

ENCOURAGEMENT

July 2024 – Issue 156

'Universal Church'

THE HOST APOSTOLATE
WWW.THEHOSTAPOSTOLATE.ORG
14, GOATBECK TERRACE,
LANGLEY MOOR,
COUNTY DURHAM DH7 8JJ
thehostapostolate@gmail.com

It is very easy to think of 'church' as that 'bit' we are familiar with or associated with the church, that we attend. We may extend it to the general area or country that we live in, or even the continent that we are in. But of course, the word 'church' covers so very much more... The Christian Church features also many divisions among Christian, sadly not all united as one body, but nevertheless one church. In some countries there is much cooperation between the various denominations even if it is only through charitable activities. But the word Universal means something that is broader than this.

If we look at the definition of Universal in the ordinary meaning, it means general and worldwide. It can also mean everywhere.

However, a mistake often made is that we refer to church in the 'micro sense' and often for Catholics the Latin Rite, i.e. the catholic church that uses 'Latin' and presently the language of the country based on the Latin by and large, in their Liturgy. Indeed, we forget that there is also a nod at least, to the Greek such as 'Kyrie Eleison': Lord Have mercy. But many Christian churches have not used Latin and today many catholic churches do not do so either. Some in the newer countries have never done so. What is often forgotten is that over one third of all Catholic churches united and of the Apostolic tradition have never used Latin and use a very different rite.

A 'Rite' is a ritual a way of celebrating something. It is often referred to as a Liturgical rite. Thus, after the Second Vatican Council ended in 1965 the Rite of celebrating Mass was referred to as the new rite, 'Novus Ordo'.

You may be surprised to learn that there are many such rites in the Catholic Church. They often originate in the Eastern part of the world and because of migration of people can be found in the West too, including The United Kingdom.

The Catholic Encyclopaedia describes the situation this way: "Within the Catholic Church ... Canonical rites, which are of equal dignity, enjoy the same rights, and are under the same obligations. Although the particular churches possess their own hierarchy, differ in liturgical and ecclesiastical discipline, and possess their own spiritual heritage, they are all entrusted to the pastoral government of the Pope. Some broke away over the hundreds of years but were reunited with Rome.

The main groups are the Melkite Rite (Greek Catholic), the Maronite, the Chaldean and Maronite and Syro-Malabar (mainly in India, especially Kerala).

There are many of these rites scattered over the entire world. Many have been relocated from their original starting point because of either war or persecution or simple migration. One example is the large number of Melkite Christians in Brazil where there are over half a million believers. Similarly there are Melkite (Greek Catholic) Communities in the USA, Argentina, Australia, and Canada, Melkite Greek Catholic Church; its origins go back to the establishment of Christianity in the Near East. As Christianity began to spread, the disciples preached the Gospel throughout the region and were for the first time recorded to be called "Christians" in the city of Antioch. Growth of the church did not stop during periods of persecution, and by the end of the 4th century Christianity became the official state religion, one of the first places to do so.

There are Communities that use both rites the Roman Rite and the Melkite Rite. One such is Madonna House, found by Servant of God Catherine Doherty and her husband Eddie in Combermere, (Ontario, Canada). Some of their member Priests pray and are able to use both liturgies (Bi-ritual.) This enriches their prayer life and is a means of uniting East and West.

'If you want to judge someone judge yourself first.' St. Charbel Makhlof

In 1965 at the conclusion of the Second Vatican council, St. Charbel was beatified by Pope Paul VI and was the only person to be beatified at the end of this council. St. Charbel was Canonised by the same Pope on October 9, 1977. This brought into prominence the Maronite Church of which he was a member. He lived as a hermit after being a member of his religious community and lived a saintly life in Annaya. He was a port of call for Christians and Moslems alike for spiritual counsel. Many churches are dedicated to him. The Maronite rite traces its origins to the work of St. Maron in the 4th century who founded a monastery east of Antioch. Later, monks moved to the mountains in what is today Lebanon. This rite never fell into heresy and was only separated from Rome by the political reality of Moslem or Ottoman occupation. The Maronite Christians make up 17% of the population of Lebanon.

The Syro-Malabar rite is based in India. Its members are descendants of the 'Thomas' Christians. The Malabar rite never broke with Rome despite the conflict with the Portuguese in the 16th century. They are generally grouped with the Chaldean family of rites because the Assyrian (later called Chaldean) church provided their bishops until the Portuguese took over that task. Also their liturgy was originally in the Syriac language which the Chaldeans used which is nearer the Aramaic of Jesus' time. Recently we saw the joyful celebration of our Syro-Malabar Christians (England) that use our church as well.

These Eastern rite Churches are very important to all Christians. Sadly they are often confused with the Orthodox Christians that are not united with Rome though we pray that this schism will one day be mended. There are also other rites such as the Ukrainian Catholic rite. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church predominates in three western parts of Ukraine, including the majority of the population of Lviv, but constitutes a small minority elsewhere in the country. However with the movements of people after the second world war and subsequently, there are now about ten million members in many parts of the world especially United States and Canada. In the Ukraine the Latin and Greek Catholic rite coexist.

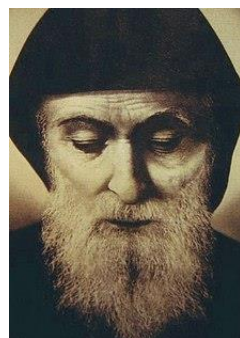
In Britain the 'Sarum Rite' used by the Ordinariate, Anglican Ministers who joined the Catholic Church, and again a very old liturgy used in Salisbury Cathedral and uses the Latin rites used from the late eleventh century until the English Reformation. Now it is permitted to be used by the Ordinariate.

All the rites of the Catholic Church are of equal dignity and equally valid. Attendance at a different rite fulfils the Sunday obligation. The Catholic Church is truly universal since it unites so many diverse rites, whose members share a common faith.

We live at a time of division, and we must not forget that the church has many faces in different countries and united we stand... this is our future and hope. It is important not to neglect the Universality of the Church. Please keep everyone in prayer. Halina Holman ©

Pope Francis

Diversity and unity were already very much present in the first Christian communities. The tension had to be resolved on a higher level. Let's think, for example, of the Eastern Churches. They have their own traditions, their own characteristic liturgical rites...yet they maintain the unity of the faith. They strengthen it, not divide it. If we are guided by the Holy Spirit, abundance, variety, diversity, never cause conflict.
Rome 2024



St. Charbel Makhoul



St. Mariam, 'The Little Arab'

St. Mariam was born in Ibillin, located in the hill country of upper Galilee, Palestine. Her family came from Damascus, Syria. They were Catholics of the Melkite Greek-Catholic Rite.

Feast Days in July

- 1st St. Oliver Plunket**
- 3rd St. Thomas, Apostle**
- 4th St. Elizabeth of Portugal 6th St. Maria Goretti
- 7th Fourteenth Sunday in Ord. Time**
- 9th St. Augustine Zhao Rong & Companions
- 11th St. Benedict, Patron of Europe
- 14th Fifteenth Sunday in Ord. Time**
- 16th Our Lady of Mount Carmel**
- 21st Sixteenth Sunday in Ord. Time**
- 22nd St. Mary Magdalene
- 23rd St. Bridget of Sweden, Patron of Europe
- 25th St. James, Apostle**
- 26th Ss. Anna & Joachim, Parents of the Bl. Virgin Mary
- 28th Seventeenth Sunday in Ord. Time**
- 30th St. Peter Chrysologus
- 31st St. Ignatius of Loyola