

Reviews

Die ukrainische katholische Kirche (The Ukrainian Catholic Church) 2nd expanded edition Munich: Kirche in Not, 1989. 165pp.

Die römisch-katholische Kirche in der Sowjetunion
(The Roman Catholic Church in the Soviet Union)
Munich: Kirche in Not, 1989. 143 pp.

The Catholic charity *Aid to the Church in Need* should be congratulated for publishing these two informative books on the situation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in the Soviet Union today. Both are aimed at the general reader and present a range of facts and documentation which are not normally available in one handy book.

The book on the Ukrainian Catholic Church gives a historical overview which sets the scene for an understanding of the current situation of the church. A strange omission, however, for a book that seeks to give a rounded view of the church and its history, is that of a detailed summary of the events surrounding the controversial *sobor* of 1946 at which the church was forcibly incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church. The book does give a brief survey of the fate of Eastern-rite churches in neighbouring countries, describing the 'incorporation' of the church in Romania into the Orthodox Church in 1948, and similar action in Slovakia in 1950. Unfortunately, little is said about the relegalisation of the church in Slovakia during the Prague Spring of 1968. This could serve as a model for any possible relegalisation of the church in Ukraine itself, and the continuing problems of Catholic-Orthodox tensions might give some warning of possible future problems to be avoided. There are translations of appeals for relegalisation, as well as a detailed report by the Bishop of Augsburg, Josef Stimpfle, of his September 1988 visit to Catholics, both Eastern and Latin-rite, in Ukraine. This report, previously not widely available, gives an insight into the continuing life of the church and the problems it still faces on a day to day level. The Bishop also describes the difficulties the authorities put in the way of the delegation's visit.

The volume on the Roman Catholic Church benefits from being edited by one person. It is more systematic, and gives a balanced survey of a multi-national church, giving relatively equal treatment to Catholics of different nationalities. Few other volumes manage to survey the various nationalities so well. Among the most useful sections are the documents on Lithuania (including a translation of an interview with Fr Vaclovas Aliulis which was published in the Polish newspaper *Lad*), a 1987 list of Latin-rite parishes throughout the USSR outside Lithuania, and a collection of documents on the situation of German and Polish Catholics in the diaspora communities of Siberia and Central Asia. The well-known memoirs by Fr Wladyslaw Bukowski and those of an anonymous Polish Catholic woman from 1980 are quoted, as well as the previously-unpublished memoirs of Fr Michael Köhler. He was parish priest in Frunze in Kirgizia from 1969 to his death in 1983. These 18-pages were dictated shortly before his diamond jubilee in 1981. His remarks show why Fr Köhler was not always popular among fellow Central Asian priests. He speaks of his hostility to innovation in liturgical practice, his scorn of Russian-language masses and his belief that some parishes would be better off with no priest at all than with the priests (mostly Polish or Lithuanian) they had. Nor does he explain his reluctance to resume pastoral work in the 1960s after, by his own admission, 23 years of inactivity as a priest.

There could have been more information in this volume about the church in Belorussia which, after more than 40 years of often severe restrictions is at last coming into its own, or about the situation of Hungarian Catholics in Transcarpathia, recently visited by the Hungarian primate, Cardinal Paskai. This book was produced before that visit was announced, but something could have been said about these estimated 60,000 Catholics. Overall, this is a commendable volume which should make western Catholics more aware of the situation of their co-religionists in the Soviet Union.

GEORGE HARRISON

*Tserkva v Ruyini — Church in Ruins.**The Demise of Ukrainian Churches in the Eparchy of Peremyshl*

by Oleh Wolodymyr Iwanusiw, Shevchenko Scientific Society

Ukrainian Studies Volume 56. Ontario: St Sophia Religious

Association of Ukrainian Catholics in Canada, 1987.

Parallel text in English and Ukrainian. 350 pp.

If one picture is worth a thousand words, this book is worth an encyclopedia. The author provides at least one picture and a brief history of virtually every Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church and chapel located within the present borders of Poland. Mr Iwanusiw is a native of the region — both his grandfathers were priests who served here — and he has returned several times in the past 20 years. The book includes a separate map of the Eparchy of Peremyshl (including the Lemko Apostolic Exarchate), showing the exact location of every Ukrainian Greek-Catholic church and chapel. We had the pleasure of accompanying Mr Iwanusiw on an excursion through the Greek-Catholic sections of Poland, and can testify that our author knows every road and every village.

Anyone interested in religion in Poland, in the Ukrainian churches, or indeed in the history of the Eastern Slavs, must study this book. It is unlikely that any other past or present diocese in Eastern Europe is so well documented — certainly not in English. The book is a labour of love, with beautiful photographs and meticulous attention to detail.

The book documents what was done not only to these church edifices, but to the entire community of people who built these churches and worshipped in them. Roman Catholic Poles and Greek-Catholic Ukrainians have had a difficult relationship for centuries.

In principle the Greek-Catholic Churches (sometimes called the Uniate Churches) exist to bring the Eastern Orthodox theology, tradition, liturgy and Christian form of living into communion with the Catholic Church. In the view of Polish Roman Catholicism, however, the Uniate Church should be a temporary phenomenon, whose purpose is rather to transform Ukrainian Orthodox Christians into Polish Roman Catholics.

Twice in the last 50 years the Polish Roman Catholic Church has used state power against the Ukrainian churches. In the late 1930s, they forcibly converted 150 Ukrainian Orthodox churches — parishioners and all — in Poland into Roman Catholic churches (over the strong, public protest of Andrew Sheptytsky, the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan). In 1947, purportedly in response to the assassination of a government official, the Poles deported virtually all the

Greek-Catholics (who were mostly ethnic Ukrainians). The events of this deportation are described in the historical background given in the book. It is impossible to determine how many people were violently removed from their family homes and resettled in western Poland (in the lands Poland had gained from Germany), but their present-day descendants number well over 500,000 people. Over the intervening years, rather more than 10,000 have succeeded in returning to their ancestral homes. Poland is not friendly to minority groups, and these people still suffer serious discrimination.

They left behind their church buildings. Out of 689 churches, more than half no longer exist or are beyond repair; 245 have been appropriated by the Polish Roman Catholic Church (without a penny of recompense to the Greek-Catholics); 61 are closed or used for purely secular purposes; 28 are used by the Eastern Orthodox Church, and nine are museums.

The Greek-Catholic Church is not officially recognised by the Polish government. After much struggle, it has been possible to organise about 40 'mass-stations' in the western territories where the Greek-Catholics were resettled. The Greek-Catholic priests in these places usually do not have the rights of pastors, but may celebrate the Divine Liturgy for the faithful (these services are often attended by very large congregations).

The Greek-Catholic eparchy (diocese) of Peremyshl is the oldest continuously functioning Greek-Catholic diocese in the Slavic territories; it is believed to have been founded by Saints Cyril and Methodius. There has been no bishop since 1947; the Polish Roman Catholic Church has appropriated the Greek-Catholic Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Peremyshl (removing all the furnishings), and the Polish Roman Catholic hierarchy refuses to recognise the Greek-Catholic Vicar Capitular, Mitred Archbishop Stephen Dziubyna. The Greek-Catholics of Peremyshl are allowed one Divine Liturgy on Sunday afternoons in the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church.

In the increasing effort to regain legal status for the Greek-Catholics in Poland, and to provide the Eparchy of Peremyshl with a residential bishop, as well as organising one or more eparchies for the Greek-Catholics in the rest of Poland, one encounters a constant attempt by the Polish government and the Polish Roman Catholic Church to shift the onus from one to the other — the civil authorities claim that the Roman Catholic Church is at fault, while the church authorities insist that the government is responsible.

The Roman Catholic Church clearly benefits from the disabilities of the Greek-Catholics — and since the same Roman Catholic Church did the same thing under the pre-war Polish government, which was not at all socialist or dominated by the Soviet Union, one is entitled to

conclude that the Polish Roman Catholic Church must bear the larger share of the responsibility.

Defenders of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholics in the USSR are rightly grieved that the Moscow Patriarchate is profiting by the persecution of fellow Christians, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholics. But what is to be said at the realisation that the Polish Roman Catholic Church is profiting by the persecution of fellow Catholics?

SERGE R. KELEHER

Áron Márton a lelkiismeret apostola (Áron Márton, the Apostle of Conscience) compiled by László Virt.
Budapest: Ecclesia, 1988. Paperback, 262 pp., 85 Ft.

In 1952 Áron Márton, Roman Catholic Bishop of Transylvania, was believed to have died in prison. Jeromos Szalay's book *Vérités sur l'Europe centrale*, published that year in Paris, was based on his life and career and referred to him as a martyr. It was an unsatisfactory work, in which the biography of a remarkable man was submerged beneath a flood of wider political material. It was also premature, for Bishop Márton lived for a further 28 years, resigning his office shortly before his death in 1980 at the age of 84.

László Virt's book, consisting of a brief biography and a selection of addresses, essays and pastoral letters, sets the record straight. It reveals the true greatness of a much-loved and saintly man who guided his large diocese through troubled times with firmness and compassion based on his own rock-solid faith.

Áron Márton came from Székely peasant stock. He went straight from school into the army during the First World War and was wounded on the Italian front. He returned to Transylvania to study for the priesthood and was ordained in 1924, by which time his homeland had become part of Romania and the Roman Catholic Hungarians found themselves in a minority. Áron Márton served briefly in country parishes before becoming secretary to the bishop and then university chaplain in Cluj (Kolozsvár). There his powerful sermons and essays on the importance of education gained him widespread recognition. He was consecrated bishop in 1939 after the sudden death of his predecessor and was immediately plunged into a series of political problems: the spread of fascism, the outbreak of war, the temporary division of his see between Hungary and Romania, and the arrival of communism. He faced these challenges resolutely. Aware from childhood of the problem of living in a country inhabited by three nationalities and divided both politically

and ecclesiastically, he mastered Romanian and German and encouraged cooperation between the churches. He did not indulge in the irredentism of the age, and when his diocese was divided he chose to remain with the minority of his flock in Alba Iulia (Gyulafehérvár), the ancient seat of the Bishops of Transylvania. When in 1944 he crossed the frontier to ordain priests he delivered a powerful protest against the deportation of the Jews and inaugurated ecumenical action there to save them.

After the war Bishop Márton initiated a successful mission to revive the badly-shaken faith of his fellow-Catholics. And with political change on the horizon he delivered some forthright addresses on the nature of true democracy and its demands on leaders and people, linking these with Christian responsibility in social concerns. All these activities are well illustrated in László Virt's book. Bishop Márton's language is crystal-clear and direct, allowing no possibility of misinterpretation.

In 1949 he was imprisoned. Both in prison and at hard labour in the mines he refused to claim any privileges, and news of his exemplary fortitude spread through the large prison population. He was suddenly released in 1955 and with characteristic energy immediately issued a call to the renewal of spiritual life throughout his sadly-disturbed diocese. In 1956 he was placed under virtual house-arrest, restricted to the few paces between his residence and the cathedral and not allowed to enter the neighbouring theological seminary which was one of his main interests. But he continued to administer his diocese and receive visitors in large numbers. He regained his freedom in 1967, by which time his health was seriously impaired. Nevertheless Bishop Márton continued to serve his people with unabated zeal till his request to resign was granted. His pastoral letter of farewell in 1980 is a call for deeper faith and renewal of family and community life, an echo of his first such letter over 40 years previously.

László Virt's sympathetic biography and admirable selection of documents, all faithfully reproduced from earlier originals except for the inadvertent omission of a phrase on page 188, constitute a moving tribute to one of the outstanding church leaders of our age. It is enhanced by 60 pages of illustrations depicting scenes from Bishop Márton's life, including some rare pictures of church interiors from 'the eastern strongholds of Gothic architecture', as the captions declare.

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