Saint Herman Calendar 2005

THE YEAR 7513 FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Printed with the blessing of His Grace ✝ LONGIN
Serbian Orthodox Bishop of the U.S.A. and Canada, New Gracanica Metropolitanate,
and Bishop Administrator of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Western America.

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P.O. Box 70, Platina, California 96076.

NOTES ON THE CALENDAR

The date according to the Church (Julian) Calendar always precedes that of the civil calendar. Scriptural references are according to the King James Version whenever possible. The Calendar follows the Typicon of St. Sabbas' (Sava's) Monastery as used in the Russian Orthodox Church. To the list of Universal Orthodox Saints are added locally venerated Saints of national Churches. A number of Saints are commemorated on different days in the Greek and Celtic and British Calendar: these are indicated at the end of the daily list of Saints in parentheses and brackets (Gr. Cal.) [Celtic & British Cal.] Saints of the Netherlands are indicated with an abbreviation in parentheses (Neth.). At the end of the daily list of Saints there are occasionally commemorations in italics; these are more recent ascetics, hierarchs and martyrs, of holy life, but not yet canonized, for whom it is appropriate to celebrate requiem or memorial services.

The Church of the Gauls

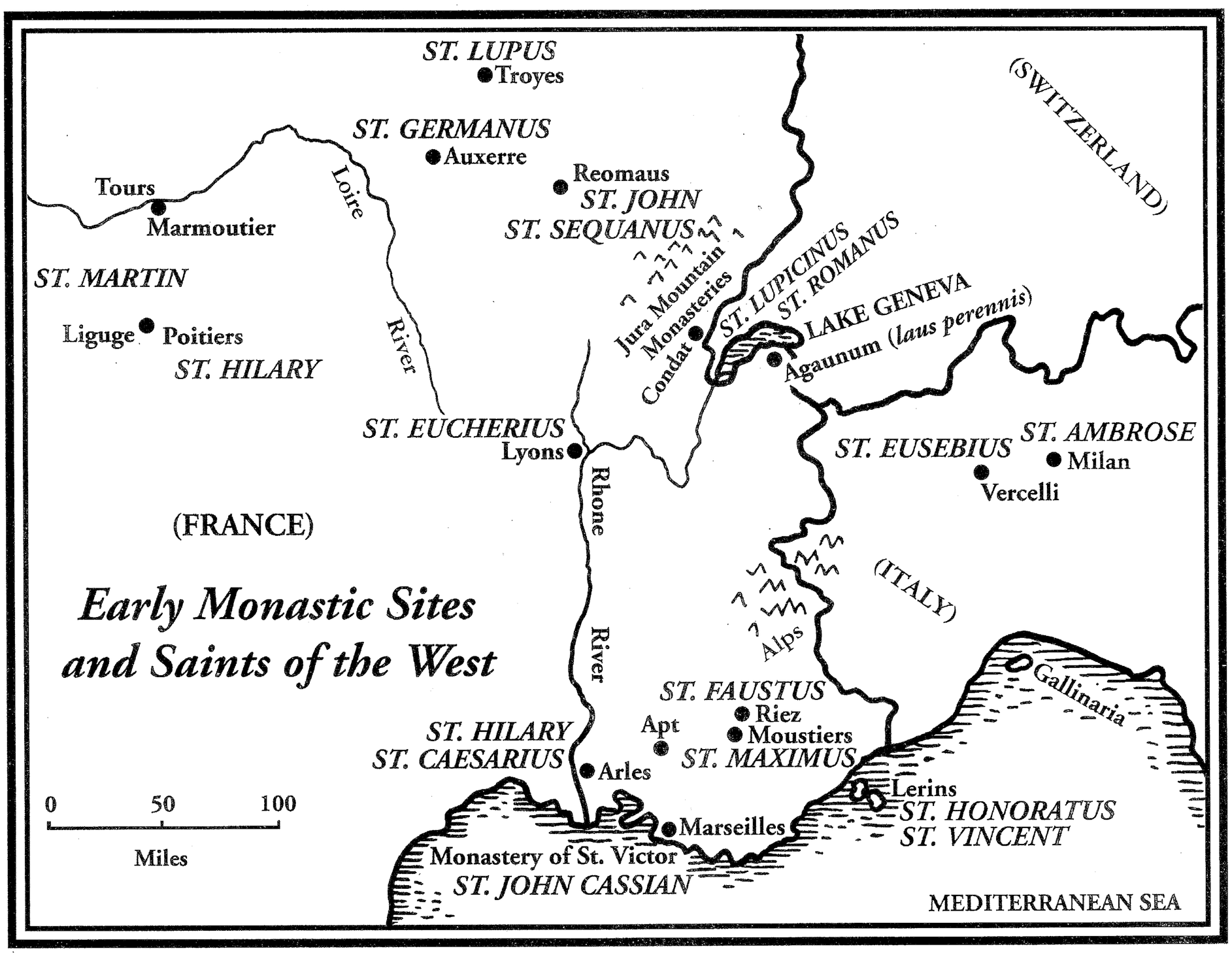
I. The Beginnings of the Gallic Church

The Gallic Church had its beginnings in the first century. Western tradition holds that Gaul (France) was initially evangelized and baptized by St. Mary Magdalene, St. Lazarus the Four-DaysDead, and his sisters Sts. Mary and Martha. On the basis of St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, several historians have thought that the Apostle Crescens, an envoy of St. Paul, labored in Gaul. Some also think that St. Paul stopped in Gaul on his way to Spain. In any event, Christianity penetrated into southern Gaul at an early date, specifically into Provence and the Rhone Valley—areas that had a strong presence of Greek minorities hailing from Asia Minor, Phrygia and Syria.

The written history of Orthodox Gaul begins in the second century with the Church of Lyons, which in the West was second only to Rome in authority and influence. Its first bishops were Sts. Pothinus and Irenaeus. St. Pothinus was among the Christians martyred by Emperor Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 177. Pothinus' *Acts*, included by Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Book 5, chapter 1), are considered some of the most beautiful writings of the ancient Church. St. Pothinus' successor was the Hieromartyr Irenaeus, who had known the Hieromartyr Polycarp in his youth in Smyrna, the latter in turn having been a disciple of the Apostle and Evangelist John. The writings of St. Irenaeus of Lyons are numbered among those of the Holy Fathers of the Church; through them St. Irenaeus' influence soon reached both Asia Minor and Egypt.

Other cities also had martyrs and saints, even though persecutions were less intense in Gaul than in other regions of the Empire. The most venerated of these holy servants of Christ are St. Victor of Marseilles, St. Saturninus of Toulouse, St. Symphorian of Autun, Sts. Marcellus of Chalon-sur-Saone and Valerian of Tournus, St. Dionysius of Paris, St. Maurice of Agaune and the martyrs of the Theban Legion, St. Julian of Cenomanis (Le Mans), St. Taurinus of Evereux and St. Patroclus of Troyes.

In the middle of the third century the Narbonne region and Celtic Gaul had more than thirty bishoprics. Local synods (councils) were held under the



auspices of the Archbishop of Arles, and were attended by clergy from throughout Gaul and even from Britain. The number of bishops continued to increase until the end of the century, as the country painfully recovered from the Alemanni invasion of 257. Having been spared the persecution of Diocletian thanks to the moderation of Caesar Constantine Chlorus, the Church of Gaul was able to organize itself in peace even before the era of Caesar Constantine's son, St. Constantine the Great. Still, on the eve of the 4th century, the Church in Gaul did not yet comprise a distinct "national Church," as did the Churches of Antioch and Alexandria.

2. St. Martin of Tours and the Flowering of Monasticism in the West

Monasticism initially took root in the East, but at an early date the West received a model for this way of life in the personal example and writings of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, who lived in exile in Treves, Gaul, beginning in 335. Since Athanasius knew St. Anthony the Great and had found refuge among the monks of upper Egypt during a period of great danger, one can surmise that the Gauls heard at this time about the blessed Anthony and the ascetic exploits of the Egyptian monks.

In the 4th century the fire of Christianity began to burn fiercely in Orthodox Gaul. This was largely due to the example and inspiration of the growing monastic movement throughout the Christian world.

Two of the greatest saints of this time in Gaul were St. Hilary of Poitiers and St. Martin of Tours. St. Hilary, known as the "Athanasius of the West," was the spiritual father of St. Martin. St. Martin is considered Gaul's first great monastic saint. His example of "bloodless martyrdom" through asceticism was embraced by many.

Three important elements in the spread of the monastic ascetic ideal among the Gallic people can be described:

a.) The first true monastery was Marmoutier, founded by St. Martin. The monks in Marmoutier,

who numbered eighty, all lived in tiny wooden cells built halfway into the natural caves on the side of an immense cliff along the banks of the Loire River. One can still see these caves near Tours. The monastery of Marmoutier had a strong influence, for many bishops were chosen from its enclosure. St. Sulpicius Severus speaks of monasticism there in his *Life* of St. Martin:

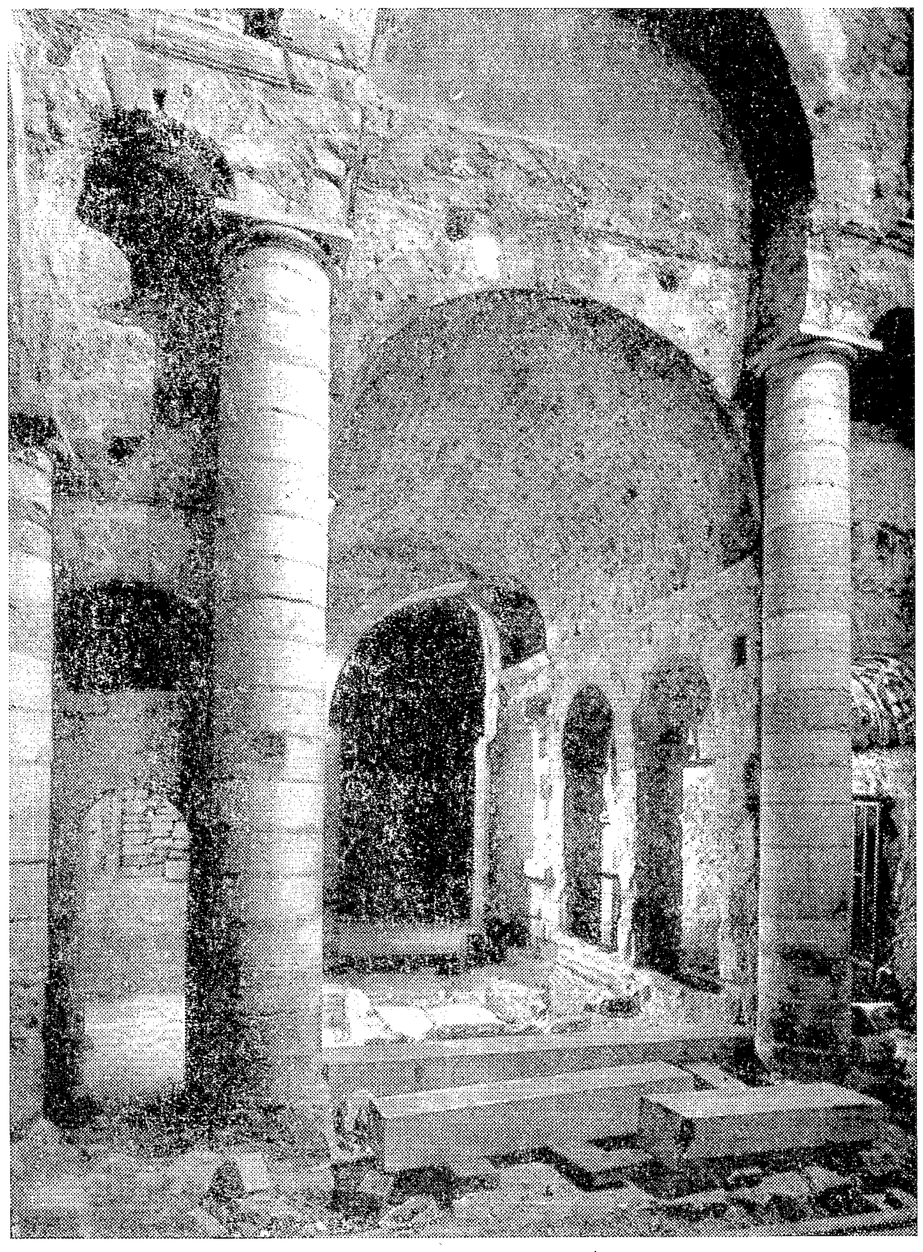
"No one there had anything which was called his own.... It was not allowed to buy or to sell anything.... No art was practiced there, except that of transcribers, and even this was assigned to the brethren of younger years, while the elders spent their time in prayer. Rarely did any one of them go beyond the cell.... They all took food together.... Most of them were clothed in garments of camel's hair. This must be thought the more remarkable, because many among them were such as are deemed of noble rank ... and far differently brought up." (Chapter 10 of St. Martin's *Life*.)

St. Martin's particular expression of the monastic life at Marmoutier was naturally harmonious to the soul of the Gauls and served as a catalyst to the spread of Christianity among the people.

b.) One of the immediate spiritual fruits of St. Martin's example was the famous monastery of Lerins. The founding of the monastery on the Isle of Lerins in 410 was the work of St. Honoratus, the future bishop of Arles. The monastery served as a spiritual school for bishops and ecclesiastical writers, such as St. Faustus of Riez, St. Eucherius of Lyons, St. Vincent of Lerins, St. Hilary and St. Caesarius of Arles, and St. Patrick of Ireland.

The information that has come down to us about the life of the monastery of Lerins can be found primarily in the *Life* of its founder, St. Honoratus, and in St. Eucherius of Lyons' *In Praise of the Desert*. From these sources one can see that most of the monks lived in community, while the more experienced struggled in an eremitic or partially eremitic way of life. Lerins-style monasticism (which held the anchoritic life in the desert as its highest ideal) spread throughout all of southeastern Gaul, notably in the Jura mountains with Sts. Romanus and Lupicinus, and in the Valais, where the monastery of St. Maurice of Agaune would remain an important spiritual center for centuries to come.

c.) Finally, the spiritual teachings of St. John Cassian must be mentioned. In 416 St. John



Basilica of St. John Cassian's Monastery of St. Victor near Marseilles.

founded the monastery of St. Victor in Marseilles. Prior to this in 400 he had been ordained to the diaconate by St. John Chrysostom. St. John Cassian was a great defender of the dogmatic teachings of the Church and carefully articulated the synergy between man's free will and God's grace. His primary labor, however, was to reveal to the Gallic monks the way of life and spirituality of the monks of the East. His *Institutes* and *Conferences*, which he wrote for the monks of Provence, are a glorious manifestation of the spiritual fruits he had acquired during his long stay in Egypt among its famous holy men. Many newly founded monastic communities, as well as ascetics who desired to lead the solitary life, used his writings as their spiritual manuals and guidebooks. The monastic rules spelled out in the *Institutes* were central to the foundation of subsequent monastic typica in the centuries to come, including the later Rule of St. Benedict.

3. The Merovingians

Just as monasticism was beginning to put down its roots in Gaul, an event occurred that shook the

minds and hearts of the entire Graeco-Roman world: after several centuries of violent conflicts and bloody skirmishes, the Germanic tribes of the north finally sacked the city of Rome. This marked the beginning of a new period in the history of the West, both ecclesiastically and politically, in the challenges it brought to the growing Orthodox Church.

The fusion of the Celto-Roman population in Gaul with the Frankish invaders was facilitated by the conversion of the Frankish King Clovis from Germanic paganism to Orthodoxy in 498, effectively beginning what has come to be known as the Merovingian period in the history of Gaul.

While Clovis' intentions may have been good, his actions and practices, as well as those of some of his descendants, fell decidedly short of the Christian ideal. But despite the fact that the behavior of the Frankish aristocracy could often be characterized as brutal, Orthodox sanctity had a powerful influence on Merovingian society. Few eras were as fertile in saints. Saints were numerous among the advisors to the kings; some even belonged to the royal families. One can mention King Guntrumnas (called "the Good King") of Burgundy and especially the holy queens: Clotilde, Radegunde and Bathilde. It was the holy Merovingian queens who really kindled the fire of women's monasticism in Gaul by founding convents and then joining them shortly before their righteous deaths.

Undoubtedly it was the holy bishops of the 5th and 6th centuries who underwent the most painful struggles. This was due to many causes: the impiety of France's ever changing rulers, the opposition of many unconverted pagan (or Arian) Germanic peoples who moved into their sees, and the laxness, worldly ambition and mercenary character of some Christian clerics. Nevertheless, great saints shone forth during these centuries, such as the holy hierarchs Remigius of Rheims, Elegius of Noyon, Aldwin of Rouen, Deodatus of Cahors, Leger of Autun and especially Gregory of Tours. St. Gregory wrote much (over twelve volumes) on the history of Gaul and its saints and sinners. It is from him that we know the most about the Merovingian years in Orthodox Gaul.

As the years went by, the Orthodox Christian Faith continued to spread among the people of Gaul. Then, at the end of the 6th century, this process of national conversion received a new impetus from an unexpected source—the monastics and saints of Ireland.

4. The Irish Missionaries to the Continent

Perhaps the best known exemplar of the Irish monastic missionaries was St. Columbanus of Luxeuil, who initiated these "migrations" to the European continent.

St. Columbanus and his disciples began their journeys in 590, traveling through Brittany into the heart of Frankish Gaul. By the time St. Columbanus arrived, the political and social conditions in Gaul were altogether deplorable. St. Columbanus and his disciples engaged in some itinerant preaching before approaching the aforementioned St. Guntrumnas, King of Burgundy, and receiving permission to establish a monastery. St. Columbanus chose a location far from the court, in the foothills of the Vosges mountains, at a place called Annegray. Shortly afterward two more foundations arose—those of Luxeuil and Fontaines. St. Columbanus was abbot of all three.

For about ten years all went well; the region was deeply and permanently affected by the monasteries and almost all the inhabitants therein were baptized. Then he ran afoul of Queen Brunhilda and was exiled from Burgundy. Though cast out of Burgundy, St. Columbanus was welcomed by other Frankish kings, who were also becoming increasingly alienated from Burgundy. Eventually St. Columbanus and his monks settled at Bregenz, at the eastern end of Lake Constance, in what is now Switzerland. Leaving one of his close disciples there, Columbanus was inspired to preach to the Lombards and crossed the Alps into Italy, eventually settling at Bobbio near the river Po, where he reposed in 615.

Other missionary monastics from Ireland included Sts. Killian, Colman and Totnan of Wurzburg in Germany, St. Gall of Switzerland, St. Ursus of Aosto in Italy, and St. Foillan of the Brabant.

Throughout Europe the Irish monks established guest houses for pilgrims and travelers in addition to their monastic hermitages, and wherever they went they brought with them—and continued to produce—works of great beauty. Western Europe had suffered a vast loss of learning from the violence of the preceding centuries. The Irish who came to the Continent carried in their satchels

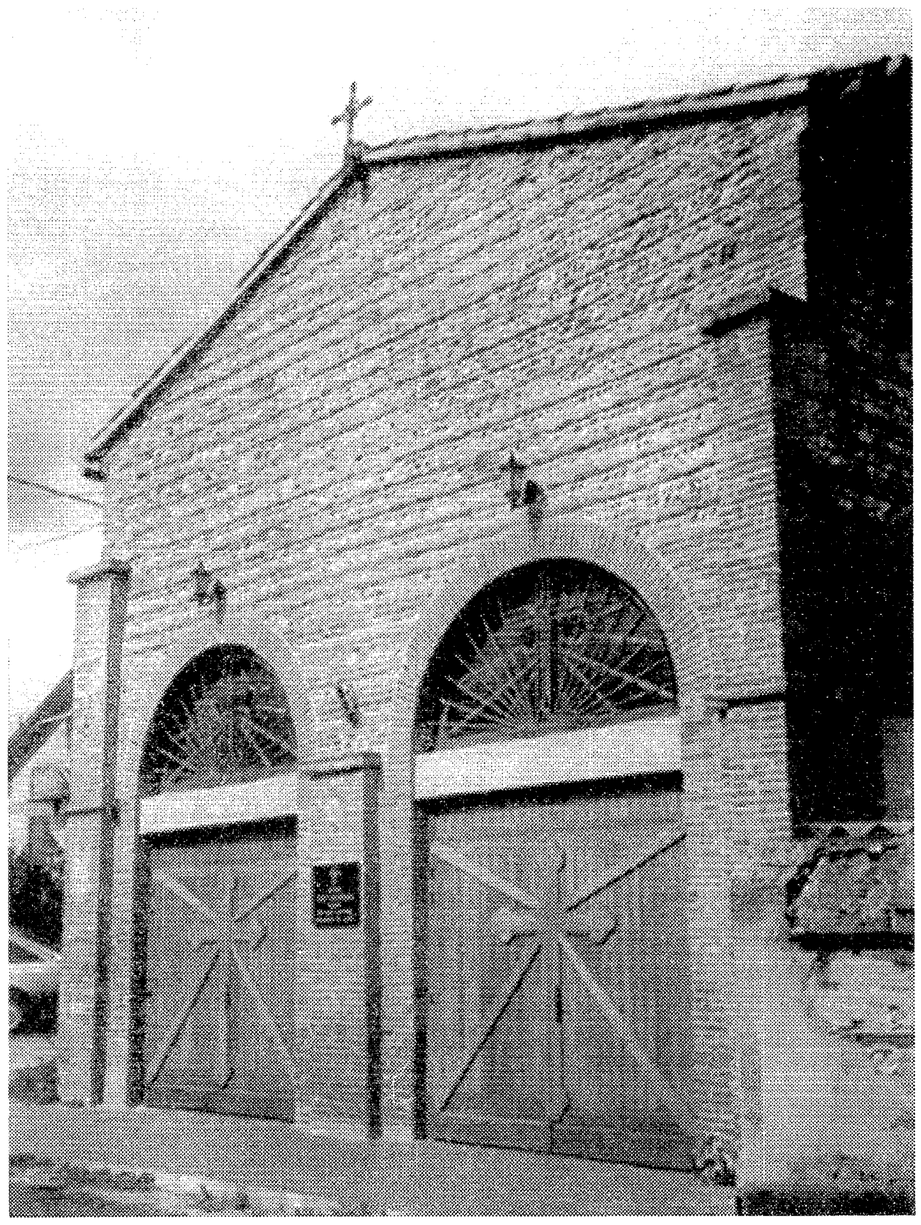
copies of ancient texts, some of which only Irish eyes had seen for centuries. Thus, these monks returned to Europe the lost treasures of classical learning, patristic thought, biblical commentary, and poetry by befriending the barbarian Germanic peoples and then converting them by their love and example.

5. Charlemagne and the Beginning of the End

By the end of the 8th century many of the Germanic tribes had heard the Good News of the Gospel and begun to convert to Christianity. Most notably, this took place on a wide scale among the rulers, eventually giving birth to the famous Carolingian dynasty, with Charlemagne as its first great leader and formative influence. He sought to institute the "new Byzantium" or "the new Holy Roman Empire" by consciously allying his kingdom with the Pope of Rome, to create an "ideal" or "model" of Christian society that future generations could build upon, both politically and dogmatically. Unfortunately, the dogmatic basis they chose was heretical, and the peremptory manner of both the Church of Rome and the Carolingian rulers enforced and built upon this flawed ideal over the centuries. The unchecked currents flowing from this flawed ideal eventually resulted in the West's separation from the rest of Christendom in 1054.

Although it resulted in decisive choices for the future of Europe—choices which would rupture Europe's spiritual unity—the advent of the Carolingians did not put an end to the Byzantine Empire. The annexationist and unionist aims of the Western powers, which would culminate with the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, did weaken the Byzantine Empire, but did not destroy it. On the eve of the Turkish conquest of Byzantium, a magnificent spiritual and cultural renaissance occurred during the time of the Paleologues, thanks largely to the hesychast movement. Even after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the continuity of the Byzantine Empire survived in the Russian Empire, until the Revolution of 1917.

When the Russian Revolution took place, the Communist disease quickly spread throughout



Serbian Orthodox Church of St. Saturninus in modern-day Toulouse, France.

other Orthodox nations. To save their lives, many of the Orthodox of these lands were forced to flee. Many came to the West. Of the Western nations, France received a very large number of these Orthodox immigrants. These émigrés slowly began to share the Orthodox Faith with their neighbors and friends, and began the process of bringing the ancient faith of France's forefathers back to her present-day children. Today one can find Orthodox monasteries and convents dotting the French land, and more and more people are returning to the fulness of the universal Orthodox Church—the Church of St. Martin, St. Genevieve, and all the patron saints of ancient Gaul. May God grant the increase!

—Monk Nicodemus

Special thanks to Popadija Elizabeth Tumbas, who provided translations and original material for this article and for the brief lives of saints included in this year's Calendar.