

appealed to him: all his life he had wanted to suffer, if by so doing he could save others from suffering'. On the 28th he was anointed; and during the night, while apparently asleep, he began to talk, 'without moving or opening his eyes, in a steady voice that seemed to come from far away. He said that he was going to die, that these were his last words, and that his voice would not again be heard until the day of judgment, when he would be listened to by those who before were unwilling to hear him; he spoke of divine judgment and of God's boundless mercy; and he as it were bequeathed his spirit to his flock'. Next morning he seemed much better; but two days later there was a relapse, and on Wednesday, October 19/November 1, when only his man-servant was present, Andrew Szepticky died.

For three days an unbroken stream of people came to look their last on the face of the Father Metropolitan as his body lay in the great cathedral church of St George the Victorious, built by his kinsman the Metropolitan Leo Szepticky in 1779. 'I was struck', says the observer already quoted, 'by the atmosphere of peace and a sort of quiet joy among those who were about him. It was shared, when the first shock was over, even by his brother, the Higumen Clement, who loved him so tenderly, and the monk Afanasy, who had been at his side for fifteen years. Life had been a heavy cross for Metropolitan Andrew; and "We ought to be glad", they said, "he has now got what he longed for—freedom and peace". And throughout the time that his body lay in the cathedral a spirit of brotherhood reigned among those gathered in the house and the church; they were consoling days of common life together'. On November 5 the streets of Lvov were thronged for the funeral.

It is said that Marshal Stalin sent a wreath.

Six months later Mgr Szepticky's successor, the Metropolitan Joseph Slipy, was arrested and deported, together with his suffragan and assistant bishops.

DONALD ATTWATER.

RUSSIAN CHRISTIANITY TO-DAY

THESE are at present two main parties among the Russian Orthodox emigrés. Some of them are in communion with the Patriarch of Moscow and accept his jurisdiction, while the rest stand aloof. The latter are suspicious of the apparently close connection between the Patriarch and the atheistic Soviet Government. The former are impelled by a sort of spiritual patriotism to give their

allegiance to the Church of their homeland, no matter what its relations with the Kremlin. Either decision has often been taken only after much prayer and searching of the heart, and may have caused much bitterness.

A number of those who have submitted to the authority of the Patriarch of Moscow have been allowed to visit the Soviet Union on business connected with the administration of the emigré churches. After staying for periods varying from a few weeks to several months, they have returned to take up again their normal work in France or Belgium. Some of them are priests, others laymen. Most of them have been born in Russia but have lived since the Revolution in Western European cities, which makes their description of the conditions among Christians in the Soviet Union all the more interesting. Most of them are still much attached to their homeland and are very proud of the victories which Russia won during the war, though this does not entail approval of all that the present Russian Government says and does. They are pleased to be able to demonstrate their solidarity with their people.

They speak of a religious revival in Russia, of churches packed to overflowing into the streets, of devout assistance at long Liturgies and Offices, of attendance at sermons and instructions lasting a full hour and more. In considering these manifestations of piety, however, it must be remembered that the number of churches open is small in comparison with pre-war conditions. Some of the old churches are situated in districts where religion has almost completely died out among the people, others have suffered damage and decay. Many of the new towns and villages, sprung up around mines, factories and collective farms, have as yet no churches. Consequently one church may serve a very wide area. It must also be remembered that the worship of the Church affords the ordinary Russian certain amenities which he cannot get anywhere else. The churches are warm and beautiful, and the Slav has always been a great lover of music. Many a worker shares his or her small area of floor in a crowded tenement with someone else, and may have to wait on the doorstep until the partner has gone out to work on a nightshift before going in to take some rest. A church solves the problem of where to go in the meantime. Living conditions in some parts of Russia are very hard, as they always have been, while in any country toil in field or factory becomes terribly monotonous. To the tired and jaded the beauty and richness of the Slavonic liturgy is a tremendous consolation. It is not correct, however, to explain away the Russian religious revival by such considerations. It is not a form of escapism. We are justly indignant when the devotion of medieval Catholic Europe

receives such treatment. But the consideration of such economic incentives does help to render credible the astonishing endurance shown by so many devout Russians who stand patiently for four hours on end in a church packed like a railway carriage in war-time so that there is not even room to bow or make the sign of the cross. Such devotion may be described as escapism, as is sometimes the devotion of our own forebears, but the realisation that we have here no abiding city is a form of escapism which we are all bound to cultivate. Many Russians are very much aware that at the liturgy they are very near to that other world which will endure for all eternity.

Confessions and Communion are more frequent than of old, when the vast majority approached the sacraments only during Lent, though with a long and careful preparation. Owing to the shortage of priests some rather unusual forms of 'mass confession' have been introduced. A priest recites a list of the more usual sins to which mankind is prone, while the penitents, standing before him, assent in chorus to those of which they have been guilty. Then, coming up to receive absolution individually, each one confesses secretly any sins not among those read out. The procedure is not such an innovation as the Western reader might think, since the Orthodox are accustomed to be questioned by the confessor rather than to come with their self-accusation already prepared. Formerly it was unusual to celebrate the liturgy (by which in the East is meant always the Eucharistic liturgy; 'Mass' signifies the Eucharist in the Latin rite) once only on Sundays and greater feasts. Now, when many feasts are not recognised as holidays by the State, and some have even to work on Sundays, three liturgies may be celebrated, one very early for those working on day shifts, and the others later on in the morning for those who have been on night duty or for the housewives. The vigil service, consisting of vespers and lauds, often begins very late at night, and is followed by a sermon, or immediately by the Liturgy, which is thus celebrated at midnight or very early in the morning. Sometimes the people assemble before the service and sing hymns, lingering on afterwards for the same purpose. There is no organ; hymn books are not provided, indeed they do not exist. Some one will start a well known hymn or psalm, and it will be taken up by everyone present and harmonised quite spontaneously by many.

The sermons are mainly devoted to doctrinal instruction. It must be remembered that religion has been banished from the schools, in some of which children are said to be taught that 'man was created in the image and form of a monkey'. Thus the problem of religious instruction has to be met and solved within the four walls of the

church. Anything given outside might well be considered as 'religious propaganda', which is illegal, as also are services outside the churches. Children have special arrangements made for them, being brought up to the front of the churches where they can see and hear all that is going on. There is, of course, a great shortage of priests. Some of the older men who have offered themselves have been ordained after a fairly short period of training, but many of these had proved their faith and constancy during the days of persecution. For the younger men the traditional seminary training is available, but the bishops are handicapped by a lack of professors and have been forced to appeal to the emigrés and to foreign Orthodox theologians to come to their aid. Nor can they presume a considerable knowledge of the Scriptures, Liturgy and Church Slavonic in their first-year pupils, as was possible in the old days. Such things are no longer taught in the secondary schools, while even Latin and Greek have lost their ancient primacy. Those young men only are accepted who have shown proof of constancy in the practice of their religion. Some of the old priests, who gave up their pastoral work during the days of persecution, have now resumed their former duties, and sometimes show themselves a little rusty in the observance of the rubrics. Many Russians are well versed in these, as well as being steeped in the *spirit* of Liturgical prayer, with the result that priests are sometimes prompted or held up and corrected by their indignant flocks, an event rare in Western Christendom. There seems as a rule to be no difficulty raised about a young man leaving his work to go to the seminary, though quite naturally objections have sometimes been raised when a trained technician of some experience has wanted to be released. Recruits for the priesthood seem to come from all classes of the population, instead of from among the sons of the clergy only, as was usually the case in Imperial Russia.

The Church may now administer property as a moral person, and may hold money in the bank. Many of the buildings taken at the Revolution have now been lent to her 'without conditions and for an indefinite period'. The Church authorities may buy materials and hire labour to erect other buildings if permits can be obtained from the local officials. They may open printing presses for the production of liturgical books and factories for the manufacture of everything necessary for the celebration of divine service. To erect a parish at least twenty people are required. The parish priests and two or three of the faithful act as an executive committee. In case of irregularities being discovered in their administration, recourse may be had to the local Soviet or to the religious affairs department of the central government. A number of monasteries have been reopened,

and some have set themselves up as collective farms. Other monastic buildings are now used as seminaries, for it is hoped in time to be able to provide one for each diocese. Priests are, it seems, well treated in the matter of food. Rations in Russia differ in accordance with one's economic status. Priests are quite high on the list. Clerical dress is worn in many districts, and the faithful, meeting a priest they know, may even in public kiss his hand and seek his blessing.

One cannot discuss here the vexed question of the extent to which the Russian Church is being used as an instrument of Soviet policy. But the utterances of the Russian hierarchy during the war, their attacks on the Catholic Church, and their attitude towards the persecution of the Catholics of Eastern Rite in the Ukraine, must not in themselves be taken as an indication that the bishops take their orders in such matters from the Soviet Government. They resented as much as the bishops of France and Belgium the invasion of their country by the Germans. If they expressed their resentment more directly than did the Western bishops, it was the same as that of their predecessors in the days of Napoleon and the 'Grande Armée'. As for their mistrust of Catholicism, it is unfortunately deep rooted in the past. It dates back at least to the days when a Polish army brought a pretender to Moscow and set him upon the throne. He had the Pope's blessing upon his exploits and there was a Jesuit mission to work for the union of the Russian Church with Rome as part of his programme. The whole story may be read in the fascinating pages of Father Pierling's 'Russia and the Holy See'. Many of those who organised the project were zealous and saintly men, but they do not seem to have realised the temper of Russian Christianity, so that the whole venture was foredoomed to failure. The later successes of the Jesuits, won mainly among the sceptical upper classes, for the education of whose sons Catherine the Great had kept the Fathers in Russia, further aroused the feelings of the people. When nearly twenty million Ukrainians passed over to communion with the Holy See, the Russians denounced the whole affair as a political move by the Jesuits and the imperialist Polish Government. It is perfectly true that the motives of some of the Ukrainian bishops who submitted to Rome on that occasion were not above suspicion. The sixteenth was a century of *politiques*. But the Russian Orthodox always regarded the 'Uniates' as renegades; victims of an insidious lure, the Eastern Rite in communion with Rome. Catholicism was always the 'religion of the Poles'. To this day there are many good Orthodox Russians, both inside the Soviet Union and among the emigrés, who think of the Catholic Church as a vast and superbly organised political power, directed by America,

the Fascists, or by any other bogey at the moment troubling them. They think that there is in preparation a huge army of Jesuits, in disguise of course, for the invasion and subjugation of Holy Russia. The work of chaplains to the Axis armies who gave the sacraments to Russian peasants who had been for years without them, encouraged such misconceptions. So too did the exploits of a few gallant souls who heard confessions over a glass of beer, worshipped in attics and evaded the pursuivants in a manner which would have done credit to the hero of one of Robert Hugh Benson's novels. But the majority of priests who work and pray for the union of Russia and Rome, and they are pitifully few in number, are scholarly men steeped in patristic and liturgical learning, or hard-worked schoolmasters whose only claims to be considered romantic and picturesque are their beards and their beautiful Slavonic Rite. Of course the Soviet Government does not discourage this mistrust of the Catholic Church; they may even share it with the Orthodox, while by their refusal to allow free contacts between Russians and foreigners they make impossible the work of dispelling it. But it would have been there even had the house of Romanoff never fallen. There has always been a tendency among Russians, who after all inhabit a sub-continent of the most diverse richness, to consider themselves self-sufficient. Russian Christianity, with her idea of Moscow as the Third Rome which shall never fail as she considers the Rome on the Tiber and the Rome on the Bosphorous to have failed, is particularly guilty of this form of spiritual pride. This is all the more surprising because of the intense personal humility of the devout Russian Christian. In spite of the long years of separation, it is true that Russian Christianity can give most abundantly of the things of the spirit, as those who have met her children in exile have learned. Some of these same children of the *diaspora* are beginning to realise that the Western Church is not a great social and political organisation, but something which belongs primarily to the world of the spirit. By living and studying together the Catholic and the Russian in exile are beginning to see the richness in each other's traditions of the life of the spirit. The separation of the East from the West was slow and almost imperceptible. Their coming together again will be like that. The process is just beginning in the cloisters, the lecture rooms and the apartments of Western Europe. But still the immense masses in the Slav lands are kept aloof by the dead weight of centuries of mistrust and misunderstanding and by the deliberate policy of an infidel power. The way through to them can be opened by prayer alone.

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