the Yeletsky. At its centre is the Uspensky cathedral, which having been built in the 12th century was remodelled in the splendid baroque style in the 17th century. The oldest church in Chernihiv and one of the oldest in Ukraine, is the Spasso-Preobrazhensky. It has at its corners two astonishing towers, which look as though they might at any minute launch a space shuttle or bomb New York, so missile-like are they in their construction. It dates from 1017 and is the shrine to the remains of several Grand Princes and their descendants. Prince Mstyslav Khorobry rests here, the younger brother of Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise. It was Prince Mstyslav who had the cathedral built. The iconostasis is again baroque, in the heavy baroque of the Slavs, and dates from the 18th century. Next door is the Cathedral of SS. Boris and Gleb (Boryso-Hlibsky). This, like so many churches and monasteries in the Ukraine, was badly damaged in the last war and is no longer a working church. On the way out of Chernihiv we spotted a Roman Catholic church which could have been copied from Lichfield cathedral – totally Gothic and standing out against the baroque.

30th April found us visiting a large folk park in a lovely, peaceful setting outside Kiev. There are two functioning churches there and a larger one outside the campus or park. Here the spring blossom was

magnificent. A few peasant families live in these folksy surroundings and cultivate their little gardens, growing vegetables and flowers; while school children come here with their teachers to study and to escape the noisy bustle of Kiev. Everywhere was blossoming blackthorn, lilac and pear and apple blossom interspersed with laburnum. Enterprising young couples had created bijoux boutiques selling recently painted portraits of the last Tsar of Russia; across the meadows a teenage boy in satin baggy trousers gave rides to anyone brave enough to mount his frisky stallion.

Back in Kiev after the Solemn Vigil service at the St. Vlodmyr Sobor a man whom we later discovered was not all there attached himself to us, promising us that London would die for its sins (he may have been on to something) and then produced a drawing of a skull and crossbones and announced that he was off to convert the Moslems in Iran. We only hoped for his sake he was stopped at the frontier.

That night Fr. Warner had a surprise treat for us. We were to leave Kiev to Lviv not in the ordinary night sleeper but in the central de luxe wagon lit of this 38 carriage train. We were very comfortable. In the next carriage was a young couple from the U.S.A. with an enormous and beautiful Newfoundland bitch called Ruth. The couple were Greek Catholics.

At 06.59 hrs. we arrived exactly on time in Lviv station where we were relieved to see Fr. Salter's friends Roman Hera and his brother-in-law, Andrew. In no time they had whisked us to the Hotel St. George – all Austro-Hungarian Empire baroque of grand and faded splendour. Time to wash and brush up and then Irina Chenetsova arrived with a colleague, Olga, from Truscavedts. We took them to a very large restaurant for lunch and to discuss the summer school for Irina's Ukrainian children. After lunch we drove to the Greek Catholic Patriarchate where we were received by the Chancellor, Fr. Michael Kwiatkowski, whom Father Salter had met in Rome at the Ukrainian College of SS. Sergius and Bacchus in 1994. It was also a great joy for Fr. Salter to meet again another acquaintance from SS. Sergius and Bacchus – Bishop Lubomyr Husar, who is administrator of the Patriarchate on behalf of Cardinal-Patriarch Myroslav Ivan Lubachivsky, who sadly is in failing health. Bishop Lubomyr was ordained secretly to the episcopate in the 1970s and is a monk of the Studite Order. We gave him the letter from the Bishop of London for the Cardinal Patriarch. Having shown us the Patriarchal Palace, a splendid roccoco building like the cathedral of St. George opposite, he invited us to the cathedral for the Sunday Divine Liturgy on the next day. He told us the 9 am Liturgy was sung by cantors and congregation, the 10 am by older folk who can still sing, but let the congregation join in; and the 11 am Liturgy which would be "Grand Opera". We decided to go to the latter as the Bishop was to ordain two new deacons at that Liturgy.

We four had dinner at the Hotel St. George and then entertained to drinks Roman Hera, Andrew and a Greek Catholic Priest, who is married, Father Stephen Kashchuk and his son-in-law. Fr. Stephen returned to the Unia having been educated at the Russian Orthodox seminary in Odessa during the years when the Greek Catholic Church

was suppressed. As a result of his Russian Orthodox training his liturgy is de-Latinized and his choir one of the best in Lviv. He still keeps in touch with his Orthodox classmates, some of whom are now bishops.

2 May 1998 – We went with Fr. Stephen Kashchuk to the large cemetery where we joined in the panikhida for his mother-in-law, Anna. Nearby was a statue of a young Ukrainian poet who had been hanged by the Soviets in 1979, also next door was the tomb to the Greek Catholic Bishop Nicholas Charnetsky who, following a secret trial in Secret Police Headquarters in Kiev in 1946, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on trumped up political charges. The Bishop died in Lviv on 2 April 1959, having been released from a Soviet prison camp in 1956. His tomb has become a shrine and pilgrims make their way there every day. His cause for beatification is proceeding in Rome. During his imprisonment he secretly ordained some priests for the Greek Catholic Church. We laid six pheasant's eye narcissi on his grave, a rather inadequate tribute to a great Catacomb Christian Confessor.

On our return journey into central Lviv we passed a Ukrainian Orthodox seminary which was once a Latin Catholic seminary and still has over its entrance gates a monstrosity in mosaic work. Nearby is Bishop Augustine's Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Moscow Patriarchate, but sadly we had no time to call on him in his now very isolated position.

We then drove to the great hill fortress of ancient Leopolis as the Romans called Lviv, where a bridal party were taking photographs. From here there is a panoramic view of the city with its many spires and domes and turrets. We concluded the outing with a beer with Father Stephen. He then drove us to the house of his assistant priest, Father George and his wife, Maria. Father George and Maria have a son, Andrew, who is very deaf and a daughter, Christina. Andrew needed some new part for his deaf aid, which had been donated by a Roman Catholic lady in Dublin. We promised to follow this up through the good offices of Archimandrite Serge Keleher, the Greek Catholic priest in Dublin.

We were taken, after an enormous lunch, to a service in Father Stephen's church, where Father Salter and Father Warner and Father Welling were robed in Slav-Byzantine vestments and flung in, so to speak, at the deep end. Father Salter sang the Lity and censed the church and congregation, guided by Father George, while Father Warner anointed the faithful at the end of the service. We were then welcomed by the congregation some of whom had relatives in the United Kingdom. Father Salter made a speech of thanks and gave them a greeting from the Association.

3rd May 1998 Sunday – at 10.40 am Andrew arrived with his car and took us to the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George. Here Bishop Lubomyr Husar celebrated Pontifical Divine Liturgy assisted by three concelebrant priests, the father of one of them had spent four years in Auschwitz. During the Divine Liturgy Bishop Lubomyr ordained two young men to the Diaconate of the Greek Catholic Church. The porrectio instrumentorum in the Slav-Byzantine Rite is a liturgical fan and a censor.



At the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Patriarchate. L-R: Bishop Lubomyr Husar, Fr John Salter, Fr Philip Warner, Fr Michael Kwiatkowski, Mr Jonathan Bolton-Dignam



Patriarch Filaret of Kiev and Ukraine with Fr Philip Warner (left) and Fr John Salter (right) at the Patriarchate, Kiev



At the tomb of the Confessor Bishop Nicholas Charnetsky of the Greek Catholic Church – Liviv cemetery. L-R R Stephen Kashchuk, Fr John Salter

After the Liturgy we were told by one of the priests from Canada that the Old Believers' churches at Byelo-Krinitza were something not to be missed. We took Father Michael Kwiatkowski, Chancellor of the Curia, Roman and Andrew to the Grand Hotel for lunch and then went on to see "Madam Butterfly" at the Opera House, where Father Stephen joined us. Thence back to father Stephen's house for a gourmet supper party where the champagne flowed!

Monday – Hired a car to take us to Ivano-Frankivsk. It arrived at 11.45 am, and we drove via Trusvavedts to our great surprise, but we had no time to call on Irina Chenetsova. Our first stop was at a large village called Borislav, where we visited the Greek Catholic church which had been furnished in the style of Dame Barbara Cartland. The Bishop's throne was heavy with gold leaf and the tabernacle was fashioned like the Ark of the Covenant complete with side poles for carrying it. Possibly it was used for processions of the Blessed Sacrament as Latin practices among Greek Catholics have by no means been eliminated in this area of Galicia.

On through Stryj and Vistova in the vicinity of which new churches are springing up in every village. On arrival in Ivano-Frankivsk we booked in at the hotel Roxolana said to be the nicest in the Ukraine. It is early art Nouveau or 1907 Secessionist to be more precise. We strolled around the town. It is now the "capital", so to speak, of the Carpathia territories north east of the Transcarpathian range. It was founded circa 1650 and lay on the trade routes controlled by the Cossacks between L'viv and the southern River Danube. The Poles and the Austro-Hungarians have ruled it and this is reflected in its wide leafy streets and pretty stucco mansions and attractive squares. The predominant Church is the Greek Catholic, which has now taken over the former Armenian church built in 1742 with twin baroque bell towers and west front, now undergoing restoration. The plaster work on the ceiling is particularly attractive. The Greek Catholics now own the former Jesuit church built in 1729, to which they have added a brightly gilded iconostasis and modern exterior statues of St. Vlodymyr and St. Olga. Its present dedication is to the Resurrection of Our Lord. The only other Latin church is now the Museum of Galician Sacred Art. We could find no Ukrainian Orthodox or Russian churches here.

We made an attempt to visit Bishop Storyn of Ivano-Frankivsk Greek Catholic diocese, but it was on the Number 2 bus route and as it was teeming with rain our attempt was half-hearted, so we waded back to the hotel soaked through to the skin.

Having recovered from our drenching the next day we had another look at the town, had coffee and drove on towards our next port of call, the town of Czernevitza. But before seeking out our hotel we drove down through Ukrainian Bukovina (the rest of this territory lies in Romania) to the Romanian frontier and just before the border crossing we turned right and after much questioning of bewildered peasants as to where Byelo-Krinitza, the Old Believers' village, was, we eventually saw over a hill standing on high ground the massive cathedrals of the Old Believers.

Byelo-Krinitza means "White Spring" and a damper place it would be difficult to find, as the whole area seemed filled with puddles. The large village is very isolated and seemed to consist only of Old Believers. Some of the men we encountered amid the pools had too much of the vodka partaken and with typical Old Believer caution accused us three Anglicans of being Communists. We were not to be intimidated, having travelled so far. The village, despite its sodden pathways, had cherry blossom of Shropshire Laddish extravagance and two youths on a haywain were behaving even more laddishly than the vodka-philosophers. Meanwhile a 'bus arrived in the village and a cart with a man selling apples – the only signs of life in this sleepy place, miles from anywhere. Apart from the 'bus nothing seemed to have changed in this isolated spot for two centuries.

The Old Believers came to be here at a time when they were being persecuted by the Tsarist government and the Russian State Church. Bukovina was until 1918 a largely Romanian inhabited land within the Austro-Hungarian Empire; with the collapse of the Dual Monarchy after World War I it was ceded to the Kingdom of Romania. In its south-eastern corner lay the large village known in Romanian as "Fantana Alba" or White Fountain. Perhaps the difficulty in finding the village was due to our asking for "Byelo-Krinitza" which probably meant nothing to what must have been Romanian-speaking Ukrainian nationals. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, to escape harassment and continued persecution the Old Believers came to the village and re-named it Byelo-Krinitza. On the whole the Austrian Emperors treated minority groups with consideration; they had enough of them to cope with! The Old Believers were no exception and have always, wherever they have settled, been law-abiding and loyal citizens or subjects to the ruling powers. The benevolent despotism of the Imperial House of Hapsburg gave them full recognition and allowed them to choose a bishop for themselves in 1844. Up to this time the Old Believers had had to rely on what were known as "Refugee Priests" or 'Beglopovtsy' from the Russian Orthodox State Church as they had no episcopal hierarchy. For 180 years they had survived without bishops, but now they were given permission from Vienna to choose a bishop. Their choice was a deposed Metropolitan from the Orthodox Church in Bosnia, Metropolitan Ambrosios. Having been received in audience by the Austrian Emperor, he made his way to Byelo-Krinitza where he stayed for only two years, but consecrated two bishops and a number of priests. From those bishops descends the hierarchy of most of the Old Believers today. The Russian Holy Synod seized the opportunity to exploit the fact that the Old Believers of the Byelo-Krinitza Concord, as it is now known, had its origins outside Imperial Russia and derisively nick-named it "the Church of the Austrian Concord". This was particularly painful as the Old Believers were most Russian. Today the Church of Old Believers of the Byelo-Krinitza Concord has the largest following within Russia and in the Diaspora, but the Beglopovtsky Church, which does not depend for its Sacraments on the Byelo-Krinitza Apostolic Succession now has its own hierarchy derived from the consecration and ordinations of a Bishop Stephan who joined the community from the Russian Church in 1930 and



18th Century Church of the Old Believers – Byelo-Krinitza

Bishop Nikolai Pozdneff who gave up the schismatic and short lived "Living Church" in 1923 and threw in his lot with the Beglopovtsy. This Church, no longer relying on Refugee Priests, has abandoned its nickname and now has the dignified title of The Old Believer Church of Ancient Orthodox Christians. Its chief hierarch has the title of Archbishop of Moscow and All The Russias and was seated at Kuibysheff in the Middle Volga region. The Byelo-Krinitza Concord has its seat at the Rogozhsky Cemetery in Moscow and is under the jurisdiction of His Grace Alympiye, The Archbishop of Moscow and All The Russias, who has a dacha in the grounds next door to the huge cathedral of Pokrovsky – Our Lady of The Protecting Veil.

We were lucky to find the older of the two churches open and a Vigil Service in honour of St. George in progress. This church was built in 1746 and the even larger one on the campus in 1906. The older church has layer upon layer of beautiful icons on what must be one of the tallest iconostases in the Ukraine. The service was sung by two priest monks in rasons overlaid with scarlet edged capes like Roman Cardinals in abito piana domestico. They were accompanied by four nuns, a layman cantor and some women. The sound was shrill and harsh, completely unlike the close and soft harmonies of the Russian Orthodox Church. It sounded like the sort of cries which one imagined would have been emitted by a group of fishermen's wives on a shore of an Hebridean island in the eighteenth century when the coastguard had just broken the sad news to them that all their menfolk had been drowned at sea. Just as Armenian music with its sad and haunting melodies recalls the sufferings of that nation, so Old Russia, pre-sixteenth century Russia, comes tumbling forward into the last years of the twentieth century when the Old Believers sing.

It was in this community that the Greek Catholic Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky had been received with full episcopal and liturgical honours on his visit to them from what was then Lwow.

As we splashed our way back to the car we passed a cemetery which was packed very closely with graves amid the ever present lilac and damson blossom, where the dead far outnumbered the living. It was a

village set in the past, but which to this day gives its name to a not inconsiderable number of Russian Christians – Byelo-Krinitza. Here the Old Believers found all those long years ago, peace, dignity, Imperial Austrian protection and a hierarchy. We left them to worship our God in their own ancient ways now undisturbed by Tsarist or Soviet Police who would have them conform, but they are Nonconformists par excellence.

6th May 1998 (St. George's Day Old Style): To the Divine Liturgy in honour of St. George in what was once the Romanian Cathedral of St. Nicholas of the old Orthodox Church of Czernovitz, a Metropolitanate of the Romanian Church under the Hapsburg Empire before the various Romanian sees were gathered under the Patriarch of Romania after 1919 to form the present day Romanian Patriarchate. The cathedral has the curious twisted effect on the towers reminiscent of Curtea de Arges in Romania, on which this 1930s church is based. The church is no longer under the Patriarch of Romania nor the Patriarch of Moscow but under the Patriarch Filaret of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church. Its atmosphere, however, is that of a Romanian Orthodox Church.

The Divine Liturgy was very well attended and while strolling in the churchyard after the service we noticed an old man with a typical Romanian trilby on his head bringing a large loaf of bread for an old beggar woman at the main gate. He presented this fresh loaf, which either he or his wife had baked that morning, to her with such old world courtesy as though she were the Empress of Austria. It was a simple act of Christian charity and one had the feeling he did it every day.

The city has the old Imperial feel about it and contains all the permutations of Christianity to be found in these parts.

Behind St. Nicholas's cathedral is the Church of the Assumption of the Mother of God, the rather Latinized Greek Catholic Church with Stations of the Cross and a statue of the Sacred Heart. In the courtyard is a monument to the Union of Brest-Litovsk when the Unia was established between Rome and certain Western Ukrainian parishes. The nearby Armenian cathedral is quite large, but as most Armenians seem to have left this area, has been used as a concert hall for the last seventy-five years. However, it is an elegant example of Armenian architecture copied from ancient sources, but with flying buttresses.

Our driver of the previous day failed to turn up so we hired another man who was plying his trade next to a small wooden Greek Catholic church outside our Hotel Tyrist. Our route now took us past an ancient fortress on the river which was designed, without notable success, to keep out the Turk from these regions. Our next stop was Kamyanets-Podilsky about sixty miles north-east of Chernivitsi on the River Smotrych. The town is on a tiny plateau of rock. From 1050 onwards it was on the main trade route from Kiev to the south and was governed by the Princes of Volhynia during the 12th and 14th century. The town went through various vicissitudes passing from the once great Lithuanian Kingdom until circa 1430 when Poland took over the territory, but it was constantly under attack by Tartars, Moldavians and the Turks of the Ottoman Empire, who conquered it in 1672, but it was returned to Poland seventeen years later with all its churches and

chapels devoid of their treasures. About a hundred years later the Russians took it over, until, for a very brief period, it became the capital of a Ukrainian National Republic after World War I. The Germans took it in World War II and exterminated about 85,000 inhabitants, mostly Jews, in what was their isolated ghetto. The Jewish community was entirely decimated, the town heavily bombed so that there are lots of eerie open spaces and a rather creepy feeling to the whole place as only thirty per cent of the original town has survived. Where once there was a cosmopolitan community of Ukrainians, Poles, Jews and Armenians, who rather uneasily tended to get on with each other and tolerate each other's religions, that community has vanished, but there is still discernible an Armenian quarter. Virmenska ulitsa is where some pretty Armenian houses have survived, and off the main square there is the Armenian Priests' house. The House of the Nobles' Sobor has survived, but the Orthodox seminary is now a picture gallery, whilst the fifteenth century church of St. John the Forerunner was totally razed to the ground during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s. The Turks had destroyed the Armenian church of the Annunciation of the Virgin. The Poles, however, in this tit-for-tat, Polly-put-the-kettle-on Sukie-took-it-off-again world, had placed a huge golden statue of the Mother of God on top of the Moslem minaret. At the far end of the street, past the Ukrainian Greek Catholic residency, we found the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Church under Moscow's jurisdiction closed and sealed and rather dilapidated. It had not been commandeered by any of the Ukrainian jurisdictions.

Kamyanets-Podilsky was not a place one could ever feel at ease in and we were glad to drive on. We next called at the pretty little town of Kremets. The town has been under Tartar, Slav and Polish rule not to mention a period under the Cossacks. The Poles eventually took the town again and built the Jesuit cathedral, which then, under Russian Imperial rule, became the lyceum. This splendid Jesuit cathedral is in the process of being restored as a church. Down the hill and opposite the Jesuit cathedral is the Ukrainian Orthodox church of St. Nicholas, all deep blue and white in the spring sunshine. Nearby is the museum which houses the records of the Ukrainians from the village of Shpykolisky where three-hundred men, women and children and two-hundred and forty houses perished in the Nazis' reprisals for partisan attacks in 1943. Close to the museum is the large convent, again all bright blue and white, the Bohoyaviensky Lavra, where there were quite a large number of Ukrainian Orthodox nuns. The church of the Faithful Christ, another Orthodox church, is a few yards from the convent and is the oldest functioning church in Kremets.

It was now time to continue our journey, or rather pilgrimage, so we drove some twenty miles across country to the great monastery and shrine of the Mother of God at Pochayiv, which rises above the plain in a baroque splendour of glistening golden domes and turrets. This is the largest pilgrimage centre and monastery in the Ukraine after the monastery of the Caves in Kiev. The founders of this monastery are thought to have been monks from the Caves monastery who fled from Kiev in 1240 when the Tartars took that city. There are two objects of pilgrimage here – the icon of the Mother of God dating from circa 1597, which is said to have saved the shrine from Turkish marauders

in 1675; and the footprint of the Holy Virgin. Pilgrims throng the precincts, old ladies and young people and plenty of beggars and a few Fools of Christ. The whole area is very spic-and-span and bright with layers of gold leafing and pastel pinks and yellows, bright blues and rich reds. Ukrainians of all ecclesiastical allegiances and varying jurisdictions come on pilgrimage to this second most holy place in the whole of the Ukraine. Orthodox and Catholics seem to be at home here. It started life as an Orthodox Ukrainian monastery, then passed to Ukrainian Catholics of Slav-Byzantine Rite, until in 1831 the Russian Orthodox Church became the custodian of the property. With the independence of the Ukrainian nation and church it is now in the hands of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The largest church is the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Mother of God and could hold over six thousand worshippers. It was built between 1771 and 1783. It is full of baroque explosions and is overwhelmingly grand and opulent. The iconography is not purely "Orthodox" and here and there are what the late Patriarch Alexis I of Moscow would have described as "chocolate box" icons, i.e. the Italian or Uniate influences. However, the building reflects the various Churches which have owned it at one stage or another. The second centre of pilgrimage in this shrine is the famous Footprint of The Mother of God and the healing stream, both situated in the south aisle. The relics of St. Job are also enshrined here.

Beyond the monk's cells lies the cathedral of the Holy Trinity completed in the year in which King Charles I was martyred (1649). It is not so large as the Uspensky Cathedral, but it has a more Slavonic feel. There are no baroque extravagances or heavy gold leaf here. The church is very dark and there are none of the splendours of its neighbour, but an Orthodox numinousness conveyed by the traditional icons, it has an almost Old Believer feel after the impression made by the Uspensky Sobor.

The grounds are similar to the Troitze-Sergievo Lavra at what used to be called Zagorsk, but here there are impressive views across green and rolling peasant farms, best seen from the ramparts in front of the Uspensky's main door. Old ladies sit on comfortable wooden benches and dream, perhaps, of their quietly but persistently overthrowing yet another oppressive and Godless regime should the opportunity or need arise. Others busy themselves Martha-like, as only babushkas can, sweeping leaves or dead-heading the stocks and geraniums. Clothed in black and headscarved they give the huge shrine campus a homely air and a certain permanency come what may jurisdictionally. Monks swish around in flowing, well-cut worsted rasons and youth groups with their young parish priests picnic among the lilac trees, while nuns marshal their kindergarten charges, the little girls like dolls and the little boys with their closely cropped hair like brightly dressed pet mice. A convent of nuns offers dormitories which sleep up to half-a-dozen people. The guide books tell us that if one stays in the local hotel in the small village one is entitled to a meal at the monastic refectory, and that the nuns' cooking is very tasty.

On to Ternopol where we stayed in a modern hotel on the edge of a lake. This town was particularly badly hit during the last war, however

some beautiful Christian monuments still survive. The leading church building is the Dominican church with its monastery building attached. Again it is in the heavy baroque style lightened by the white-washed walls. Today the church seems to be in the hands of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics and nuns seem to inhabit the friary of the Latin Dominicans, who are not to be seen. The so-called "Uniates" having taken over the Latin church, the Ukrainian Patriarchal Orthodox Church (not under Patriarch Filaret) has taken over the former Uniate church. On the opposite side of the lake from our hotel was a small church with Stations of the Cross in the churchyard, a Latinization of a Greek Catholic church, an old practice which is now disappearing.

We left Ternopol on the night sleeper for Kiev where we arrived at the ungodly hour of 5.45 am. However, to recover our spirits we had breakfast at what was the most expensive hotel in the Ukraine, The Dnieper; but the cost was less than ten pounds sterling. After breakfast we attended the Divine Liturgy at the monastery of the Caves, where monks and seminarians provided a rich choir at a church of the nearer caves. There seemed to be no shortage of either monks or seminarians and much has been restored here since our Association Pilgrimage in 1988, when the monks were worshipping at greater feasts and pilgrimages out-of-doors.

Despite the multiplicity of jurisdictions among the Christian communities there were many signs of hope, not least in the number of young monks and nuns and seminarians and the restoration of holy places again. Our only regret was the difficulty we encountered about obtaining a visa for the Ukraine. It has great tourist potential, it needs Western currency and it has an enormous amount to offer to us spiritually. It is a joy to travel through its lands as the Ukrainians are an hospitable and friendly people.

John Salter

1998 PILGRIMAGE TO YORK

I had visited York as recently as 1996, but I was keen to see York again in the context of a pilgrimage and to see "some of the shrines and holy places of Yorkshire", as the official title of the pilgrimage ran, the holy places ranging from the cathedrals of York (the largest mediaeval church in Britain) and Ripon to the tiny St Hilda's Well at Hinderwell.

We gathered on 14th August in the rather forbidding ambience of Langwith College, one of the colleges of the University of York. Despite York's antiquity the University was founded in the 1960s and all its buildings are concrete, apart from its administrative headquarters, the brick Elizabethan mansion, Heslington Hall, in whose parkland the University has been built. The grounds are beautifully laid out, with lakes with plenty of wildfowl (including, according to one of our pilgrims, whistling ducks, birds whose existence I refused to believe in until I was given documentary proof).

After dinner we had the pleasure of hearing Father Alberic Stacpoole OSB of Ampleforth Abbey speak on the monastic history of

Yorkshire. I had known of our speaker as the editor of "Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue", a collection of papers written for the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so it was appropriate that he joined us on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption.

I remember particularly that he told us that some of the monks are titular priors of dissolved Benedictine houses. Chester Cathedral was, before the Reformation, a Benedictine abbey; sometimes the titular prior of Chester is joined in choir by the (Anglican) Dean of Chester, who is a confrater of the Community, and wears the Benedictine habit on such an occasion.

Apart from the evening when we had a service in the Minster, we had a lecture with slides each evening after dinner, followed by an Orthodox or Anglican service. Our chaplains were Father Peter Pufulete of the Romanian Church in London, who is well known to many of us from earlier pilgrimages, and a new friend, Father Paul Greenwell, Vicar of St Mary's Hunslett, Leeds.

The following day, for those Orthodox Churches which use the New Calendar, was the Feast of the Dormition, and we started the day with the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Father Peter at the altar of the tiny Victorian Church of St Paul, Heslington, a church with a big modern extension to enable it to be used to minister to the University population. The service was the simplest celebration of the Orthodox Liturgy which I have encountered, but was no Low Mass or 8 o'clock Communion, for incense was used, if sparingly, and there was much singing, so we were able to experience in a considerable degree the glory of Orthodox worship.

After breakfast we set off for Bishopthorpe, the home of the Archbishop a few miles outside York. There we were shown round by two guides, a husband and wife, who spoke most knowledgeably about the building and its contents. The standard of the (voluntary) guides at the various places which we saw was, on the whole, remarkably high. The part of the palace which is open to visitors is mainly in the pretty "Strawberry Hill Gothic" style. I was reminded of our first Constantinople Lecture in 1981 and our 1983 pilgrimage to Durham by the sight, among the portraits of former Archbishops, of the painting of Archbishop Michael Ramsay.

We then met the present Archbishop, who celebrated the Eucharist for us and a few others (including an American bishop and his wife), the service sheet describing the day as "the Dormition". The original date proposed for the principal feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the calendar of the Alternative Service Book was 15th August, but General Synod changed the date to the Nativity of Our Lady, 8th September, and it is only recently that the new calendar has restored 15 August to its rightful place.

The service took place in the Chapel, the oldest part of the building, dating from the thirteenth century. There was no organ, but Father Philip Warner accompanied the hymns on the harmonium. Perhaps it would have been more Orthodox not to have had instrumental music, but it was fine to sing "Heaven with transcendent joy her entrance graced" with Father Philip's supporting chords.

After the service we went round the Chapel, looking in particular at the Romanian icons, and the spectacular icon of St George and the Dragon which the Russian Church presented to Archbishop Garbett on his visit to Moscow in 1942. We then had another opportunity to speak to the Archbishop over coffee in the Great Hall, and were able to walk in the lovely riverside grounds. After lunch we had a free afternoon in York, and some of us sought out All Saints, North Street, to see its famous stained glass. We found an Anglican High Mass of the Assumption in progress, which was followed by a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, in which we joined, and Benediction. When I told one of the Orthodox pilgrims about this afterwards he said that he could attend other non-Orthodox services, but not Benediction, as this was "gazing upon God". I read that the church was the site of many visions of Our Lady in the Middle Ages, and was the home of an anchoress not only in those times, but also earlier in the present century.

In the evening Canon John Toy, Chancellor of the Minster, gave a talk with slides on the Minster's mediaeval glass, which he said represented one-third of the surviving mediaeval glass in England. We ended the day, as we did each day with worship.

I think that no pilgrimage could have had a better beginning.

The following day, Sunday, we attended Sung Eucharist in the Minster, which Canon Toy celebrated, the preacher being the Bishop of Bermuda. We were publicly welcomed, and I seem to remember that the Association was included in the intercessions.

After coffee in the magnificent Chapter House, with its 42 stone seats round the walls for meetings of the cathedral clergy, we were able to familiarise ourselves with the mediaeval buildings of the Minster Close, and to see the Roman column, for the area was the site of the legionary fortress, and was the place where Constantine the Great was proclaimed Caesar by his troops. Only the previous month the York Civic Trust had erected a statue of Constantine by the Minster at a cost of £78,000. He is shown seated nonchalantly with a sword in his hand, but his imperial dignity did not prevent children from climbing all over him and sitting in his lap. When he was in York he was not, of course, "Equal of the Apostles", as he was still a pagan. There were, however, Christians in Eboracum (York) at the time, and the Bishop of York attended the Council of Arles in 314, along with the Bishop of London. Did Constantine ever meet the Bishop in York, or did the bishop have to keep a low profile?

The origins of the Minster are traced to a few centuries later, for it was founded by the Anglo-Saxon King Edwin of Northumbria, who was converted and baptised in York in 627.

After lunch we went by coach to Beverley Minster, a huge cathedral-like church, which until 1548 was a collegiate church with a huge staff of clergy. The building had examples of all three styles of English Gothic, but its origins are from a much earlier time. St John of Beverley was Bishop of York from 705 to 717, and founded a religious house in Beverley, to which he retired and where he died in 721. We gathered round the small slab in the nave which marks the site of his burial and said prayers.

On Monday morning we were back at the Minster, to meet the Venerable Leslie Stanbridge, formerly Archdeacon of York, who holds the impressive-sounding office of Succentor Canonicorum. He welcomed us warmly, and showed us the stained glass windows: after seeing Canon Toy's slides we were now taking a detailed look at the originals. Coffee followed in St William's College in the Close, not an educational establishment, but the home of 28 chantry priests until the college was dissolved in 1549.

In the afternoon we were given an excellent guided tour of the mediaeval churches and other historic buildings of York, and then after a brief look at the Minster's architecture and Evening Prayer we all dined together in a restaurant in the city, instead of returning to the University. The reason for this was that, when the Minster was closed to visitors we were to have a service in the crypt. Canon Stanbridge took the service, and I imagine that few who were there will forget the atmosphere of devotion which we found in that place. We prayed at the restored shrine of St William, a murdered Archbishop of Norman times, and then left the building quietly.

We saw something of the rest of Yorkshire by coach the following day, starting with yet another minster, St Gregory's, Kirkdale. "Minster", a word derived from "monasterium" does not usually denote a monastery but a community of non-monastic clergy, and here the Minster was not only of Anglo-Saxon origin, but retained much of its fabric from the time of its rebuilding just before the Conquest. The most famous feature is the Anglo-Saxon sundial on the wall, which shows that our ancestors were optimists (although I must admit that we had good weather for our pilgrimage).

We then made our way to Ampleforth, the home of Benedictines since 1803, and well-known for its public school, at which the late Cardinal Hume was a housemaster before becoming Abbot. We were taken round the monastic buildings by one of the monks, shared in the worshipping life of the community by attending the mid-day office in the fine chapel designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (the architect of the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool) and had lunch, not in the refectory but in the restaurant for visitors and others.

Having seen a living monastery, we then visited the nearby ruins of the most important Cistercian house in Britain, Rievaulx Abbey. The ruins of the great church and other buildings dating from 1132 stand in a beautiful setting surrounded as they are by green hills. Byland Abbey, the next place which we visited, was described in the late twelfth century as being, along with Rievaulx and Fountains, one of the three shining lights of northern monasticism. It seems odd that there should have been two Cistercian houses so close to one another, but Byland was a Savigniac house before that Order merged with the Cistercians. The church was huge; yet another church of a cathedral type lost as a result of Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries.

That evening Canon Toy spoke to us after dinner on the ecclesiastical history of York.

On Wednesday 19th August we travelled by coach to Lastingham, where St Mary's Church stands on the site of a monastery founded by St Cedd and his brother St Chad in 654, and the Eucharist was celebrated in the crypt. Whitby was our next destination, and on a windy hill above the port we spent a few hours at the ruins of the Benedictine abbey, successor to St Hilda's double monastery (one for men, the other for women) the place where the Synod of Whitby was held in 664, which decided that the Northumbrian Church would follow the Roman dating of Easter, not the Celtic (an archaic Roman method which Rome had abandoned). We had an opportunity to see the parish church, with its eighteenth-century box pews and three-decker pulpit.

Mount Grace Priory was our last monastery of the day, a Carthusian house founded in 1398, the last monastery to have been built in Yorkshire before the Dissolution. We entered the grounds through the manor house and then had the dramatic sight of the large ruined cloister and the rather small church. Some of the monastic cells had been fitted out as they would have been when in use, and seemed to me to be more luxurious than their present-day equivalents in Romania.

The last day of our pilgrimage began with a visit to Kirk Hammerton, a parish church in the diocese of Ripon. The church is either very late Saxon or early Norman, so could have been consecrated when the East and the West were still in communion before the mutual excommunications of 1054.

We then travelled on to Ripon Cathedral, of which Father Paul had been Minor Canon and Precentor. He celebrated the Eucharist for us in the Pilgrim Chapel, and showed us round the great church. I was amazed by the splendour of the coloured and gilded reredos erected as a memorial to the dead of the First World War to the designs of Sir Ninian Comper, featuring statues of the northern saints with Our Lady and the Holy Child in the centre.

I loved the woodwork of the choir stalls, the misericords and the mechanical hand in the organ gallery, which allowed the organist to play the organ and conduct the choir at the same time.

We ate our packed lunches in the venerable surroundings of the Cathedral library.

The last holy site which we visited was Fountains Abbey, where our guide was expert and interesting, and we learned how a mediaeval monastery functioned. It was a Benedictine house, and must have been larger than any of the other monasteries which we had seen, so served as a splendid ending to a most enjoyable pilgrimage.

So much of the success of the pilgrimage was due to the thought which Father David Bond gave to organising it, and the trouble which he and his wife, Joan, went to in touring the area beforehand to plan the itinerary. We owe them both a great deal.

Neil Harrison

LEBANON AND SYRIA

(The visit to Lebanon and Syria was undertaken by Father Salter as part of a very short sabbatical; the travelling and accommodation arrangements having been kindly arranged by Father White, his travelling companion, of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church.)

LEBANON

The Middle East can often spell trouble and we ran into it at Heathrow Airport when we were one person short on the passenger list. After a one and a half hour check and re-check, the missing person was a baby! A rather bad-tempered Arab became very disgruntled in the seat in front of us and asked where he could get another flight. Fearing he might be of the Hezbollah persuasion we were reluctant to suggest he transfer to El Al. Surprisingly he did not hi-jack the aircraft, but our next bit of excitement was in avoiding overflying Serbian airspace, so we had to fly over the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Cyprus. On leaving Bulgarian airspace we flew over a terrific thunderstorm, with the whole horizon one continual flashing stream, but with no turbulence. On landing at Beirut the majority of passengers applauded, presumably because we had neither been hi-jacked nor crashed nor struck by lightning.

Father Joseph Kallas, the Superior of the Paulist Fathers of Harissa, met us at the airport and drove us into town for a meal, thence on to the Paulist monastery and Melkite Greek Catholic seminary on a mountain overlooking Beirut and the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. We were greeted with glasses of iced beer by two of the young lecturers at the seminary – Father Paul Fardel and Father Joseph Malouf. Really too tired to sleep and one could hear the steady tramp all night long of pilgrims, Christians and Moslems, making their way past the monastery and up to the huge statue of Our Lady of Lebanon, which dominates the mountain and the surrounding bay. Car hooting is a sound which never stops in Beirut and its environs, such infrastructure as traffic lights having, for the most part, vanished. Car horns hooted all night long up to the mountain shrine. Handel's Hallelujah Chorus repeated itself from the huge Maronite Catholic basilica above us, which looks like an overblown version of the Thames Barrier at Woolwich.

The next morning we visited the Melkite nuns in their beautiful convent. Here we attended the Divine Liturgy sung by Father Joseph Malouf, lunched with the nuns and had coffee in a very elegant salon overlooking the harbour. Two young nuns at lunch wanted to know whether female priests in the Church of England had the same powers as males. On our way back to the Paulists we drove into the compound of the Maronite Patriarch's residency. The Maronites are the largest Christian body and are entirely united with Rome: they have no Orthodox counterparts. The Melkite Greek Catholics are the next largest body, then the Syrian and Armenian Churches.

That evening there was a birthday party for a young seminarian (22 years) and we played a raucous game which was a round in which certain groups had to imitate different animals. This enjoyable cacophony was led by Father John, a young Maronite priest. I promised the seminarians the words and music of "Three Blind Mice" for future birthday parties.

After the party some of us adjourned to promenade on the ramparts of the monastery from which we could see, bumper to bumper, a ribbon of traffic far, far below on its way into Junieh from Byblos. When would the oil run out? We had a serious talk, in the cool of the evening, about Melkite and Orthodox relations, which was partly the reason for my sabbatical. We were told that until the 18th and 19th centuries this territory had been largely Byzantine Orthodox under the Greek Patriarch of Antioch, but was now largely Melkite Greek Catholic. One priest told us he did not feel separate from the Orthodox because his ancestors have been under the Greek Patriarchs of Antioch and he yearned and prayed for the union of the much fragmented Patriarchate of Antioch from whence we had all received the name of Christians. Tragically the Antiochene Patriarchate had been divided by the loss of the Nestorians, the Jacobites, the Maronites, the Melkites and the establishment of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the autocephaly of the Churches of Cyprus, Georgia and Mount Sinai. Nevertheless, as the ancient See of Peter (Rome is regarded here as the See of Peter and Paul) Antioch-in-exile in Damascus now saw itself as Christendom's Bridge Church. Now that the Church of England has come down firmly on the side of the Reformed Churches since the Porvoo Agreement it has probably lost its bridge status.

The huge basilica of the Paulist Fathers was the venue on the Sunday for the Divine Liturgy. The building is totally unlatinized and the Byzantine-style mosaic work among the finest in the Middle East. The acoustics are superb.

After lunch some of the seminarians and nuns from the convent across the road collected together some mentally handicapped children and teenagers and took us in their mini-bus to Byblos, where there are fine Crusader churches. Byblos is one of the most ancient cities of the Middle East and was the port into which papyrus from Egypt was imported and made into biblia or books, hence its name. The churches on the sea front were Maronite and Greek Orthodox. After an ice-cream in Pirate Pepe's restaurant we drove up into the hills to the shrine of a recently canonized Maronite saint, whose blood-stained alb is a major secondary relic and whose face miraculously appeared on a family group photograph some fifty years after his death. The room where the saint died is kept intact, but is visited by hordes of pilgrims particularly at weekends. His wine-press has also survived but is now part of the secondary relics.

At the convent of the Sisters of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament we helped entertain the children and teenagers to basket-ball and a picnic. The seminarians are fully involved with the local community and its needs and the young folk obviously looked forward to their weekly outing very much indeed. Fahdih, a young seminarian from Syria, had the task of keeping everyone in reasonable order.

On arriving back at the monastery we noticed that the Eastern Catholic Patriarchs were arriving for their Holy Synod. It was a great pleasure to meet again the courteous and kindly Patriarch Rafael of Babylon, whom I had met some two or three years ago after the Gulf War in Baghdad.

The next day Father David White was principal celebrant for the seminarians' liturgy. Before lunch three young Armenian Catholic priests and a seminarian arrived from the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate which is in the hills above Harissa. One priest was working in Chile and the seminarian had been Orthodox or Gregorian Armenian so knew the Catholikossate at Antelias, thus I was able to give him a book for one of the Archbishops which the Revd. Dr. Perry Butler, Rector of St. George's Bloomsbury, had asked me to deliver.

After a two hours siesta (my sabbatical grant from Sion College and the Bishop of London depended on my having a period of rest) we set out via bomb-damaged Beirut for the junior Melkite seminary. We were told that although there had been fierce fighting in the city between various factions, Christians and Moslems, there had been no reprisals after the war ended (would that it were so in Kosovo!). There are thirty-three junior seminarians housed here and a kindergarten school. Sadly a very small number actually become priests. At the reunion of old boys, later in the week, we discovered that the new Syrian Ambassador to the Court of St. James in London was once a junior seminarian here. His brother is a priest at the Melkite Patriarchate in Damascus. At lunch a Melkite Archbishop told me how impressed and moved he had been when attending a Sung Eucharist sung by a lady minor canon in St. Paul's Cathedral.

On Wednesday 5th May we were received at the Patriarchal residency by His Beatitude Patriarch Maximos V Hakim, Head of the Melkite Church. I reminded His Beatitude that we had not met for forty years when he was then Archbishop of Galilee and had given a lecture of St. Basil's House. He entertained us to lunch at which we met an Abbot, whom I had met in Rome, and who knew Father George Mifsud at the Greek College. Alongside the Patriarchate the Melkite Church had built flats and apartments at reasonable rents for young married couples. The Patriarchate is very involved with the social side of the Gospel and housing, particularly in Beirut after the bombing, is a priority along with orphanages and old peoples' homes.

Back in Harissa we visited the Convent of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, where the last Patriarch, Maximos IV Saigh, is buried in a chapel in the grounds. A young nun is decorating the chapel in traditional Byzantine iconography.

Later we visited, in the hill country, the Greek Orthodox monastery at Baskenta where there are five monks, one of whom enquired after Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia. The igumenos or abbot had been on Mount Athos before moving to St. Michael's. He entertained us to coffee and chocolates and the luxury of quails' eggs. Thus refreshed we drove on to the large Melkite convent and orphanage of the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin at Zaraya. The Lebanese President's wife had restored these buildings in the Neo-Crusader style. There are young boys and girls and teenagers all looked after by the nuns in very

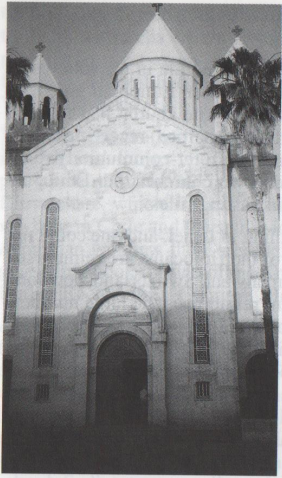
well-appointed and attractive dormitories for the younger ones and in double rooms for the seniors.

A Palestinian couple from Chelsea who have a villa in the suburbs of Beirut invited us out to lunch; their maid was an Ethiopian girl, who when taken to the Divine Liturgy at the Melkite church had insisted on fasting from midnight until 10 am before receiving Holy Communion. There is a certain amount of inter-communion where Christians are some distance from their own churches, but Ethiopian Christians keep very strict and rigorous fasting rules.

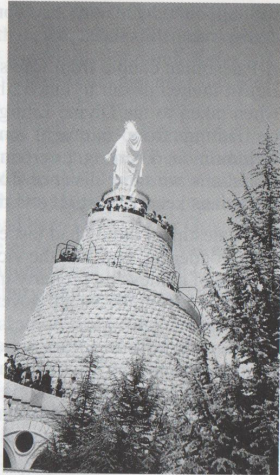
The Palestinian family had lost everything in Israel, and one could not help wondering, now that the victims of the Holocaust are reimbursed for loss of money and property in Germany and Switzerland, how long it will be before the Israeli government reimburses the huge numbers of Palestinians who lost homes and property in Palestine after 1948. The Israeli airforce often supersonically fly over Beirut and this couple had had their windows smashed by aircraft boom. The next day we spotted Israeli 'planes flying high over the monastery. On our way home we passed the Marriott Hotel where Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Special Envoy, had had his last meal before being taken hostage.

The next day found us in Saida (Biblical Sidon) and Damour. It was along this road that the Israelis invaded in 1982. The area is half Christian and half Druze Shouf, but the religion of the Druze remains shrouded in mystery. A few miles on and we arrived at the charming Maronite village of Deir el Qamar. A local magnate or war-lord, Fakhr Ad-Din, built the place for his troops and horses. The village has an Ottoman Empire feel about it, while the Maronite church with its Aumbry in the wall had the appearance of an Anglican Prayer Book Catholic church; the Maronites are not usually so restrained. On the opposite side of the valley is the Emir Bachir's palace of "Beiteddine" or "House of Religion". The palace had been built in the 19th century and the complex between 1788 and 1838. It is the greatest surviving achievement of Lebanese architecture. Incorporating many new ideas, it was once considered vulgar and Over The Top, but it cannot fail to impress. The Druze had a hermitage here. Emir Bashir died in Constantinople in 1850 but his body was brought back to rest here after Lebanese independence. The Israeli Army seem to have looted most of the valuable artefacts, ninety-per cent by all accounts. In former times, due to Middle Eastern hospitality, travellers and visitors were housed, fed and entertained here for three days before being asked either their business or their identity.

Beyond this territory lay an almost totally destroyed village and near that the large monastery of the Salvatorian Fathers, which had played such an important role in the movement towards union with Rome in the 18th century. It remains one of the main Melkite centres and its founder, Father Aftmos Saifi, is held in great veneration. Not far away is the Salvatorian nuns' convent where the sisters entertained us to coffee and sweets. On our way back towards Beirut we passed villages in which the sinister flags of Hezbollah fluttered and others which had once been the homes of Christians, but were now devastated. We had lunch with a Melkite priest, Father Tony Haddad, and his family. One



The Cathedral of The Armenian Orthodox – Catholicoesate of Cilicia, Aurelios, Lebanon



Christian and Moslem pilgrims flock in large numbers day and night to the shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, Harissa



Fr Tony Haddad, the Melkite Catholic priest, in one of his new churches, in Abra near Tyre



St Michael's Greek Orthodox monastery at Baskeuta, Lebanon, under the Patriarch of Antioch



A Melkite Catholic priest with one of his sons near Abra, Lebanon

of his brothers was killed in the fighting at the age of nineteen by the Israelis. He has two churches near Tyre – one at Aabra, a village where 150 houses were destroyed in the bombing in 1985, and the other nearby which is not yet finished, and in the churchyard of which is a yew tree planted by that great English traveller in the Levant, Lady Hester Stanhope, who stayed in a convent here and at one stage commandeered an Emir's villa without paying a penny in rent. She had obviously taken more than fair advantage of Middle Eastern courtesy which for three days entertained and housed travellers, as noted above!

Across the field from Lady Hester's yew lay the ruins of a Moslem school bombed from a helicopter by the Israelis. As we had been invited to meet a seminarian who is engaged to be married, Jean al Kady, we drove to his home where the family own a small orchard. His mother and a Syrian maid were packaging the tasty Nefle fruit which looks, but does not taste, like apricots. This village had houses about to collapse from bomb damage. We attended the Divine Liturgy in this village and met the Melkite priest and his wife, two sons and a daughter. A married Catholic priesthood is accepted as perfectly acceptable in these villages and the Latin Church should seriously consider it for Latin Rite men in Latin America, and elsewhere for that matter.

After the simplicity of the Christian villages the next day was in complete contrast as we were invited to attend Solemn Pontifical High Mass in the Maronite basilica at Harissa which was to open the Holy Synod of Eastern Catholic Patriarchs. A liturgical scene unparalleled now in the Post-Vatican II Western Church opened before us. The choir consisted of a huge number of young men and women dressed in vermilion robes. The procession was led in by thurifer, crucifer and acolytes, servers, priests, archimandrites, bishops, archbishops and the Patriarchs – Maximos V of the Melkites, without his mitra or crown, but wearing instead his kallousi (stove-pipe hat) and latieh (veil); the Cardinal-Patriarch of the Maronites in short Syrian-style veil on the top of which was a baroque mitre studded with sapphires and emeralds; the Catholic Coptic Patriarch Stephanos wore a cope-like vestment like the Maronites, but with a Byzantine crown; the Syrian Catholic Patriarch wore a tall Latin-style mitre and short veil; Patriarch Rafael of Babylon a Latin mitre; the Armenian Catholic Patriarch a mitre unique to Armenians both Catholic and Gregorian. The Papal Nuncio to the Lebanon concelebrated as did the Cardinal Archbishop Anize of Nigeria, who is on the Vatican's Inter-Faith Commission. Cardinal Silvestrini, President of the Oriental Congregation, was due the following day. The Divine Liturgy was immensely splendid and, as noted earlier, would be unequalled in the West. Representatives of the Arab Evangelical Church, the Greek Patriarchate of Antioch, the Gregorian Armenian Orthodox Catholikossate of Cilicia, the Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch and the Presbyterian Church of Lebanon were present within the sanctuary. We saw ourselves on television in the evening, to the excitement and amusement of the Melkite seminarians.

10th May – Monday: Mr Antoine Chacar, a Melkite layman, very kindly took us to Baalbek this morning. Beirut shows tragic signs of the war, but when one travels south-eastwards one passes through such towns as Kahale, which is very badly damaged, in fact almost

ruined; on into the Bekaa Valley the scene of ferocious fighting and here the horrors of what Lebanon has endured become more and more apparent. The five star Grand Hotel at Sofar is now totally gutted and a mere shell of a place. The Bekaa Valley is a huge plain surrounded by distant snow-capped mountains at its circumference. Traces of the Crusaders survived the bombing of the 1980s – Haramou is one such mediaeval survivor on a mountain top. Northwards lies the road to the ancient city of Homs, where once most of the Eastern Patriarchs had their residences after Antioch had been abandoned as the Patriarchal city. We drove through Zahle which is a Christian town with the largest Catholic population in the Middle East. The valley is fed by two ancient rivers Nahral-Asai (the Orontes river of Classical times) and the Nahr-Litani. These waters irrigated the barley and other cereal crops, which made this valley the bread-basket of the Roman Empire. The victims of war live in squalid tents stitched together from old sacks, mile after mile of them.

In Baalbek we saw the outside of the famous ruins, but our host was nervous of staying any length of time as two days earlier the Israelis had bombed the main square. Pushy Hezbollah youths with black head bands and flying black flags asked us what we wanted. As we envisaged being captured and chained up for three or four years in some hell-hole we merely asked for the quickest way out of the city! On leaving the town of Baalbek we passed the Christian Martyrs' tree at which children between the ages of five and fifteen years were shot. On past the other Cana where we saw a splendid new house with extensive walled gardens at whose gate were pitched the everlasting sacking tents. Lazarus still sits at Dives's gate. In contrast to the poverty of the refugees there are lush vineyards stretching off the road on either side. We hardly pass anyone here, but soon we are in Zahle, a Christian town, in which the river runs through its middle. We were entertained to lunch here in a splendid hotel, where we thought we had experienced our first earth tremor until we discovered that the restaurant we were seated in was a revolving one! We were in the Monte Alberto "the hanging paradise" restaurant overlooking Wadi-Zahle. This is a largely Christian town and we saw on the top of a huge block of flats an enormous image of the Blessed Virgin. Iscariot-like I wondered whether the Mother of God would have preferred the money used to have housed the poor. Everywhere there are roses of every conceivable colour and every possible scent, but coupled with the beauties of nature are the ugly deeds of men – pock-marked houses, ruins, more sack tents, displaced Palestinians. Do Blair and Clinton and Albright agonize over these ethnically cleansed peoples as they do over the Albanians of the Kosovo? One hopes someone does.

Ear-popping vertiginous heights are scaled and there is now no sign of life human, animal or bird in these fastnesses. The land of Lebanon is Syrian dominated – Syrian soldiers are at check-points, but as a sign of national pride and hoped for independence the great cedars of Lebanon have been planted again on these hills above the Litani river.

Antoine takes us sadly to his abandoned villa, where geraniums run wild and cicadas chirrup in the over-grown gardens. This is Masser-el-Chouf. His house had been taken over by the mysterious Druze and



The Catholic Patriarchs of Eastern Rites



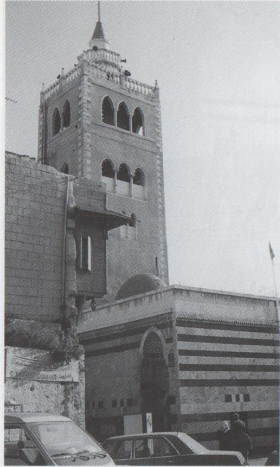
The Catholic Armenian Patriarchate near Harissa, Lebanon



His Beatitude Patriarch Maximos V, Hakim – of the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem of the Melkites with Fr Salter (left) and Fr White (right)



The Eastern Catholic Patriarchs' Synod – His Beatitude Patriarch Rafael of Babylon of the Chaldean Church and Fr John Salter



A Christian church in Tripoli, Lebanon, now a mosque



Orphans at the Melkite Convent of the Annunciation, Zaraya, Lebanon

then abandoned by them. It is not safe to return here permanently. There is no sign of anger or revenge, only sadness. Lower down the slopes in the centre of the village the Melkite church's presbytery has its doors and windows shuttered with blocks of stone. The holy icons have long ago been looted. The souk is destroyed. Here there are tales of mass murders of Christian families by their Druze neighbours. Church towers seem to be a special target for anti-Christian factions. Further along the road back to Beirut we pass the villa of the leader of the Druze Party of Progressive Socialists. Druze atrocities towards Christians go back a long way; in 1830 some 2,300 Christians were slaughtered by the Druze who had promised them peace in these parts.

Our Homeward route took us past the Khafarim grotto of the Virgin and a modern Armenian church of the Mekhitarists: these are the Uniate Armenians who have monasteries in Venice (the Isola San Lazzaro) and in Vienna. Across the square, or what is left of it after the bombing, is a Greek Orthodox church, which is intact, although it was in the path of the Israeli attack.

After coffee with Antoine and his wife we visited the Catholikossate of Cilicia in Antelias. It was the first time Antoine and his wife had visited the site, although they live only a few yards away. This is the seat of the Catholikos of Cilicia, the equivalent of the Archbishop of York in the hierarchy of the Armenian Church, the senior and Supreme Catholikos being located in Holy Etchmiadzin in Armenia. The great church is golden on the outside and grey on the inside. It is cool and uncluttered except for the high altar, which has numerous candles and looks like an old fashioned Latin altar, but it has a huge veil which is drawn in front of the sanctuary at certain moments in the

Sourp Patarag or Holy Liturgy. In the courtyard are two small chapels, one containing the bones and relics of the martyrs of the Turkish yoke.

SYRIA

This morning (11th May) Father White and I set out for Damascus. The roads out of Beirut were severely congested, but everyone drives at enormous speed and one eventually ceases to worry about a head-on collision, although it could be on the cards! Elie, our driver, seems to be in control. We were about half-an-hour getting through the Lebanese and Syrian frontiers and Customs, but discovered on the Syrian side of the border the traffic had petered out and the road was good, so we drove quickly towards Damascus, thinking of St. Paul's Conversion and the death of Mrs. Manning and their impact on the life of the Catholic Church! At 11.45 am we arrived at the Melkite Patriarchate (the Patriarch has three titles and three Patriarchates – Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem and a residency near Beirut. Antioch was long ago abandoned and Damascus now replaces it, Jerusalem survives in the Holy City, but the seat in Egypt is now in Cairo).

We were received by Archbishop Isidore, the Vicar-General. His office contained a splendid collection of bishops' crowns, panhagias, pectoral crosses, Orders from various rulers, and hand crosses together with the exotic Damascus furniture with its mother-of-pearl inlay work.

The monk-priests who make up the suite of the Patriarch under his title 'of Antioch' consist of several scholars. At lunch one priest told of his research into Christian remains in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine before the Moslems came in the seventh century. One of the priests was the brother of the Syrian Ambassador to the Court of St. James. We were to be housed in the monastery of the Paulist Fathers and were driven there by a Melkite priest who had been an ordinand in the Syrian Orthodox Church. We walked through the Via Recta or the Street called Straight, which at its end beyond the city walls has an ancient Roman arch still surviving. We visited an old Islamic mansion, where the descendant of the original founder of this beautiful but restrained house now dealt in damask and had supplied material for Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation. The Old City of Damascus is not very large and we were able to see in a very short time the Melkite church from whose walls St. Paul was let down in a basket; the Latin Franciscan church in which was the house of Ananias and in which St. Paul recovered his sight; the Syrian Catholic Patriarchate, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, where I delivered for the Patriarch the letter from our Anglican President, the Bishop of London. We were also well received at the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate as was our driver, Father Naim, despite his having crossed to the Melkites. Father Saliba Touma had met Mgr Giorgio Orioli, the Chorepiscopus representative in Rome of the Syrian Catholic Patriarchate. Mgr Orioli has now left Rome and been replaced by a Bishop, but the Syrian Catholics are still based at the church of Santa Maria in Campo Marzio near the Pantheon. A splendid old prelate rather Latinly dressed in red piped soutane and cincture, Archbishop Dionysios, with a magnificent white beard, entertained us to coffee

and sticky doughnuts, which miraculously revived our flagging bodies. He had visited Kelham, St. Edward's House and Nashdom Abbey and knew Archbishop Michael Ramsey. He wished to be remembered to Lord Coggan and Lord Runcie, whom he had met either in Damascus or Jerusalem and of whom he spoke with enthusiasm and great affection. He knew Father Aydin and his son, also a priest, who was in charge of the Syrian church in Istanbul when I did a locum at Christ Church in the mid-1970s. Father Aydin junior had stayed with me in London on his way to the Syrian congregation in Sweden. Both Father and son minister to the Syrian diaspora in Austria. Father Saliba Touma kindly gave me a picture of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch and the monastery where he resides.

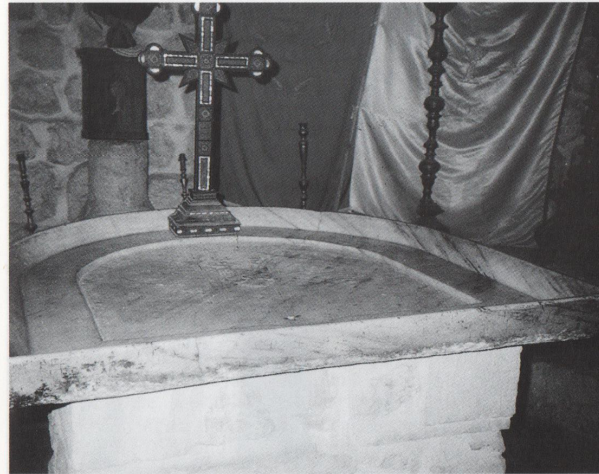
At supper with the Paulists in Jeramanna we ate with a very friendly old priest, Father Gabriel Dick, of 84 years, a Melkite, who had ministered in Venezuela to all Syrians of whatever denomination despite the then Latin bishop's objections. "Your Excellency! what do these good people know of the niceties of Christian doctrines? They are all Christians!"

We learned here that President Assad has Christian advisers, and, as noted above, a Christian ambassador in London. We also learned that the Syrian government gives electricity free to all places of worship, Moslem and Christian. Father Gabriel was delighted to have English-speaking guests to entertain, and spoke to us of his ministry in Venezuela and New Jersey. He was a wise and charismatic old priest with a very vigorous mind. He told us of those villages near Damascus where the language of Our Lord, Aramaic, is still spoken.

Mr and Mrs Antoun Dabbous, a Melkite couple, took us out of Damascus for the day. On the way we picked up a Moslem couple and were driven to an enormous restaurant. Syrians, and Lebanese, believe in having large family meals, especially on Sundays and feast days, so the restaurants have to be large enough to accommodate large family groups. The restaurant we were entertained at was an enormous array of tents full of roses and hubbub-bubbles. After lunch we drove on to Mahoullah, where we walked through a ravine in this pretty little town partially clinging to the cliffs around it and bought Aramaic hymns off a young Christian man. "The funeral Service of Jesus Christ in His Language" advertised on a board over his shop. Having bought the Good Friday liturgy in Aramaic he then gave us a free sample of his father's wine, full-bodied and rather dry. From the little square steps led up to the Greek Orthodox convent and orphanage. The Convent of St. Thekla houses what may be one of the oldest Christian shrines in Christendom – the tomb of St. Thekla, the companion of St. Paul. One has the feeling that the Christian sites and shrines in Syria have a certain authenticity which may be lacking in Israel. Here there has been a continuous Christian presence and Damascus was not obliterated as Jerusalem was. No need here for St. Helena to excavate, for all is still above ground. A perpetual watch is kept by the nuns at St. Thekla's first-century tomb. There are twelve nuns here and twenty-five orphan girls. The young igumena, Abbess Pelagia, has a face as serene as a Nesterov Madonna. She spoke excellent English



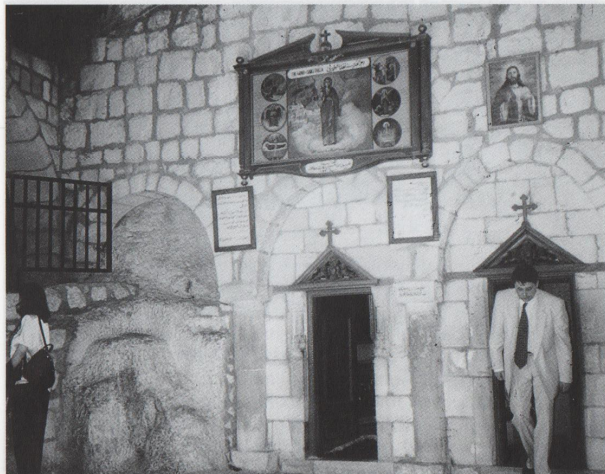
L-R: Fr John Salter, Abbess Pelagia and Fr David White at St Thekla's convent, Syria



Pagan altar of blood sacrifice now Christian – Syria



Below the large icon – the small icon which exuded oil in Myrna's house, Damascus



Entrance to the Shrine of St Thekla, Syria

and plying us with coffee, fruit juice and chocolates she told us of the shrine and the orphanage. The community has a benefactor living in London. She asked to be put in touch with the Russian Convent of the Annunciation in Brondesbury, north-west London as the Sisters of St. Xenia are Palestinian and originally from Ain Karim. Having given us a booklet on the convent and packets of very sweet incense she showed us some of the little orphan girls who were playing at house-keeping by sweeping with toy dust pans and brushes the convent steps.

On a hill overlooking the Christian town with its Aramaic-speaking congregations of the most friendly and hospitable people in the Christian world, is what we were told was one of the oldest churches in Christendom. It is in the hands of the Melkites and is known as the cathedral of St. Sergius. The three altars within its walls have clearly visible the runnels which drained off in pagan times the blood of the sacrificial victims. Today the unbloody Eucharistic sacrifice is still pleaded at these converted pagan altars. Nearby the Greek Orthodox church has similar altars.

Back in the Paulist monastery we were visited by Myrna, a very down-to-earth young housewife and mother. Myrna is a Melkite and her husband Greek Orthodox. Some years ago in the 1980s Myrna's husband visited the St. Alexander Nevsky cathedral in Sofia, Bulgaria. Here he bought ten small, cheap paper icons of Our Lady of Kazan. On returning to Damascus one of these icons exuded oil, quite large quantities. It was taken for safe keeping to the Greek Orthodox Church, where it was kept before being returned to Myrna. At this time Myrna had a vision of the Mother of God in the trees opposite their house in Soufanieh. She told us she was frightened. "Why me?" she had asked, as she was not particularly devout and tended to go to church only for festivals and family occasions. She, too, began to exude oil from her hands. Then she began to show signs of the stigmata, in her hands and feet and head and side there was bleeding. It is a curious phenomenon because sanctity in the Eastern Christian tradition is associated with glorification – the exuding of fragrant oil, the glowing of garments and skin, the transfiguration of matter; whereas in the Western tradition the signs of sanctity have been the stigmata in some saints. The answer to this mystery may lie partially in the message Myrna says she received from the Holy Virgin. The message was that Christians both Eastern and Western should keep the Feast of the Resurrection on the same day. Ever since her first vision Myrna has exhibited the signs of the Passion when the two Easters – Eastern and Western – coincide. The longed-for unity of the two Patriarchates, Greek and Melkite, would seem to be the message conveyed. Myrna invited us to her home on the next day. She had to attend a funeral of the mother of one of the priests who had entertained us on our arrival at the Paulists.

The next morning we attended the Sourp Patarag at the Armenian Orthodox cathedral near the Bab Touma or Thomas Gate of the city. Touma was the son-in-law of the Emperor Heraclius. Eddy, a Palestinian living in the U.S.A., met us at the gate and took us to Myrna's house. Washing hung on the line and it had a very homely appearance. In the main living room was the small icon now sealed and locked under a glass dome with a bowl for the oil should it exude

again. A large notice in three languages says: "No Donations Accepted". Pilgrims both Christian and Moslem come from all over the city and from abroad, but Myrna's head has not been turned by these people, although her home life has been totally disrupted. Her teenage daughter dressed as outlandishly as any other teenager plays with her pet terrapin on the floor, whilst people kneel and pray.

To lunch with young Father Eiad the priest at the nearby Melkite church. He is a Salvatorian Father who had ministered in London to the Melkites using the Sacred Heart convent church in Horseferry Road. His church was very well appointed and had iconized images of St. Therese of Lisieux and Our Lady of Lourdes.

The sixty-five miles or so back to Beirut took very little time to cover and the delay at the frontier was minimal. At supper at Harissa we sat with Bishop Boutros whom we had met in November at Cardinal Hume's tea-party for the Eastern Catholics and their opposite Orthodox numbers at Westminster.

The next day we were driven to the Melkite Patriarchate by Ragi George Saleh, a seminarian from Egypt. I sat with Sister Agata, who is the nun in charge of the domestic arrangements of Patriarch Maximos V Hakim. His Beatitude invited us to lunch with the prelates attending the Eastern Catholic Patriarchs Synod. Here we met Archbishop Jean C. Jeanbart, Metropolitan of Aleppo and Archbishop Zoghby and Mlle. Lucienne, a very friendly Belgian lady who some twenty-five years ago lectured in French Literature at the University of Beirut, but now works in the Patriarchate editing "Le Lien" the magazine of the Melkite Church published in French. Archbishop Zoghby had resigned when Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh had received the Cardinal's hat. He felt that Patriarchs were above Cardinals. He also felt very strongly that the Eastern Orthodox should have been at the Eastern Catholic Patriarchs' Conference.

The Patriarch lives under the same roof as his seminarians and moves freely among them. He received us twice that day in audience and nothing was too much trouble for him. He was delighted to receive the letter I had brought from the Bishop of London and some compact discs of Anglican church music I had bought for him.

We drove back via the blocks of flats the Patriarch had built for young married couples, to provide them with reasonably priced accommodation and called on an English nun, Sister Judith Mary of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. The community has a house in Kensal Rise and has opened a Latin Rite convent in Romania. They run a school for Christian girls in Junieh, a suburb of Beirut. We also called on the retired Mother General of the Salvatorian Melkite Sisters who had just had an eye operation and was recovering from a stroke. She bore her sufferings and discomfort with remarkable tranquillity and insisted we stay for biscuits and coffee and very sweet rose water. Back at Harissa more entertainment – Father Joseph in the seminary insisted we join him for beer and nuts on the terrace thousands of feet above the Mediterranean. Seminarian Fahdy, the Syrian went out for the beer.

After the liturgy, the next day being Sunday the fathers and seminarians who had not gone home for the weekend entertained



Fr White and Fr Salter with the Archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Damaascus



The Greek Patriarchate of Antioch – Damaascus

members of the congregation to coffee in the Common Room – all very Church of England, this Sunday hospitality, so that one immediately feels at home as an Anglican!

On our afternoon drive in the mountains with Father Joseph he took us to visit the monastery of Patriarch Jean-Pierre XVIII Kasparian of the Catholic Armenians. It is a lonely place and seems to have been founded in 1749. The Father Superior and a visiting Bishop offered us wine, and having visited the church, we drove down the mountain to visit Patriarch Moussa David, the Syrian Catholic Patriarch. It is a large building and contains some fine oil paintings of previous Patriarchs. There is also a seminary built in the neo-Crusader style and each seminarian has a small cell-like room which doubles as bedroom and study.

After lunch we drive to Tripoli passing the fairy-tale castle perched on a huge block of rock in a valley – Moussalayha castle. We called at Balamand monastery on the way. It was originally Belmont in Crusader times and was built by the Latin Cistercian order, but is now Greek Orthodox under the Patriarchate of Antioch. The great refectory is now a concert hall, but the church has a fine iconostasis and contains old icons depicting the ecumenical Councils. The monastery has recently become famous as the meeting place for Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholics, who held the Balamand Conference here to open up discussions on Uniatism. Before Tripoli we paid a call on the huge castle of Raymond de St. Gilles, Count de Toulouse, a Crusader who industriously destroyed 100,000 Arabic books. He had a sister, Vrelisende, who was betrothed to the Byzantine Emperor, who later called the marriage off. Raymond, outraged at this insult, packed a gang of bandits into the dowry ships and proceeded to rob every Byzantine town he could lay his hands on. This tended to make the Latin Church somewhat unpopular in these parts.

The great cathedral of St. Mary the Virgin in Tripoli is a mosque, but still looks like a church. Its tower has become a minaret. Tripoli abounds in mosques, their minarets piercing the skyline. After an ice-cream with two Melkite nuns we had given a lift to we made our way out of town and up a mountain to the Greek Orthodox convent of Our Lady of Light. This seems to be a favourite place for people to visit on a Sunday evening, as it is set in pretty wooded grounds with a superb view across the eastern Mediterranean. Here we watched the sun set in blood-red magnificence and realized it was time to leave all these hospitable Christians and return to the west, but we took with us many happy memories and good impressions of this once great and powerful Patriarchate of Antioch, where first we were nick-named Christians. It has gone through terrible times of strife and division – Christians squabbling among themselves, Moslems taking over the weakened Byzantine Empire step-by-step through Syria until the coup de grace was given it on 29th May 1453. But today the Christians of the ancient Patriarchal territory have discovered a new role for themselves as bridges between each other and between the East and the West. It looks very likely that the unity lost at the Great Schism of 1054 will begin to be healed in that most divided of Patriarchates, because there are plenty of Christian men and women of good will who pray and work for that healing.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE ORTHODOX MONASTERIES AND CHURCHES OF FINNISH AND RUSSIAN KARELIA 6th – 12th JUNE 2000

Our pilgrimage for the year 2000 is to Finland with a brief visit to the Russian Monastery of Old Valamo. Although we will not reach the Arctic Circle this must be the most northerly pilgrimage the Association has yet made. It should be quite like old times with Bishops Michael and Kallistos as our spiritual leaders. Finland is a wonderful country to visit and I look forward to renewing acquaintance with former pilgrims and meeting new ones.

David Bond

Day one – Tuesday 6th June

Morning scheduled flight of Finnair from Heathrow to Helsinki. Onward domestic flight of Finnair to Kuopio. Here we meet our local guide, and transfer by coach to the city of Iisalmi, situated in the heart of northern Karelia. We will stay for two nights at the Orthodox Cultural Centre, at the Hotel Artos, owned by the Orthodox Church. At dinner our host will be Father Elias, the charismatic priest who administers the centre. Dinner will be a traditional Karelian affair.

Day two – Wednesday 7th June

After breakfast, Fr. Elias will give a guided tour of the Orthodox Cultural Centre, including the remarkable Icon Gallery and the Church of St. Eliah, as well as the frescos by the Greek artist, Dimitrios Andonopoulos in the great hall. Afterwards drive to the city of Kuopio, situated about 50 miles from Iisalmi. We visit the Finnish Orthodox Church Museum which includes exhibits and icons which are unique in Western Europe. Afterwards we pay a courtesy call on Bishop John, the head of the Orthodox Church in Finland at the Episcopate. We take a coffee break in Puijo Tower, a rotating restaurant which affords us a spectacular view of the Tower of Kuopio and the surrounding terrain. After time at leisure in Kuopio we drive back to Iisalmi for dinner with Fr. Elias and an overnight stop.

Day three – Thursday 8th June

We leave Iisalmi and drive through one of the finest scenic areas in Finland which includes Lake Pielinen and the Koli National Park. We take a break for coffee and Karelian pastries at a typical Karelian house near to the lake, known as the Bomba House. We visit the nearby chapel of Saints Sergius and Herman. Afterwards we visit the studio of an octogenarian sculptor, Eva Rynanen, who has sculpted a remarkable Orthodox Chapel which we visit, out of pine and spruce. Continue to Ilomantsi, the furthest point east in the E.U., where the Orthodox congregation, established in the 14th Century, is the oldest in Finland. We check into our lakeside hotel, before visiting another of Karelia's dynamic priests, Father Rauno, with whom we will celebrate evening prayer in St. Eliah's Church. Father Rauno will then host a dinner for us at his Irjala Charity Centre, a mission he has established to provide food and shelter for ex-convicts, having been impressed by the English Church's efforts to reach out to the needy. Father Rauno will give an explanation of his mission to us. We end the

day with an optional visit to a tasting of Finnish berry wines and liqueurs in a water-tower high above Ilomansti.

Day four – Friday 9th June

An early start. We drive to the Russian border, which we cross, before driving to the Russian Karelian town of Sortavala, which Finland was forced to cede to the USSR, in accordance with the 1945 Peace Treaty. After a break for coffee and a visit to Sortavala's Lutheran Church, we take a one hour trip by hydrofoil across Lake Ladoga to Valamo Island, to visit Valamo Monastery (Old Valamo) founded in the 12th Century by Saints Sergius and Herman, and which has since then endured a cycle of destruction and rebuilding, including the dark years of the Finno-Russian 'Winter War' and the horrors of life under Stalin. It is once again a living Christian community. We are guided around the Monastery and Cathedral of the Transfiguration, and the church of Saints Peter and Paul. We continue by boat to St. Nikon's Bay on the other side of the island, where two Sketes have been modelled on Jerusalem, including Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, and the Dormition of Mary the Mother of God. We listen to a short concert by the choir of the Valamo Monks and enjoy a light lunch in the monastery café, before our return hydrofoil trip, and the return road journey to Finland and the city of Joensuu where we check in for dinner and a stay for the night, at the centrally located Best Western Atrium Hotel.

Day five – Saturday 10th June

We visit the beautiful orthodox church of St. Nicholas, built in 1887, containing some remarkable icons painted in St. Petersburg towards the end of the 19th century. Afterwards, drive to Heinavesi, not far from the Russian border. When the monks evacuated from Old Valamo during the winter of 1940, they came to the mainland of Finland, and settled in Heinavesi, where they founded the New Valamo Monastery. It is still the only Orthodox Monastery in the Nordic countries. We have a guided tour of the churches, the magnificent library and the museum containing priceless icons and Faberge Jewellery. There will be a chance to join the monks in prayer. Afterwards we take a boat trip to the only convent in the Nordic countries. At Lintula the Sisters will give us a guided tour to include their chapel and small factory which makes candles for all the Orthodox churches in Finland. Afterwards, transfer by road to Joensuu Airport. We fly from Joensuu to Helsinki leaving at 1900 by domestic flight of Finnair. Check into our downtown hotel for dinner and a two night stay.

Day six – Sunday 11th June

We hope to celebrate Pentecost with the Anglican Community in Helsinki and meet members of the Lutheran and Orthodox churches there. In the afternoon there will be a guided city tour. Helsinki is one of the nine European cities of culture 2000, with the theme of "knowledge, technology and the future". The city has recently built a new Opera house, and a new museum of modern art will be opened in time for the year 2000.

Day seven – Monday 12th June

Our last morning in Finland will be at leisure, with an afternoon transfer to Helsinki Airport for the return Finnair flight to London.

This itinerary is a guide and is subject to change.

Price: £899

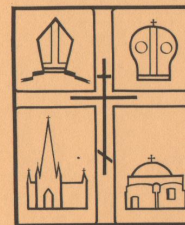
Price includes:

- Finnair scheduled flights – London/Helsinki/London.
- Finnair domestic flights – Helsinki/Kuopio, Joensuu/Helsinki.
- All touring and guiding as per itinerary.
- Accommodation as follows, in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities:
 - 2 nights at Hotel Artos, Iisalmi (or similar).
 - 1 night in the Hotel Paaskynpesa, Ilomantsi.
 - 1 night at Best Western Hotel, Joensuu (or similar).
 - 2 nights in a 3-star, centrally located hotel in Helsinki.
- Meal plan – Finnish breakfast and 3-course dinner each day.
- Lunches at Old Valamo Monastery. On day 2 coffee and pastries at Puijo Tower and Bomba House on day 3.
- Visa for Russia.

Extras:

- U.K. and Finland departure taxes and passenger service charge (not yet known for the year 2000).
- Lunches except at Old Valamo Monastery.
- Single room supplement at £108 per person for 6 nights.
- Travel insurance (see booking form).

To reserve your place please send your completed booking form and a deposit of £60 per person (Cheques payable to Pax Travel Ltd) to the Revd. D. W. Bond



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CONSTANTINOPLE LECTURE

Thursday 25th November 1999

at

LAMBETH PALACE

Speaker

Dr SEBASTIAN BROCK

(Oxford University)

**“THE SYRIAC CHURCHES IN
RECENT THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE**

Evensong

6.30

Lecture

7.00

followed by a Reception

Admission only by ticket in advance from the
General Secretary, the Revd Philip Warner,

£5 *(to include the Reception)*