

A Pilgrimage to Turkey and The Sacred Island of Patmos



The mosaic icon of Christ Enthroned in the apse of the 11th century Church of the Theotokos Pammakaristos in Constantinople, which is today partially a mosque and a museum

May 22nd – June 4th, 2013

Wednesday, May 22nd Day 1 - Departure

Departure from St. Paul's at 2:30PM

Departure from LAX at 6:20PM - a direct flight from Los Angeles to Istanbul on Turkish Airlines Flight #10

Thursday, May 23rd Day 2 - Arrival in Constantinople/Istanbul

We arrived at the Ataturk International Airport at around 6PM, after a more than 12 hour flight. After receiving our Turkish visas, we picked up our luggage and were met by our guide, Arman Mosooglu, an Armenian Orthodox Christian. We were taken to our hotel on the European side of Istanbul near Taksim Square, in the heart of the city, and had dinner.

Turkey and Christianity

Most Christians in the United States don't know that next to Israel, it is the modern state of Turkey that contains some of the most revered sites in Biblical and later Christian history. Haran, the city to which Abraham and Sarah moved after having left Ur in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), as recorded in Genesis 11:26-32, is near the Euphrates River in southeastern Turkey. The Apostle Paul was born in the ancient Roman city of Tarsus in northern Turkey (*Acts 21:39*). It was in ancient Antioch, then a part of Syria but today a part of Turkey, where the followers of the Lord Jesus were first called Christians (*Acts 11:26*). The Book of Revelation (*1:4 – 3:22*) contains letters addressed to the seven ancient churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea – all sites in Turkey. All of the seven Ecumenical Councils so highly revered in the history of the Orthodox Church were held in ancient cities like Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon - all sites in Turkey. Some of the greatest post-Biblical saints of our Church were from what we today call Turkey: Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Nicholas of Myra, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Gregory of Nyssa, Macrina, Maximus the Confessor, Photius the Great, Theodore the Studite, Symeon the New Theologian and many others too numerous to mention here.

Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul

Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey with a population of nearly 14 million people. It is one of the world's great cities, the only city in the world to stretch across two continents, a city built on seven hills – like Rome - where the continents of Europe and Asia meet. The accidental archaeological discovery in 2008 of the remains of four human skeletons from the Neolithic Age indicates that this area was inhabited some 8,000 years ago. The founding of the ancient Greek city of Byzantium is usually dated to 667BC. King Byzas, the ruler of the ancient Greek city of Megara near Corinth, consulted the oracle at Delphi as to where to found a new city and was led to the straits of the Bosphorus where he established a colony on the European side and later called it Byzantium after himself. It grew to become an independent Greek city-state, one of the 40 most important such states in the ancient Greek world. Some 600 years later, in 64BC the city was subsumed into the Roman Empire and received the more Latinized name of Byzantium. In 324AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (272-337AD), who was responsible for the granting of legal status to Christianity after centuries of persecution, moved the

capital of his newly-won empire from Rome to the site of Byzantium and began a massive building program that culminated in the official consecration of the city on May 11, 330AD. From then on, Byzantium became known as Constantinople – Constantine’s city – and became the capital of the Christian Byzantine (or Eastern Roman) Empire for more than a thousand years. The city continued to be called Constantinople even throughout the Ottoman period until 1930, when Istanbul was officially adopted as the sole name of the city. Interestingly enough, the modern Turkish name “Istanbul” etymologically derives from the Medieval Greek phrase “εἰς τὴν Πόλιν” which means “to the City” – a reference that reflected its status as *the* major city in the area, much as people today near major urban centers like New York refer to it as “the City.” After the fall of the city to its Muslim conquerors on May 29, 1453, Istanbul became the capital of the sprawling Ottoman Empire and



the home of the sultans. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, the history of the modern Republic of Turkey is dominated by the figure of Mustafa Kemal Pasa (1881-1938), a military hero turned politician whose portrait hangs virtually everywhere in Turkey, where he is universally known as Atatürk or “the Father of the Turks.” After taking power he abolished the sultanate in 1922, declared Turkey a secular republic, encouraged western style dress (for example, the fez was banned), required all Turks to take a last name and replaced the Arabic alphabet with the

Latin alphabet for writing the Turkish language. In 1923, in order to move the institutions of the new republic he had established from Ottoman Istanbul, he chose the more centrally located Ankara to become the capital of the modern state of Turkey, located in what had been the ancient Roman province of Galatia – the ancient province to whose churches St. Paul wrote his *Letter to the Galatians*.



The skyline of modern Istanbul

Friday, May 24th Day 3 - Constantinople/Istanbul

In the morning, following breakfast at the hotel, we visited ***Ayia Sophia*** when it opened at 9AM, **the great Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom**, named not for the woman martyr named St. Sophia (whose memory is celebrated on September 17th) but for Christ, whom St. Paul called the Wisdom of God (*1 Corinthians 1:24*). Built in the 6th century by the Roman emperor Justinian (482-565AD), it is one of the world’s greatest architectural and spiritual masterpieces and was for nearly a

thousand years the largest church in the world and the heart of Orthodox Christianity within the Byzantine Empire.

We spent more than a couple of hours here to see everything – the upper galleries, the ancient mosaics – and get a feel for the overall beauty and structure of the building. So much of our history has taken place in this building. Father Steve first visited *Ayia Sophia* in 2008 and this is what he wrote in his journal at that time: "As a Greek Orthodox priest the one structure, the one building that I absolutely *had* to see was *Ayia Sophia*, the Church of the Holy Wisdom of God built by the Roman emperor Justinian more than 1400 years ago, the spiritual center of Byzantium. I entered the building from the west end, through the "Royal Doors," the main entrance used today by tourists - doors that at one time were reserved only for the Byzantine emperor and his entourage. How I wished the walls could talk, whispering to me what they've witnessed through so many centuries. This is where so much of our worship found its liturgical structure and architectural setting; where Christian emperors were crowned and patriarchs enthroned; where envoys



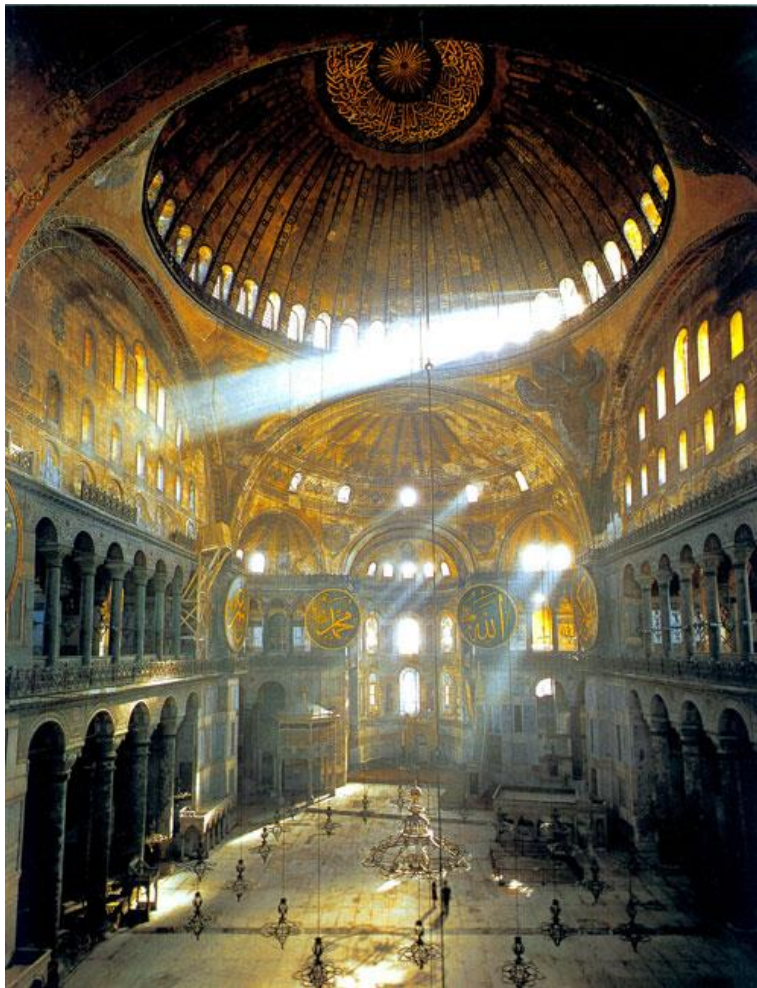
from Russia participated in worship and no longer knew if they "were in heaven or on earth," ultimately leading to the conversion of Prince Vladimir and Kievan Russia in the 10th century; where, in 1054, Cardinal Humbert, the papal envoy to Constantinople, laid a Bull of Excommunication on the altar excommunicating Patriarch Michael Cerularius and in some ways beginning the Great Schism between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches; where, in 1204, Latin Crusaders sacked the city and carried away the most precious relics of the Great Church, placing a prostitute on the patriarch's throne before cutting up it's great altar made of gold as a trophy, sealing the Great Schism between our two churches by their brutality; where Enrico Dandolo, the ruler of Venice who had ordered the Crusaders to sack the city, was buried; where, in 1453, at the last Liturgy to be celebrated beneath the beautiful 9th century mosaic of the Virgin Mother with the infant Christ on her lap high up in

the apse, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians received communion together before going out to die, defending the walls of the city against Muslim invaders; and where Sultan Mehmet, the Conqueror, entering the building through the same Royal Doorway that I had just walked through, commanded a *mullah* to issue the call to prayer, turning *Ayia Sophia* into a mosque for nearly 500 years, until it was turned into a museum by Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, the first president of the newly established Republic of Turkey, in 1935."

Exiled from the Russia he loved after the Bolshevik Revolution, the famous Russian Orthodox theologian Father Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944) visited *Ayia Sophia* in 1922 and later wrote about his experience of looking up into the central dome: "This heavenly dome, which portrays heaven bending to earth in order to embrace

it, gives expression in finite form to the infinite, to an all-embracing unity, to the stillness of eternity in the form of a work of art which, although belonging to this world, is a miracle of harmony." For Bulgakov, the very structure of the building was filled with a "grace, lightness and simplicity" that "enchants and convinces" in "an ocean of light" that "pours in from above and dominates the space below." For him, the building itself was a Liturgy carved in stone, a miracle of God's presence among His people.

The current *Ayia Sophia* stands on the site where two earlier churches, both eventually destroyed, once stood. The first church was a basilica built by the emperor Constantius II, the son of Constantine the Great, in 360AD, some thirty years after Constantinople had become the capital of the Roman Empire. This first church was the cathedral of St. John Chrysostom and was destroyed during the riots that protested his exile by the emperor Arcadius and his wife Eudoxia in 404AD. A second *Ayia Sophia* was built by the emperor Theodosius II in 405AD. A hundred years later, in 532AD, during the reign of the emperor Justinian, this church was burned down during the Nika riots which resulted in the deaths of more than 30,000 people. The inner grounds of *Ayia Sophia* are still today filled with some stone remains of these first two churches to occupy the site.



On February 23, 532 – only a few days after the destruction of the second basilica – Justinian decided to build a third and entirely different basilica, far larger and more majestic than its two predecessors. Justinian chose the engineer and mathematician Anthemius of Tralles and the physicist Isidore of Miletus to be the primary architects of his new cathedral and under their direction more than 10,000 stonemasons, bricklayers, sculptors, painters, mosaic artists and workers labored around the clock for five years to complete *Ayia Sophia*. Justinian had materials brought from all over the Empire to be used in its construction: Hellenistic columns from the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus; porphyry from Egypt; green and white marble from Thessaly in northern Greece and yellow stone from Syria. But its primary feature, stunning to

everyone who entered the building for the first time, was its spacious nave covered



*The interior of Ayia Sophia; the full name of this building is:
The Great Church of Christ, the Holy Wisdom of God*

by a massive central dome that is 18 stories high, the weight carried on pendentives, something that had never been done in such a monumental building before. For over 900 years, no building incorporated a floor space so vast under one roof. On December 27, 537 Justinian and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Euthymios, inaugurated the new cathedral by consecrating it for worship and then celebrating the Liturgy in it. It is said that Justinian, when he stepped inside the finished cathedral for the first time, compared himself to King Solomon – the man who had built the first Jewish Temple in Jerusalem some 900 years before Christ – and said: “Solomon, I have surpassed you!”

During the centuries that *Ayia Sophia* was used as a mosque, after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, many of its original Christian mosaic decorations depicting Christ and the saints were covered over with whitewash and plaster. Ironically, in some cases the plaster actually helped to preserve the iconography. For others, damage was inevitable.



Since the conversion of *Ayia Sophia* into a museum in 1935 by Ataturk, the painstaking task of restoring the basilica to its original state and uncovering its Christian art has begun. This has sometimes proved to be controversial and there are many in Turkey today who would like to see *Ayia Sophia* turned back into a mosque, a position once espoused openly by the current Prime Minister, Recep Erdogan. In fact, only last year - on May 26, 2012 - several thousand Muslim protesters knelt in prayer in the park near *Ayia Sophia*, calling for its conversion back to a mosque, part of the current conflict in Turkey between a resurgent Islam and those who wish to remain faithful to Ataturk's vision of a modern, secular state.

At the base of the dome, between intersecting arches, one can now see the icons of the six-winged seraphim (Isaiah 6:1-4). The two icons of the seraphim nearest the eastern apse are from the 14th century and it was only in 2009 that the face of the seraph depicted on the left was uncovered by experts. It had been buried under 7 layers of plaster. The 19th century Ottoman additions of the eight 24-foot wide green medallions with bright golden Arabic calligraphy partially obscure the icons of the seraphim. The two medallions flanking the apse are painted with the names of Allah (on the right) and Mohammed (on the left).

It is the upper galleries of *Ayia Sophia* that hold its most famous mosaics: in particular, the *Deisis* (or “Entreaty”) mosaic of Christ, flanked by the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist, is today one of the most famous artistic images of Christ in the world. Probably from the 13th century – it was created sometime after 1261, when the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Paleologos re-took the city after 57 years of Crusader occupation. Over 19 feet wide and nearly 14 feet tall, this is an unrivalled mosaic masterpiece. In 1931 Thomas Whittemore led a team of

archaeologists, historians and craftsmen on behalf of the Byzantine Institute in America to begin uncovering and restoring the mosaics of *Ayia Sophia*. It took a year just to remove the plaster that had been used to cover the *Deisis* mosaic over and another four years before the restoration was complete. Unfortunately, as can be seen below, much of the mosaic has been lost to the vicissitudes of history.



In preserving *Ayia Sophia* and its treasures for future generations, there are the obvious challenges of leaks, cracks and the centuries of neglect – one of the reasons for the ever-present scaffolding inside the nave of the building over the past two decades. “For months at a time you don’t see anybody working,” said Zeynep Ahunbay, a professor of architecture at Istanbul Technical University in a 2008 interview with *Smithsonian Magazine*. She directed a partial restoration of *Ayia Sophia*’s exterior in the 1990’s and is considered by many to be the building’s



guardian angel. “One year there is a budget and the next year there is none. We need a permanent restoration staff, conservators for the mosaics, frescoes and masonry, and we need to have them continually at work.” As our guide Arman informed us, he has never seen people working in *Ayia Sophia* in spite of all the scaffolding that might lead someone to think otherwise. Several attempts to finance large scale restoration with funds from abroad – mostly America and Western Europe - have

been stymied by Turkish suspicion of foreigners, a problem that was only made worse by the war in Iraq. But perhaps the greatest danger to *Ayia Sophia*’s future is the fact that Istanbul sits on a geologic fault line between the continents of Europe and Asia and the seismic danger of a serious earthquake is unfortunately very real.

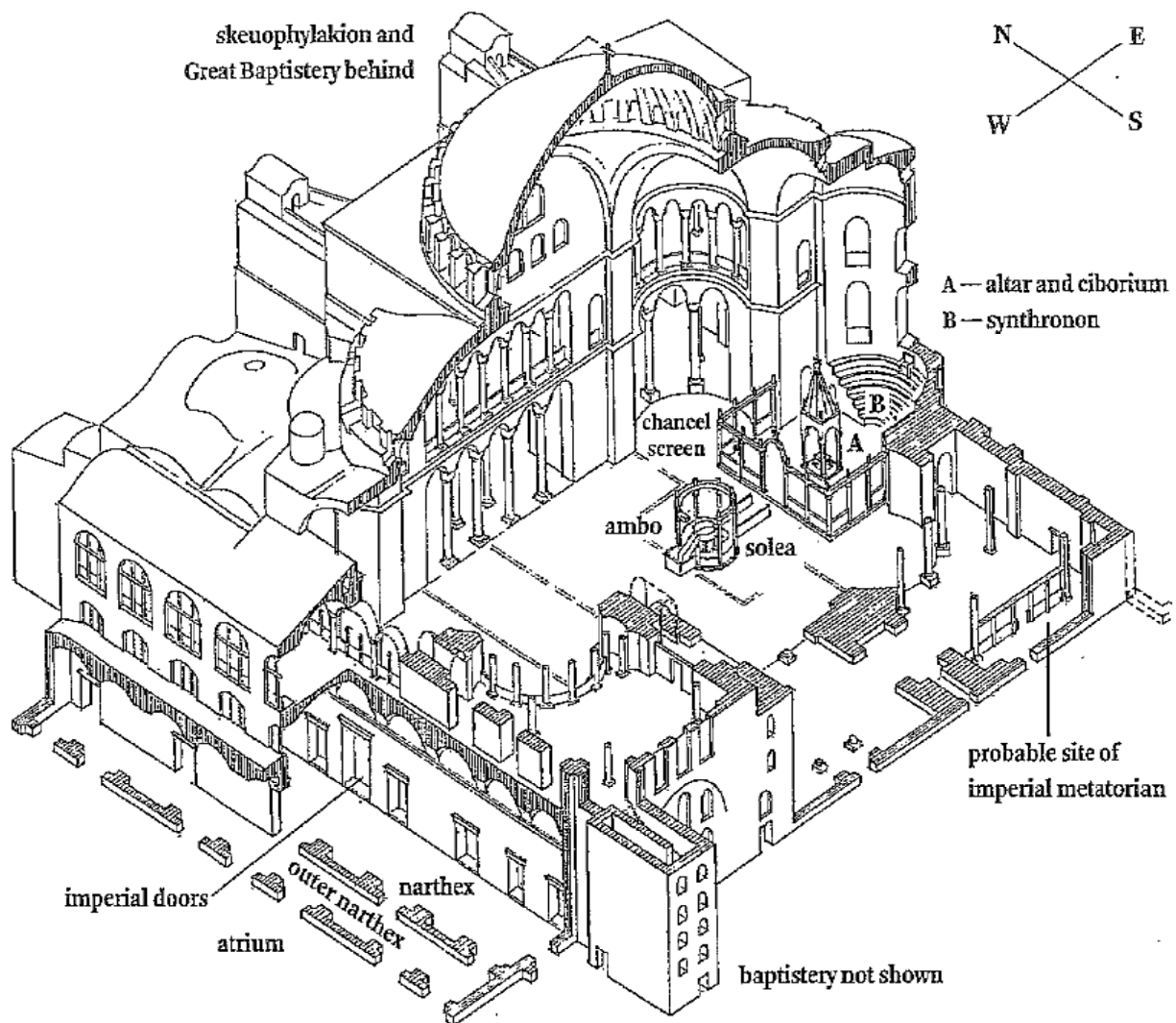


*Restoration of the mosaics in the upper gallery during the 1930's.
The mosaic on the left is of St. John Chrysostom*



*On the left, an 11th century mosaic of Christ, flanked on either side
by the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (c. 1000-1055) and his wife Zoe.*

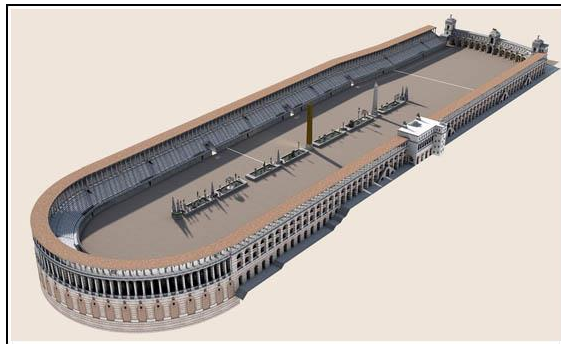
*On the right, a 12th century mosaic of the Theotokos
with the emperor John Comnenus (1087-1143) and his wife Irene.*



Above is an artist's rendering of the interior of the Great Church of Christ, the Holy Wisdom of God, shortly after it was built in the 6th century, based on various descriptions of the building that have survived from that period. Please note the positioning of the *ambon* – or pulpit, as we would say today – in the center of the Church. It is from the *ambon* that all of the readings of Scripture would have been done and the main chanter would have led the people in singing various parts of the Liturgy and other services. The *solea* is that space between the *ambon* and the altar area. Although the altar area is enclosed, please note that there is no *iconostasis* as we understand it today. Note also that the altar, which was made of gold, is covered by a silver *ciborium* which is a free-standing canopy supported by columns. In Italian this came to be called a *baldacchino*, the most famous of which was done by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) for St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

Buried beneath the busy streets of the modern city, and only a few hundred yards from *Ayia Sophia*, we next visited the largest of the more than 300 underground cisterns in Istanbul, called the **Basilica Cistern** or, in Turkish, Yerebatansaray – the Underground Palace. Built by slave labor during the reign of the emperor Justinian in 532AD to provide water for the city when it was under siege by its many enemies, the cathedral-sized cistern can hold as much as 2.8 million cubic feet of water. Located in the northwest corner of the cistern are two columns at the base of which are reused stone blocks carved with the visage of Medusa on them: one Medusa head is placed sideways and the other is upside down. For a century after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans did not know of the cistern's existence. Today the cistern is kept virtually empty with only a few feet of water lining the bottom and is most often used for concerts and laser light shows, as well as being a tourist attraction. It also provided the backdrop for a scene in the 1963 James Bond film *From Russia with Love*.

After emerging from the cistern, we walked back toward *Ayia Sophia*, to what is



today called **Sultan Ahmet Square**, which is today what's left of the ancient **Roman/Byzantine Hippodrome**, which at one time was a massive U-shaped stadium for horse and chariot racing that was rebuilt and enlarged in the 4th century by the emperor Constantine as part of the construction of his new capital. As big as any of today's football stadiums, some scholars believe that the Hippodrome could

accommodate as many as 100,000 people. Between races, people were entertained by dancers, musicians, acrobats and performing animals, providing a kind of circus atmosphere. The Hippodrome was not only a center of sports and entertainment, but also of politics as many of Constantinople's social classes as well as chariot teams were identified by their colors: the Blues, Greens, Reds and Whites.

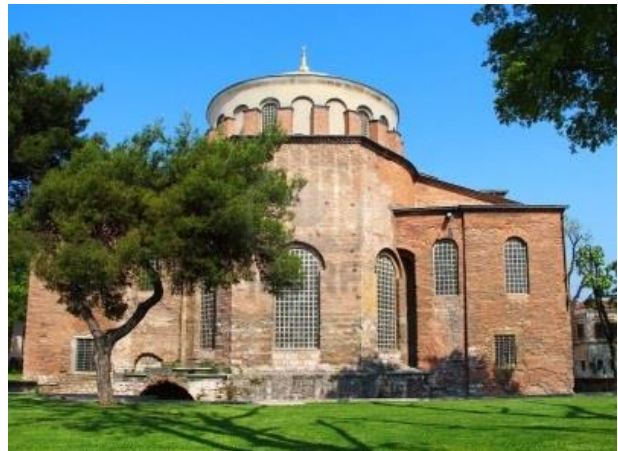


Spectators at the chariot races in the Hippodrome often came to blows – much like today's soccer hooligans – and the deadly Nika Revolt in 532AD that destroyed much of the city, led to more than 30,000 deaths and almost toppled the emperor Justinian, erupted after a chariot race. Today, almost nothing of the original structure survives. The last remaining stones of the Hippodrome's "bleachers" were used to build the Blue Mosque in the early 17th century by Sultan Ahmet I. All that's left are three ancient columns that once stood in the center of the Hippodrome: one from Egypt that was constructed in 1500BC to honor Pharaoh Thutmose III for his military achievements; the obelisk was brought to Constantinople from the Temple of Karnak in the upper Nile valley by the emperor Theodosius the Great at the end of the 4th century. An interesting aspect of this column is its

Roman/Byzantine base, carved with scenes on all four sides of the emperor Theodosius – who called the 2nd Ecumenical Council in 381AD –

watching the Hippodrome races with his family. The second is the Tripod of Plataea, called the Serpentine Column, which was brought to Constantinople by Constantine from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in Greece, constructed sometime around 475BC by 31 Greek city-states to commemorate their victory over the Persians at Plataea in 479BC. The top of this column was adorned with a large bowl made entirely of gold that was supported by three serpent heads. The golden bowl – together with the three serpent heads – was taken during the sack of the city by the Crusaders in 1204. In 1847, one of the serpent heads was found and today is in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum. The third column, once covered entirely with bronze, is today called the Walled Obelisk because only its brick core survived the sacking of the city in 1204. It was probably built in the 10th century AD by the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905-959AD).

Behind *Ayia Sophia*, as we entered the grounds of Topkapi Palace, is ***Ayia Erene*** or the Church of the Holy Peace of God – again, named for Christ (*Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 3:15*) and *not* St. Irene the 4th century martyr whose memory is celebrated on May 5th. It is the first Christian Church built in Constantinople, having been built by the emperor Constantine in the 4th century as part of establishing the new capital for his empire – although much of the present church dates from the time of Justinian who rebuilt the Church after much of the building was destroyed during the Nika riots in the mid-6th century. *Ayia Erene* played an important role in Christian history as it was, in the spring and early summer of 381AD, the site of the 2nd Ecumenical Council that was convened by the Christian emperor Theodosius (347-395AD). Initially presided over by St. Gregory the Theologian during his brief tenure as the Patriarch of Constantinople, this Ecumenical Council produced the Creed that we still recite at every Liturgy.



Unfortunately, we were unable to see the interior of *Ayia Erene* as it is now closed to the general public and is open only for special concerts of opera and classical music. As one of the few churches in Constantinople that was not turned into a mosque following the fall of the city, *Ayia Erene* preserves several features of Christian art and architecture not seen in the other Byzantine Christian Churches preserved in Istanbul. For example, in the apse one may still see the *synthronon*, five rows of theatre-style seats that were used by Christian clergy during services. In the apse above the *synthronon* is a large mosaic of a simple black cross on a gold background, dating from the period of the iconoclastic (literally, “icon-smashers”) controversy that almost ripped the Empire apart in the 8th century, when all icons and other figurative images were forbidden by imperial decree. This controversy, initiated by the emperor Leo III in 730AD who was at least partially influenced by the Islamic prohibition of figurative art, was settled by the 7th Ecumenical Council that was held in Nicea – modern Iznik which is today a suburb of Istanbul – in 787AD. (Parenthetically, in 2012, the Church in which this Council

took place, also named *Ayia Sophia*, a site of Christian tourism visited by 40,000 people in 2011 according to the local Iznik chamber of commerce, was turned into a mosque by the Turkish government.) The first Sunday of Great Lent, also known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, commemorates the 7th Ecumenical Council and the restoration of icons as part of the liturgical life of the Church. (On this day at St. Paul's a special service is done at the end of the Liturgy with the children and teachers of our Sunday school program processing around the interior of the church carrying their icons.)

Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 *Ayia Erene* was incorporated into Topkapi Palace, the residence of the sultan, and within the first decade after the fall of the city, was used – perhaps ironically, given its association with the peace of Christ – as an arsenal and warehouse for war booty. During the reign of Sultan Ahmet III (1703-1730) it was used as a weapons museum. From 1908 to 1978 it was used as a military museum before being turned over to the Turkish Ministry of Culture that now uses it primarily for concerts.

Just beyond and behind *Ayia Erene* is the **Archaeological Museum** whose collection of artifacts spans some 5,000 years of Turkish/Anatolian history. The collection here ranges from artifacts from the ancient city of Troy to 19th century pottery. Although we had hoped to see the wonderful late Roman/Byzantine collection housed here, the exhibit was unfortunately closed due to renovations. One of the things we were able to see was the Kadesh Treaty, the world's oldest surviving peace accord, carved in cuneiform on clay tablets, created in 1283BC to end the decades long war that raged between the ancient Hittites and Egyptians. Given its historical importance, a large copy of this treaty is displayed at the United Nations in New York.

Topkapi Palace - the primary residence of the sultans, the location of the sultan's harem and the seat of government for the Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years, from 1465 to 1856 - is just behind *Ayia Sophia* and commands a wonderful view of the Bosphorus Straits, the Golden Horn (considered to be one of the world's greatest natural harbors) and the Sea of Marmara. It was Sultan Mehmet II (1432-1481) - called the Conqueror because of his conquest of Constantinople in 1453 – who ordered its construction atop the ruins of the ancient acropolis of Byzantium. Rather than a single building it was conceived as a series of pavilions contained by four enormous courtyards. The New Palace, as it was then called, opened its doors in 1465. Its name was changed to Topkapi Palace in the 19th century. "Topkapi" means "cannon door" and is a reference to one of the gates on the old Byzantine wall along the Sea of Marmara. In 1923 Topkapi Palace was converted into a museum by Ataturk, shortly after he abolished the sultanate.

The riches on display here were impossible to be taken in during the short time we were there. On display are Muslim and other art from all over the once sprawling Ottoman Empire that includes Japanese ceramics, glass and more than 10,000 pieces of priceless Chinese porcelain from the Sung, Yuan, Ming and Chi'ing dynasties, spanning almost a thousand years of Chinese history, from 960 to 1912. (How priceless is priceless, you may ask? A flask from the mid-14th century Yuan dynasty was recently purchased for \$5 million.) Items ranging from a perfectly



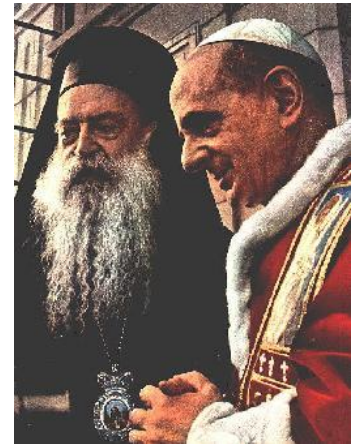
preserved red and gold silk kaftan worn by Mehmet the Conqueror in the 15th century to the amazing 86-carat spoon maker's diamond found in the 17th century may also be seen. The jeweled Topkapi dagger, originally intended to be a gift from the Ottoman sultan to the shah of Iran in 1741 - the theft of which was the plot around which the 1964 Peter Ustinov film *Topkapi* was centered - is also on display. A relic, one of the hands of St. John the Baptist - who is also venerated as a prophet in Islam - is housed in the Topkapi Palace. Also on display were a number of what can only be called *false* relics: the staff of Moses, the sword of King David and a host of others. But the most sacred treasures of Topkapi Palace for Muslims is the cloak once worn by the Prophet Mohammed and two of his swords. Visitors cannot actually enter the room in which the cloak and swords are stored but must view them from an open doorway while listening to verses of the Quran being chanted.

Saturday, May 25th Day 4 - Constantinople/Istanbul/Halki

In the morning after breakfast at the hotel, we visited **the Church of St. Mary in Blachernae** that was built in 1867 over the site of a mid-fifth century church near a spring of water that was, until it was destroyed by a fire in 1434, one of the most important shrines and pilgrimage sites in Constantinople. This church hosted one of the most famous icons of the Virgin Mary and Christ-child and it was carried around the city walls by Patriarch Sergius during the siege of the city by the Avars in 626AD and was believed to have saved the city from conquest: the khan of the Avars said that he had been frightened by the vision he had of a young woman walking the walls of the city. However, for all of its significance during the Byzantine era, the site was completely neglected during most of the Ottoman period. It is from this event in 626AD and this church that we get the hymn "Champion Leader" sung to honor the Virgin Theotokos during Great Lent on Friday evenings and Sundays during Liturgy: "To you, O Champion and Leader, we your city dedicate a feast of victory and thanksgiving to you, O Theotokos, as you have delivered us from all suffering. As one whose power is invincible, deliver us from all danger that we may cry out to you, hail O unwedded bride." The Akathist Hymn is sung here every Friday morning throughout the year. It is also here that pilgrims washing their faces in the waters of the spring can read this ancient palindrome believed to have first been written by St. Gregory the Theologian: Νίψον ἀνομήματα, μὴ μόναν ὄψιν, meaning: "Wash your transgressions, not just your face."

From here we visited **the Church of the Life-giving Spring in the Baloukli Monastery**. Outside the main church is the tomb of the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras (1886-1972) and we prayed a *Trisagion* for him. In 1930, Athenagoras was elected the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of North and South America and served as our Archbishop until 1948. It was during his 18-year tenure that the women's Philoptochos, the philanthropic arm of the Church was established. He also established an orphanage, St. Basil's Academy, and a seminary, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Elected Patriarch of Constantinople in 1948,

Athenagoras was very active in the ecumenical movement, seeking to establish better relationships among Christians. Most notable in this regard was his meeting with Pope Paul VI in Jerusalem in 1964, which resulted in the mutual lifting of the anathemas that had been part of a wall separating Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians since Cardinal Humbert had laid a Bull of Excommunication on the altar of *Ayia Sophia* in the summer of 1054AD. This symbolic gesture opened the possibility of authentic dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches for the first time in centuries. As a result, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians have spoken more to one another in the past 50 years than in the previous 500 as both churches seek, in the words of their *Common Declaration*, "to live afresh – for the greater good of souls and the coming of God's kingdom – the full communion of faith, brotherly harmony, and sacramental life which obtained between them throughout the first thousand years of the life of the Church."



The Life-Giving Spring of the Theotokos

This place/event is celebrated on the Friday of Bright Week

In 450AD the Roman empress Aelia Pulcheria (398-453AD), a devout Christian, began building a church to commemorate the miraculous appearance of the Virgin Mary near a spring whose waters were said to produce miraculous healings. It was situated outside the ancient city walls of Theodosius II at the foot of the sixth hill of Constantinople. After her death in 453, the shrine was completed by her husband, the emperor Marcian (392-457AD). The Christian Roman Emperor Leo I (401-474AD) expanded the shrine by adding two more buildings, one of them a chapel. Because the waters of this spring continued to cure the many sick people who came



to be healed of their diseases, the church built around it was called the Church of the Theotokos of the Life Giving Spring. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the church was destroyed by the Muslim conquerors of the city and its stones were used to build a mosque. A small chapel was allowed to remain at the site, with twenty-five steps that led down into the chapel that had been built around the spring, now surrounded by a small railing. But after the Greek Revolution in 1821, even this little chapel was destroyed by the Ottoman government and the spring was buried beneath the rubble. However, in 1833, the Ecumenical Patriarchate received permission to uncover the spring and rebuild the church. In 1835 the Ecumenical Patriarch Constantine II dedicated the church, once again, to the Theotokos. The church was again

destroyed on September 6, 1955 during anti-Christian riots and a much smaller edifice stands on the site today, marking the spot where the Life-Giving Spring of

the Theotokos still works miracles after more than 1500 years as a place of Christian pilgrimage.

In the early afternoon, we took an hour ferry ride from Istanbul to the island of Halki, the second largest of the Prince's Islands in the Sea of Marmara, the home of **the Halki Patriarchal School of Theology** that was established by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in October, 1844 and closed by the Turkish government in 1972. We took a horse and buggy ride to the top of the hill where the school is situated on the site of the Holy Trinity Monastery founded by St. Photius the Great (810-893AD) more than a thousand years ago and briefly toured the facilities. The opening of Halki Seminary has become a human rights issue that has received international attention in recent years. In October 1998, both houses of the United States Congress passed resolutions that supported the reopening of Halki. The European Union also raised the issue as part of its negotiations over Turkish entrance to the European Union. Former President Bill Clinton visited Halki on his trip to Turkey in 1999 and urged then Turkish President Süleyman Demirel to allow



the reopening of the school. On April 6, 2009, in a speech before the Turkish Parliament, President Barack Obama re-affirmed the need for Turkey to allow the reopening of the Halki seminary: "Freedom of religion and expression lead to a strong and vibrant civil society that only strengthens the state, which is why steps like reopening the Halki Seminary will send such an important signal

inside Turkey and beyond. An enduring commitment to the rule of law is the only way to achieve the security that comes from justice for all people." Nevertheless, to date the Seminary remains closed, and there is strong political opposition to reopening the Seminary from Turkey's nationalist and Islamist parties.

For Great Vespers on Saturday afternoon May 25th and Sunday morning, May 26th for Liturgy, we worshipped at the 17th century Cathedral of St. George, which is today the Cathedral of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. As a reminder of the persecution faced by Christians in Turkey under Muslim rule, at the entrance to the compound there are three gates, with the main gate in the center welded shut. These are the doors to the Patriarchal compound that have been sealed since the execution of St. Gregory V in 1821 by Sultan Mahmud II and the Ottoman government at the beginning of the Greek Revolution. The three crosses on this gate represent the patriarch and the two archbishops who were executed with him. An Anglican minister, the Rev. Walsh, who was in Constantinople at the time, described Patriarch Gregory V's death in his memoirs, published in London in 1826:

"The old man (he was close to eighty years old), was dragged under the gateway where the rope was passed through the staple that fastened the folding doors and was left to struggle in his robes in the agonies of death. His body, attenuated by abstinence and emaciated by age, had not sufficient weight to cause immediate death. He continued for a long time in pain which no friendly hand dared abridge and the darkness of night came on before his final convulsions were over." St. Gregory V's relics are today kept in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Athens.

While at St. George's we had the opportunity to venerate the relics of St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom that were returned by the late Pope John Paul II in 2004 after having been stolen from Constantinople some 800 years ago, during the sack of the city by the Crusaders in 1204. We also venerated relics of St. Basil the Great that were returned in 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI. We venerated the relics of St. Euphemia of Chalcedon, a young woman who was tortured and then executed for her Christian faith during the final, Empire-wide persecution of Christians in 305AD under the anti-Christian emperor Diocletian, after she had refused to offer sacrifice to Ares, the ancient god of war. Once Christianity became a legalized religion in the Roman Empire, a large cathedral was built in her honor over her grave. It was in this cathedral – that has since been destroyed – that the 4th Ecumenical Council met in Chalcedon, not far from modern Istanbul. Some of her relics are also kept in the Roman Catholic Church of St. Euphemia in Rovinj, Croatia. Her memory is celebrated by both Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians on September 16th. Nearby are the relics of the sainted Byzantine empress Theophano Martiniake, who died in 897AD and was the first wife of the emperor Leo VI, also called Leo "the Wise" in some accounts. After Leo took a mistress sometime in 890AD, St. Theophano – a well-educated woman who had always been a devoted Christian – decided to become a nun in 893AD, entering a monastery in the *Blachernae* section of Constantinople. Her memory is celebrated in the life of the Church on December 16th. And finally, the relics of St. Salome, one of the myrrh-bearing women remembered on the 3rd Sunday after *Pascha*, whom the Gospel of Mark describes as being one of the women present at the crucifixion of Christ (*Mark 15:40*) and one of the women who went to the tomb to anoint the body of the Lord Jesus and found it empty (*Mark 16:1*), are also one of the treasures of the Patriarchal Cathedral.



But perhaps the greatest treasure of the Cathedral of St. George is a piece of the column upon which Christ was bound and whipped before His crucifixion. Two other portions of this column are preserved: one in Jerusalem and the other in Rome. The two pieces of the column that are in Constantinople and Rome were brought back from Jerusalem by St. Helen, the mother of the emperor Constantine, after her pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 326AD.

Unfortunately, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was traveling in Slovakia as part of an anniversary celebration of the 9th century missionary work of St. Cyril and St. Methodius, the two brothers from Thessaloniki who are known in our Tradition as

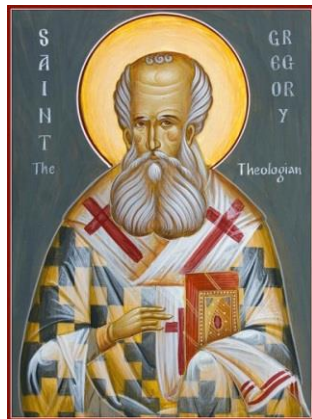
the Apostles to the Slavs, and so we did not have an opportunity to meet him. However, we were warmly welcomed by Deacon Nephon Tsimalis, an American from Chicago and a graduate of our Holy Cross Seminary outside Boston.

Earlier in the month news services all over the world reported that Turkish police had arrested two men in Ankara who were planning to assassinate Patriarch Bartholomew on May 29th, the 560th anniversary of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. There has been at least one previous assassination plot on Patriarch Bartholomew's life in recent years and the Patriarchate has had grenades and other explosive devices thrown over its walls, but so far no one has been killed. Frequent attacks on Christians have raised concerns among human rights groups around the world about the safety of religious minorities in Muslim Turkey, which has around 100,000 Christians out of a total population of 76 million people.



Sunday, May 26th Day 5 - Constantinople/Istanbul

On Sunday morning we attended Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. George, with Morning Prayer beginning at 8AM followed by the Liturgy at 9:30AM. The Cathedral, which is smaller than St. Paul's, was full with a congregation composed almost entirely of pilgrims from Greece, Russia, the Ukraine – and us! In Patriarch Bartholomew's absence, a priest and a deacon of the Patriarchate celebrated the Liturgy with Metropolitan Stefanos, the Patriarchal Vicar, standing at the episcopal throne. After Liturgy we had the opportunity to venerate the relics of the saints in the Cathedral for a final time, visit the tiny bookstore of the Patriarchate and as a group have coffee and sweets in the Patriarchal reception room with Metropolitan Stefanos and Deacon Nephon.



Who was St. Gregory the Theologian?

His memory is celebrated on January 25th and 30th

St. Gregory the Theologian – together with his lifelong friend St. Basil the Great and later, St. John Chrysostom – is celebrated as one of the three greatest teachers and preachers of the Christian faith in the history of the Church. He is also one of only three individuals – together with St. John, the author of the fourth Gospel, and St. Symeon the New Theologian – who bear the title "*the Theologian*" in the Orthodox Church. The son of Gregory, the 4th century Bishop of Nazianzus in Cappadocia (central Turkey), and his wife Nonna – both of whom are also remembered as saints – the young Gregory was educated in Caesarea, Alexandria and Athens. He taught rhetoric in Athens before returning to Asia Minor where he lived for a time as a monk in the hermitages of Pontus with St. Basil. It was during this period that he and Basil composed the first *Philokalia*, a collection of the sayings of Origen, the third century Alexandrian teacher, about

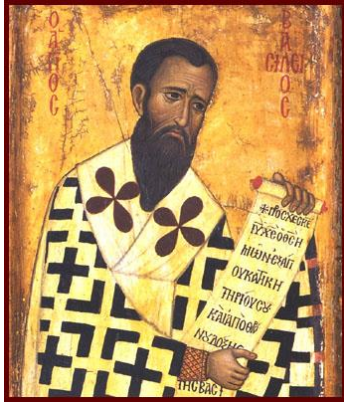
prayer and the disciplines of the spiritual life. He was ordained as a priest by his father and ultimately a bishop by St. Basil. As the patriarch of Constantinople, he was a staunch advocate of Trinitarian theology, insisting that the Lord Jesus was indeed the Word of God made flesh. A pivotal figure in the life of the Church, he presided over the Second Ecumenical Council in 381AD that proclaimed the divinity of the Holy Spirit and composed a brief summary of the Christian faith that we today call the Nicene Creed. We had just seen the Church of *Ayia Erene* where the 2nd Ecumenical Council had taken place on Friday afternoon.

Who was St. John Chrysostom?

His memory is celebrated on November 13th and January 30th



St. John Chrysostom (347-407AD), the 4th century Patriarch of Constantinople, was one of the most important saints and Fathers of the Church and is revered as a preacher, teacher and liturgist. He was so well known for his preaching that after his death he was given the title Χρυσόστομος, a word that means "the man with the golden mouth." During his sermons, his congregation would often burst into applause. Eloquent and uncompromising, he spoke out forcefully against political and clerical corruption, the conspicuous consumption of the wealthy, and for the needs of the poor and disenfranchised of his day. Preaching that "feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead," he was responsible for initiating ministry to Constantinople's poor, with the Church providing meals for several thousand people every day. More than 600 of his homilies have survived. He had a deep love for the Scriptures and, as Metropolitan Kallistos Ware once wrote, "he can truly be called an evangelical." His series of 55 sermons on the Acts of the Apostles are the only surviving commentary on that book of the Bible from the first 1,000 years of Christian history. His treatise *On the Priesthood* – which discusses the requirements and responsibilities of those who would seek to serve Christ and His Church as bishops, priests and deacons – is still read in Orthodox seminaries to this day. "When the priest calls upon the Holy Spirit," Chrysostom wrote, "angels attend him and the whole sanctuary is filled with the heavenly hosts." Although the Liturgy that bears his name has changed in a number of details over the centuries, it is certain that the central prayer of the Eucharistic anaphora – or prayer of gratitude and offering – goes back to him and is still the basis for most Orthodox Eucharistic worship all over the world to this day. John died in 407AD while still in exile for his preaching against the excesses and corruption of the imperial court. His final words were "Glory to God for everything!" His memory is celebrated by Orthodox Christians on November 13th each year; and by Roman Catholics, Anglicans and some Lutherans on September 13th.



Who was St. Basil the Great?

His memory is celebrated on January 1st and 30th

The impact of the vigorous personality and thought of St. Basil the Great (329-379AD) dominated the life of the Church in the 4th century in a way that few other figures did. An able ecclesiastical politician who was more than willing to challenge the secular Roman authorities if necessity demanded, a clear sighted dogmatic theologian whose book *On the Holy Spirit* was an important factor in leading to the 2nd Ecumenical Council in 381AD, a liturgical reformer whose *Liturgy of St. Basil* is still celebrated in the Orthodox Church to the present day, an organizer of social relief on a vast scale in an age when harshness and cruelty often seemed to reign supreme, he was also, first and foremost, a man engaged in living the monastic life. Black-bearded, with heavy eyebrows, glittering eyes, small lips pressed tightly together, Basil stares out from mosaics and icons found in churches in Greece, Constantinople, Mt. Athos, Russia and throughout the Orthodox world. Basil was born into an old Christian family of wealth and distinction in Caesarea (modern Kayseri) of Cappadocia (central Turkey) and educated in Constantinople and Athens. He had a strong sympathy for the poor and downtrodden. Becoming the bishop of Caesarea in 370AD, he established a large monastic complex, called the *Basilead*, that included a hospital for the sick, a hospice, an orphanage, a special building for the care of lepers, a soup kitchen and so much more that it came to be called a new town, a new Caesarea. Basil the Great – he wears the name well: a man of profound intellect and compassion for others who was deeply in love with God.

After leaving the Patriarchate, to save time before our flight to Cappadocia that evening, we decided not to visit the 13th century Church of St. Mary of the Mongols and instead visited the nearby **11th century Church dedicated to our Lady the Theotokos Pammakaristos, meaning our Lady "the All-blessed"**. Most historians and archaeologists date the original structure of the church to the reign of emperor Michael VII Doukas (1050-1090). The Church of the *Theotokos Pammakaristos* became the cathedral church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate a few years after the fall of the city to its Ottoman conquerors in 1453 and remained so until 1586. It was converted into a mosque in 1591 by Sultan Murat III who re-named it *Fethiye Camii* (meaning "the mosque of the conquest") to memorialize his conquest of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Today the building is both a functioning mosque and a museum. Most of the original architecture remains intact and in a small funeral chapel added for Michael Glabas Ducas – a former general -



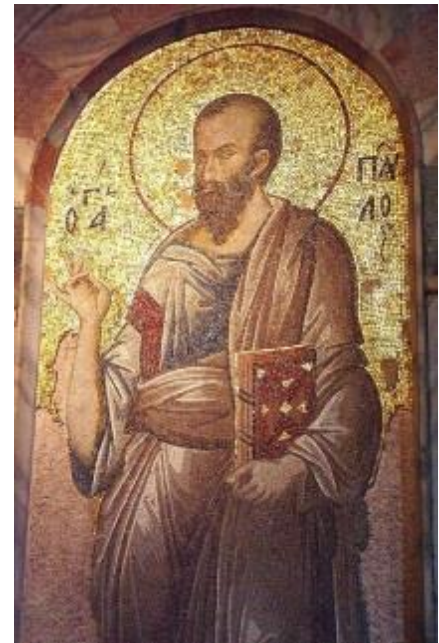
and his family in 1315 there are still a large number of beautiful mosaics dating from around 1320. Particularly striking is the icon of Christ *Pantokrator* or “the Ruler of All” in the apse of the chapel.

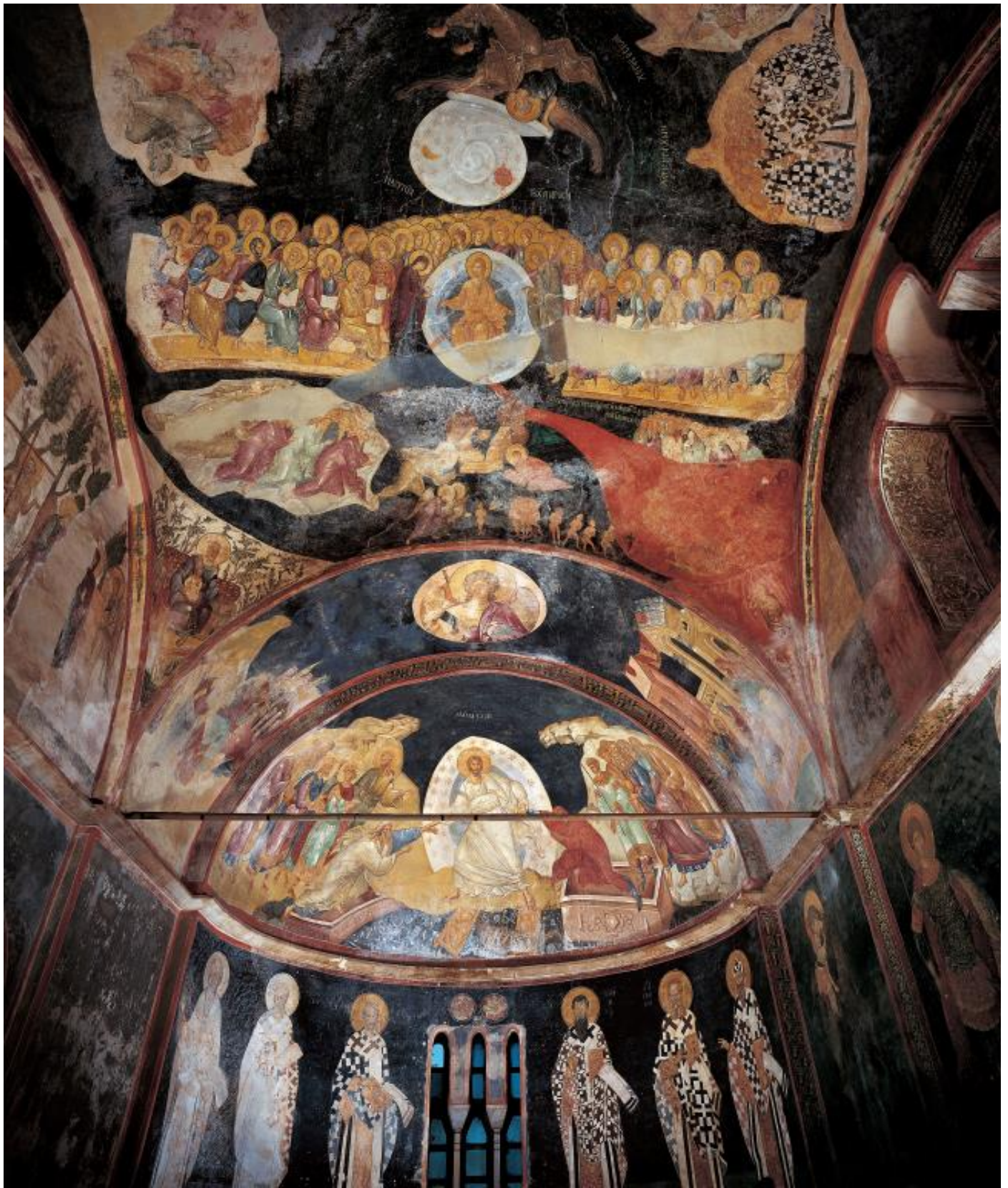


However, the most important place to see before we left for Cappadocia that evening was **the Church of our Savior in Chora, or “in the country.”** The original church that was built on this site in the 5th century stood outside the city walls that had been built by Constantine in the previous century and was thus considered to be “in the country.” Even after its incorporation into the city with the building of new city walls in 413-414AD by the emperor Theodosius II, it retained its name, *Chora*. The majority of the current

construction of the building dates from the last quarter of the 11th century when the church was rebuilt after being damaged by an earthquake by the mother-in-law of the emperor Alexios I Comnenus (1056-1118AD), Maria Dukaina. However, the amazing mosaics and frescoes outlining the life of Christ that we saw in this church date for the most part from 1315 to 1321, some 200 years later, and were commissioned by the very wealthy and powerful Byzantine statesman Theodore Metochites (1270-1332AD). In commissioning the iconography for the *Chora* Church Metochites said: “The mosaics and frescoes in the church show how God became a mortal on behalf of human beings.” Metochites described himself as a statesman by day and a scholar by night and eventually retired to the church he had endowed with such splendid artwork, spending the last two years of his life as a monk here.

About 50 years after the fall of the city to the Ottomans, Atık Ali Paşa - the Grand Vizier of Sultan Bayezid II - ordered the *Chora* Church converted into a mosque — *Kariye Camii*. Because of the prohibition against images in Islam, all of the mosaics and frescoes were covered over with a layer of plaster. This and frequent earthquakes in the region have taken their toll on the artwork. However, in 1948, the building ceased to be a functioning mosque when Thomas Whittemore and Paul A. Underwood, from the Byzantine Institute of America and the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies in Washington, D.C. that is affiliated with Harvard sponsored a program of artistic restoration. In 1958, the newly restored *Chora* Church was opened to the public as a museum — *Kariye Müzesi*. Art historians today consider the vivid frescoes and haunting mosaics of the Church of our Savior a masterpiece of iconography, the final flowering of Byzantine art before the fall of Constantinople.

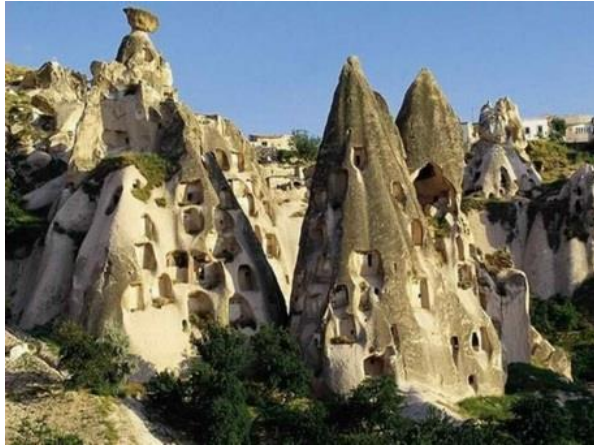




Part of the 14th century fresco iconography in the apse of the Church of our Savior in Chora with scenes of the Resurrection of Christ, the Last Judgment and various saints.

Monday, May 27th Day 6 - Cappadocia

After a short flight late Sunday afternoon, we landed in **Kayseri – the ancient Roman Caesarea – in Cappadocia**, the heartland of Turkey. From there we drove a little over an hour to reach our hotel. Cappadocia is a mountainous land, dominated by snow-capped Mount Erciyes, which towers to some 13,000 feet in height and was at one time an active volcano. It was the first sight that greeted us when we stepped out of the airport to board our bus. In ancient times Cappadocia was famous for its horses and the wry humor of its people, who had a reputation for toughness. Cappadocia, Karia and Crete were called "the three bad K's" – *tria*



kappa kakista in Greek – and the story was often told in Roman times of the viper that bit a Cappadocian – and the viper died!

The landscape of Cappadocia was created about 30 million years ago when erupting volcanoes like Mount Erciyes blanketed some 12,500 miles of the region with ash. This ash eventually solidified into an easily eroded soft rock called tuff that has been overlain in places by hard volcanic rock, the result of ancient lava flows. Mount Erciyes is the largest in a chain of

volcanoes created by the boundaries of two tectonic plates that meet in Cappadocia beneath the earth's surface. Mount Erciyes last erupted 2,000 years ago. The region is a geological wonderland that in some places has been sculpted by erosion into a lunar landscape.

Cappadocia is mentioned in passing in the New Testament in St. Luke's account of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples on Pentecost (*Acts 2:9*). Cappadocia is also the homeland of St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian and St. Gregory of Nyssa, three of the most important Fathers and mystics of the Church. It became an area of refuge for persecuted Christians as early as the 2nd century and it was into the rocky moonscape of Cappadocia that Christians carved out underground towns and cave churches that were decorated with graceful columns and impressive frescoes.

The Goreme Valley holds the greatest concentration of these rock-cut churches, chapels and monasteries. Dating largely from the 9th and 10th centuries, the valley's 30 extant churches were carved out of the volcanic tuff. One of the most important places that we visited in Cappadocia was **the Goreme Open-Air Museum**, a park and UNESCO world heritage site, where we visited 10 of these churches. Along with rectories, dwellings, and a religious school, they form a large monastic complex carved out of a roughly ring-shaped rock formation in the



otherworldly landscape of Cappadocia. Most of the churches are fully painted inside, floor to ceiling, with beautiful and historically important icon frescoes dating from 900-1200AD. Most of these frescoes are in remarkably good condition. Most of the names of the saints to whom these churches were once dedicated have been lost to history and archaeologists have given them various names depending on the formations of rock from which they were cut or particularly striking features within the cave of the church itself. We saw the Apple Church, the Snake Church, the Buckle Church, the Sandal Church, the Dark Church and the Church of St. Barbara. The Dark Church – so named because so little sunlight penetrated to its interior – was not restored until the 1950's, having been used as a pigeon house before that. Because of the darkness of the interior, its frescoes are the best preserved. "The Nunnery" as it's called – an ancient convent carved out of the rock – is said to have housed as many as 300 nuns at one time.



We also visited **the Zelve Open Air Museum** in the afternoon, an amazing cave town, honeycombed with houses and churches. Christians lived here until 1923 when the Treaty of Lausanne, Switzerland mandated the infamous exchange of populations: all Greek Orthodox Christians in the interior of Turkey were forcibly displaced and deported, not a few of them simply murdered along the way. The



signing of this Treaty between Greece and Turkey to end the Greco-Turkish War that followed WWI affected the lives of more than a million and a half people who became refugees virtually overnight. Virtually all of Turkey outside of Istanbul was emptied of its Christian population. Most of the property left behind by Greek Orthodox Christians who were subjected to compulsory deportation was confiscated by the Turkish government and eventually Muslim Turks were settled in Zelve. However, they also were forced to leave in the 1950's when it was determined that living in the caves had become too dangerous because of the continued erosion of the tuff rock from which the town had been carved.

Today, some of us rode camels; many of us attended a Turkish carpet weaving demonstration; and all of us ate lunch in a "cave restaurant" carved into the tuff and specifically set up for tourists. For some people the amount of walking and climbing we had to do today proved too much and some chose to sit out walking the Zelve Open Air Museum at a café just outside the park entrance.

Tuesday, May 28th Day 7 - Cappadocia



A number of us got up at 4AM to go **hot air ballooning** and watch the sunrise over Cappadocia. An unforgettable experience, we ascended as high as a mile up, offering us incredible views of the Cappadocian landscape. In the late morning we visited **the ancient multi-level underground city of Derinkuyu**, the largest excavated underground city in Cappadocia, which scholars believe may have sheltered as many as 20,000 people. Only half of this vast complex, which is 11 floors deep, is open to the public. We also visited

the Eskigumus Monastery, the farthest south of all the ancient Christian monasteries in this region. It was so well camouflaged to protect it from Muslim invaders that it was lost in time and only rediscovered in 1963. Its frescoes, like so many others we saw in this region, are more than a thousand years old, dating back to the 10th century.

Wednesday, May 29th Day 8 - Cappadocia/Smyrna

Today was largely a day of travel as we flew from Kayseri (ancient Caesarea, where St. Basil was bishop) to **Izmir/Smyrna** along the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. Christianity probably began in Smyrna as the fruit of the missionary efforts of St. Paul in nearby Ephesus. Smyrna is one of the 7 cities in Asia Minor addressed with a letter in *the Book of Revelation* (2:8-11). In Smyrna, we visited the Roman Catholic Church of St. Polycarp, the oldest of the few surviving Christian Churches still allowed to function, and prayed there. First built in 1620, it was restored by the French Levantines in 1630 and was one of the few Christian churches to have survived the burning of Smyrna by Turkish troops in 1922.

In 1906, after centuries of Ottoman Muslim rule, Smyrna was still a predominantly Christian city with over 135,000 Greek Orthodox Christians; 12,000 Roman Catholics; 8,500 Armenian Orthodox Christians and 92,000 Muslims. There was also a sizeable Jewish community of about 25,000 people. Today there are virtually no Christians and no Jews in Smyrna. During the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922, Greek troops were forced out of Smyrna by Ataturk's armies, who took control of the city on September 9, 1922, effectively ending the war in the field. Four days later fires were set by the Turkish military in the Armenian and Greek quarters of Smyrna completely destroying them and resulting in the deaths of at least 30,000 Greek and Armenian Orthodox Christians, wiping out the latter community. On September 24th, the evacuation of some 150,000 Greek Orthodox Christian refugees began when Greek ships entered the harbor of Smyrna under the supervision of Allied destroyers. Chrysostomos, the Greek Orthodox bishop of

Smyrna, was tortured and then hacked to death by a Turkish mob. Declared a martyr by the Church of Greece in 1992, his relics are kept in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Athens. These events and the Treaty of Lausanne effectively put an end to the Christian presence in Smyrna and all of Asia Minor after almost 19 centuries. We then drove to a couple of hours to Pammukale where we spent the night.

Who was St. Polycarp of Smyrna?

His memory is celebrated on February 23rd

St. Polycarp (70 -155AD), was the bishop of the city of Smyrna, one of the cities in Asia Minor mentioned in *the Book of Revelation* 2:8-11 (now the city of Izmir in modern Turkey). He was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist and received the Gospel of Christ from him. Polycarp, whose name in Greek means "much fruit," had reportedly been John's disciple in Ephesus, along with St. Ignatius of Antioch and an "elder" named Papias. He and Ignatius remained close. Ignatius' letter to him would seem to indicate that he was not only Polycarp's friend, but



also his mentor after John the Evangelist died. Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnians* has the character of an elder bishop trying to shore up support for a younger one. It appears that Polycarp was already a bishop of Smyrna at a young age; perhaps even at the time the Apostle John was writing the Book of Revelation. Polycarp was martyred at the age of 86 around the middle of the second century having survived Ignatius, his mentor, by forty years, and having served as bishop for perhaps sixty years. In addition to the account of his martyrdom, a letter written by him to the Church at Philippi also survives. During the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire during the second century, Polycarp was arrested, burned at the stake and then stabbed to death. Eyewitnesses in a letter from the church in Smyrna to the church of Philomelium recorded the story of his martyrdom, the earliest such account outside the New Testament. It is a vivid account describing, sometimes in gruesome detail, the betrayal, the arrest and the death by fire of this 86-year-old man who faced death like a young athlete sprinting to the finish line. The cruelty and barbarism of the Roman Empire are set in sharp contrast to this lamb-like octogenarian who refused to deny his Lord. The Roman state and the populace in general considered the Christians to be atheists since they did not worship the gods of Rome. And so, shortly before his death, the proconsul asked Polycarp to repent and say, "Away with the atheists!" The letter describes Polycarp solemnly looking at the crowd gathered in the stadium to see his martyrdom and motions toward them with his hand, as he cried out, "Away with the atheists!" (*The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, chapter 9). The message was loud and clear: The Lord Christ had won out over Lord Caesar. Polycarp is a fascinating figure because he represents a bridge between the age of the Apostles and the Church of the second century and is therefore one of the key figures in what we understand as "apostolic succession."

Reading the Scriptures: The Letter to the Church in Smyrna

The New International Version (NIV)

The Book of Revelation: chapter 2

⁸ "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. ⁹ I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown. ¹¹ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the Churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Thursday, May 30th Day 9 Pammukale/Hierapolis

Following breakfast visited the ancient ruins of **Hierapolis** and saw the ancient theatre, the Temple of Apollo and the *Martyrium* of the Apostle Philip. Hierapolis, whose name means "sacred city," was believed by the ancients to have been founded by the sun god Apollo and was famous for its "sacred" hot springs. The city also had a significant Jewish community. Today, Hierapolis is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a popular tourist destination.

Hierapolis is mentioned only once in the Bible, when St. Paul praises St. Epaphras, a Christian from Colossae, in his *Letter to the Colossians*. St. Paul writes that Epaphras was a "slave of Christ" and "has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis" (*Colossians 4:12-13*). St. Epaphras is remembered in our Church as the bishop of Colossae and the founder of the Christian community at Hierapolis and we honor his memory on January 4th.

Friday, May 31st Day 10 - Kusadasi/Ephesus

Today we spent the whole day seeing **the ancient city of Ephesus** and the surrounding area, one of the most extensive and well preserved archaeological sites in the world. Archaeologists have been working at the site of ancient Ephesus for nearly 150 years, with excavation work first beginning in 1863 under the auspices of the British Museum. Originally a Greek colony established around 1000BC, Ephesus was the capital of the ancient Roman province of Asia Minor and at the time of the apostles in the first century AD it was the 4th largest city in the Roman Empire, with a population estimated by scholars to be some 250,000 – a little larger than Irvine. It was also a major center of the Christian faith in the ancient Roman world. In fact, there are more chapters in the New Testament that deal with Ephesus than any other early Christian Church. The *Acts of the Apostles* records the founding of the Christian community in Ephesus in chapters 18, 19 and 20 by St. Paul and his apostolic co-workers, Priscilla and Aquila. During his third missionary

journey, St. Paul lived in Ephesus for over two years (*Acts 19: 8-10*), caused a riot there, and later, during his imprisonment in Rome, wrote one of his letters to the Ephesians. While in Ephesus, probably sometime during 58AD, he wrote his *First Letter to the Corinthians* (cf. *1 Corinthians 16:8*). He also wrote two letters to St. Timothy the apostle, his young protégé, who served as the first bishop of Ephesus (cf. *1 Timothy 1:3*). Tradition also records that St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary both lived in Ephesus for a time and a letter to the Church in Ephesus is found in the Book of Revelation (2:1-7). St. Ignatius, the third bishop of Antioch, on his way to being executed for being a Christian in the Coliseum in Rome in 107AD, also wrote a letter to the Ephesians. The 3rd Ecumenical Council that was presided over by St. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444AD) and proclaimed the Virgin Mary as *Theotokos* or Mother of God was held there in 431AD.



Ephesus was the center for the worship of the ancient goddess Artemis – but the Artemis of the Ephesians was a combination of both the Greek goddess who was the daughter of Zeus and twin sister of the sun god Apollo with the even more ancient Asian and Anatolian mother-goddess Cybele. The Greek Artemis was the moon goddess and protector of chastity; the Ephesian Artemis was the many breasted patroness of sexuality, fertility and childbirth. Her great temple in Ephesus – reputedly four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens – was considered to be one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world and many thousands of people came to worship at her shrine annually seeking aid in becoming pregnant and protection in childbirth – a very dangerous process in the Roman world of late antiquity. A Roman edict of 162AD acknowledged the Temple's religious importance and extended the annual festival celebration of Artemis from a few days in March and April to an entire month. The Temple of Artemis also functioned as a banking and financial center for the Roman province of Asia Minor.

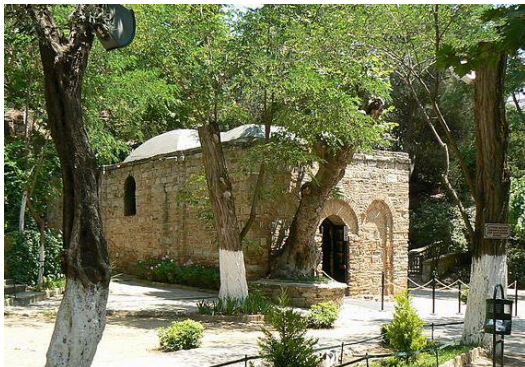
Large amounts of money were deposited and borrowed from the Artemision – as it was called – by a variety of wealthy individuals and even the rulers of kingdoms. The Temple of Artemis was finally destroyed during the invasion of the Goths, an East Germanic tribe, in 268AD and virtually nothing of it remains standing. The site is marked today by only a single column. Ephesus was also a center for the practice of magic and the occult in the ancient world (*Acts 19:19*).

We started at the upper entrance to the site, walking through the Gates of Hercules, and then worked our way down through the main streets of the city, seeing everything – from the latrines and brothel to the slope houses where the wealthier residents lived and decorated their homes with mosaic floors and frescoes. Probably the most famous building in the city is the Library of Celsus that was built in the 2nd century AD as a grave monument for Tiberius Julius Celsus Polemaeanus, the proconsul for the Roman province of Asia from 105-107AD, by his son. One of the largest libraries in the ancient world, the Library of Celsus contained approximately 12,000 scrolls before its destruction during an earthquake in 262AD. We also saw, and some of us actually stood in, the Great Amphitheatre

of Ephesus, with a seating capacity of nearly 25,000 people. When the preaching of the Apostle Paul led to a near riot, it was into this Great Amphitheatre that his companions, the apostles Gaius and Aristarchus, were dragged by the crowd. Fortunately, after a couple of hours the city clerk was able to bring order to the unruly crowd and end the outbreak (*Acts 19:35-41*).

After walking through the heart of Ephesus, we walked a few hundred yards past the main street that led from the ancient harbor to see the ruins of **the Church of St. Mary**, the Cathedral Church of the bishop of Ephesus for many centuries. It was here, according to the Acts of the Council of Ephesus that have survived, where the 3rd Ecumenical Council was held in 431AD under the presidency of St. Cyril of Alexandria and that the Virgin Mary, as the woman who had given birth to the Word of God, was proclaimed the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. The theological significance of this title lies in the fact that it was in the womb of Mary, a teen-aged Jewish girl, that the Word, who was with God and was God, through whom all things were created, became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1-3, 14). This title for the Virgin Mary is found in ancient Christian writings dating back to the second and third centuries and is used for the first time in surviving documents by an early Christian scholar named Origen (185-254AD).

We returned to the bus and were driven to another entrance, about 3 miles away, where we visited the ruins of **the Church of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian** that had been built by the emperor Justinian in the 6th century as part of his empire-wide building program and where the tomb of the apostle had once been located. With the conquest of the region by Muslim Seljuks, it was converted into a mosque in 1330AD. The building was then destroyed and left in ruins in 1402AD by the invading armies of the Mongol conqueror Tamerlane (1336-1405AD) who swept through the region leaving nothing but destruction in his wake.



The House of the Virgin Mary is located on Mount Koressos just outside of Ephesus and is a Roman Catholic shrine that is today maintained by the Franciscans. It is a place of pilgrimage not only for Christians but for Muslims as well. Many Christians are unaware of the fact that the 19th chapter of the Quran is devoted to the Virgin Mary and her giving birth to Jesus. In fact, in the Quran, no other woman is given as much attention as the

Theotokos and she is considered to be one of the most righteous of women in the Islamic faith. The House of Mary was discovered in the 19th century by following the descriptions reported in the visions of Anne Katherine Emmerich (1774-1824) a Roman Catholic nun living in Germany. Her visions were published as a book after her death. Several popes have visited the site on pilgrimage beginning with Pope Leo XIII in 1896 and most recently by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006. While Orthodox Christians do not believe that the Virgin Mary actually died in Ephesus – but rather, in Jerusalem – there is some historical evidence that this was originally a small Byzantine church built over the ruins of an ancient house that may well have been where the Apostle John lived with the *Theotokos* near the end of the 1st century.

Reading the Scriptures: The Apostle Paul in Ephesus

The New International Version (NIV)

The Acts of the Apostles: chapter 19

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. ⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other languages and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. ¹¹ God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴ The seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" ¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁷ When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸ Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. ¹⁹ A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

²¹ After all of this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also."

²² He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

The Riot in Ephesus

²³ About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. ²⁵ He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. ²⁶ And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. ²⁷ There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

²⁸ When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

²⁹ Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into



the theater together. ³⁰ Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³¹ Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

³² The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³³ The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. ³⁴ But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

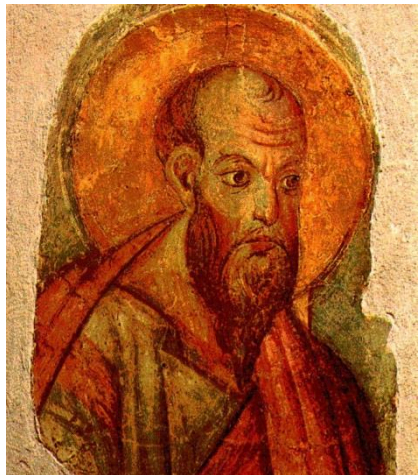
³⁵ The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Fellow Ephesians, doesn't the entire world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁶ Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁸ If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁹ If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a

legal assembly. ⁴⁰ As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it." ⁴¹ After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

The Acts of the Apostles: chapter 20

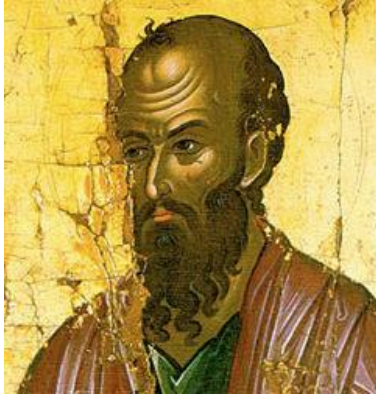
Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders (Presbyters)

¹³ We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. ¹⁴ When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. ¹⁵ The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. ¹⁶ Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.



¹⁷ From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. ¹⁸ When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

¹⁹ I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. ²⁰ You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. ²¹ I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. ²² And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³ I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. ²⁴ However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace. ²⁵ Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. ²⁶ Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. ²⁷ For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. ²⁸ Keep watch over yourselves - and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops. Be shepherds of the Church of God, which he bought with the blood of his own Son. ²⁹ I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. ³⁰ Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. ³² Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the



weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

³⁶ When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷ They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. ³⁸ What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

Wisdom from St. Paul's Letter to the Church in Ephesus

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all of the Lord's people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of the fullness of God. *Ephesians 3:17-19*

Lead a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *Ephesians 4:1-3*

Let us speak the truth to our neighbors for we are all members of one another. *Ephesians 4:25*

Do not let the sun go down on your anger. *Ephesians 4:26*

Do not make room in your life for the devil. *Ephesians 4:27*

Put away all bitterness, anger, wrangling, slander and malice. *Ephesians 4:31*

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you. *Ephesians 4:32*

Live in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. *Ephesians 5:1*

Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality or of any kind of indecency, or of greed because these are improper for the Lord's people. Nor is it fitting for you to use language that is obscene, profane or vulgar. Rather, you should give thanks to God. *Ephesians 5:3-4*

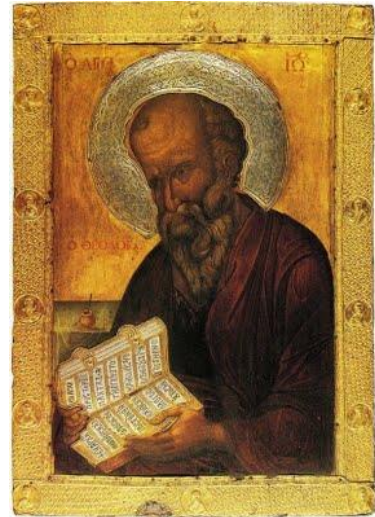
Do not get drunk with wine for that is debauchery. *Ephesians 5:18*

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. *Ephesians 6:18*



Saturday, June 1st Day 11 - Patmos

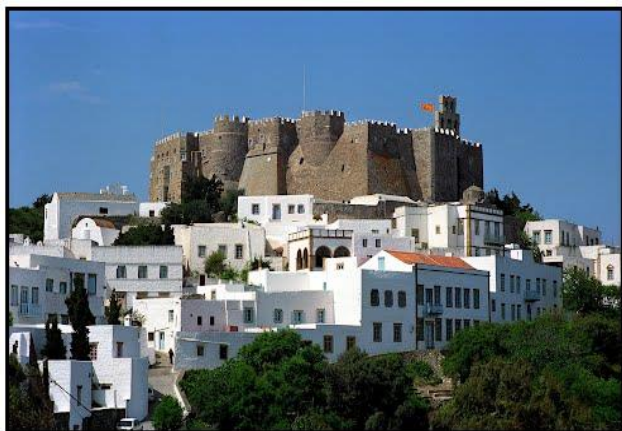
After a 3 hour private ferry ride across the Aegean from the port of Kusadasi, we arrived on Patmos in the early afternoon. Everyone immediately noticed the “shift” from a Turkish Muslim environment to a Christian one. Patmos, at 10 miles long and 6 miles wide, is one of the smallest islands in the Aegean Sea. Volcanic in origin, it is one of the original Dodecanese or “Twelve” Greek islands, and is rich in both history and natural beauty. This small, hilly island was populated from as early as 500 BC by the Dorians, the Ionians, and then the Romans from the 2nd century BC. Its association with the Apostle John and the Book of Revelation has made it into an important pilgrimage site for Christians and it has traditionally been called “the Jerusalem of the Aegean.” Historical tradition is consistent that the Apostle John, together with the Virgin Mary, went to Ephesus where he wrote the Gospel and three letters of the New Testament that bear his name. During the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96AD) Christians were persecuted throughout the Roman Empire and the Apostle John, an old man at this point in history, was exiled to Patmos together with one of the 7 deacons of the Church in Jerusalem, Prochorus (*Acts 6:5*). During his exile on Patmos, which the Romans used as a kind of Devil’s Island, John was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (*Revelation 1:10*) i.e. Sunday, probably during the celebration of the Eucharist, when he received “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (*Revelation 1:1*) that Prochorus would ultimately



transcribe to form *the Book of Revelation*, the final book of the Bible. Following the assassination of Domitian, his successor Trajan who ruled from 98-117AD did not systematically persecute Christians and, according to the 4th century church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, John returned to Ephesus where he died. Churches were built on the island in remembrance of the Apostle John’s exile there as early as 350AD, but early Christian life on Patmos barely survived the incursions of Arab/Muslim pirates and from the

7th to the 11th centuries the island was practically uninhabited.

St. Christodoulos of Patmos (1020-1093), whose name literally means “the slave of Christ” – a title used by the Apostle John to describe himself in opening verse of the *Book of Revelation (1:1)* – was born in the city of Nicea (modern Iznik) where the 1st and 7th Ecumenical Councils had been held. He established **the Monastery of St. John the Evangelist and Theologian** in 1088, building it at one of the highest points of the island and fortifying it to resist the incursions of Arab pirates. The monastery soon became the most significant religious, cultural and intellectual center in the Aegean Sea, largely because of support from emperors and patriarchs



in Constantinople. The monastery has continued to remain under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate – just as we are at St. Paul's. Today the monastery is home to 40 monks and the most famous member of the monastic brotherhood – although he no longer lives on Patmos – is Metropolitan Kallistos Ware.

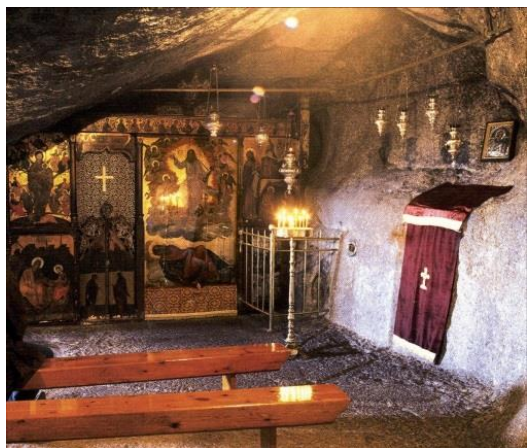
In 1207AD, the Venetians conquered the island and held it until the Ottoman Turks conquered it in 1537, forcing the

monks to pay an annual tribute to the sultan. The island remained part of the Ottoman Empire until 1821 when it briefly gained independence; but then it was returned to the Turkish government in 1832 and remained under Ottoman control until 1912, when the island was taken over by Italy after the Turko-Italian War. Briefly held by the Nazis during WWII, Patmos did not become a formal part of the modern Greek state until 1948. In 1999 the island's historic center of Chora, along with the Monastery of St. John the Theologian and the Cave of the Revelation, were declared World Heritage sites by UNESCO.

In addition to the monastery, a school was established on the hillside just above the Cave of the Revelation in 1713 by St. Makarios Kalogeros (1688-1737), a monk and a deacon, where students were offered instruction at no cost. As a result the island soon became known as the "Athens of the Aegean." Today the school is a seminary. The icon and relics of St. Makarios are placed in the Cave of the Revelation for veneration by the faithful to the left of the small *iconostasis* in the chapel.

Sunday, June 2nd Day 12 - Patmos

On Sunday morning we returned to **the Cave of the Revelation** where the Liturgy

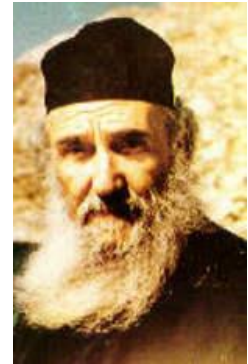


was celebrated by one of the monks from the monastery – Father Isidore – in the small chapel set up within the cave. Many of those in attendance were, like us, pilgrims from Greece, Russia and other parts of the world. In addition to Father Isidore and myself, two priests from the Ukraine were also in attendance. After Liturgy in the Cave of the Revelation – an incredibly Spirit-filled experience – we visited **the Monastery of the Annunciation**, a convent founded by Father Amphilochios (Makris) of Patmos (1889-1970) where we were warmly welcomed by the nuns

and sang "Christ is Risen" in the monastery Church in Greek, Arabic, English and Slavonic – thanks to some Ukrainian clergy and pilgrims who happened to be visiting at the same time. Father Amphilochios, whose relics we had the opportunity

to venerate at a little side chapel, became a monk at the Monastery of St. John in 1906 and was ordained a priest in 1919, briefly becoming the abbot of the monastery in 1935 before the Italians exiled him in 1937. Upon his return in 1939, he established the convent and his spiritual influence continues to be felt on the island and around the world. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is currently in the process of canonizing Father Amphilochios as a saint.

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, who lived on Patmos as a monk of St. John's in the early 1960's, wrote of Father Amphilochios: "What most distinguished his character was his gentleness, his humor, the warmth of his affection and his sense of tranquil yet triumphant joy. His smile was full of love but devoid of all sentimentality. Life in Christ, as he understood it, is not a heavy yoke, a burden to be carried with sullen resignation, but a personal relationship to be pursued with eagerness of heart. He was opposed to all spiritual violence and cruelty. Two things in particular I recall about him. The first was his love of nature and more especially of trees. A second thing that stands out in my memory is the counsel he gave me when, as a newly-ordained priest, it was time for me to return from Patmos to Oxford where I was to begin teaching at the university. He himself had never visited Western Europe but he had a shrewd perception of Orthodoxy in the diaspora. Do not be afraid, he insisted. Do not be afraid because of your Orthodoxy, he told me. Do not be afraid because as an Orthodox in the West, you will often be isolated and always in a small minority. Do not make compromises but do not attack other Christians. Do not be either defensive or aggressive. Simply be yourself."



By mid-afternoon, we returned to the port at Skala and boarded our ferry for the 3 hour return trip to Turkey, arriving in Kusadasi in the early evening.

Monday, June 3rd Day 13 - Kusadasi/Izmir/Istanbul

Today was a day of travel as we left Kusadasi for the airport in Izmir from which we returned to Istanbul for our final day in Turkey. We arrived in Istanbul in the early afternoon and had time to visit **the Grand Bazaar** to do some shopping. The Grand Bazaar is a labyrinth of streets covered by painted vaults and lined with nearly 5,000 booth-like shops and cafes, and whose shopkeepers are relentless in making a sale. It was founded by Mehmet the Conqueror shortly after his conquest of the city in 1453. We returned to our hotel that evening just in time to avoid any of the consequences of being so near the protests that had begun in Taksim Square, not far from our hotel – although we could smell the tear gas used by the police to disperse the protestors from our rooms.

Tuesday, June 4th Day 14 - Istanbul to Los Angeles/Home

After breakfast, we were taken by bus to the Attaturk International Airport and returned to LAX *via* direct flight on Turkish Airlines, Flight #9 that departed at 12:45PM and arrived at LAX on Tuesday, June 4th at 4:30PM. A 13 hour flight!