

The Eastern Catholic Churches - Guidance for Schools

Introduction

In addition to the Western (Latin) Catholic Church, with a membership of about a one thousand million, headed by the Roman Pontiff, there are 23 Eastern Catholic churches in full communion with the see of Rome. Many people will recently have watched representatives of these churches, present in a very visible way and taking part in the funeral of Pope John Paul II and the Inauguration of Pope Benedict XVI. There are increasing numbers of these Eastern Catholic churches in our capital city. Their presence adds a rich element of diversity to the Church in this area, but increased awareness and understanding is required to ensure that Catholics who belong to those churches do not face unjustified discrimination. In particular, our schools must ensure that they are not treated in any way less favourably on account of their different liturgical and sacramental traditions.

Each Eastern Catholic Church has its own long history and, as a result, there is a great diversity among them. Some have always been in full communion with the Roman See (e.g. the Maronites). Others are the result of one or more reunions following previous schisms over the centuries (e.g. the Ukrainian Catholic Church). They vary in size from very small to very large. Some are still concentrated in their original homeland, whilst migration means that others have more members elsewhere (particularly in North America), Some are growing fast, whilst others are now shrinking. Their history and size are key factors in their form of government - ranging from completely self-governing to governance in the name of the Roman Pontiff.

It is important to be careful about the use of language in relation to the Eastern Catholic Churches. For instance, many Eastern Catholics find the older term "Uniate Churches" offensive. There is an unfortunate history within the Latin Church of either refusing to recognise Eastern Catholics as Catholics, or of "Latinisation": trying to force them to abandon their proper heritage and adopt Latin practices. The Second Vatican Council, in its Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, recognised the right of Eastern Catholics to their unique ecclesiastical and spiritual heritage, and the obligation of the universal Church to defend them.

Each Eastern Catholic church belongs to one of five major "Traditions".¹ The word "Rite" strictly speaking means the liturgical tradition observed by a church, but is often used interchangeably with the wider term "Tradition" or to mean a "Church" which uses that Rite. Historically there has been a certain intermingling of Traditions and even more of an overlap when it comes to rites. However, it is easier to be clear about each "church *sui juris*", which is the institutional entity as a whole with its own hierarchy and particular laws.² Twenty-one of the twenty-three Eastern Catholic churches have been established as churches *sui juris*.

For almost all Eastern Catholic Churches, there are one or more equivalent churches which are not in communion with Rome, but which come from the same Eastern Tradition. Care is often needed to distinguish between them. The two tables attached to this paper give some more details of the Eastern Catholic Churches and their counterparts amongst the Orthodox and other Eastern Christian Churches which are not in full communion with Rome.

More information

Six Eastern Catholic Churches are formally represented by clergy in London. Contact details are in the current edition of the Westminster Year Book, which can also be accessed online at www.westminsteryearbook.org.uk/dow/dow_eastern.rite.tml (The heading "Eastern Catholic Churches" is listed on the site under "Immigrant Communities"). For an

introduction to the history and background of all the Eastern Christian Churches, see Ronald Roberson CSP, *The Eastern Christian Churches, A Brief Survey*, Edizioni "Orientalia Christiana" Rome, 1999. An updated version is accessible at: www.cnewa.org/ecc-bodypg.aspx?eccpageID=3&IndexView=toc. See also the Vatican II Decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*.

For further information contact the diocesan Education Service (Tel. 020 7798 9005). In the Archdiocese of Westminster there is an Episcopal Vicar for Eastern Catholic Churches (Canon Vincent Berry Tel. 020 7589 5487).

¹ See Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, canon27

²CCEO , canon28

Table I This table lists all Catholic churches and the Traditions from which they come, as well as giving an indication of the major non-Catholic churches to which they are related. This does not attempt to be an exhaustive list in relation to the non-Catholic churches. In both cases an attempt has been made to show (in brackets) some alternative names by which the same Church is known.

TRADITIONS	ACCEPTED	NOT ACCEPTED CHURCHES
Western (Roman)	Latin Catholic Church	Churches of the Protestant Reformation Church of South India (CSI) (<i>Non-St Thomas Christians</i>)
Alexandrian	Coptic Catholic Church	Coptic Orthodox Church
	Ethiopian Catholic Church (" <i>Gheez rite</i> ") (includes Eritrean Catholic Church)	Ethiopian Orthodox Church; Eritrean Orthodox Church
Antiochean (West Syrian)	Syrian Catholic Church	Syrian Orthodox Church
	(Syro-)Maronite Catholic Church	None
	Syro-Malankar Catholic Church	Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church St Thomas Christians: Indian Orthodox Church; Orthodox Syrian (Jacobite) Church; Mar Thoma Syrian Church; Malabar Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyoor; Church of South India (CSI) (<i>St Thomas Christians</i>)
Armenian	Armenian Catholic Church	Armenian Apostolic (Orthodox) Church
Chaldean (East Syrian)	Chaldean Catholic Church	Assyrian Church of the East
	Syro-Malabar Catholic Church	St Thomas Christians: Syrian Malabarese Church; Syro-Chaldean Church
Constantinopolitan (Byzantine)	Albanian (Byzantine) Catholic Church	Albanian Orthodox Church
	Belarussian Catholic Church	Belarussian Orthodox Church
	Bulgarian (Byzantine) Catholic Church	Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Georgian Catholic Church	Georgian Orthodox Church
Greek (Hellenic) Catholic Church	Greek Orthodox Church (<i>Greek speaking</i>); Cypriot Orthodox Church
Greek-Melkite Catholic Church	Greek Orthodox Church (<i>Arabic speaking</i>)
Hungarian (Byzantine) Catholic Church	Hungarian Orthodox Church
Italo- Albanian (Byzantine) Catholic Church	None
Church of the Byzantines of the Diocese of Krizevri (Krizevci Catholic Church) (<i>Byzantine Catholics in former 'Yugoslavia'</i>)	Serbian Orthodox Church
Macedonian Catholic Church	Macedonian Orthodox Church
Romanian (Greek) Catholic Church	Romanian Orthodox Church
Russian Catholic Church	Russian Orthodox Church
Ruthenian (Byzantine) Catholic Church	Ruthenian Orthodox Church; Orthodox Church in America (OCA) American Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox Church
Slovak (Greek) Catholic Church	Slovak Orthodox Church; Orthodox Church in America (OCA); American Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox Church
Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church	Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Orthodox Church in America (OCA)

Table 2. This table shows all of the Eastern Catholic churches according to their governing structure, with the name and title of its leader (if any) and an indication of its membership. Membership figures are to the nearest thousand, based on the numbers for dioceses or equivalent in recent editions of the *Annuario Pontificio*. These numbers do not officially contain members of the churches resident in diocese of other churches, but this may not always be the case. In the case of some churches, figures are either unavailable or are based on very old data. An "eparch" is equivalent to a diocesan bishop in the Latin church, and "eparchy" is equivalent to a diocese. An "exarch apostolic" is similar to a vicar apostolic in the Latin church, his vicariate is termed an "exarchate".

Eastern Catholic Churches		Leader	Membership
Patriarchal Churches (Fully self-governing, elect their own Patriarch)			
Coptic	His Beatitude Stephanos II Ghattas CM, Patriarch of Alexandria of the Copts		243,000
Maronite	His Eminent Beatitude NasraUah Cardinal Sfeir, Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites		3,107,000
Greek-Melkite	His Beatitude Gregory III Laham, Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek-Melk'ttes		1,341,000
Syrian	His Beatitude Ignatius Peter VIII Abdel-Ahad, Patriarch of Anlioch of the Syrians		123,000
Armenian	His Beatitude Nerses BedrosXIX Tarmouni, Patriarch of Cilicia of the Armenians		369,000
Chaldean	His Beatitude Emmanuel III Delly, Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans		383,000
Major Arc hi episcopal Churches (Fully autonomous, election of Major Archbishop subject to confirmation by Rome)			
Ukrainian	His Eminence Lubomyr Cardinal Husar, Major Archbishop of Lviv of the Ukrainians		4,322,000
Syro-Malabar	His Eminence Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil CSSR, Major Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly of the Syro-Malabarese		3,752,000
Syro-Malankar	The Most Revd. Cyril Mar Baselios Malancklaiuvili QIC, Major Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Syro-Mala nkarese		404,000
Metropolitan Churches (Self-governing in many respects, Metropolitan appointed by the Roman Pontiff from a shortlist)			
Ethiopian	The Most Revd. Berhane-Yesus Demerew Souraphiel CM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Addis Ababa		197,000
Romanian	The Most Revd. Lucian Muresan, Metropolitan Archbishop of Fagaras and Alba Julia of the Romanians		746,000
Ruthenian	The Most Revd. Basil Schott OFM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh of the Byzantines / The Rt. Revd. Ivan Semedi, Eparch of Mukacevo of the Byzantines / The Rt. Revd. Ivan Ljavinec, Bishop of Acalisso, Exarch Apostolic for Byzantine Catholics in the Czech Republic		598,000
Other Churches (Governed by a hierarch (or hierarchs) freely appointed by the Roman Pontiff)			
Italo' Albanian	The Rt. Revd. Ercole Lupinacci, Eparch of Lungro of the Italo- Albanians of Continental Italy j The Rt. Revd. Sotir Ferrara, Eparch of Piana of the Albanians of Sicily / The Rt. Revd. Father Archimandrite Emiliana' Fabbncat QKOSBI, Abbot of S.Maria de Grotaferrata		60,000
Hungarian	The Rt. Revd. Szilard Keresztes, Eparch of Hajdudorog of the Byzantines		269,000
Slovak	The Rt. Revd. Jan Babjak, Eparch of Presov of the Byzantines		235,000
Krizevci	The Rt. Revd. Slavomir Miklovs, Eparch o/ Krrzrodof the Byzantines		77,000
Bulgarian	The Rt. Kevd. Christo Proykov, Bishop of Briula, Exarch Apostolic of Sophia for Byzantine-Slav Catholics in Bulgaria		10,000
Greek	The Rt. Revd. Anarghyros Printesis, Bishop of Grazianopoli, Exarch Apostolic of Athens / Exarch Apostolic of Istanbul (Vacant)		2330
Russian	Exarch Apostolic of Russia / Exarch Apostolic of Harbin (China) (Both currently vacant)		3500
Macedonian	The Rt. Revd. Joakim Herbut, Bishop of Skopje, Exarch Apostolic of Macedonia		Unknown

Albanian	The Rt. Revd. Hil Kabashi OFM, Bishop of Tori di Bizacena, Administrator Apostolic of Albania Meridionale	3,000
Churches with no Hierarchy (i.e. not a church sui juris as understood in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches)		
Georgian	None	Unknown
Belorussiatt	None	100,000