

# The Eastern Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is currently comprised of twenty-two autonomous churches. Each church enjoys a status of relative independent self-governance vis-à-vis the Roman Pontiff—with whom they are in full communion and in whose person universal communion is realized.

The following is a list of the eastern Catholic autonomous churches, arranged according to the tradition(s) they observe:

***I. Alexandrian:***

1. Coptic
2. Ethiopian

***II. Antiochene:***

1. Malankar
2. Maronite
3. Syrian

***III. Constantinopolitan:***

1. Albanian
2. Belorussian
3. Bulgarian
4. Greek
5. Hungarian
6. Italo-Albanian
7. Melkite
8. Romanian
9. Russian
10. Ruthenian
11. Slovak
12. Ukrainian
13. Yugoslav

***IV. Armenian:***

1. Armenian

***V. Chaldean:***

1. Chaldean
2. Malabar
3. Latin - Western Rite

The following is a list of the eastern catholic autonomous churches, organized according to their hierarchical status:

***VI. Patriarchal churches***

1. Armenian Church
2. Chaldean Church
3. Coptic Church
4. Latin Church
5. Maronite Church
6. Melkite Church
7. Syrian Church

***VII. Major Archiepiscopal Church***

1. Ukrainian Church

***VIII. Metropolitan Churches***

1. Ethiopian Church
2. Malabar Church
3. Malankar Church

4. Ruthenian Church
- IX. Episcopal and other Churches
1. Albanian Church
  2. Belorussian Church
  3. Bulgarian Church
  4. Greek Church
  5. Hungarian Church
  6. Italo-Albanian Church
  7. Romanian Church
  8. Russian Church
  9. Slovak Church
  10. Yugoslav Church

<b>Eastern Catholic Churches Population (2004)</b>	
Armenian Catholic Church	368,923
Coptic Catholic Church	242,513
Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic Church	196,858
Syro-Malankara Catholic Church	404,052
Syrian Catholic Church	123,376
Maronite Catholic Church	3,106,792
Chaldean Catholic Church	382,637
Syro-Malabar Church	3,752,432
Melkite Catholic Church	1,340,913
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church	4,321,508
Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church	597,623
Romanian Catholic Church	746,000
Greek Catholics in Former Yugoslavia	76,670
Greek Byzantine Catholic Church	2,345
Bulgarian Byzantine Catholic Church	10,000
Slovak Greek Catholic Church	225,136
Italo-Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church	60,448
Hungarian Byzantine Catholic Church	268,935
Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church	3,000
Faithful of various Eastern Catholic Churches without their own hierarchy	65,000

## **Byzantine – Ruthenian**

Byzantine Catholics are followers of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Living God. They believe that, in His great mercy, He came into the world; He assumed our human nature by becoming a man, thus enabling Him to save us from our sins by His passion, death, resurrection and glorious ascension to Heaven. We are the witnesses to God's saving action in human history, and the bearers of the Good News of Christ to the ends of the earth.

### ***The Byzantine Catholic Church is the New Testament Church led by the Holy Spirit.***

The Byzantine Catholic Church traces its foundation to the 12 Apostles of Christ who were the companions of Jesus as he walked on this earth some 2000 years ago. After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), the Apostles began to proclaim the Gospel, first to Jerusalem, then to the Gentiles. The first mission of the New Testament Church to the Greek-speaking Gentiles of the Levant was to Antioch, in the Roman province of Syria, where *"the disciples were first called Christians"* (Acts 11:26). Antioch became the staging area for the great missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul, which resulted in the foundation of a string of Greek-speaking Christian communities in Greece and Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). Similar missionary journeys were undertaken by other Apostles throughout the Hellenized Eastern Mediterranean, as well as deep into the heart of the Latin West, to Rome itself, the capital of the Empire.

As the Christian Church grew, each nation and culture who received the Gospel in turn influenced the growth of the Church. Even at a relatively early stage in the history of the Church, two major heritages developed and remain with us today: The Eastern or "Greek" tradition, and the Western or "Latin" tradition. The Church in the West had its principal center at the Imperial capital of Rome, and is known in our present-day as the Roman Catholic Church. The Church in the East grew and developed from the Churches in Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria. These three Eastern centers shared a common language, Greek, and similar mode of discourse which formed the basis for the subsequent development of the Eastern Christian tradition. The Byzantine Catholic Church shares in the inheritance of the first Greek-speaking Christian communities of the Eastern Mediterranean world, founded by the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

### ***The Byzantine Catholic Church shares in the inheritance of the Byzantine Religious Culture of the Christian East.***

A landmark event in the history of the Church, and particularly the Eastern Church, was the decision in 325 by the Roman Emperor Constantine to move the Imperial capital from Rome to Byzantium, a small town on the Bosphorus strait which he renamed Constantinople (and which is presently Istanbul, Turkey). This shift in the secular political balance had a dramatic impact on the Eastern Church, for a new secular and religious center – Constantinople – was created in the heart of the Christian East. The Eastern Roman, or "Byzantine," Empire centered on Constantinople was a Christian Empire that flourished for over 1,000 years; it engendered a new and unique culture infused with Christianity. Naturally, the Church based in the capital city of Constantinople gradually came to have a pre-eminent influence in the Christian East; it spread a religious culture that was both a synthesis and dynamic restatement of the existing strands of Eastern Christian culture that had been cultivated in the Greek-speaking world – the "Byzantine" religious culture. Byzantine Catholics in America are the spiritual descendants of Christians in Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East who are the heirs of this Byzantine religious culture, and who therefore trace their spiritual heritage to the Great Church of Constantinople, known as Hagia Sophia (*The Church of Holy Wisdom*).

The spiritual heritage of the Byzantine Catholic Church is the same as the one given to us by the Apostles; it matured in the Christian East, during the period of the Byzantine Empire. This heritage includes the doctrines, liturgical practices and underlying theology and spirituality that came from the Christian Church of the Byzantine Empire. This heritage is shared among all of the Christian peoples—regardless of ethnicity or nationality—who trace their spiritual roots to the Great Church of Constantinople, and the Byzantine religious culture that grew from that Church. From the First Millennium, Christians of the Byzantine tradition have referred to themselves as "Orthodox Christians." Byzantine Catholics are Orthodox Christians who embrace full communion with the Church of Rome and its primate, Pope John Paul II, the successor of St. Peter, the first among the Apostles.

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## **Byzantine-Melkite:**

The Melkite story goes back to the beginning of Christianity itself. The Melkites, or Byzantine (Greek) Catholics of Middle Eastern origin, are descendants of the early Christians of Antioch (cf. Acts 11:26). As Rome was the most powerful city in early Western Europe, and spread its manner of worship throughout the surrounding area, so too did the Greek capital, Constantinople (originally called Byzantium), spread its traditions and customs to the countries closest to her. Therefore, this Church uses the Byzantine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

Today, the term Melkite is used to refer to those Catholics whose ancestry is Middle Eastern and who follow the Byzantine Tradition in worship, theology, and spirituality.

### **TERMINOLOGY:**

In the Western world, this Church is called Melkite Greek-Catholic (Grec Melchite Catholique). In the Middle East they are generally known as Room Katuleek, literally "Roman Catholic," just as those whom they call Antiochian or Greek Orthodox here are known as Room Orthodox ("Roman Orthodox") there. However, the Rome they are referring to in these titles is not the Rome in Italy, but Constantinople, which the ancients called New Rome. Those whom North Americans call Roman Catholics are known as Lateen (Latins) in the Middle East.

An explanation of the names Melkite, Greek, and Byzantine follows:

*MELKITE:* The term comes from the Semitic words for king, "melko" or "melek." The king in this case was the Byzantine emperor who supported the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon, held in 451. The opponents of this council, most of whom were in the Middle East, called its supporters "The Royalists" (Malikiyeen). So the name, which today refers to the Byzantine Catholics of the Middle East, originally was an insult aimed at all Christians, both Eastern and Western, who supported the Council of Chalcedon.

*GREEK ("ROOM" in Arabic):* This word refers to the spiritual tradition of the Greek Fathers which our Church follows. At the time of Christ, Greek was the spoken language in the major cities of the Middle East. The New Testament and the writings of the most important Church Fathers were composed in Greek. In contrast, people in the rural areas spoke Aramaic or Syriac until the Muslim conquest.

*BYZANTINE:* The word refers to the city of "New Rome" originally known as Byzantium. It is chiefly known in history as Constantinople, the "city of Constantine." Its present name is Istanbul, the Turkish pronunciation of the Greek words for "to the city." Our Church follows the ritual of the Great Church of Constantinople for the Divine Liturgy.

### **GOVERNANCE:**

Melkites are governed by a successor of the Apostles in the person of His Beatitude Gregory III Laham, the Patriarch of Antioch and the entire East, of Alexandria and Jerusalem. He presently resides in Damascus, Syria. They relate directly to him and to the Holy Synod of Melkite Bishops throughout the world.

Our Diocese, the Eparchy of Saint Sauveur, covers all of Canada. It was shepherded by the late Bishop Sleiman Hajjar who went to his eternal reward on March 10, 2002. He was appointed bishop of Canada on June 30, 1998, consecrated a bishop on August 6, 1998 by Patriarch Maximos V Hakim, Archbishop Michel Hakim, and Bishop Issam Darwish, at the Holy Saviour Monastery near Sidon, Lebanon, and installed as Eparch on September 12, 1998. His address is: 34 Maplewood/ Montreal, Quebec/ H2V-2M1.

(The former Eparch was Archbishop Michel Hakim. He was born on April 21, 1921 in Maghdoucheh, Lebanon. He was ordained a priest on November 10, 1947 and a bishop on September 10, 1977. Prior to being appointed the Archbishop of Canada, he was the Archbishop of Sidon, Lebanon.)

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**Byzantine-Romanian:**  
BRIEF ROMANIAN HISTORY

This Church takes its roots from Romania. In order to understand this Church, one needs to know some history of the region.

For almost nineteen centuries, there has dwelt in southeastern Europe—in the land historically known as “Dacia Felix,”—a people of Roman origin. This nation was and still is as an island surrounded by a Slavic sea. The Romanian nation arose from a mixture of Roman colonists and legions, brought to Dacia by the Emperor Trajan in 101 A.D., with the indigenous Dacian element. The formative period of Romanian nation took several centuries.

During that time there were constant disturbances occasioned by the invasion of tribes from the east, who swept over the territory inhabited by the Daco-Roman people. Missionaries from Rome Christianized this population. In the eleventh century, the Bulgarians imposed upon the Romanians the Byzantine jurisdiction and the Byzantine ritual.

However, the desire for reunion with the See of Rome was preserved in the hearts of the Romanian people in spite of harsh political and religious oppression. In 1700, the Romanians living in Transylvania had reunited with the See of Rome, and reentered the Universal Church. It was this Church that gave to the Romanian nation its cultural and national conscience, culminating eventually in 1918 in the political reintegration of all the Romanians provinces into one national state.

In December 1, 1948, the Soviet controlled regime suppressed the Byzantine Catholic Church in Romania. Most of its hierarchy, clergy, and many faithful followers were thrown into prison or sent into labor camps for refusing to renounce their Catholic faith. All bishops and numerous clergy died in prison. A cruel persecution was initiated by the communist regime against the Catholic Church. In 1989, following the anticommunist revolution, the first decree of the new regime was to reinstate the Greek-Catholic Church of Romania.

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## **Byzantine-Slovak:**

We can not state an exact date when answering the question concerning the establishment of the Byzantine rite. Church, established by Jesus Christ, was spread across the world after the descent of Holy Spirit. Since first centuries certain differences concerning religious celebrations start to appear, naturally, influenced by local culture and mentality of nations. There was a significant influence by the synagogical worship in Palestine, where the majority of Christians originate from Jewry. There was a difference between Romans, rather strict and pragmatic, and Greeks who had greater sense of theatricality and pomposity. There was a different situation in Syria, and different in Egypt. These differences in culture and mentality had naturally occurred in spirituality and in a form of worshipping. After Milanese Edict (313) the differences and contrasts began to crystallise and the individual rites began to differentiate. Our Byzantine rite has its roots in the Greek part of Empire, the influence from Palestine and Antioch is significant too. In 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries was the Byzantine rite adopted by Slavic nations, which influenced and enriched its form, that is the main reason for referring to it as to a Byzantine-Slavonic rite, which is slightly different from the Byzantine-Greek or the Byzantine-Melchite rite and spirituality.

### *St. Cyrill and Method the Apostles of the Slavs*

The attendance of the Byzantine Catholic Church in Slovakia derives from the activities of two Slavic saints: Saint Cyrill and Saint Methodius who introduced Christianity to the region. “Saint brothers” from Thessaloniki brought to Great Morava Christianity and consequently the Byzantine rite too. Together with the translation of the Bible they prepared the translation of the Liturgy and other worships into clear and comprehensible language, as it is usual in the East. After the death of Saint Methodius and after the banishment of their disciples in 885 the Byzantine rite was restrained and gradually vanishing but it has never completely vanished from our territory. Even during the reign of Dynasty of Arpad (11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> centuries) in Hungarian Empire many Byzantine monasteries were established. Pope Inocent III had shown the willingness to establish the bishopric even of the Byzantine rite. The opposition of the Latin (western) clergy and the historical circumstances changed the situation and it gave the main reason for rough period of latinization (e.g. prohibition of building Byzantine churches in towns, the vicars of the Byzantine rite on the mixed areas were subordinated to a western bishop...) The reinforcement for a small community of the Byzantine rite was Walachian colonisation from 14<sup>th</sup> century, which signified a great influx of Christians of the Byzantine rite. Since 15<sup>th</sup> century there are reliable reports about the existence of the Eparchy of Mucachevo occupying our area up to the area of Spis. It is objectionable to observe the unity or disunity of Eastern Christians with the Catholic Church in 11<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, anyway, the considerable part was not united. After many ‘tries’ they claimed the Unity with the Catholic Church in 1646 by ratifying the Agreement of Unification in Uzhorod. The component part of this Agreement was a promise not to interfere in the worshipping or spiritual life of Eastern Christians and not to force them to adopt their habits and forms of spirituality or any attempt of assimilation by Latin Church. In spite of that, a hundred years later we notice an evident pressure of assimilation. Later on this attempt of assimilation is noticeable within the Byzantine Catholic Church. There were many causes of it. Byzantine priests were not equal coram state with Latin priests. They were usually, with a few exceptions, serfs and they were not supported by the state. This situation lasted until 1692 when the emperor Leopold I. granted equal rights for the Latin as well as for the Byzantine clergy. Byzantine Catholic priests acquired their higher theological qualifications at Roman Catholic Universities (e.g. in Trnava). The superiority of the Latin rite was strongly noticeable in whole Catholic Church, especially after the Lateran Concile IV. Many Byzantine Catholics viewed the Latin rite as something ‘superior’ and that fact caused a rapid adaptation of various Latin items (e.g. adoration of the Eucharist, cross way) and the Latin way of spiritual life and thinking.

The aspirations of the Latin bishops to subdue Eastern Catholics, latinization and hungarization of Eastern Catholics culminated in 18<sup>th</sup> century. Pope Clement XIV officially established the Eparchy of Mucachevo on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1771 thanks to Maria Theresa. It consisted of 711 parishes and 560 thousand worshippers directly subordinated to Rome. In the intention to facilitate the administration of that large territory the Vicary of Kosice was established in 1787. (Later transferred to Presov [1792]). The emperor Frantisek I decreed to establish an independent Eparchy in 1816 (1815). Vatican officially confirmed it on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1818. The territory of middle and south Zemplin remained under the administration of the Eparchy of Mucachevo. (De facto until 1939, the establishment of the Apostolic Exarchate in Kosice legally solved that affair). Byzantine Catholics – Ruthenians and Slovaks – had to resist intense Hungarian pressure. The national issues concerning Ruthenians occurred during the whole period of the existence of the first Czecho-Slovak Republic.

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# **Byzantine-Ukrainian:**

## UKRAINIAN GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) is the largest of the Eastern Catholic Churches *sui juris*.

The UGCC is a Church of the Byzantine rite that is in full ecclesial communion with the Pope of Rome and acknowledges his spiritual and jurisdictional authority. In this context, "rite" means liturgical, theological, spiritual and canonical tradition.

**Other names for this church:** Uniate Church; Greek Catholic Church; Greco-Catholic Church; Ukrainian Catholic Church; Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Byzantine rite; Kyivan Catholic Church.

The name Greek Catholic Church was introduced by the Empress Maria-Teresa in 1774 to distinguish this Church from the Roman Catholic and Armenian Catholic Churches.

In official church documents, the term *Ecclesia Ruthena unita* was used. In 1960 the name Ukrainian Catholic Church started to be used in official documents to refer to Ukrainian Catholics in the diaspora and the underground Church in Soviet Ukraine. In the papal statistical annual *Annuario Pontificio* the name Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Byzantine rite is used. At the Synod of Bishops of the UGCC (September 1999) the name Kyivan Catholic Church was proposed, to emphasize the identity of this Church.

### **The Conversion of Ukraine and Tensions Between East and West**

In 988 Prince Volodymyr the Great established Christianity in its Byzantine-Slavic rite as the national religion of his country, Kyivan-Rus. This happened before the Great Church Schism of 1054 divided Christian East from West. The Kyivan Church inherited the traditions of the Byzantine East and was part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Yet this Church also remained in full communion with the Latin West and its patriarch, the Pope of Rome.

Though Constantinople and Rome had their disputes, the Kyivan hierarchy tried to work for Christian unity. Representatives from Rus participated in the Western Councils of Lyon (1245) and Constance (1418). Isidore, the Metropolitan of Kyiv, was himself one of the creators of the Union of Florence (1439).

While the Kyivan metropolia was working towards reunion, a new metropolia arose north of Kyiv, in Moscow. The Church of Moscow refused to accept the Union of Florence and separated from the ancient metropolia in Kyiv, announcing its autocephaly (self-governing status) in 1448. In 1589, with Greek Orthodoxy and Constantinople subject to Turkish domination, the Church of Moscow became a patriarchate.

### **Union with Rome in 1596 and East/West Divisions in Ukraine Itself**

The Kyivan Church was challenged by the Protestant Reformation and the renewed Catholicism of that period and was also suffering a serious internal crisis. The Synod decided to pass under the jurisdiction of the see of Rome. The traditional Eastern rite of the Kyivan Church was preserved and its ethnic, cultural and ecclesial existence was guaranteed. This was confirmed at the Council of Brest in 1596, which is the beginning of the [Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church](#) as an institution.

Some hierarchs and faithful of the Kyivan Church, however, insisted on remaining under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Torn by internal division, the Central and Eastern sections of Ukraine passed under the control of the ruler of Moscow in 1654. Soon the Orthodox Kyivan Metropolia was under the authority of the Moscow Patriarchate (1686). As the Tsarist Empire grew, it repressed the Greek Catholics and forced "conversions" to Russian Orthodoxy (1772, 1795, 1839, 1876). The Pratulyn Martyrs died as a result of these repressions.

Orthodox clergy and laity in Ukraine were dissatisfied with the close connections of the Russian Orthodox Church with Russian national interests. "Ukrainophile" movements began and after the Russian Revolution in 1917 a movement began to gain autocephalous status for Ukrainian Orthodoxy. Attempts to proclaim autocephaly in the 1920s and 1940s were, however, repressed by the Soviet powers.

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## *Armenian Catholic*

The official schism of the Armenian Church in the 6<sup>th</sup> century did not prevent many bishops, along centuries, to remain in communion with the Universal Church. Henceforth, since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Armenians united their efforts to those of the Crusaders for the re-conquest of the Holy places, and entered in relation with the Church of Rome. However, this union did not materialize.

The birth of the Armenian Catholic Church did not take place until late 1742. It was recognized as such by the Pope Benoit XIV, and having at its head the patriarch Abraham-Pierre 1st ARDZIVIAN. Its residence was first at the Kreim, close to Harissa, and then the patriarch bought land at Bzoummar where his successor built a convent and placed the first patriarchal ecclesiastical community which became thereafter a center of radiance for Lebanon, Cilicia, Mesopotamia and Egypt.

The Catholic Armenians have dioceses in countries of the Middle East, Europe and in the American continent. Three congregations or masculine religious institutes and a congregation of Catholic Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception share the monastic life.

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## **THE CHALDEAN CHURCH**

Since the second century A.D., Christianity has flourished in Mesopotamia among the descendant of the two great and ancient nations of Chaldea and Assyria. One they were baptized, both nations preferred the name "Christian" to their old national name. Thus the church comprised of these two nations was simply called "the Church of the East." Our church of Mesopotamia prospered and expanded into the whole of Chaldea, Assyria, Persia, Arabia, the steppes of Mongolia in Asia, the Malabar Coast of India, and even into China.

During the first five centuries A.D., the Chaldean-Assyrian church was in communion with Rome and had control over its people; their jurisdiction was exercised independently from the Patriarchate of Antioch. A school for Christian learning was even established in Edessa (modern Urfa-Tur). This school reached its highest glory under Mar Aprem (St., Ephrem) in 363 A.D. Sixty years later, however, the church of east, decided to separate from Rome around 493 A.D. when Nissibin became the new intellectual center of Mesopotamia by imperial order.

The head of the newly independent Church of the East in Mesopotamia was called "Katholikos." He resided in Seleucia-Cteisphon, near Baghdad, Iraq. In the seventh century, Mesopotamia was conquered by the Moslems. In 780 A.D., the Chatholikos Timetheos I moved his residence to the new capital of Baghdad.

Historians acknowledge the important role, which the scholars of the Church of the East played in the formation of the Arab culture. By the end of the tenth century, there were fifteen Metropolitan Provinces in Mesopotamia and five beyond the border, including Malabar in India, China, Iran, Syria and Egypt. The provinces even extended into Eastern Siberia and Mongolia.

The first official attempt on the part of the Church of the East in Mesopotamia to be reunited with the Catholic Church of Rome was realized when the elected Patriarch John Sulaka went to Rome and made his profession of the Catholic Faith before Pope Julius III in 1553. By 1592, however, most Mesopotamian Catholics had separated again from Rome. Periodically, various groups of them had reunited with Rome only to break ties again after a few years. By the nineteenth century, reunited Catholics outnumbered those who refused to unite.

Chaldeans as nation existed since the seventh century B.C. Today's Chaldeans are the descendants of that great nation. But the term "Chaldean Church" was first used in 1445 A.D. by Pope Euginus V to distinguish the followers of the church of east of Cyprus, who were newly reconciled with Rome, from those who refused to reunite in general, henceforth called Assyrian.

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## **Maronite**

Antioch has always been a city of openness, dialogue, and bold initiative. It was converted to Jesus Christ by the preaching of certain of his disciples, and the believers were strengthened in their faith, thanks to the labors of the apostles Paul and Barnabas. The apostle Peter himself, the head of the Christian Church, was its bishop until he set out for Rome. Subsequently, the Church of Antioch prospered and extended its territory, finally becoming one of the great original patriarchates, namely Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

In the year 518, the Patriarch of Antioch, Severius, was deposed from his see for having denied the two distinct natures in Christ and for rejecting the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. A Catholic Patriarch succeeded him, by the name of Paul. However, not all the Christians approved his appointment, and in consequence the Church split into two groups: the Chalcedonians and the anti-Chalcedonians. Ever since that time, there has always been a Catholic Patriarch holding to the faith as defined at Chalcedon and a non-Catholic Patriarch rejecting it.

A century later, another division affected the Church of Antioch, leaving three groups of Christians, the Syriacs, the Maronites, and the Melkites, and this division has continued down to the present day. As from the seventh century, we find that the original Church had given rise to five district communities, the Melkites, the Maronites, the Syriacs, the Assyrians, and the Armenians, each of which had its own Patriarch. In the twelfth century yet another Patriarch was added in the person of the Latin Patriarch.

The Church of Antioch had originally been one church encompassing the whole of Asia and the East, but finally became several churches. Where there had been one Patriarch, now there are several. One day, God's mercy will bring it together again as one flock under one shepherd.

### ***The Maronites and Lebanon***

The Maronites are those Christians who gathered round a certain priest by the name of Maron and adopted his pattern of life.

Maron left the city and made his abode on a mountain, intending thereby to leave behind the theological strife and to worship God in solitude. But in his retreat, Maron found that his true vocation was to live with others, so he resumed his parish duties and set about teaching the true doctrine. His disciples increased in number, and they began to call themselves Maronites after their teacher.

Maron died in the year 410, but his disciples carried on his mission. In 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, they held to the clear teaching that Christ was both God and man, having two natures, one divine and one human. Afterwards the Maronites were loyal defenders of the decrees of the Council. In the upshot, the opponents of Chalcedon showed themselves bitter enemies of the Maronites, who started moving to Lebanon in successive waves after 350 of them had been martyred.

Near the end of the fifth century of the Christian era, the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon had been converted by the disciples of St. Maron and had become Maronites themselves. These now welcomed their brethren arriving from Antioch and the two groups, now mingled, pursued their mission together. When the Arabs finally dominated the area, and any regular contact with the patriarchate of Constantinople became impossible, the Maronites had to appoint in 687 their own Patriarch, who was Saint John-Maron.

The Emperor of Byzantium acted as if his royal authority extended over the Church. He appointed Patriarchs and in many ways interfered in ecclesiastical matters. The Christians for their part got into the habit of turning to him to solve their problems. When the Maronites chose a Patriarch for themselves, the authorities at Byzantium withheld their consent. While invading the region, the imperial army attacked the Maronites, and a battle was fought at Amioun, which resulted in a victory for the latter. The Patriarch established himself at Kfarhay, where he made the Episcopal palace his seat.

A number of Patriarchs resided at Kfarhay, among whom are John-Maron, Cyr, and Gabriel. They watched over their flock and ensured the purity of their faith. The Anaphora of St John- Maron, in daily use, is a brilliant testimony to the faith of the Maronites in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The lure of the riches of the world, which they had left, could not shake their firm belief, nor could the assaults of their enemies disperse them. They loved their Creator and cherished his Holy Word.

### ***The Maronites and Rome***

Pope Innocent III saw with his own eyes what men of prayer the Maronite Patriarchs were on the day when Patriarch Jeremiah of Amshit came to see him during the proceedings of the Latran Council of 1215, in which the latter participated.

"The Pope ordered that the Patriarch be depicted in a painting to be made for St Peter's. When over the centuries the painting had lost much of its radiance, Pope Innocent XIII ordered that it be retouched. This painting represents the Patriarch raising the host that had frozen in his hands while he was celebrating Mass, with the Pope attending". (Douaihy, Chronologie des Patriarches Maronites, 24).

These Patriarchs did not leave behind them great works, such as fine Churches or castles or universities. Nevertheless, they succeeded like the Apostles in watching over their flocks as mothers and fathers do over their children, and to pass on to them the teachings of Our Lord. They formed a people full of the faith, blessing when insulted and enduring when persecuted. When at last they had completed their labors in one place, they carried the torch and went elsewhere.

For three centuries the Maronites were cut off from the rest of the world, blockaded within their mountains; and when the Crusaders swarmed into the East, their discovery of the Maronites came as a surprise. The Holy See itself was astonished to learn of their continued existence when their disappearance had been taken for granted. Subsequently there were strong ties formed between the Maronites and the Crusaders, particularly after the arrival in the East of St Louis, King of France.

During the thirteenth century, Lebanon knew some decades of relative peace. The Maronites were even able to undertake the construction of a number of Churches, an activity which Patriarch DOUAIHY recorded as follows: "At that time, Christianity spread throughout the East and was openly proclaimed. Bronze bells were rung to summon the faithful to prayer and to the sacred services. Those who received the outpourings of God's grace founded convents and built Churches, for the people yearned to serve the Almighty and to perform good deeds. Father Basil of Bsharri had three daughters: Mariam, Thecla, and Salomeh. Mariam constructed the shrine of St Saba in Bsharri in Mount Lebanon; Salomeh, that of St Daniel in Hadath; and Thecla, that of St George in Bkerkasha as well as two churches in Koura..." (The Annals, 104)

### *The Pallium*

Although he had received an invitation from Pope Eugene IV to attend the Council of Florence in person, "the Maronite Patriarch sent Fra Juan as his delegate, being motivated by concern about the risks of the voyage. Fra Juan had an audience with the Pope, at that time presiding the works of the Council, after which he returned to Lebanon bearing the Pallium.

"When the worthy friar reached Tripoli, there was a large crowd who came to greet him; unfortunately however, there were also soldiers sent by the governor to arrest him, the official in question being persuaded that the Christians had met in Florence to prepare the launching of another crusade against the Muslims of Syria. On learning of the envoy's misfortune, the Patriarch sent emissaries to reassure the governor about Fra Juan's intentions. After having pocketed a substantial bribe, the governor set his prisoner free after the latter had promised to return after completing his mission. Fra Juan made his way up to Our Lady of Mayfuk, which was then the seat of the Patriarch, and delivered him the Pallium together with a letter from Pope Eugene IV. But he then set off for Rome again, this time passing through Beirut and ignoring his earlier promise to the governor of Tripoli, who naturally enough flew into a rage and sent his soldiers to arrest both the Patriarch and other leading personalities. Finding nobody at the patriarchal residence, he plundered and set fire to the houses around and even killed a number of the local inhabitants. Those of his men who continued the search for the Patriarch destroyed the monastery, killing some of the monks and taking the others in chains to Tripoli." The Patriarch was obliged to leave the monastery of Mayfuk and from then on lived under the protection of Jacob, Mukaddam of Bsharri

The Maronite Rite was brought to the United States in the early 1900's with the immigration of many Maronites from Lebanon due to famine and persecution. The Maronites of the United States became an Exarchate in 1965, and in 1971 the Eparchy (Diocese) of St. Maron was established with the See in Brooklyn. In 1994, the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon was established with its See in Los Angeles. The See was moved to St. Louis in 2001, to better serve its parishes. There are over 54 Maronite parishes and several missions in the U.S.

Bishop Robert Shaheen, who presides over the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, is the first Maronite Bishop to be American-born, and the first such bishop to be ordained outside of Lebanon.

Aron's death in the year 410 A.D., his disciples saved his remains and in spite of strong persecution, his tomb became a place of religious pilgrimage. St. John Maron, the first Patriarch of the Maronite people, was a monk of the monastery of St.

Maron, who was elected by the religious community to secure the Apostolic succession to the See of Antioch. Accordingly, the Maronite Patriarchate was initiated by the election of John Maron in 686 A.D. and has continued, since his death in 707 A.D., to the present time. A total of 76 Patriarchs have ascended to the Antiochene See, including the present successor, Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, Patriarch of Antioch and the Entire East.

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## *Syrian Catholic*

### *History of the Syriac Catholic Church:*

**Antioch:** The Syriac Catholic Church belongs to the See of Antioch (which prior to his departure to Rome, Saint Peter established) and extends its roots back to the primitive Christianity in the Orient. And in the Acts of the Apostles we are told that it is in Antioch where the followers of Jesus for the first time were called "Christians" (Acts 11:26).

**History:** In the time of the first Ecumenical Councils, the Patriarch of Antioch held the ecclesiastical authority over the Diocese of the Orient, which was to be extended from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf. Its scholarly mission in both languages: the Greek and Syriac was to provide the world and the Universal Church with eminent saints, scholars, hermits and pastors. Among these great people are Saint Ephrem (373), Doctor of the Church, Saint Jacob of Sarug (521) Dionysius Bar Salibi (1171) and Gregorius X Bar Hebraeus (1286).

In modern history the distinguished leaders of the Syriac Catholic Church have been among others: Patriarch Ignatius Michael Djarweh, Archbishop Clemens Daoud, Patriarch Ephrem Rahmani, Vicomte de Tarrazi, Monsignor Ishac Armaleh, Patriarch-Cardinal Gabriel Tappouni and Chorbishop Gabriel Khoury-Sarkis.

The present Syriac Catholic Patriarch of Antioch is Mar Ignace Pierre VIII since February 2001 and resides in Beirut, Lebanon. At this title he presides upon the Patriarchal Eparchy of Beirut and leads spiritually all the Syriac Catholic Community around the world.

Moreover, the patriarch emeritus, his eminency Cardinal Ignace Moussa Daoud preside the congregation for eastern churches. The patriarch Mar Ignace Antoine II Hayek who was elected patriarch in 1968 took his reverence few years ago, and lives always in Lebanon.

Our Community includes two Archdioceses in Iraq, four in Syria, one in Egypt and Sudan, a Patriarchal Vicariate in the Holy Land, a Patriarchal Vicariate in Turkey and our Diocese of Our Lady of Deliverance in the United States and Canada.

**Liturgy:** The Syriac Rite is rooted in the old tradition of both churches of Jerusalem and Antioch and has ties with the ancient Jewish Berakah and is usually called the Western Syriac Rite. The main Syriac Liturgy is called the "Anaphora of Saint James" (brother of the Lord).

**The People:** Throughout history the Syriac people have been known as the "Arameans" who were from the Biblical countries of Aram near the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and were the first disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Language:** Their ancient Semitic language is known as Aramaic (or "Syriac" after the time of Christ since the majority of people who spoke this language belonged to the province of "Syria"). It is the same language that was spoken by Jesus, Mary and the Apostles and is still the language used during the liturgy. Many of the ancient hymns of the Church are still maintained in this native tongue although several have been translated into Arabic, English, French and other languages to benefit the faithful.

**Rome:** The Syriac Catholic Church was formally and officially united with Rome in 1781

**North America:** Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Diocese in the United States and Canada is comprised of nine parishes; seven in the United States and 2 in Canada.

### *The Syriac Catholic Church*

During the Crusades there were many examples of warm relations between Catholic and Syriac Orthodox bishops. Some of these bishops seemed favourable to union with Rome, but no concrete results were achieved. There was also a decree of union between the Syriac Orthodox and Rome at the Council of Florence on 30 November 1444 but this also came to nothing.

Jesuit and Capuchin missionaries began to work among the Syriac Orthodox faithful at Aleppo in 1626. So many of them were received into communion with Rome that in 1662, when the Patriarchate had fallen vacant, the Catholic party was able to elect one of its own, Andrew Akhidjan, as Patriarch. This provoked a split in the community, and after Akhidjan's death in 1677 two opposed patriarchs were elected, an uncle and nephew, representing the two parties. But when the Catholic Patriarch died in 1702, this brief line of Syriac Catholic Patriarchs died out with him.

The Ottoman government supported the Oriental Orthodox against the Catholics, and throughout the 18th century the Syriac Catholics underwent much suffering and persecution. There were long periods when no Syriac Catholic bishops were functioning, and the community was forced underground.

In 1782 the Syriac Orthodox Holy Synod elected Metropolitan Michael Jarweh of Aleppo as Patriarch. Shortly after he was enthroned, he declared himself Catholic, took refuge in Lebanon and built the still-extant monastery of Our Lady at Sharfeh. After Jarweh there has been an unbroken succession of Syriac Catholic Patriarchs.

In 1829 the Turkish government granted legal recognition to the Syriac Catholic Church, and the residence of the Patriarch was established at Aleppo in 1831. Catholic missionary activity resumed. Because the Christian community at Aleppo had been severely persecuted, the Patriarchate was moved to Mardin (now in southeast Turkey) in 1850.

Steady Syriac Catholic expansion at the expense of the Syriac Orthodox was ended by the persecutions and massacres that took place during World War I. More than half of the 75,000 Syriac Catholics were massacred. In the early 1920s the Patriarchal residence was moved to Beirut, to which many Syriac Catholics had fled.

The Syriac Catholic Patriarch always takes the name Ignatius in addition to another name. Although Syriac Catholic priests were bound to celibacy at the Synod of Sharfeh in 1888, there are now a number of married priests. A patriarchal seminary and printing house are located at Sharfeh Monastery in Lebanon.

***Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Diocese in the U.S. and  
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## *Syro-Malabar Catholic*

The history of Syro-Malabar Church starts with St. Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. It is believed that he came to India in 52 A.D. and landed at Kodungallur on the Kerala coast. He preached the Gospel to the high caste families of Kerala, many of whom received the faith. He established several churches and moved on to the East coast of India. He was martyred near Little Mount, Madras and his body was brought to Mylapore (Near Madras) and was buried there.

A connection to the East Syrian Church (Chaldean) was established after the arrival of another Thomas and several families from Cana (Knai Thomman) in the 4th century. This infused new blood to the sagging old church established by St. Thomas and the church began to be ruled by East Syrian (Chaldean) bishops. The Indian church however, did not join the East-Syrian Church or priests from India were not made bishops. This situation lasted for about eleven centuries.

With the arrival of the Portuguese explorer, Vasco De Gama to Calicut on the Kerala Coast in 1498, a Latin connection began to take shape. The Portuguese were happy to discover the St. Thomas Christians on the West coast of India, but did not like their connection to East-Syrian Church. Pointing out some expressions in their liturgical texts, the Portuguese alleged that St. Thomas Christians believed in the Nestorian Heresy. The Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur) in 1599 convened by the Latin Archbishop Menezes of Goa brought an end to the connection between St. Thomas Christians and East-Syrian Church. St. Thomas Christian Church thus became a colonial Church of the Portuguese.

The Latin connection also brought division to the St. Thomas Christians. The Coonan Cross Oath in 1653 at the Church of Our Lady of Life at Mattanchery was the culmination of several years of latinization by the Portuguese, and the crowd gathered there took an oath that they would not be subject to the Portuguese Archbishop of Goa, Francis Garcia. This revolt eventually split the Church into two: one group continued to recognize the prelates appointed by Rome and the other broke away from Rome and joined the West-Syrian Jacobite Church of Antioch. This group came to be known as the Jacobites (Puthankootukar) or Syrian Orthodox Church of India. The Marthomites separated from the Jacobites in the 19th century due to Anglican Church influence. The Jacobites were further divided into two groups: Methran Kakshi or the Bishop's group (Syrian Orthodox Church of India) who's Catholicos or supreme head resides at Devalokam, Kottayam and the Bhava Kakshi or Patriarch's Group (Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church of India) whose head is the Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch.

After the Coonan Cross Oath, Rome began to take an active interest in the Kerala Christians. Several Carmelite monks were sent to Kerala and Carmelite Vicar Apostolics were residing at Varapuzha. Also, the Portuguese nominated administrators or archbishops for Malabar who were stationed at Kodungallur. This dual jurisdiction also was cause for complaints to Rome. In 1787, Representatives from 84 churches assembled in Angamly and drew up a document called Angamaly Padiyola which made a strong demand to Rome for native bishops, citing the sins of omission and commission of the foreign missionaries. In 1861, the arrival of a Chaldean Catholic bishop, Thomas Rokkos sent by the Chaldean patriarch created more problems. He was excommunicated on his arrival by the Vicar apostolic of Varapuzha, and a schism followed. Another Chaldean bishop, Elias Melus arrived in 1874 and he too met the same fate. The Syrian Christians, popularly known as the Surais, in and around Thrissur who owe allegiance to the Syrian Nestorian patriarch are the followers of the schism Melus created.

Finally in 1887, Pope Leo XIII decreed the separation of Rite of St. Thomas Catholics from that of the Latins. Two Vicariates apostolic, at Thrissur and Kottayam with two Latin Bishops, Adolf Medlycott and Charles Levigne were erected. Continued pleas for native bishops resulted in Pope's decree in 1896 for the erection of three vicariates for St. Thomas Catholics: Thrissur, Ernakulam and Changanassery under Indian Bishops John Menachery, Louis Pazheparambil and Mathew Makil respectively. In 1911, Pope Pius X erected a fourth vicariate at Kottayam for the Southists or Knanites, who claim to be descendents of East-Syrian Christians who migrated from Persia along with Knai Thomman.

Today, there are 24 Syro-Malabar dioceses in India, 12 of them in Kerala and 12 of them outside the state

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## *Syro-Malankara*

### GLIMPSE HISTORY OF MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Church in Kerala its origin to the preaching of St. Thomas one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ. Hence the Christians here are called St. Thomas Christians'. This Apostles Church has been in Catholic Communication from the early centuries. In the fourth century it came in contact with the Syro – Chaldean Churches and consequently adopted the Syrian Liturgical traditions in tis worship. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century it came in contact with Western Church through its missionaries,. Owing to the policy of the Portuguese missionaries in iatinizing the Liturgy and indigenous customs of the Apostolic Indian Church, a section of the Community broke away from the Portuguese ecclesiastical authorities and eventually got into communication with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Even since the division in the Church, attempts were being made to regain the original Catholic Communication, which could be crowned with success only in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1926 the Episcopal Synod held at Parumala, empowered Metropolitan Mar Ivanios to enter into negotiations with Rome to effect a reunion with the Catholic Church under expressed condition that the ancient and venerable traditions of the Malankara Church should be retained and kept intact. The Holy Father Pope Pius XI graciously accepted the conditions and welcomed the reunion.

Accordingly on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1930, Archbishop Mar Ivanois, Bishop Mar Thephilos , Rev. Fr. John Kuzhimepurth OIC, Deacon Alexander(Later Fr. Seraphion OIC) and Mr.Chacko Kililelath mad their profession of faith and were duly received in the Catholic Communication by His Excellency Rt. Rev. Dr. Maria Benziger, Bishop of Quilon, specially deputed by the Holy See. By the Apostolic constitution, “Christo Pastorum Principi” (11<sup>th</sup> June 1932) the Holy Father Pope Pius XI established the Syro-Malankara Catholic Hierarchy comprising the Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum and the Eparchy of Tiruvalla. The Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum was inaugurated on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1933 and His grace Mar Ivanios enthroned as its first Archbishop. The Eparchy of Tiruvalla was inaugurated on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1933 and Most Rev. Jacob Mar Thephilos took charge as its first Bishop.

Archbishop Mar Ivanios after a period of 22 years of organizing and administering the Malankara Catholic Church and passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1953. On 27<sup>th</sup> January 1955 Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios was enthroned as the Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum and the Head of the Malankara Catholic Church. During this period, large number of people from the non-Catholic Malankara Churches returned to the Church and many parishes, missions, convents, schools, hospitals, orphanages and other institutions were started in different places. His Excellency Most. Rev. Poulos Mar Phileoxinos, the Metropolitan of the Malabar independent Church, was received into the Syro Malankara Catholic Church on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1977. He was appointed Titular Bishop of Chayal.

The Malankara Catholic Church been steadily growing and spreading throughout the States in South in South India. For the Malankarites the Eparchy of Bathery was erected on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1978, bifurcating the Eparchy of Tiruvalla Most Rev. Cyril Mar Baselios was appointed the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Bathery.

A significant development in this period has been establishment of parishes for the members of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church in different parts of India and in the United States of America.

It was for the first time that a Pope visiting Kerala. His Holiness Pope John Paul II during his visit in Kerala visited also the St. Mary’s Cathedral, Pattom, Trivandrum, on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1986. The Holy Father in his speech in Trivandrum praised the founder of the Reunion Movement and expressed his high appreciation of the work and witness of the Syro Malankara Church.

After 41 years of devoted service, Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios the Head of the Malankara Catholic Church passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1994. His grace Most Rev. Cyril Mar Baselios, the Bishop of the Eparchy of Bathery was appointed Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum and the Head if the Malankara Catholic Church. Most Rev. Gee Varghese Mar Divannasios was appointed as the second Bishop of Bathery.

Bifurcating the Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum, the Eparchy of Marthandom was erected on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1996 and Most Rev. Lwarence Mar Ephraem was appointed as its first Bishop.

Bifurcating the Eparchy of Thiruvalla the Eparchy of Moovattupuzha was erected on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003 and Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos was appointed as its first Bishop. His Excellency Most Rev. Issac Mar Cleemis was appointed the Bishop of Thiruvalla on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II appreciated Syro Malankara Catholic Church as one of the fastest growing churches in the world.

**Syro-Malankara Exarchate**

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