

Photo Archive 2003

The Baptism of Harley Peter Stanley Bateman (2 November 2003)



CRETE 2003

By Fr. Deacon John-Mark

The six intrepid missionaries of St Aidan's visited Crete in October in order to help spread the good news among the Greeks that there is now up and running another branch of the Orthodox Church in Great Britain. But there was only a limited success in this aspect of the trip, as the Cretans do not go much for English and we do not go much for Greek. One priest and two nuns were especially interested in our approach – after they had made sure we are under Patriarch Ignatios and not one of his rivals in Antioch.

As in Cyprus, it was obvious that many churches and some monasteries had been built or re-built since World War 2 and we were surprised just how many churches there were in each parish – and all of them Orthodox! We stayed in a small village outside Agios Nicholas called Kalo Chorio where there seemed to be six churches and we experienced great difficulty in finding out which was to be used for the Liturgy on the Sunday, and at what hour. The latter information never did emerge and we just arrived in time for the Little Entrance. Gradually the place filled up until there was a very large congregation composed of all age groups, but no one ventured to speak though they certainly stared at us. Three men formed the choir and one boy served – all in everyday attire – and there was no sermon. The Church, which appeared to be dedicated in honour of Christ, the High Priest, was modern but down on the shore-line was what was called a "Fisherman's Chapel" and after the Liturgy we visited this and a lady seemed to be preparing it for worship. This may have been the original church of the area.

During our week we visited two archaeological sites and a church museum of icons; we gained access to six different churches and three monasteries – more of both were closed, and we passed by plenty of others as well. The ancient sites were very different. Lato was a large town of the Doric civilization and Knossos is the largest of the Minoan palaces to be excavated. This was only done at the turn of the twentieth century by Sir Arthur Evans whose bust greets the thousands of visitors to the world-famous

site. It is a vast area and again you are forced to marvel at how such a giant undertaking was achieved by men and horses.

Near to Lato was a lovely village of Kritsa, said to be the largest in Crete, with the 12th century church of Panagia Kera with a central aisle dedicated to St Mary the Theotokos, and two later ones dedicated to St Antony and St Anna. The walls were covered with frescoes, sometimes one on top of another and one or two modern ones as well. We had to pay to get in so whether it is used for worship is not clear. For a while in mediaeval times, Crete was occupied by the Venetians and so most ancient churches have some reminders of western art-styles, and this was obvious at Kritsa.

Agios Nicholas is a sprawling city built on a hill-side and has a modern cathedral dedicated to the Holy Trinity with lots of modern frescoes on the walls. Fine, but it took us a whole morning to locate the wee chapel which gave the town its name. Eventually we stumbled on it -- in the grounds of an hotel, down near the original harbour. This St Nicholas was used for worship we learned but mostly for weddings which afterwards retired to the hotel for the meal. It was simple, cool and haunting and like many churches in Crete had a couple of what we would call "squints" at the east end above the altar. As in England, were these meant to allow lepers to take part in the worship from the outside? We never found out.

In Heraklion there is a modern Cathedral dedicated to St Minas, while the original Church of that name stands next to it. Also in the same square was a former monastic church of St Catherine which now houses a Museum of Icons and very interesting it was.

The Curator said he well remembered Manchester as he had a road accident here in the 1970s! That we escaped any road accident coming out of Heraklion that evening during the rush hour can only be ascribed to Divine intervention guiding our two able drivers.

The monastery of Phaneromeni, like so many places in Crete, is built into a steep hillside and the priest-leader (Igumenos) of the six monks graciously answered our ringing of the doorbell and showed us round, though he had little English. The centre of the original community was a large cave in which we were told was discovered an icon of the Blessed Virgin. We were able to go into the cave which is still used for worship and the atmosphere was, as they say, "mystagogic".

The two women's monasteries were very different. Kremasta had been a men's community which they eventually abandoned. Then in modern times it had been taken over by an enterprising Archimandrite Gabriel who fostered a women's community and they now lovingly tender the whole place and also his tomb in the grounds. A young nun showed us round both the old part and some new buildings, and an older one let us into the Church and the shop, and then showed us some beautiful embroidery which she had done as a covering for what appeared to be a western-type lady chapel altar.

One the last day we made a visit to the imposing Lassithi Plateau, 3,600 feet above sea level and surrounded by higher mountains still! It was an amazing place. On the way, we called at what is one of the most important religious centres in Crete, the women's monastery of Karthiotissa. The place was packed with visitors like ourselves and also two coach-loads of children. No one really knows how old it is and has a history of its famous icon being repeatedly stolen – the last time in 1982, but it is back there now.

Instead of one big car, we had to hire two small ones which were driven by Ron and Pam-Mary with their usual aplomb. Peter was tour guide with the map and the assistant drivers, Rita-Mary and Marina, put in their two-penn'orth from the back seats. It is only right to close by saying "thank you" to them all for looking after the grateful passenger -

Fr. Dn. John-Mark

Baptism of Yafet Henok (21 September 2003)



Parish Retreat at the Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Tolleshunt Knights, Essex

(17 - 20 September 2003)

[An Account of the Retreat by Dwynwen East](#)



Tolleshunt Knights Community House



Lyme Park Family Summer Day Out (25 August)





Horse Riding Trip to George and Judith Weymont's Farm (23 August)





PASCHA 2003

GREAT LENT PILGRIMAGE



Walsingham Pilgrimage, Great Lent 2003
(from left: Fr. John Mark, Brian Kelsall, Marina Moss, Barbara Kelsall)

Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ecumenical Pilgrimage
to Walsingham 1st-4th April 2003.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham was the venue for this pilgrimage. The Shrine is known as England's Nazareth and every year thousands of pilgrims gather there for worship and fellowship. It was at this place where it was reported that the Mother of God appeared to Lady Richeldis who lived at the manor in Walsingham which belonged at that time to St. Edward the Confessor.

The Shrine is a place where Kings, Nobles, merchants and the poor flocked to from 1061 – 1538. The last King to visit was Henry V 111 who, very soon after, was responsible for the destruction of the Shrine.

In 1934 Cardinal Bourne, Catholic Bishops and people restored the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham within the 14th Century Slipper Chapel. Fr. Hope Patten, vicar of Walsingham 1921-1958 was responsible for the restoration of the Shrine House and Anglicans erected an image of Our Lady of Walsingham in the Parish Church which was later moved to the new building erected for it in 1938.

There are many chapels surrounding the Shrine and in 1939 the Russian Orthodox consecrated their own chapel in the new Church of the Theotokos. The previous year there was an Orthodox presence led by Archbishop Nestor who celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the High Altar in the Shrine in the presence of the Bishop with the Prince Vladimir Galitzine acting as lector. This was Whit Monday 1938 when the extensions to the Shrine were solemnly blessed by Bishop O'Rorke assisted by thousands of pilgrims from all over England. Eastern Orthodox pilgrims also took part in the Golden Jubilee worship at the Shrine in 1981 on Oct. 15th.

During the 1950's an Orthodox priest lived in the village and held regular services in the Orthodox Chapel up the stairs in the Shrine. Many Russian Orthodox clergy and pilgrims visited the Shrine before the war and Anglicans often attended the Divine Liturgy before their own services started.

This brief history of the Shrine gives some insight into the degree of ecumenical interest and involvement over the years and the continued Orthodox presence at the Shrine and in the neighbouring village of Great Walsingham.

Eighty nine pilgrims attended this particular pilgrimage of whom 36 were Anglican, 27 Roman Catholic, 17 Orthodox and 9 Methodist/Presbyterian.

Natalya Pack, our pilgrim secretary, together with Bishop Kallistos Ware, were responsible for the organization of this April pilgrimage. Worship, talks and meditations were all excellent. Bishop Kallistos gave a talk – "Am I not Free?" in which he considered the freedom of Mary in saying 'Yes' to the Angel and later to her Son. Food for thought indeed. Fr. Stephen Platt and Fr. Anthony Clements led the meditations which were deeply devotional.

The highlights for us were the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at the Orthodox Parish Church of the Transfiguration at Great Walsingham and on the following day the Akathist to the Mother of God sung in the chapel upstairs in the Shrine. Both these services were very well attended. During the Akathis Hymn all the people crowding down the stairway and spilling over into the nave below, were joining in the singing as parts of the Hymn became familiar to them. These two services were both led by Bishop Kallistos himself whose powerful yet humble presence as a servant of God is always in evidence.

The Stations of the Cross led by Revd. Peter Marr brought back memories of my Anglican worship. This was followed by the sprinkling at the well in the Anglican Shrine Church and both these services were deeply devotional.

We also visited other local Parish Churches in the area where the North Folk people have worshipped for centuries. The Orthodox Church of S. Seraphim next to the Shrine is, by contrast, quite new. It was converted from the old railway station in 1967 and houses a room with icons and many other orthodox items for sale. The conversion is very well done. A place of peace and prayer.

The final morning we attended a Methodist service in the Chapel at Common Place in the village of Little Walsingham. This is the only Georgian Methodist Chapel still in use in East Anglia. The service was led by the Revd. Peter Collingwood with an address by the Revd. Dr. Leslie Griffiths. We were in the gallery and had a good view all round particularly appreciating the sight of Bishop Kallistos heartily singing the hymns. This was a fitting and rousing ending to our pilgrimage.

Altogether it was a memorable, prayerful, devotional four days with good (fast) food for the middle of Lent, excellent accommodation, interesting people to talk with and always many questions to answer from various people interested in our Orthodox faith. Thank you Natalya and Bishop Kallistos and others who made the pilgrimage such a success and gave us all the excuse, if we needed one, to visit again this sacred place and immerse ourselves in its holiness.

"To go on a pilgrimage is much trouble, little profit;

the King of Heaven whom thou seekest there, unless thou bring Him with thee, thou wilt not find."
Anon.