

## A Brief History of Western Orthodoxy

*Fr. David Abramtsov wrote this article in the 1960s, at which time it appeared in The Word magazine (April 1962). Much of the information concerning the Western Rite in the Antiochian Archdiocese is now out of date and the Orthodox Church of France, now the Orthodox Catholic Church of France, is much reduced and no longer canonical. This article does, however, provide much helpful background information.*

### Introduction

From the earliest beginnings of the Christian Church there were divergences in the manner in which the Eucharist was celebrated in the various regional Churches. Within these Churches with their mixed populations, differing historic development, local traditions, diverse racial temperament, and the like, it was inevitable that a large number of varying types of Eucharistic prayers or anaphoras should emerge. The unity of the Church of Christ and the unity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice did not require a uniformity in the celebration of that Sacrifice. The liturgical liberty, the variations and local differences were not only tolerated but were being constantly elaborated upon. What is more important, they manifested the Catholic nature of the Church.

In the Western parts of the Church, in what today are parts of North Africa, Western and North-western Europe, and Great Britain, there also were differences in custom and rite from place to place. Broadly speaking, however, the liturgical usages of the West are described by liturgists as having belonged to two liturgical families or types: the Gallican and the Roman. There is still some question of how to fit the rites of Milan and Africa into this neat division. The so-called Gallican rite was spread through Gaul, Spain, probably Celtic Ireland and England, and Northern Italy, with variations in different locales, *e.g.*, the Mozarabic rite of Spain. But the usages were enough in agreement in the basic structure that they are considered as having belonged to the same family or type. The Roman rite, the most important of the family of Italian rites, was restricted at first to Rome and its immediate vicinity. At the conclusion of the Fourth Century the Roman rite is said to have composed a sort of liturgical island in the sea of Gallican usages.

It must be kept in mind that the classification of the ways the Liturgy was celebrated in the early centuries as “rites” is quite modern. Christians of those days were not conscious of following this or that particular rite — they were simply celebrating the same Eucharist in different ways. Real distinctions between “rites” started to become apparent only in the politically disrupted and confused sixth – seventh centuries. But the “rites” continued to remain fluid and were counter-influenced by one another. By the eighth century a process known as the “Western synthesis” was well under way. The use of various Roman *Sacramentaries* spread in Southern Gaul. By the time of Charlemagne half the churches of Gaul were using the Roman rite with Frankish adaptations, and material from the Roman rite was being incorporated into the Gallican rite used in the remaining churches. With the end of the Sixth Century Roman missionaries began the liturgical “Romanization” of England — unmercifully driving the Celtic

usages out. Anglo-Saxon missionaries from England, now using the Roman rite, evangelized the Germanic territories in the eighth century and the Scandinavian areas in the Ninth. In the eighth century the rite of the Gauls was surrounded by the rite of the Romans. Only the Iberian Mozarabic rite kept Gaul from becoming an island in the midst of the Roman see. By the ninth century, assisted by the edicts of Charlemagne — a zealot for Roman ways and uniformity, the end of the Gallican rite came. [ed. note: Actually, Charlemagne merely continued the policy instituted under Pippin 50 years earlier, to introduce the Roman usages.] So effective was its uprooting in the Carolingian Empire that barely a handful of manuscripts have survived from those days. In the Spanish Peninsula the Mozarabic rite (also of the Gallican type) remained in general use until the end of the Eleventh Century and lingered on in some of the Moorish provinces until these were reconquered three or four hundred years later. In highly “Romanized” form it is still used in a few churches in Spain today.

Despite the death of the Gallican rite as such, certain Gallican prayers and usages crept back into the liturgical books after the death of Charlemagne and these Gallican elements came to be fused with the Roman rite. The Roman Missal with the Gallican customs and usages now spread from Gaul into surrounding areas, e.g., England (and Italy in the Tenth Century), and was adopted at Rome itself in the Eleventh Century, displacing the old Sacramentaries such as the Gregorian reformed Sacramentary of about 595 A.D. The process of the “Western synthesis” had taken about three hundred years but the Missals that evolved were to serve the Western Church substantially in their same form down to the present. The basic structure remaining the same in the West after this, there continued to be considerable variation in details, in the prayers of the proper, etc., and in many local usages and derived rites, e.g., the Sarum usage. Serious attempts to impose uniformity in the West by legislation came only in the Counter Reformation period in the Sixteenth Century and was assisted by the invention of printing. Even today, however, considerable differences in the details of the Roman rite can be noticed in the provincial churches of Europe. It is simply a myth that liturgical diversity is a thing alien to the “orderly” Western mind. In this respect the Eastern mind tends to be far more “orderly.”

By the time of the Great Schism of 1054, with the separation of the Roman Patriarchate and the Churches of the West from Catholic unity, the Orthodox Catholic Church became almost completely an “Eastern” Church territorially as well as in regards to rite. In the West the rite emanating from Rome gradually forced out the other rites, though in turn absorbing elements of the rites it superseded. In the East, too, the various Autocephalous Churches gradually became more or less “Byzantinized” by adopting the rite of Constantinople. Unlike the West, where the Roman rite seems to have been adopted voluntarily (Charlemagne and several local synods sought conformity within local Churches and were not imposing the rite of one Church on another), in the East, under the protection of the Byzantine Empire, the Constantinopolitan Church seems to have exerted much more centralistic influence towards uniformity. In the West certain token vestiges of ancient non-Roman rites still survive (at Milan and in Spain) and, despite the post-Tridentine reforms, all local customs preserving various monastic and diocesan usages. In the East no non-Byzantine rite has survived except those outside the Church.

Be that as it may, Constantinople was the New Rome. Its Patriarch was second in place of honor after the Roman Pope and first among equals after Rome’s defection. The prestige of the

Patriarchate was great. The bishops of lesser cities imitated the grand ritual and ceremony of the capital's churches, and missionaries from Byzantium to the Slavs carried the same rite northward in translation. In later centuries the Russian Orthodox missionaries took the Byzantine rite wherever they spread the Christian message. Churchmen, such as the Twelfth Century canonist Theodore Balsamon, did their best to demonstrate the pre-eminence of the rite of Constantinople over other rites and usages. By 1193 the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the last Regional Church to keep its own rite, gave way to Byzantinization and the process was complete for the Orthodox Church, which now possessed one more or less uniform use. The ancient Liturgies of Antioch, Alexandria, and other places were retained only by the separated Eastern Churches who had seceded from Orthodoxy in the early centuries of theological controversy. In the course of time these, too, underwent a certain measure of Byzantinization.

With the passage of the centuries it was almost inevitable that many of the Orthodox faithful, and even some of the clergy, came to equate Orthodoxy with the Byzantine rite. The ancient Catholic diversity of rites was forgotten. Because of the separation in time and space of Eastern and Western Christians, with the ensuing ignorance of each other's practices, few Orthodox Christians found it possible to admire and appreciate the varying customs and liturgical usages of ecclesiastical bodies separated from them through schism and heresy. The very rites used by heretics were looked upon as heretical despite their origins in the primitive past of Catholic unity. There were even those Orthodox who developed a sort of "*Ritualatry*." History records the origins of the Old Believers Raskol (schism) in the Russian Church as being based to a great extent on a protest against any change in ritual. The "Old Ritualist" mentality can still be detected in modernday schisms over such matters as calendar-style changes. Those who have succumbed to the heresy of liturgical papalism are sometimes found in high places.

Although most Orthodox people may have forgotten the ancient idea of the catholic diversity of rites, there occasionally were those who saw light in the darkness. In the mid-Seventeenth Century when Patriarch Nikon of Moscow had recourse to Patriarch Paisius of Constantinople with a long list of questions on various aspects of ritual, he received, in 1655, a remarkable answer composed by Meletios Syrigos of the same Patriarchate. Meletios stated quite clearly that it was only in matters of Faith, in the things of principle that uniformity was required. In the order of Divine Service and in the external ritual, diversity of form not only was fully tolerable but historically inescapable. The Divine Service, said Meletios, was composed and developed gradually, — it was not created at once. Much in the offices of the Church depended upon the "discretion of the pastor." He continued: "One must not think that our Orthodox Faith is perverted if anyone possesses an order of service differing somewhat in unessential matters but not in the articles of Faith, if only agreement with the Catholic Church is preserved in that which is chief and important..." Unfortunately for Orthodoxy, Patriarch Nikon did not heed this advice.

It was another prelate of the see of Moscow, Metropolitan Platon Levshin, who tried to rectify Nikon's error about one hundred and fifty years later. In 1800 the Russian Church officially recognized the principle that variations in rites are permissible providing there is complete unity of doctrine. In that year Metropolitan Platon arrived at an agreement with a group of schismatic Old Ritualists and the so-called *Edinoverie* came into being. The *Edinoverie* (literally, united-faith or one-belief) was called a conditional unity. It was known as such because

of the agreement reached whereby certain of the schismatic Old Ritualists entered into communion with the Church and received a lawful priesthood from the Church on the condition that they were permitted to retain the old “uncorrected” liturgical books and rites. Since they were received into ecclesiastical unity, the Old Ritualists did not form a new Church but became part of the Orthodox Church. But since their unity was conditional they kept their peculiar practices which distinguished them from the other Orthodox. The *Edinoverie* exists to this day in Soviet Russia.

In the mid-Nineteenth Century when the Russian Church and the Greek Church through Metropolitan Gregory of Chios had conversations with representative’s of the Armenian Church, it was understood that if unity was achieved between the Orthodox and the Armenian Churches, the latter body would retain its peculiarity of rite. This has always been true of Orthodox discussions of unity with the other separated Eastern Churches. The Orthodox Churchmen realized that the separated Christians retained rites as old or older than even the Byzantine rite.

### **Early Western Attempts at Unity**

Almost simultaneously, in the second decade of the Eighteenth Century there were two proposals of unity with the Orthodox Church made by two different Western groups of Christians. In both cases the proposals came from minority, schismatic groups who were in disagreement with either the political or the ecclesiastical policies of their times. One proposal of unity came from a group of Jansenist professors of the Sorbonne in Paris. This was directed to the Church of Russia and was inspired by the visit of Peter the Great to Paris in 1717. The Jansenists had rebelled against Pope Clement XI and his promulgation of the Bull *Unigenitus* in 1713. The memorandum of the Sorbonne Doctors to the Russian Church was rather hurriedly drawn up and touched upon differences between themselves and the Orthodox rather superficially. Their proposal was a typical Roman Uniate scheme and it allowed not only for the possibility of differences in rite but in doctrine as well. The Jansenist proposal was answered by three leading Russian hierarchs who, while praising the Sorbonne Doctors for striving towards Church unity, evaded the issue by saying that they could not speak with authority on the subject without the concurrence of the Eastern Patriarchs. The Russians probably felt the distance was too great between their respective positions.

About the same time another, more serious, proposal of unity with the Orthodox Church came from the Non-Juring bishops of the Church of England. The Non-jurors were schismatic clergy who had, in 1689, refused the oath of allegiance to William III and Mary, the sovereigns who had overthrown James II in 1688. Among the Non-jurors were to be found the best British liturgists and Greek scholars of the day. When Metropolitan Arsenius of the Alexandrine Patriarchate visited England in 1712 he found many people interested in Orthodoxy and he received a number of them into the Church. During his visit he was contacted by the Non-jurors who then conceived the idea of uniting their group to the Orthodox Church. In the discussions that ensued with the Eastern Patriarchs, the Non-jurors asked not only to be allowed Western rites, specifically the 1549 Prayer Book of Edward VI with revisions, but sought doctrinal concessions as well. The Orthodox Patriarchs were prepared, with some misgivings at first, to examine the proposed English rite and to approve it if they found it conformed with the

Orthodox “unspotted Faith.” They wrote in 1718 to the “British Catholics”: “When, therefore, we have considered it [*the English liturgy*], if it needs correction, we will correct it, and if possible will give it the sanction of a genuine form.” In doctrinal matters, however, the Patriarchs would not yield an inch and insisted that there must be complete dogmatic agreement with the Orthodox Church before unity could be achieved. In answer to a second memorandum from the Non-Jurors the Patriarchs wrote, that in regard to “custom and ecclesiastical order, and for the form and discipline of administering the Sacraments, they will easily be settled when once unity is affected. For it is evident from ecclesiastical history that there both have been and now are different customs and regulations in different places and Churches, and yet the Unity of Faith and Doctrine is preserved the same.”

The efforts at unity with the Orthodox Church on the part of the Non-jurors did not succeed because the British were unwilling to accept the total Orthodox Faith and the Orthodox would deal with them on no other terms. The Patriarchs accepted the principle of Western Orthodoxy but the Anglicans were not enough progressed in their Catholicity to become the seed of Western Orthodoxy. Over a century and one half was to pass before the Orthodox Church was to be again presented the question of the restoration of Western Orthodoxy.

### **Khomiakov – Memorialist Scheme**

In the mid-Nineteenth Century most of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches were too engrossed in their local problems to give much thought, if any, to the theoretical possibility of the re-establishment of Orthodoxy in the West. The Balkan countries and Churches were striving for their independence from the Sublime Porte and Phanariot Patriarchate. The latter was occupied with financial embarrassments, divorce proceedings, as well as with the problem of retaining its freedom-loving but taxable Balkan subjects. The other Eastern Patriarchates were struggling for survival against the encroachments of Turks, Jesuits, and Presbyterians. It was only Russian churchmen who had the inclination and the leisure to meditate upon the extension of the Church.

The Russian philosopher and theologian Alexis Khomiakov was particularly interested in the question of the return of the West to Orthodoxy. He corresponded on the subject of Christian unity with various Western churchmen and encouraged the Anglican Deacon William Palmer to set a movement afoot in England towards Orthodoxy. The famous Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov) agreed with Khomiakov that an Orthodox Church in England gathered from among the Anglicans would have to be in full accord with the rest of the Church in dogma but that “every rite not implying a direct negation of a dogma would be allowed. . .”

In 1851 a considerable number of High Church Anglicans became disgruntled over the Gorham decision rendered by the English Privy Council which in effect stated that Baptismal Regeneration was an open question in the Established Church of England. Some of these Anglicans turned their sights towards the Orthodox Church and circulated a Memorial addressed to the Russian Holy Synod stating their desire for unity. To this Memorial they sought signatures of like-minded Anglicans. The “Memorialists” hoped for the establishment of an autonomous Church in communion with the Orthodox Church and using a Western rite based on the reasoning that it would be an inducement for others, who might balk at an Eastern rite, to join the

movement. They were quite willing to submit their forms of prayer for correction and approval in order to insure their Orthodoxy.

Nothing came of either the Khomiakov-Palmer scheme or the Memorialist movement. The Russian Synod was never officially approached about the latter and only learned of it unofficially through Fr. Eugene Popoff the Chaplain of the Russian Imperial Embassy in London. The Holy Synod regarded the Memorialist scheme with favor but never had the opportunity to act upon it. Khomiakov, too, was extremely interested in the scheme and rebuked Palmer for his lack of its support. Palmer, however, soon after this (1855) joined the Roman Church as did the leaders in the Memorialist scheme.

At this time Orthodoxy was comparatively little known and but imperfectly understood by the majority of the British. Even Palmer, one of the few students of things Orthodox in the England of his day, had no clear conception of Orthodoxy and often tried to make his views of Orthodoxy fit with Roman theories. For Anglicans it was difficult enough to break with the Established Church let alone turn their eyes Eastward. It seemed more natural to look to Rome from whence, Anglicanism had come. Moreover, the Roman Catholics were close at hand with a hierarchy, clergy, and parish churches. They could easily mend the soul of a disillusioned Anglican when he became convinced of the innate Protestantism of the Established Church. Orthodoxy was represented in England only by two or three priests ministering to small foreign colonies.

### **Dr. J.J. Overbeck**

In the 1860's of England an event took place which was ultimately to stir the imagination of some and disturb the serenity of others for several decades. This was the conversion to Orthodoxy of Dr. Joseph J. Overbeck. Unlike previous converts to the Church, Overbeck did not wish to abandon his Western heritage and ethos and simply became an *Eastern* Orthodox Catholic. He conceived the idea of the re-establishment of the Western Catholic Church in communion with the Church of the East: a Western Church at one with the Orthodox Church doctrinally but repossessing its ancient heritage of Western rites and customs.

A Westphalian by birth, Overbeck was educated for a career in the Roman Church. He was, for a time, a docent in the Theological Faculty at Bonn. Belonging to the liberal party within the Roman Church, Overbeck, with many other Germans, was dissatisfied with the growing ultramontanism of Rome. He left the priesthood and became a Lutheran. In the early 1860's he emigrated to England where he made his home until his death over a half-century later. Not finding spiritual sustenance in Protestantism, Overbeck studied Orthodoxy and became convinced that the Orthodox Church was the ancient Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Creed. He came to believe that every other Church of Christendom was schismatically and heretically severed from the Church founded by Christ — only the Orthodox Church was the continuation of the Church of Christ.

Even before his reception into the Church by Fr. Popoff of London in 1865, Dr. Overbeck began to publish books in German and English expounding his views and setting forth his

scheme for the restoration of Western Orthodoxy. He was assured by the highest ecclesiastical authorities that he could work for this goal and he received the cooperation of Fr. Popoff and others. Overbeck was convinced that it was the Eastern Church's duty to regenerate the ancient Catholic Church of the West. However, it was "suicidal" to think that the West could be Orientalized, i. e., that Western people could become Eastern in their customs, traditions, and rites while in the process of returning to the primitive Catholic Faith. The Church of SS. Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, and others of the Western Saints had to be restored but it was only the Orthodox Church which could admit such a body into communion, reconcile and absolve it of the sin of schism, and help it in the labor of restoration.

In Overbeck's view the re-established Western Church had to be built up from individual conversions. The Vatican as well as the Establishment had to be by-passed. For the edification of possible converts from Rome, Overbeck set out a program which they would be expected to accept. All Papal novelties would be rejected, among them the doctrine of indulgences and the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, as well as enforced celibacy and Purgatory, though an intermediate state after death would certainly be held. Icons would replace statues, Baptism-by triple immersion, Chrismation to follow Baptism and be administered by the priest; communion of the laity under both kinds; leavened bread to be used in the Eucharist. Only the Benedictine monastic order to be recognized since it existed previous to the schism; no Roman Catholic saints canonized after 1054 would be recognized; Divine Service to be in the vernacular; and infants and children not denied Communion. The Sacrament of Holy Unction would not be administered only to the dying; the Mass would be celebrated on an Antimins; the Sign of the Cross as made by the Eastern Church would be adopted for the Western Christian also since this was the ancient manner of making it; the sacerdotal vestments would be of the primitive Western shape; the Gregorian Chant would be used in preference to "opera-music," and the Canonical Hours, after purification from "Romish stain," would be required to be said daily in full only by the Regular Clergy (Monks) and "*ritu paschali*" by the Secular clergy. The Mass would have the addition of an epiclesis from the Mozarabic rite.

As for Anglicanism, Overbeck saw no possibility of unity with it at all. The Orthodox Church required as *conditio sine qua non*, full agreement with the Orthodox Faith from any body seeking unity with her. The Established Church of England not only did not profess the Orthodox Faith, it authoritatively tolerated "all shades of belief from a mitigated Unitarianism to a slightly disguised Roman Catholicism." Overbeck was of the opinion, however, that there were a class of Anglo-Catholics or Ritualists whose zeal for unity, if properly directed, could result in a gain for the Church. This group of younger Anglicans had to accept without reservation all the dogmas and canons of the Orthodox Church. They would have to separate formally from and cease communion with heretics and apply to the Church to be reconciled and received into communion. They would retain, he said, a Western Liturgy, not the Communion Service of the Prayer Book, but a revised Roman or Sarum Mass along with the Canonical Hours, rites, ceremonies, and vestments. In departing from Anglicanism, they would actually be returning to the old English Church of St. Alban, the Venerable Bede, and St. Edmund. The contemporary Church of England was not a lawful continuation of the old Church, for the present body taught all sorts of heresies such as the "Real Absence," denied Baptismal Regeneration, and rejected the

Sacramental character of Holy Orders. The Anglican Church had become hopelessly Protestant at the Reformation and it was simply a delusion to think it could “un-protestantise” itself.

Immediately upon his conversion, Overbeck set to work convincing his friends of the feasibility of his ideas; soon there was a small group who shared his views. To give wider circulation to his ideas, Overbeck began to publish *The Orthodox Catholic Review* in 1867, and circulated a petition to the Russian Holy Synod to which he sought signatures. He felt that the Russian Church, as being more in the stream of European culture and being more “active and stirring” than her sister Churches, would be the logical part of the Church to approach. There was considerable Russophobia in the England of the 1860’s, however, and on occasion Overbeck’s work was accused as a Russian Propaganda by “enraged Anglican Intercommunionists.”

By September 1869, after securing 122 signatures to his petition from Anglicans and Roman Catholics, Dr. Overbeck forwarded it to the Holy Governing Synod at St. Petersburg. The Synod immediately formed a committee to study the question, appointing Overbeck ‘a member. At Christmas of that same year, he was called to the Russian capital to sit with the Synodal Committee. The latter body presented a favorable report to the Synod which in turn gave its approval to the principle of Western Orthodoxy and showed generally its avid interest in the success of Overbeck’s scheme. The Synod then proceeded to the details and asked Dr. Overbeck to present his revision – of the Roman Mass for its approbation. The following Christmas Overbeck was again in St. Petersburg to discuss the liturgical draft in committee. Subsequently, the final text of the Mass was approved by the Synod – the Latin text being considered the authentic basis for all translations. For the time being, Overbeck proposed that the Western Church use the Eastern forms for the administration of the Sacraments and for the lesser offices, until the Western forms could be revised.

The Mass as finally approved adhered closely to the *Ordo Missae* of the Roman Missal. Slight changes were made in the text for doctrinal reasons, the epiclesis was interpolated into the prayer: “*Supplices te rogamus,*” and the elevation of the elements after the Words of Institution was abolished because it was introduced after the schism in line with Roman Catholic belief that the transubstantiation took place at that moment in the Mass. Immediately after the “*Gloria in excelsis*” the Trisagion was added in memory of the “union with the Orthodox Church.” This was to be said twice in Greek and once in the vernacular.

Although the Russian Synod approved the principle, of Western Orthodoxy, it was hesitant, for some reason, to implement the scheme without the approval of the Eastern Patriarchs. It therefore took the steps necessary to get the views of the Patriarchs. Meanwhile, in 1870-71, the Old Catholic revolt against the Papacy began in Germany. Many Orthodox churchmen, among them Dr. Overbeck, saw in the Old Catholic movement the start of the restoration of Western Orthodoxy. Many of the Old Catholic leaders were known to Overbeck from his school and university days and he immediately communicated with them on the matter of unity and attended their congresses, as well as the Bonn Reunion Conferences sponsored by the Old Catholics. Nothing came of the Orthodox – Old Catholic rapprochement however. The Old Catholics found a closer rapport with the Anglicans than with the Orthodox and Dr. Overbeck lost hope of seeing them as the founders of Western Orthodoxy.

After the interlude with the Old Catholics, Overbeck resumed his negotiations with Orthodox Church leaders. The approval of the Eastern Patriarchs had not been forthcoming. The matter had bogged down somewhere, as could have been expected with the frequent changes of Patriarchs at Constantinople and the disturbed situation of the Balkans. The Bulgarian Question had come to a head in 1870-72 and war clouds were gathering for the Russo-Turkish War which commenced in 1877. Also, Constantinople had apparently received protests against Overbeck from Britain. The British objected to his “proselytism” and the Patriarch very obligingly issued a prohibition against Orthodox “proselytism” in Great Britain, which Overbeck ignored.

Late in 1876 Overbeck addressed an appeal to the Patriarchs and Synods of the Church asking them to approve his scheme and to permit him to proceed in his work. Receiving no reply from the East, Overbeck went to Constantinople in person in August 1879 and consulted with Patriarch Joachim III who promised that his Synod would discuss the matter. He asked for the Western ritual to be submitted for approbation. A committee appointed at the Phanar to examine the scheme reported favorably and in 1882 the Greek Patriarch approved the scheme provisionally, upon the condition that the other Churches concur. A protest from the Synod of the Church of Greece halted the matter and it was subsequently dropped by the Patriarchate.

It is difficult to understand why Overbeck’s plan to restore Western Orthodoxy failed of acquiring sufficient Orthodox support. There is, of course, the fact that Overbeck had stirred up a hornet’s nest among the Anglicans who resented his attempt to establish a “new schismatic Church” in order to proselytise “within the jurisdiction, of the Anglican Episcopate.” The Anglican Intercommunionists and Branch-theorists were the most vociferous in their denunciations of Overbeck. He wrote: “We are reviled and insulted; and even in the meeting of Heterodox Bishops voices are heard against the establishment of our ‘schismatic’ (!!!) Church.” Despite the numerical insignificance of his group, the Anglicans busied themselves with them as if they were a great army. Overbeck asked, did the English Church feel itself so weak that it feared a handful of people who had neither riches nor influence? Even today, one hundred years later, certain Anglicans shudder at the thought of Overbeck and his scheme. His movement, if successful, could have diverted part, if not all, of the steady Anglican Romeward stream to Orthodoxy and could, perhaps, have taken numerous other adherents of the Establishment along. However, the British had a large voice in the policies, internal as well as external, of the new Greece and English influence bolstered the decaying Ottoman Empire. In order to wreck Overbeck’s scheme, the Anglicans could have exerted pressure upon the Greeks through the secular power. Perhaps, on the other hand, timid Greek churchmen were frightened by Overbeck’s grandiose scheme or they may have simply regarded it as utopian. The failure of Overbeck’s movement may have been the result of a combination of things, as well as simply inertia on the part of the Greek ecclesiastics.

Whatever the reasons for Overbeck’s failure, his work and writings at least awoke some Orthodox churchmen to a realization that Orthodoxy had a broader mission than some had thought. Thank God for the Russians, Overbeck wrote, — otherwise Orthodoxy would be a “Tribal Church” like Judaism. Overbeck stimulated Orthodox scholars, particularly the Russians, to study Western traditions. Numerous monographs on Western liturgical usages appeared in the

second half of the Nineteenth Century and at the beginning of the present century. The Old Catholic and Anglican theological positions were closely scrutinized. Through Overbeck many separated Christians learned of the existence of the Church. His numerous writings and his magazine were widely read and the latter published many valuable works for the first time in English translation. Dr. Joseph J. Overbeck's death in 1905, his dream unfulfilled, was barely noticed.

### **Orthodoxy and Old Catholic Bishops**

After the Old Catholic revolt of the early 1870's there continued to be much interest shown in the Old Catholics by some of the Orthodox churchmen. A Russian layman, General Alexander Kireev, developed an all-consuming passion for the Old Catholics. He assisted them in various ways, was their defender from Roman Catholics and their spokesman before the Orthodox. Kireev, a theologian, did not have the same regard for the Anglicans and, though he would have liked to see the Church come to an understanding with them, he felt this was impossible until the Anglican Church became doctrinally "homogeneous." As far as Kireev was concerned the Old Catholics were the "Catholic Orthodox Church" in the West. They were rebuilding the ancient Orthodox Church on Latin ruins and were as Orthodox as St. Cyprian, St. Leo the Great and Blessed Augustine.

Not all Orthodox churchmen were as generous in their appraisal of Old Catholicism as Kireev. He was constantly battling in the press with those who held differing viewpoints on the Old Catholics. There were those in the Church who felt that all parts of the Church ought to possess not only the same doctrines but the same external manner of expressing those doctrines, *i.e.*, follow the same rite. Like Fr. Alexis Maltsev, the translator of Orthodox liturgical books into German, they felt that it was unlawful and even criminal to desire to be Orthodox and yet follow a Western rite. Kireev's view, however, was different: "Unity of doctrine is a *conditio sine qua non* of the Unity of the Church, and consequently also of intercommunion *in sacris*. Wherever there is contradictory dogmatic teaching, there also must be separate Churches, which cannot be united. Churches may be altogether self-governed, may have different rites, different liturgies, independent hierarchies, and yet form but one Catholic Church, providing that as to dogma they are the same." Kireev corresponded with a small Old Catholic body in America headed by Joseph Rene Vilatte, later to become a notorious *episcopus vagans*. In the process of searching for episcopal orders Vilatte came into contact with Bishop Vladimir (Sokolovsky) of the Orthodox diocese of the Aleutian Islands, and Alaska (1888-91). Although having Swiss Old Catholic ordination, Vilatte was serving some Belgians in the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Fond du Lac (Wisconsin). He apparently used the Swiss Liturgy in French. In 1890 or early 1891 Vilatte seems to have been accepted provisionally into the Orthodox Church by Bishop Vladimir and considered an "Orthodox Old Catholic." The Old Catholics of Wisconsin, who had by this time severed their relations with the Protestant Episcopal Church, were visited in the Spring of 1892 by Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov), the successor of Bishop Vladimir in America. Some correspondence was carried on between this group and members of the Russian Synod in St. Petersburg but in the end nothing came either of it or of the group's acceptance by Bishop Vladimir. Kireev approved of the group's avoidance of intercommunion with the Protestant

Episcopalians but disparaged their lack of relations with the European Old Catholics. Vilatte, himself, managed to be consecrated in May, 1892 by Jacobite Bishops in Ceylon, India.

When, about 1890, a small movement towards Orthodoxy began in Prague among the Czechs, Kireev advised them to join the Old Catholics who were the Orthodox of the West. In 1898 Kireev published a Russian translation of the Czech Old Catholic Liturgy which he praised as Orthodox. The Czech Mass was basically Roman with certain additions from the Byzantine rite such as the prayer “O Heavenly King,” and the Trisagion, at the beginning of the Mass, a Little Ektenia at the Kyrie, an epiclesis after the Words of Institution, and a few other Byzantinisms. It was Kireev, too, who took up the cause of the Polish Mariavites, introducing them to the Old Catholics, and promoting their case in Russia where, through his efforts, their bishops received official state recognition. From the point of view of other Orthodox interested in extending the Church’s mission, among them Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) — later Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Kireev did more harm than good by diverting potential Western Orthodox groups into Old Catholicism.

Among other “Old Catholic” attempts at joining the Orthodox Church on the basis of a Western rite was the abortive endeavour of Bishop Arnold Harris Mathew, an Englishman with Old Catholic orders. After breaking with the Old Catholics of Utrecht and being placed under the greater excommunication by Rome for certain consecrations he performed which displeased the Vatican, Mathew tried to enter into some arrangement with the Orthodox Church. He turned, first, to the Holy Synod of the Russian Church where, after his background was investigated, he was refused. Undaunted, he then approached Metropolitan Gerrassimos (Messarah) of Beirut (of the Antiochian Patriarchate). The latter apparently received him into communion in 1911 on a provisional basis. [ed. note: in the document of reception issued by Metropolitan Gerassimos, there is no mention of a provisional or temporary or conditional basis for the reception. However, Mathew himself does not appear to have built further on this foundation.] That year Mathew began calling his small group the Western Orthodox Church and in 1912 he started publishing *The Torch*, a monthly magazine advocating “reunion” with the Orthodox Church and the restoration of the Orthodox Church of the West. The action of Gerassimos, however, was not subsequently implemented and the matter was dropped.

### **Orthodox Study of Western Rites**

Overbeck’s scheme, which was highly publicized in Russia and elsewhere, as well as the Old Catholic movement, caused many Orthodox liturgists to turn to a study of Western rites and Liturgies. Hoynatsky, an authority on the Uniates and their practices, did some scholarly papers on the Western rites. In an article in the *Works of the Kievan Academy* in 1869, entitled “Latin ecclesiastical hymnologists,” Hoynatsky pointed out that Latin hymnology and rite had been studied barely at all in Russia and that in view of Overbeck’s petition they must be examined. He was of the opinion that the restored Western Orthodox Church of the future must not overlook the beauty of certain Eastern Orthodox hymns and that, at the very least, such things as the Paschal Kanon of John Damascene or the Penitential Kanon of St. Andrew of Crete ought not to be disregarded by the Western Christians. There is nothing particularly Eastern in the sentiments these kanons express.

The Old Catholic liturgical books came in for study by such scholars as Vladimir Kerensky who, in his book on the principles of Old Catholicism, discussed their liturgical reforms from the Orthodox viewpoint. Kerensky found that for the most part the Old Catholic reforms could not but be praised. Most of the reforms, he felt, were an attempt to free Old Catholicism from the later accretions brought into the liturgical books by medieval Roman Catholics. He saw the reforms as an attempt to bring the Old Catholic usages closer to the Orthodox. Kerensky disagreed with Overbeck's later evaluation of the Old Catholics, saying that Overbeck frequently accused the Old Catholics of those things of which they were faultless.

Another liturgist, A. I. Bulgakov, on the other hand, after extensive work on the Old Catholic liturgical reforms came to the conclusion that many of the reforms took Old Catholicism towards Protestantism. Among such reforms he mentions the deletion of the names of Saints in the prayers of the German Mass — these, he said, were to be found in all the ancient rites of the West.

The Holy Synod of the Russian Church considered the question of relations with Western Christians so important it set up a permanent commission to deal with Old Catholic and Anglican matters. In 1904 this commission examined the American edition of the Book of Common Prayer (used in the Protestant Episcopal Church) at the request of the Holy Synod. The Synod had received an inquiry from Bishop Tikhon as to whether the Book of Common Prayer could be used by a formerly Protestant Episcopal parish which became Orthodox. What, asked Tikhon, in the BCP needed revision and correction to make it conform to Orthodox standards. The Synodal Commission very carefully studied the BCP and issued its report to the Synod. The commission found much that was objectionable in the BCP not by what the book said but in what it did not say. The BCP was composed, the commission reported, in such a fashion as to allow holders of entirely opposite theological positions to use it with a clear conscience. The book was found to, be too colorless and found that if it were to be used by newly-converted Orthodox Catholics much would have to be done to it in the way of insertion of essential Orthodox ideas and beliefs into the texts of the prayers and offices, e.g., prayers for the intercession of the Theotokos and Saints, prayers for the dead in the Burial Office, etc. Also the missing offices for the administration of Penance, Chrismation, and Unction would have to be composed. The Synodal Commission was more lenient with the BCP than many advanced Anglo-Catholics are themselves. The latter solve the problem of the latitudinarianism of the BCP by rejecting it entirely and using instead various English adaptations of the Roman Mass and offices.

A study of the liturgical books of the Church of England was undertaken by A. J. Rozhdestvensky who wrote numerous articles analyzing the British version of the BCP and comparing it to the Roman rite. Needless to say, he found that the British BCP had traversed a tortuous road from its mother Roman rite. Many of Rozhdestvensky's articles were reprinted in book form in 1908.

Most of the Orthodox students of the Western usages started with the Roman or other ancient rite to which they compared the various Old Catholic and Anglican reactions. Of the Roman Mass of the Fourth through the Seventh Centuries, the Russian liturgiologist A.

Katansky, in his study of the *Ancient National Liturgies of the West*, said that despite all its significant differences from the Eastern rites, Eastern Christians had no misgivings about participating in it when present in a Roman rite church. Orthodox leaders generally came to the realization that the external form of the worship of God had been variformed in the early centuries and could be so now, providing the external ritual expressed a purely Orthodox inner doctrinal content. Patriarch Anthimus of Constantinople, in his well-known encyclical of 1895, referred to this: "...the differences regarding the ritual of the sacred services and the hymns, or the sacred vestments, and the like, which matters, even though they still vary, as they did of old, do not in the least injure the substance and unity of the faith..."

### **Western Orthodoxy in Poland**

Following World War I the map of Eastern and Central Europe was largely redrawn following the principle of the self-determination of nations. The intense nationalism of the period also had its effect upon ecclesiastical life with the resultant secession of nationalist anti-papal churchmen from the Roman Church. The "Los von Rom" movements demanded certain reforms in the government of the local Church, participation of laity in administration, use of the vernacular in the services, abolition of clerical celibacy, and the like. Such a movement in Czechoslovakia at the beginning appeared to be like another Old Catholic movement. Very soon, however, two tendencies appeared. There was the majority radical-rationalist faction and a minority conservative, pro-Orthodox group. The latter group, headed by the Serb-consecrated Bishop Gorazd Pavlik joined the Orthodox Church while the larger body degenerated into Unitarianism. In the short interim period before having its Church life stabilized the pro-Orthodox party as, well as the radically orientated faction used the Roman rite in the vernacular. After 1921 the Orthodox group adopted the Byzantine rite which, with the strong Cyrillo-Methodian tradition among the Czechs was, apparently, not difficult to do. The larger body continued using the Roman rite but with the parting of the ways of the two groups in 1924 any question of a Western rite Orthodoxy in the new Republic of Czechoslovakia could no longer be put.

The post-World War I period in Poland produced similar anti-papal and nationalist unrest within the Roman Church there. In the new Republic of Poland some of the anti-Roman revolts exhibited strong Polish "Messianism." Besides the Marlavites an Old Catholic Church of Poland (not in communion with Utrecht) was formed. These two bodies united after World War II. The Polish National Catholic Church of America also started a Mission in Poland after World War I. Its first parish was organized in Cracow in 1923 and by 1939 this body numbered about 50,000 members with seventy five parishes.

Still another secession from Rome took place in Poland in 1923 a group which desired the Mass in the vernacular. Headed by several former Roman Catholic priests the new body called itself the Polish Catholic National Church. The movement was met with powerful opposition from Roman Catholic authorities. It was forbidden them to erect any dioceses, build churches, or even publicly hold services. The organization was not legalized which meant that anyone married by its priests was not recognized as such. Disputes with the police and adherents of this Church frequently led to the spilling of blood. The movement originated in the industrial

areas around Cracow and Dabrowa and spread among the inhabitants of Western Galicia, and in the southern part of the Lublin Province.

The Polish Catholic National Church in 1926 sought admission to the Church and came into contact with Metropolitan Dionysius of Warsaw who headed the Orthodox Church in Poland at that time. Father Andrew Huszno, the leader of the Poles, was invited along with other members of the body to attend the session of the Holy Synod held in Warsaw in the Summer of 1926. Father Huszno's proposals for uniting with the Church while retaining the Western rite were accepted and the terms of unity were discussed. The Holy Synod then referred the question to Patriarch Basil III of Constantinople and to several outstanding Russian hierarchs outside of Russia for their opinions. Together with Huszno several thousand Poles, mostly from Dabrowa Gornicza in the Kielce Province, had presented the Synod with a petition to be received into the Church.

In August 1926 the "Conditions of Union of the Polish Catholic National Church with the Polish Orthodox" were made public. Officially the united Church was to be called the "Polish Orthodox National Church" but domestically and privately it could be called the "Polish Catholic National Church." The PKKN (initials of the body in Polish) was to accept all the dogmas held by the "undivided" Church before the schism of 1054; it accepted, the Nicene Creed and the whole body of Orthodox canon law; the Seven Sacraments; Communion under both kinds; it was to retain both public and private Confession; it retained the Western Liturgy in Polish with the necessary changes to make it conform with Orthodox doctrine; it kept the whole Western rite in Polish where it did not disagree with the Orthodox Faith; it retained clerical celibacy only for the episcopate; it was to receive Holy Chrism and the Antimins from the Metropolitan of Warsaw. It was agreed that Fr. Huszno would be consecrated head of the PKKN by the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church in Poland. Meanwhile he was appointed administrator of the Church. These "Conditions" were accepted for the Poles by the Priests Andrew Huszno and Jan Pietruszka who signed them with three lay delegates to a congress called for this purpose.

In a ceremony in Polish in the Eastern rite, Bishop Alexis of Grodno, on 8 August 1926, received Huszno and Pietruszka into Orthodoxy in Warsaw. Other clergy were received later. Thereafter Metropolitan Dionysius appointed Fr. Huszno pastor of the church of St. Michael the Archangel in Dabrowa Gornicza. The size of the Western rite Orthodox Church was never very large, having at most six parishes with five priests. The Western Orthodox seem to have suffered considerably during World War II emerging with only one church intact. The Western Orthodox parishes apparently enjoyed considerable self-government in administrative matters.

The Polish Western rite parishes followed the Roman rite with only small changes in the liturgical texts' where dogmatic differences with Orthodoxy were expressed, *e.g.*, the *Filioque* was removed from the Creed and references to works of supererogation were effaced. The Western calendar-style was followed, including the celebration of Pascha. The Septuagint was adopted for the Old Testament and for quotations therefrom in the liturgical texts. An epiclesis was added in the Mass *after* the prayer: *Supplices te rogamus*. The entire rite was in Polish. Generally speaking, the Western rite Orthodox were quite conservative in the changes made in

the rite, preserving it very carefully. However, they did not consider it as finally established and left it fluid in the texts, ritual, and customs.

### **Western Orthodoxy in France and Western Europe**

The roots of present-day Western Orthodoxy in France may be said to lie in the formation of the Confraternity of St. Photius in Paris in 1925 with the approval of Metropolitan Eulogius, at that time reigning prelate of the Russian Church in Western Europe under the Patriarchate of Moscow. Within the Confraternity was a Commission which undertook a study of the Gallican and Roman rites. Active in that Commission was Eugraph E. Kovalevsky, who was to play a prominent role in the Western Orthodox movement. In 1928 the newly organized French Orthodox parish in Paris petitioned Metropolitan Eulogius for permission to restore the Gallican Liturgy and use the new calendar. The matter was referred to the Patriarchate of Moscow with, apparently, no results of a positive nature. The Confraternity was convinced that the Western tradition had to be restored in France if French Orthodoxy was to be resuscitated.

About this time (1929-30) a figure appeared out of the “inter-church expanse” who, like St. Simeon, was not to pronounce his Nunc Dimittis, until he beheld Western Orthodoxy restored in France. This was Bishop Louis-Charles Winnaert. Born in Dunkirk, in Northern France, in 1880, Winnaert studied at the Roman Catholic University of Lille. Ordained to the priesthood in 1905, he was appointed vicar of Aniche. As a Roman priest Winnaert endeavoured to place the liturgical life at the center of parish life. Later at his parish at Viroflay, during the war years of 1914-18, he celebrated the services of Holy Week as they were actually introduced forty years later by Pius XII. During the war he became a Modernist and, after some vacillation, left the Church of Rome in 1918 with a small following. In 1922 he formed the Liberal Catholic Church and was consecrated bishop by the theosophist James Ingall Wedgwood. Winnaert, apparently, had no sympathy for Wedgwood’s theosophy and was merely seeking valid orders.

By 1930 Winnaert seems to have changed his Modernist position. In that important year for him he married at that time, he changed the name of his Church to the “Evangelical Catholic Church.” Belonging to his organization were small parishes in Paris, Rouen, Brussels, Holland, and Rome. In 1936 his followers totaled in the neighborhood of 1500 faithful. About 1930 Winnaert, seeking a firm dogmatic and canonical foundation for his Church, began to search for a rapprochement with the Orthodox Church. After being approached by Winnaert, Metropolitan Eulogius took an interest in him. A conference of professors from the St. Sergius Institute called by the Metropolitan to advise him was inconclusive in its results. The professors were generally indifferent to Winnaert’s quest for unity. In 1931 came the rupture of Metropolitan Eulogius from the Moscow Patriarchate. Winnaert kept up his contacts with Eulogius, now under Constantinople, and, following the advice of the Metropolitan, he presented a petition to the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1932. As usual there was no reply and Winnaert again wrote to the Phanar in 1934. In 1935 the convert Hieromonk Lev Gillet travelled to Istanbul to plead Winnaert’s case in person. Gillet held discussions with bishops empowered by Patriarch Photius who was ill, and Metropolitan Gennadius presented certain conditions orally for transmittal to Winnaert.

Although the Phanar accepted the idea of French Western Orthodoxy in principle, the discussions led to no practical result: Winnaert never received any official decree from Istanbul nor even any confirmation of the oral terms presented by Gennadius. Finally losing all patience with the Greeks, Winnaert, in March, 1936, approached the Russian Church through its representatives in Paris. He asked the Confraternity of St. Photius to undertake the task of uniting his group of the Church by interceding with the Moscow Patriarchate. Wholeheartedly supporting Winnaert's case, the Confraternity sent its report along with a Memorandum from Winnaert to Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky), Locum Tenens of the Patriarch and later himself Patriarch. The Confraternity emphasized the urgency of the matter owing to Winnaert's poor health. On 16 June 1936 the Moscow Patriarchate promulgated its now famous decree which restored Western Orthodoxy in France with its proper rite on the one hand, and fixed the conditions, for receiving Winnaert and his community on the other. The Ukase was no doubt the work of Metropolitan Sergius himself and incorporated his ecclesiological and canonical erudition. The late Patriarch considered the restoration of Western Orthodoxy in Western Europe one of the most important acts of his arch-pastoral life and it is truly remarkable that in the second half of the 1930's, when the Russian Church was at its lowest ebb physically and materially, its hierarchs displayed spiritual vigor enough to realize the consequences and importance of the restoration of Western Orthodoxy.

### **Western Rite Ukase**

The 1936 Ukase of the Moscow Patriarchate indicated that the Russian Church had the authority to deal with Winnaert only as one of the Local Autocephalous Churches and could not act on behalf of the whole Orthodox Church. In receiving Winnaert's group into Orthodoxy it was receiving it into the Russian Church. The new body therefore must conform to the laws of the Russian Church as well as to its teachings, for the new Orthodox would be teachers not only of their own flocks but of the Russian Orthodox faithful as well. There must not be essential differences in the administration of the Sacraments which might cause scruples among the old Orthodox faithful as to receiving such from the newly united clergy. The new community, while keeping its time-honored customs, must, at the same time, not be segregated from the Church which received it.

As for the Orders of the uniting group, the Ukase pointed out that since the Orthodox Church had never made a conciliar decision about Old Catholic orders all Old Catholic clerics who join the Russian Church must be received through Chrismation. Winnaert's consecration by Wedgwood, moreover, had to be ranked as a "vagrant" consecration and could not be accepted in any case. Despite the transgression of the canons by his marriage, the Ukase was lenient towards Winnaert and decreed that he could be received as a priest (having been ordained in the Roman Church) provided he dissolved his marriage and gave up any hopes of elevation to the episcopacy. The Ukase then decreed that Winnaert and his community could be received on the following terms:

1. Winnaert could be recognized only as a priest; his improper marriage to be dissolved. He could have no hopes for the episcopacy, but he could be appointed administrator or dean of the united group under diocesan supervision.

2. Clerics and laymen who had received Confirmation recognized by the Russian Church would be received through Penance; those without it would be received through Chrismation. All clerics in either case would be ordained unless their Orders derived from a source recognized by the Church.
3. The uniting community must accept the full Orthodox doctrine of faith without reservations.
4. In its liturgical cult the united community may preserve the Western rite but the liturgical texts must, at least gradually, be purified of all heterodox expressions and thoughts.
5. The kalendar of Saints and Feasts must be purged of all saints canonized in the West after the schism of 1054.
6. In the Mass of the united community only leavened bread must be used; the laity to receive Communion under both kinds by means of a spoon. An epiclesis is to be inserted after the Words of Institution, and the Liturgy itself to be celebrated upon an Antimins issued by the diocesan “in token of canonical unity with the Orthodox Diocese.”
7. Baptism must be by triple immersion and affusion used only clinically. Holy Chrism issued by the Bishop must be used in Chrismation which is administered by the priest. The Sacrament of Holy Unction is not to be reserved only for the dying but to be administered to the sick as well.
8. All seeking to be united must petition Metropolitan Eleutherius of Lithuania, in charge of the Russian parishes in Western Europe, who will receive and reconcile those approaching the Church, or delegate the duty to a priest able to use French.
9. The united parishes of the Western rite will be known as “Western Orthodox.”
10. Those desiring Holy Orders shall be examined as to canonical impediments and as to their Orthodoxy and knowledge of the ritual. At ordination they shall be vested in Western vestments but while participating in Eastern services they may wear vestments of either rite. The same shall apply to Eastern rite priests concelebrating in the Western rite.
11. All matters concerning the reception as well as the further care and direction of the Western Orthodox parishes were to be placed in the hands of Metropolitan Eleutherius, the Exarch.

## **Winnaert's Reception**

On 2 December 1936 Mgr. Louis-Charles Winnaert, who was gravely ill at the time, was personally received into the Church by one of the priests of the Patriarchal Church. By the early months of 1937 the groundwork for the reconciliation of Winnaert's entire body was laid. At the beginning of February, Fr. Winnaert was raised to the rank of Archimandrite by Metropolitan Eleutherius, having, meanwhile been professed a monk, taking the name Irenaeus. Later that month and at the beginning of March the Metropolitan reordained Fr. Lucien Chambault and other clergy of Winnaert's group. On 3 March 1937 Winnaert died after seeing his cherished goal accomplished. Soon after this Eugraph Kovalevsky was ordained for Western rite work — the first instance of an Eastern rite layman being ordained for the Western rite. His first Mass as well as the first Western Orthodox Mass to be celebrated in France, presided over by Metropolitan Eleutherius, was. sung on the day of the burial of Archimandrite Irenaeus Winnaert.

From its very birth, French Western Orthodoxy had to traverse a road filled with both internal and external obstacles. These began with the death of Fr. Winnaert and continued until the end of the German occupation of France in World War II, which stopped the organic development of French Orthodoxy. The history of the growing pains of French Orthodoxy is mixed up in all the difficulties of the Orthodox Church as such in Europe, *e.g.*, the various schisms and jurisdictional disputes among the Russians. But Western Orthodoxy has had its own peculiar problems, none the least of which concerned the matter of exactly what form of the rite to use. The ritual which had been evolved by Winnaert reflected the peregrinations of his community. In order to avoid any delays, Metropolitan Sergius had allowed the use of this rite provisionally, providing it satisfied the minimum desiderata of Orthodox dogmatic theology. But he did stipulate that further work be carried out in reforming the rite in the spirit of the ancient liturgical traditions.

## **Benedictine Order Restored**

During the first few War years, Fr. Lucien Chambault, pastor of the Western Orthodox parish of the Ascension (on rue d'Allerary), and the only Western Orthodox priest in Paris, came into close contacts with monks of the Eastern rite. Subsequently he received the calling to embrace the monastic life. Together with another Western rite monk, Fr. Chambault decided to restore Western Orthodox monasticism and to adopt the ancient rule of St. Benedict. Purging the monastic Offices of all later stratifications and working with the friendly aid and advice of several learned Roman Catholic Benedictines, Fr. Chambault translated all the offices necessary for daily recital in choir. It was possible, thus, to establish a communal life. Along with this, the ritual for the reception and profession of monks in accordance with the Benedictine Rule was established after considerable research. In a short time, the nucleus of a monastic community was formed with three monks of the Western rite. Later, others joined the community. Fr. Chambault took the name Denis at his profession, after St. Denis (Dionysius) the first Bishop of Paris. The new Benedictine community continued its close ties with Eastern rite monks, several of whom shared its community life.

## **Founding of the Parish of St. Irenaeus**

June 1944 marked the opening of a second Western Orthodox parish in Paris. This was the church of St. Irenaeus and its pastor was Fr. Eugraph Kovalevsky. From its beginning the parish used the Liturgy according to the reconstructed Gallican rite. The restoration of the Gallican Mass leaned, in great part on the work of Mr. V. Palashkovsky, but Fr. Vladimir Guettee, a French convert of the previous century, also had done some work in that direction. Fr. Guettee had published the Liturgy of the Gallican Catholic Church in 1875 and had, apparently, celebrated that Mass a few times. Later, after 1946 the restored ancient Roman Mass, the work of Fr. Alexis van der Mensbrugge, was used at the parish of St. Irenaeus.

In December 1944 the Theological Institute of St. Denis was officially opened. The Institute, with instruction in French, had several purposes: to enlighten the French Orthodox and deepen their knowledge of the Faith; to serve the needs of emigrant children who were being assimilated into French culture and language; to give information to those separated from the Church who were interested in her doctrines and life; to prepare students for the priesthood. The initiator of the founding of the Institute was Fr. Kovalevsky who was assisted by the Confraternity of St. Photius and various French Orthodox circles. Two French Orthodox who gave the greatest assistance were Dr. Bernie and Mrs. Y. Winnaert. The Romanian colony in Paris gave the Institute much support. The Institute, in the course of its existence, has published several valuable theological and liturgical works.

## **1945 – Year of Peace**

With the conclusion of World War II the Western Orthodox parishes were able to resume contacts, broken by the war, with the Moscow Patriarchate. In the meanwhile, Metropolitan Eleutherius had died and the French churches were without any episcopal supervision. In August 1945 a delegation of churchmen arrived in Paris and Metropolitan Nicholas of Krutitsy, who headed the delegation, ordained several Western Orthodox priests and deacons. The Metropolitan also held numerous conferences with the Western Orthodox. The year 1945 was of vital importance to the Western Orthodox: all the dissensions which had hindered the expansion of Orthodoxy were healed; several priests were ordained, and the Theological Institute set on a better footing. Connected with the parish of the Ascension was an Orthodox Scout Movement as well as the Mission of St. Paul which brought the benefits of the Mass and preaching to Orthodox people scattered in the provinces. The Western Orthodox movement became known in various parts of the world and much correspondence was received from interested parties in various countries.

In March 1946 Fr. Joseph Civel, a married priest, was ordained for Western Orthodox work. In that year the parish of St. Irenaeus found larger quarters for, with the growth of the parish, the old ones were outgrown. It and the Institute of St. Denis moved to a former Old Catholic church on Blvd. Auguste Blanqui. In 1946, however, the “Year of Peace” came to an end with fresh schisms in the Russian Church in Western Europe. The French parishes, however, remained faithful to the Moscow Patriarchate. About this time Mr. Arthur Francis Le Pape from the English Channel Island of Jersey became Orthodox and joined the monastic community of

Ss. Denis-Seraphim at the Ascension parish. After his novitiate, he was professed in 1947 taking the name Timothy. Returning to Jersey, Fr. Timothy established a priory affiliated with the Parisian community and adopted the latter's usage for the monastic offices. He used the Mass of the *Missale Romanum* with some modifications. By this time the Western rite was being celebrated in French, English, German, and Italian.

### **The Restored Roman Liturgy**

A significant event in the history of Western Orthodoxy was the first celebration, on Holy Thursday, 1946, at the St. Irenaeus church, of the restored Roman Liturgy, the work of Archimandrite Alexis van der Mensbrugghe. Born in 1899 of a distinguished Belgian Roman Catholic family, after a classical and theological education in various Benedictine colleges and Universities and higher studies at the Papal Oriental Institute in Rome in the field of Patristics and Liturgics, Fr. Alexis (then called Albert) was ordained to the Priesthood by Cardinal Mercier in 1925. He left a promising, brilliant career in the Roman Church, however, when his studies led him to embrace Orthodoxy. In April, 1929 he was received into the Church by Metropolitan Eulogius. When the Orthodox Institute of St. Denis was opened in Paris, he was asked to occupy the chair of Patristic Theology and Ancient Liturgies, in both of which fields he was a scholar. It has been said of him that there was no one else who "could hold his own with Gregory Dix," the well-known late Anglican liturgist. At the request of the Confraternity of St. Photius Fr. Alexis worked on the restoration of the ancient Roman Mass as it was said before the Great Schism. After considerable research and study his *La Liturgie Orthodoxe de Rit Occidental* was published in 1948.

Fr. Alexis was of the belief that the restored Western Mass must start with the old Roman Liturgy. The "Pure" Roman rite, however, existed probably only at its very start and throughout its history assimilated Byzantinisms from Gaul and Spain. In certain cases, various Popes introduced Byzantinisms as an attempt to get away from the Roman rite's narrow provincialism. Fr. Alexis' restored Mass departed from the contemporary Roman Mass in three points: (1) By removal of medieval deformities and stratifications; (2) By re-introduction of ancient Roman elements in their proper places; and (3) by the introduction of Gallican elements which underscore essential values held in common by the entire Christian tradition. He also kept in mind that the restored "Ordo" must not be so different that priests of the Byzantine rite would find it impossible to con-celebrate at the Western Liturgy.

Some years after the publication of the restored Roman Mass, it was subjected to a detailed critical study, published in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* in 1954, by Professor N. Uspensky of the Leningrad Theological Academy. Prof. Uspensky, probably the leading liturgist in the Soviet Union, took greatest exception to what he called Fr. Alexis' unhistorical approach to the cardinal moments of the Mass, to the assembling of a canon with admixtures of ancient, medieval, and other elements, with too much of the Archimandrite's personal tastes showing through. He objected, particularly, to the inclusion in the restored Mass of two forms of the epiclesis: an ascending Roman type and the typical descending Eastern type. Uspensky found this an unnecessary duplication and felt that the ascending epiclesis of the Roman canon, found in the prayer: "*Supplices te rogamus*," quite sufficient. The Orthodox

Church, said Uspensky, never having accepted the Florentine definition of the consecration taking place at the Words of Institution, has never denied the Roman epiclesis. Uspensky's view is of interest because it seems to disagree with the late Patriarch Sergius who, in his Ukase of 1936, required an epiclesis to be inserted after the Institutionary Words. Sergius, on the other hand, did not stipulate an "Eastern" *epiclesis* and his emphasis on *after* proceeded from the fact that the old Winnaert Mass had the epiclesis before the Words of Institution. However, as noticed above, it was an "Eastern" type of epiclesis which was added to the Winnaert Mass, and one, moreover, almost identical to the epiclesis which the Holy Synod added to the Overbeck Mass of 1870. The restored Roman Mass was also celebrated at the Orthodox parish of Notre Dame de la France in Paris.

### **Recent Developments in French Orthodoxy**

In July 1947, Dom Gregorio Baccolini, a Benedictine priest, entered Western Orthodoxy. Born in Bologna in 1913, he had studied at the Pontifical University in Rome and was ordained in Florence in 1940. He served in several capacities in the Church after his reception, among them as instructor at the Institute of St. Denis. Later, in his small Benedictine Priory in Rome, Fr. Baccolini used the Mass of the Roman Missal in almost the same redaction as the Overbeck Mass. In 1949 for the first time a graduate of the Institute was ordained to the priesthood: Fr. George Chretienne, a convert to the Church from Rome. Also that year Mr. Paul L'Huillier, a convert from Roman Catholicism, received his Licentiate of Theology from the Institute and was made "*charge de cours*." He was later professed in monasticism and ordained an Eastern rite priest, continuing his support of Western Orthodoxy. In January 1950 a center was purchased at Columbes where a chapel was dedicated later in the year. November of 1951 saw the opening of the parish of the Dormition at Nice by Fr. George Chretienne.

In January 1953 there came a change in the jurisdictional adherence of a part of the Western Orthodox clergy and churches. At that time Fr. E. Kovalevsky, several priests, and two churches, besides several communities without regular services, withdrew from the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Moscow. They were provisionally received by the Constantinopolitan Exarchate in Western Europe and then led an independent existence until the Summer of 1960 when they were taken into the jurisdiction of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad headed by Metropolitan Anastasius. There are some quite capable men in this "*Eglise Orthodoxe de France*," among them Fr. Gabriel Bornand, a convert from Rome and a graduate of the Institute ordained in 1952. Fr. Bornand is the editor of the bi-monthly magazine *Cahiers Saint-Irenee*. There are at present ten or more churches and chapels in various parts of France and one in Brussels and the clergy also serve communities without churches in different places. Since the affiliation of the "*Eglise Orthodoxe de France*" with the Russian Synodal emigre Church, the diocesan, Archbishop John of Brussels, has ordained several candidates to Holy Orders. Fr. Kovalevsky has been elected bishop of the Church but his consecration has not yet taken place.

The "*Eglise Orthodoxe de France*" is attempting to resurrect the dead Gallican rite with all its customs and traditions which disappeared from the life of the Church. The Gallican Mass "according to St. Germanus of Paris" is celebrated in their churches. A "provisional edition of the

‘Ordinary of the Mass’ in use since 1944” was published in 1956. The Gallican Mass is a reconstruction of how it was supposed to have been celebrated before it was superseded by the Roman Mass before the Great Schism. It contains, however, interpolations in it of elements from other rites, the Roman, the Milanese, and the Byzantine. Fr. Kovalevsky, in answer to criticism for using the “restored” Gallican Mass, argued that it was quite possible to restore the Gallican rite as it was followed in pre-Carolingian times, i.e., before 794 A.D. He justified the addition of elements from other rites by saying that there never was a time when one Liturgy was not influenced by another. A historical date in the history of this “*Eglise*” is 8 May 1960 when Archbishop John pontificated at the Gallican Mass for the first time. According to research made, the Pontifical Mass of the “*Rite des Gaules*” had not been celebrated since the year 823.

There are several churches of the Western rite within the Moscow Patriarchate in Western Europe. As indicated above, the oldest Western Orthodox parish in France is the church of the Ascension in Paris. Dom Denis Chambault, who was a close associate of Fr. Winnaert, is pastor. He is also superior of the Benedictine monastery of Ss. Denis-Seraphim attached to the parish. A very interesting monthly *Bulletin* of the parish is published, with readers all over the world. At Christmas and Pascha the parish distributes packages to the poor and the community, generally, serves as a hospice to strangers and those in distress. With a membership of over a hundred faithful, the parish is a mixed community of various people, including a few Russians. The monks have always been active in other parishes, including those of the Eastern rite, and have performed special missions in the provinces. In 1960 an Anglican cleric, Fr. Ian Burton, came from England to be received into Orthodoxy. He made his monastic profession on 20 November 1960, taking the name Barnabas, and joined the monastic community attached to the Church of the Ascension. On 18 December 1960 Fr. Barnabas was ordained to the priesthood by Metropolitan Nicholas, Patriarchal Exarch in Western Europe. Up to now the rite used by the parish is that evolved by Winnaert. The Western calendar is followed, including the celebration of Pascha according to the New Style.

The importance attached to the Western Orthodox work by the Moscow Patriarchate is seen in the consecration, on 1 November 1960, of Archimandrite Alexis van der Mennsbrugge as Bishop of Meudon, auxiliary bishop of the West European Exarchate in charge of Western Orthodox work. One of his first acts was the formation of a new Italian parish in Italy from former Roman Catholics.

Bishop Alexis has continued to work on the ancient Western liturgical texts and in 1960 completed the *Missal or Book of the Synaxis of the Liturgy* to be used in Western Orthodox churches. The differences between the Mass found in this book and his previously published Roman Mass are quite substantial and represent considerable new work. The new Missal, which is not yet published in book form, contains in effect four “Liturgies.” The first of these is the usual Mass, celebrated ordinarily. It follows the Order common to both the Gallican and Italian rites of the Fifth Century as codified by St. Germanus of Paris in the Sixth Century and as found in the double Euchologion of Autun and Rome. Both the Gallican and Italian (Bishop Alexis with Gregory Dix prefers “Italian” to “Roman”) variations are given side by side so that either usage can be used. Provision is made for a pontifical service and, of course, it is presumed that there will be con-celebration by other priests. After the *Tersanctus* both the Gallican and Italian usages

are given for the continuation of the Eucharistic Canon to its conclusion with the final doxology. The Gallican Canon is taken from an Euchologion of the Fifth-Sixth Century, while the Italian Canon dates to an Euchologion of the fourth or fifth century following the Alexandrine tradition of the fourth century.

The Gallican Canon, as may well be expected, contains an Eastern type of descending epiclesis while the Italian Canon contains the prayer: “*Supplices te rogamus*” with very slight differences in wording from the same prayer in the modern *Missale Romanum*. Thus both types of epiclesis are given, according to the rite followed. Both are immediately followed with the blessing of the antidoron, silently, and the concluding doxology. It is interesting to note that many of the criticisms of Prof. Uspensky leveled at Bishop Alexis’ former “restored” Roman Mass have been taken into account in the new work.

Still another Liturgy, or actually variable portions of the ordinary Liturgy, is called the “Eucharistic Liturgy for the Night,” *i.e.* for vigils. This Mass is intended for the baptismal vigils of Pascha and Pentecost, for Christmas eve, for ordination vigils of the “Sundays of the Four Seasons,” and for “Obsequies for the Dead.” The variances from the usual Liturgy are noted, but the chief difference is in the Canon. Instead of either of those given in the ordinary Liturgy the very ancient Anaphora, dating to the beginning of the Third Century, of St. Hippolytus is used.

Next is given the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts to be celebrated on the Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent and of the “Four Seasons.” This “Liturgy” is what an Eastern Typica service might be like with Holy Communion administered. The Liturgy of the Presanctified is always preceded by the recital of the Office of None, followed by the “Synaxis of the Catechesis”, *i.e.*, Liturgy of the Faithful, Procession with the Gifts from the Chapel of Oblations where they were reserved from the previous Sunday, and the conclusion of the usual Liturgy from the Confraternity (the Anaphora being omitted).

The Missal presupposes a Choir, a Deacon, Subdeacons, and priests participating with the celebrant. Rubrics, however, are given in case the Liturgy is celebrated “without solemnity,” *i.e.*, without either a Deacon or a Choir. A Reader must read and sing aloud the responses ordinarily reserved for the Choir, and he will stand in the chancel using a lectern or analogion to hold his book. There are no low masses or silent masses permitted.

Besides the Missal, Bishop Alexis has prepared the *Opus Dei*, the Divine Office, for publication and it is expected to appear shortly.

### **Western Rite Edict of Metropolitan Antony**

Metropolitan Antony (Bashir) of Syrian Antiochian Archdiocese, too, has often been approached by leaders and individuals of various bodies. He has always made it his policy thoroughly to investigate such seekers of unity with the Church and has had occasion to refuse several. At the same time, however, in desiring to extend and implement Orthodoxy’s mission in America, Metropolitan Antony realized that there were also “those outside of communion with the Church who were sincerely seeking the truth, who were desirous of becoming engrafted to

the vine of Christ. After considerable meditation of the problem and taking into consideration the action of the Church elsewhere in the world, namely France, he came to the conclusion that the use of a Western rite in America could be of importance in facilitating the return to the Church of separated Western Christians in America. He turned for guidance to the late Patriarch Alexander III of Antioch who, in May 1958, after consultation with the other Autocephalous Churches, gave an affirmative reply. Forwarding the Metropolitan an Arabic translation of the famous 1936 Ukase of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Patriarch of Antioch authorized Metropolitan Antony to “take the same action, leaving to your Orthodox, zeal and good judgment the right to work out the details in the local situations.” Thereupon Metropolitan Antony issued his edict of August 1958 in which he set forth general and provisional basis for establishing Western rite parishes within his Archdiocese. The Edict’s stipulations were:

1. All converts to the Church must accept the full Orthodox doctrine of Faith.
2. Parishes and larger units received into the Archdiocese retain the use of all Western rites, devotions, and customs which “are not contrary to the Orthodox Faith and are logically derived from a Western usage” antedating the Schism of 1054.
3. All individual converts must be integrated into parochial life; there can be no individual converts to the Western rite unless to an established parish.
4. The manner of reception of prospective Western rite groups as well as to whatever concerns the rite itself, the approval of texts, etc., shall be handled by a special Commission appointed by the Archbishop.
5. There can be no transference from one rite to another without special dispensation. Such dispensations shall be granted only to: (a) the faithful of one rite who permanently dwell in the parochial limits of another rite and have no church of their own rite to attend; (b) to Priests appointed for specific missionary duties; otherwise there shall be no “bi-ritual” privileges for any cleric of the Archdiocese; and (c) to women who marry men of another rite automatically join the husband’s rite.
6. Church schools in Western rite Orthodox parishes shall conform to the same Christian Education Program of the Archdiocese in teaching materials, etc. as the Eastern rite parishes’ All candidates for the clergy must conform to the same standards regardless of rite; they must be graduates of St. Vladimir’s Seminary.
7. Western rite parishes and clergy are subject to the canons of the Orthodox Church and the laws of the Archdiocese.

The stipulation in this edict, in §5, which forbids transference from one rite to another probably appears in Western rite legislation for the first time. Also, except for temporary missions, all priests are denied “bi-ritual” privileges and are “forbidden to use the dress, Vestments, rites, ceremonies of a Rite other than own.” The legislation of §5 from the quarter-century practice of

Western Orthodoxy in France which was blessed by Patriarch Sergius in his 1936 Ukase. It probably differs from the ancient custom of the Church.

## Conclusion

The rebirth of Western Orthodoxy, however humble its beginnings, however depreciated by its foes, has taken place. Oftentimes it may be heard that the Western rite is taking its place in the Church through the condescension and permission of Orthodox authorities, that the Western rite *can* be admitted, *might* be allowed, that it has certain possibilities, etc., *but* that the *real*, true Liturgy is that of Saint John Chrysostom. Rome also permits, allows, and sees certain possibilities in the *Eastern* rite — but for what reasons and for what ends are obvious — but the only *real* Liturgy is the Roman Mass sung in Latin. Papalism, however, is not a heresy peculiar to Rome nor peculiar to the organization of the Church. Papalism exists as a potentiality in every Bishop, or even in every parish priest. Orthodoxy, however, has never held to the heresy of liturgical papalism.

Unless a truly indigenous African Liturgy can be foreseen, a truly indigenous Indian and Chinese Liturgy, composed according to the *one unique structure* of the Liturgy (a structure imposed interiorly, having its source in dogmatic and mystical theology — in the true sense of those words — and not exteriorly by stifling the life of other Liturgies, as was the case, historically speaking, where St. John Chrysostom's Liturgy is concerned), the truly Orthodox vision of the world has not yet been seen. Uniformity, imposition, external authority are the death of Orthodoxy, for she is a precious box encrusted with a thousand different but equally lovely jewels, each of which reflects the light of Truth in a manner particular and unique.

It is not by the condescension of authority that a Western rite is celebrated. Those who live in the West and in the Western stream of tradition must before God and the Angels and Saints respect all that is good in her traditions. What is to be done with the ten centuries of Western liturgical life before the Schism? Reject them or ignore them or simply forget them? But St. Leo, St. Clement, St. Irenaeus, St. Gregory, St. Colomban, St. Chad and a thousand more lived by and were nourished upon the Orthodox Western Liturgy and Tradition. Is it by a condescending permission that some desire to celebrate after their example? St. Basil the Great and St. John Chrysostom would give different answers.

What can the rebirth of Western Orthodoxy bring the Church as a whole? Dr. Overbeck, who hoped for the restoration of the Western Church a hundred years ago, said that when that great day came, a “new current of life would flow to the heart of Orthodoxy.” Eastern-and Western minds, he said, would meet on common Orthodox grounds instead of on heretical soil. There would be no more one-sidedness, the Church would be Catholic territorially as well as theologically. New paths would be found to an invigorated spiritual life. A copious exchange of talents and ideas would cause a stirring up of life such as it was in the Patristic age. The wall separating East and West would crumble and the two drawn into close relationships.

The Western Orthodox movement is not yet large enough to reap all these benefits, but wherever Western Orthodox parishes have been founded the outlook of Eastern Christians has

been enriched and deepened, Intolerance has lessened, a fraternal, Christian love towards the separated Christians has been strengthened, and a fuller vision of the Church's goal in the world realized.