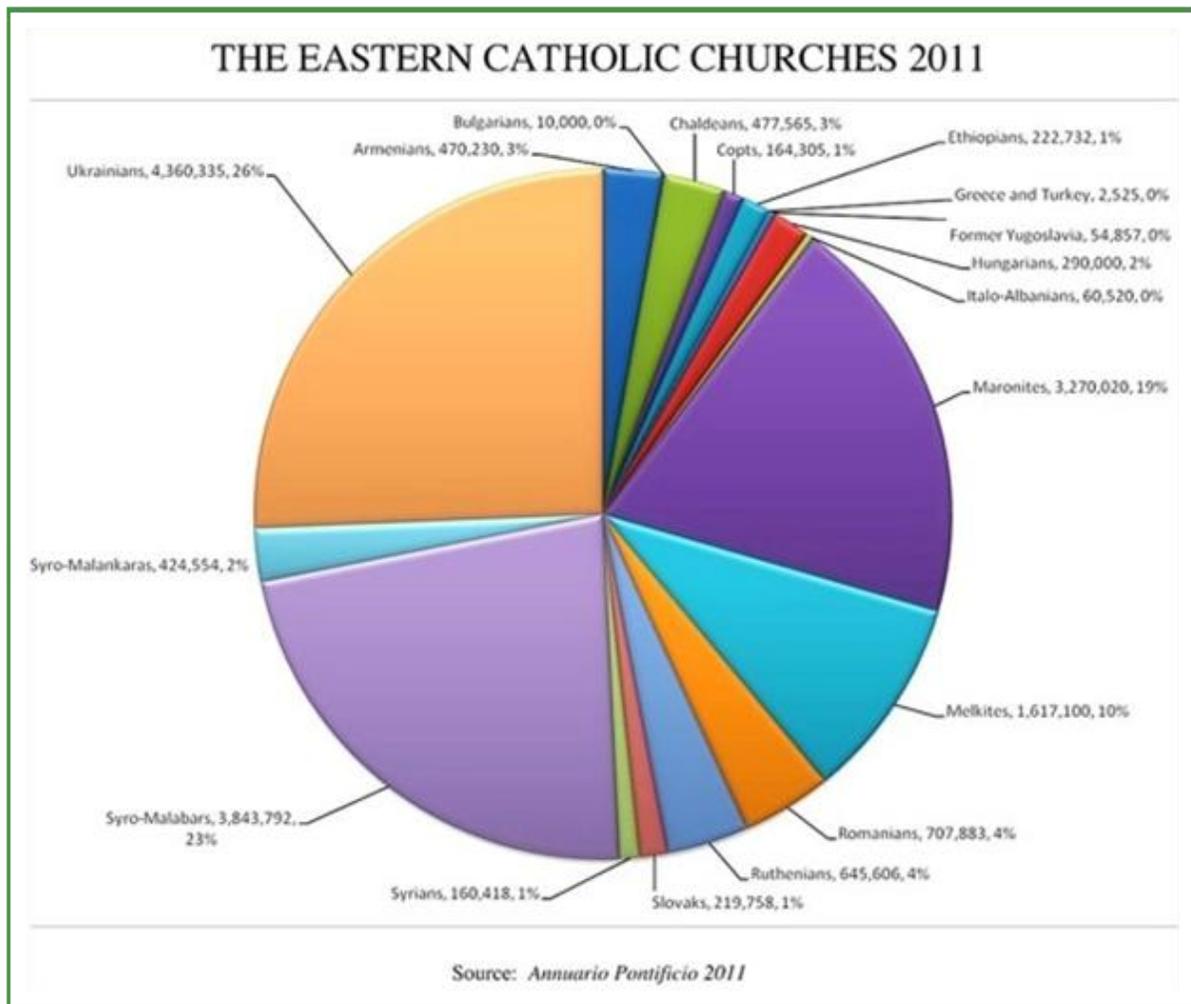


August 16-17, 2014

EAST AND WEST: BREATHING WITH TWO LUNGS!



Last Sunday after Mass, a University of Minnesota student of Iraqi descent approached me to discuss the homily I had just given about the situation in Iraq. His mother is a Chaldean Catholic from Baghdad and he thanked me for bringing the plight of the Christians to bear in that part of the world. I replied that in truth, I have long been paying attention to this geo-political and religious situation, mostly because of my interest in Catholics of Eastern Rites. In paragraph 54 of his encyclical “*Ut Unum Sint*,” St. John Paul II wrote that “the Church must breathe with her two lungs,” referring to East and West. We consider ourselves to be Roman Catholics, meaning that we are in communion with and spiritually linked to Rome in the person of our Holy Father. But there are 20 million Eastern Catholics, also united to Rome and just as “catholic” as you or me, but with entirely different liturgical customs, Canon Laws, and customs. From four major groupings (Roman, Antiochian, Alexandrian and later Byzantine) developed over twenty liturgical rites present in the Church today, including the Chaldeans referenced above. See chart below for a full listing of Rites.



Think of the Catholic Church as a large tree. A “rite” represents a church tradition about how the sacraments are to be celebrated, and may be likened to a branch of the tree. By far, the largest branch is the western branch, made up of the Latin Rite (that’s us), a few other western rites (e.g. Ambrosian liturgy still found in Milan Italy, and Mozarabic found in Toledo, Spain). But the Latin rite far outnumbers all others in its breadth. Sure, you may attend Mass in Mexico and it will be entirely in Spanish, but it is the same liturgy we celebrate here, only in a different language. It is still part of the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church. The Eastern rites are different: vestments, music, feasts days, Canon Law, age of Confirmation, etc. and other liturgical customs. For example, some Eastern Catholics celebrate 1st Holy Communion at the time of Baptism. The Eucharist is called the “Divine Liturgy” because “Mass” derives from the Latin *missa* (one who is sent)— a word never used in the East!

What can be tricky about understanding these eastern Rites is that nearly all of them have a Catholic and an Orthodox counterpart. Various doctrinal splits happened over the centuries, with a definitive break between East and West occurring in 1054 A.D. Roman attempts at reunion characterized future centuries, but were mostly unsuccessful. Eventually segments of virtually all of these churches came into union with Rome, sometimes due to missionary efforts, while others (Bulgarian Byzantine Church) was the result of a spontaneous movement of Orthodox back to Rome. Confused yet? That is, some of these groups are in union (called communion) with Rome and some are not. The Lebanese Maronites do not have an Orthodox counterpart. They have always maintained bonds of communion with Rome and operate two parishes in the Twin Cities, under the authority of the Maronite Eparchy (i.e. Diocese) of Our Lady of Lebanon.

Through a synod, each of the six eastern patriarchal churches (Chaldean, Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, Maronite, and Melkite) elects its own Patriarch and seats him in the throne. That Patriarch then requests ecclesiastical communion with Rome. Other eastern bishops, once elected, must be confirmed by the Pope before they can be enthroned. We have much to learn about the richness and diversity of liturgical expression from the East. It is also true that one of the biggest differences centers upon the issue of mandatory clerical celibacy. In the east, married men may be ordained to the diaconate and priesthood, while the bishops are exclusively chosen from the ranks of the celibate. Marriage may not follow ordination, but only precede it. Ordination is the definitive step.

Far from being obstacles, these differences are evidence of the legitimate diversity of traditions in the universal Church. While Eastern Catholics generally do not pray the Stations of the Cross (a western tradition), most of us do not pray with icons. In 1985, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Sts. Cyril and Methodius as co-patrons of Europe, along with St. Benedict. These “apostles to the Slavs” represented in our Shrine of Nations, bear witness beautifully to the “two lung” theology so needed. Vatican II’s decree on Ecumenism taught: “The very rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches should be known, venerated, preserved and cherished by all.” If you have never been to an Eastern Catholic Divine Liturgy, I encourage you to go sometime. You will not be disappointed.

- There may be no such thing as a free lunch, but we do offer free organ concerts, in honor of our newly restored gallery organ. Join us on Thursday, August 21 at 7:30 p.m. for a wonderful organ concert by Samuel Holmberg, whom you have heard many times on Sundays here at the Cathedral. Spread the word and bring a friend.
- According to Patriarch Sako, the Chaldean Catholic leader of Iraq: “The churches are deserted and desecrated; five bishops are out of their bishoprics, the priests and nuns left their missions and institutions leaving everything behind, the families have fled with their children abandoning everything else! The level of disaster is extreme.” The Pope has dispatched Cardinal Filoni, former Apostolic Nuncio to Iraq as his special envoy to visit Baghdad and Kurdistan, offering spiritual and financial support in the Pope’s name.

- The local public school system is debating later start times for high schools, based upon scientific research of teenage sleep habits. My own take on the subject comes from the 1735 A.D. edition of Poor Richard's Almanac: "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Personally, I'll take two out of three any day!
- The Holy Father is in Korea for an apostolic visit. Representing about 10% of the total population, Catholicism is growing rapidly there. The Pope will also beatify 124 Korean martyrs during his trip.
- I invite all Cathedral parents to register your children for Religious education classes this fall. We need an accurate accounting to best prepare to serve you. Online registration is available at www.cathedralsaintpaul.org/religious-ed. Just click on the handy link.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel

Rector