

Lesson 22 - The Church in a New Age

Objectives

By the end of this lesson the student should know that:

- Know that the fall of Constantinople contributed to the Renaissance in Western Europe and the explorations leading to the Discovery of America.
- Understand that the Protestant Reformation and the Roman Catholic response to it contributed to the union of many Eastern Catholics with the Western Church
- Know that the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries saw the establishment of Greek Catholic Churches in Europe and the Middle East
- Recognize that the Eastern Catholic efforts at the union of the Churches were not largely successful in that most Eastern Christians did not accept them.

For the Catechist

This lesson introduces the question of the union of Eastern Catholics with the Western Church. It is an issue that is often not treated objectively in popular presentations. These treatments often are meant to show that the Uniters or Uniates were "right" in returning to the "one true Church" (or that they were "wrong" in abandoning the "one true Church" for heterodoxy). This lesson rather simply takes the approach of the 1993 Agreed Statement of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church: *"Whatever may have been the intention and the authenticity of the desire to be faithful to the commandment of Christ: 'that all may be one' expressed in these partial unions with the See of Rome, it must be recognized that the re-establishment of unity between the Church of the East and the Church of the West was not achieved and that the division remains, embittered by these attempts"* (¶ 9).

In many families there are found both Orthodox and Eastern Catholics. Many Roman Catholics or members of other Eastern Churches have married into these families as well. This closeness has sometimes brought people to overlook the poor relations of the past. Sometimes, however, it has caused further dissension, bringing issues from other times or places to damage the fabric of family life. In presenting this topic, catechists must be aware of (a) previous approaches taken to this question in their particular community, and (b) the sentiments harbored in their community today, balancing them with (c) the official approach of the Churches as expressed in the Agreed Statement: *"The history of the relations between the Orthodox Church and the Eastern Catholic Churches has been marked by persecutions and sufferings. Whatever may have been these sufferings and their causes, they do not justify any triumphalism; no one can glory in them or draw an argument from them to accuse or disparage the other Church. God alone knows His own witnesses. Whatever the past may have been, it must be left to the mercy of God, and all the energies of the Churches should be directed so that the present and the future conform better to the will of Christ for His own "* (¶ 23).

Materials Needed:

Opening Prayer: Icon corner, student texts

Introduction: Easel or wall pads, markers,

Guided Reading: Bibles

Activity A: Welcome to Our Church (God With Us Publications)

Activity B: Introduction to the Eastern Catholic Churches (Eparchy of Parma, available from Theological Book Service), TV, VCR or DVD player

Activity C: Kingdom Tree Worksheet

1. Opening Prayer

Pray the hymn in honor of the Theotokos on page 111 in the student text. Remind the students that the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God accompanied the Slavic troops against the Mongol and Tatar invaders of their nation.

2. Review

Review the main points of the previous lesson using the pages from your wall or easel pad. Use the time line on the Unit Page to recall that the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries were the darkest period in the history of Eastern Christians, containing the separation of 1054, the Fourth Crusade (1204), the Mongol and Tatar invasions of Rus', and the fall of Constantinople (1453).

3. Introduction

Begin by talking about the issue of "peer pressure" and how this is discussed at school or in the home. Ask what parents, teachers, and counselors advise about handling peer pressure: don't give in to it, report it, go along, etc. Note that today you will discuss a time in which many Eastern Christians "went along" with the Westward movement of culture and united with the Western Church.

Background Reading (Roman Catholic Fragmentation: The Protestants):

"The division between Churches described above happened within the first millennium and have persisted until the present. Today there is a desire for reunion on the part of many Christians, but in the second millennium the situation has been complicated by further divisions that may prove even more difficult to resolve, for they cut even deeper into Christian practice and ideals. Perhaps a full Christian unity may never be possible, yet we must not allow this to diminish our charity towards others nor to seek to impose an unhealthy uniformity on the Church.

"In the second millennium the Western Church experienced a more painful and destructive division than ever occurred in the East. In the late Middle Ages there was much corruption in the Roman Catholic Church that seemed to affect its very holiness and authenticity. The pope and the bishops established themselves as noblemen and princes, while the parish priests were generally uneducated. In the sixteenth century an open protestation against these conditions took place, led by such men as Martin Luther (1483-1546), John Calvin (1509-1564), and Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531).

"The unity of Western Christianity was shattered, and as in earlier times, these divisions overflowed into the political realm and led to persecutions and wars among princes. Protestantism rejected first the papacy, then the very sacramental basis of the Church in favor of the sole authority of the Scripture, the preeminence of faith over good works for salvation, the prime importance of the preaching and hearing of the Word of God, and the priesthood of all believers. Rome reacted against the formulations of some of these doctrines and in its own counter-reformation at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) defined its position and gave a form to modern Roman Catholicism that would endure for four centuries. From the sixteenth century to the twentieth century the number of mutually exclusive Protestant bodies would greatly multiply, *sometimes united only in their hostility to Roman Catholics*".

(TEE 41-42 - continued on next page)

4. Guided Reading, Pages 112 - 113

22 **The Church in a New Age**



During the 15th century, the Ottoman Empire conquered much of Eastern Europe. Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks, and some Romans joined the Christians of the Middle East as a consequence subject to the Turkish Sultan. The Ottoman Turks converted Christians and Jews to Islam (and, and they became poorer and poorer, with little chance for education or prosperity.

At the same time, Western Europe began to prosper. Many of the scholars, who had left Constantinople especially after 1453, went to the West, especially to Italy. They brought learning and art, inspiring the teachers of the great sons of the Renaissance like Leonardo da Vinci. Some Italians began to look to the West as the future of Christianity, so one of these scholars, Michael Agrippa, wrote: "In the cradle of civilization - which has of long ago, a middle, and an end - we are at the living age of our culture while you are in the mortal phase, and we are advanced while you are free."

The fall of Constantinople also meant that Europe had lost access to the Silk Sea and the main overland trade route between Europe and Asia. As a result, more Europeans began to

God With Us Grade 6 Unit 6: God Works In The Church 112

Before the reading, summarize the objectives of the lesson on a wall pad or easel pad so that the page can be preserved and used for review next week.

Have the students quietly **read the first three paragraphs** on page 112, identifying the three results of the fall of Constantinople. (*Impoverishment of the remaining Eastern Christians, emigration of many from the leading classes, need to find another trade route to India*) Refer to the map on page 179 ("Ottoman Empire") to show that the Turks ruled the Middle East, the Balkans and Eastern Europe up to the gates of Vienna.

Add that this was also the time that printing was invented and books could be produced in greater quantity than before. This was the age in which Western Europe would rise to prominence in the world.

secretly outside the possibility of reaching Asia by sea. Within fifty years after the fall of Constantinople, Christopher Columbus, looking for a new route to India, had landed in the New World.

Twenty-five years later, another important event occurred which would affect the future of both East and West. In 1517 a Roman Catholic monk, Martin Luther, began the Protestant Reformation. The new ideas he spread would divide the Western Church and soon reach the East as well. Western Europe became divided between Roman Catholics and an increasing number of Protestant groups who rejected one or more aspects of Church Tradition and doctrine.

Effects of the Reformation

Within a few years, two important developments came about as a result of the Reformation. First, both Roman Catholic and Protestant teaching became clearer and more exact. Teachers wanted to make their views more understandable to the ordinary Christian laity, so good relations between competing groups. Europe generally agreed to follow the principle that the people follow the religion of their land.

Western Europe was largely divided between "Catholic countries" like Spain and France and Protestant nations like England and the Netherlands. Some nations, like Germany, were divided into Catholic and Protestant sections, with each group trying to influence the others. Religion has since more often had its politics or less powerful regions were drawn to follow stronger neighboring states.

In the sixteenth century Poland and Lithuania had united to form one of the largest and wealthiest Western Catholic powers in Europe. Western Europe, already united by Lithuania's inheritance of the Commonwealth and Livonia was considered a Polish-Lithuanian state. Alarmed by the spread of Protestantism in their country,

Poland's Roman Catholics made a strong effort to educate their people about their faith. Upper class Ukrainians increasingly became Roman Catholic, bringing the Ukrainian Church of strong leaders. The Patriarch of Constantinople was not far away and so weakened by the Turks to strengthen the Ukrainian Church. Through the Poles, the Ukrainian hierarchy came into contact with the more highly trained Roman Catholic teachers and were increasingly influenced by them.

Eastern Catholics in Ukraine

In 1596 the Metropolitan of Kiev and several other Ukrainian bishops signed the Union of Brest, giving their Church under the Pope of Rome while they the Patriarch of Constantinople "the authority of the Christian religion (Poland) and to avoid further confusion and division." They realized that there be no change in the Creed or the liturgy, and that other practices of their Church remain unchanged.



113

Introduce the next topic by noting that not every development in this age was necessarily positive. It was also a time of great division in the Western Church. Then allow time for the students to read the previous paragraph ("*Twenty-five years later..*").

Ask if the students are aware of Protestant churches in your area and what makes them different from your own church. Note that many Protestants don't believe in the sacramental mysteries such as Chrismation or Repentance. Others don't baptize children, honor the Theotokos or the saints, or have icons or even priests. We recognize them as Christian communities, but don't see them as "Churches" in the same way as Roman Catholics or Orthodox.

Background Reading (Roman Catholic Fragmentation - continued):

"The Church of England withdrew from union with Rome in the same century, but for reasons somewhat different from those that fueled the reform on the European continent. In 1527 King Henry VIII, who had become involved with Anne Boleyn, sought to dissolve his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. The pope refused his request and Henry repudiated papal authority, summoning parliament to name Henry head of the Church in his kingdom. In 1533 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, dissolved Henry's marriage and was excommunicated by the pope. After Henry's death the Anglican Church was increasingly influenced by European Protestantism which would dominate it until at least the end of the nineteenth century" (TEE 42-43 - continued on next page)

Note that many of these groups came into being in the sixteenth century and the conflict in Europe that followed affected the Eastern Churches as well.

Have the students read the section "**Effects of the Reformation**" and identify the two effects that would impact the East as well as the West: (a) the development of clear presentations of both Roman Catholic and Protestant teaching and (b) the development of the principle that the ruler determines the religion of his state.

Remind the students that the condition of Eastern Christians had declined since the fall of Constantinople and that they had few opportunities for education. Discuss what they think might have happened when these poorly educated Christians came into contact with more polished Roman Catholic or Protestant teachers.

Stress that another important force at the time was the principle that the ruler determined what religion would be recognized by the state. Explain the concept "*state church*" meant that the government paid the expenses of the church (bought property, books and materials; paid for clergy salaries, repairs, etc.). Today it is the church members who pay but that was not so in the sixteenth century. If your church was not a state church, it would not be able to do anything that cost money.

Note that Eastern Christians under Western rulers could not be a state church nor could their leaders clearly explain their Tradition so that people would remain faithful. Ask:

- What would you have done if you were church members then? Would you have stayed in your church whether you understood what it believed or not?
- Would you have joined another church where teachings were clearly and interestingly explained?
- If you were the church leaders, how would you have solved this problem?

Background Reading (Roman Catholic Fragmentation continued):

In our own century, the ecumenical movement within both camps has greatly reduced this hostility and led to open dialogue between many of the Protestant churches and Catholicism. Within each division, however, there remain many Christians unconvinced of the value of such dialogues. Some traditionalist Roman Catholics, who are suspicious of or even reject the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), look upon the modern Church as a sellout of Catholic values. At the same time, many fundamentalist and non-denominational Protestants look upon co-operation with Catholics as a dangerous evil for pure Christianity" (TEE 43).

Have the students read this section and the following one, "**Other Eastern Catholics in Europe.**" Point out that Eastern Catholics in Catholic Austria and Poland were recognized as state churches and received government support. Eastern Catholics in countries not ruled by Catholics did not have these advantages.

Note: If your parish was founded by people from any of these areas, you may share stories about how people were living in Europe before they came to the United States or Canada.

Catholics in the Patriarchate of Antioch Pages 114 - 115

The union was strongly supported by the king of Poland, but opposed by some bishops and prominent nobles of Rus', especially by those seeking Ukrainian self-rule. As a result the Ukrainian Church was divided into branches: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which remained in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in communion with Rome.

The Greek Catholic Church came under increasing Polish influence, especially in the seventeenth century, and many western customs were adopted. At the end of the eighteenth century, Poland was divided as a result of war and Western Ukraine became part of the (Catholic) Austro-Hungarian Empire while Eastern Ukraine was absorbed into Russia. In general, Ukrainian Catholics under Austria remained Greek Catholic while those under Moscow eventually became Orthodox.

Catholics in the Patriarchate of Antioch

The Ottoman Turks had conquered much of the Middle East in the sixteenth century. They did not consider Christians and Jews as citizens of their Islamic state, but as subject peoples. They made the Patriarch of Constantinople to be the official (official leader) of all the Christian (Christians) in their empire. Although there were other patriarchs and bishops, the patriarch was the chief governor of the Roman Byzantine Christians.

During the seventeenth century the Turks allowed a number of French and Italian as trading partners in the Ottoman Empire. These Europeans brought goods with them who were much more advanced than the Europeans. These European goods began to influence the local Christians and led many to seek union with the Western Church.

When one of these pro-western bishops was elected as Patriarch of Antioch in 1724, the patriarch (the Patriarch of Constantinople) expelled him and put another in his place. There were now two patriarchs, one in communion with Rome and the other in communion with Constantinople.

Other Eastern Catholics in Europe

Over the next 170 years groups of Eastern Christians in the Carpathian areas of Hungary and Romania united with the West. They tried to join Roman Catholic and Protestant churches but were completely isolated from other Eastern Christians. They had no country of their own and decided to unite with the Catholic Church as a distinct group, accepting "all and everything that our Holy Mother the Roman Church holds as Article," as the signers



114

Read the section and note that the status of Christians in the Ottoman Empire was similar to that of Native Americans (Indians) on reservations. They had limited opportunities and, although they had treaties with the rulers, they were often ignored. People had to bribe the government officials to get the laws enforced.

Note that, instead of being a state church, Eastern Catholics could be given protection by the French or Italians. They received help from churches in those countries and were admitted to Roman Catholic schools. They were able to receive a European education, to explain Christian beliefs as the Europeans did and could call on the European ambassadors for help, if they were pressured by their rulers. They were no longer on their own.

Note: If your parish was founded by people from the Middle East, you may share stories about how people were living before they came to the United States or Canada.

Have the students reread the last paragraph in this section together and aloud ("*There were now..* "). Have one of the students read John 17:20-23 (Christ's prayer for unity). Discuss why Christ said that Christian unity was necessary if the world was to believe.

Praying for Unity

Ask the students if they have ever tried to do something and failed or at least failed in part. Discuss making an honest mistake that does not achieve your aims but may even make things worse. Say that today Catholic and Orthodox leaders have agreed that the events of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries were like that. Now Catholic and Orthodox leaders have agreed that "*Whatever the past may have been, it must be left to the mercy of God, and all the energies of the Churches should be directed so that the present and the future conform better to the will of Christ for His own*" (Agreed Statement, ¶ 23).

5. Activity A (Eastern Catholic Open House)

Stress that as Eastern Catholics we should pray often for unity and help Western Christians become more aware of the Eastern Churches by inviting others to visit our churches. If possible, discuss taking part in or even promoting the idea of a parish open house for visitors. Distribute the five leaflets from the hospitality packet *Welcome to Our Church* (God With Us Publications). Divide the class into groups so that each student reads one leaflet. Then group the students who read the same leaflet together and have them discuss how they would explain the topic of the leaflet to visitors.

If time permits, discuss related topics such as:

- Who do you think should be invited to the open house?
- Who should greet the visitors as representatives of the parish?
- What would you do if you were helping with publicizing the open house?
- What kind of prayer or liturgical service might you have?
- What special refreshments would you serve?
- What souvenir would you give to visitors?

Remind the students throughout that we have been blessed by being part of our Church and that we can show our gratitude to God by sharing its treasures with others.

6. Activity B (Eastern Catholic Churches)

Indicate that we have learned that we can make a contribution to the Christian life in this country, not by giving up or diluting our Tradition, but by celebrating it and sharing it with others. Have the students view the 12-minute video/DVD, *An Introduction to the Eastern Catholic Churches*, which touches on some of the topics covered in Lessons 18-22.

Before showing the program, direct the students to list three things discussed in it that they had previously heard and three things that they had not.

7. Activity C (The Kingdom Tree)

Remind the students of Jesus' Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32) and the project of the Kingdom Tree. Have the students add a branch representing the unions of Ukraine, Uzhorod, Romania, and the Patriarchate of Antioch.

8. Time Line

Refer to the time line poster. Have the students brainstorm the names of people mentioned in this lesson (*Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, the Ukrainian Catholic Union of Brest, the Ruthenian Catholic Union of Uzhorod, the beginnings of the*

Romanian and Melkite Greek Catholic communities) and indicate the period in which each lived. Write in the names and dates under each appropriate heading.

9. Summary

End the lesson by summarizing the lesson from the aims on page 308, from the elements in the student text on which you focused and/or from any other points raised in the lesson.

10. Closing Prayer

Conclude with the reading of the Prayer for Unity of St Photius the Great on page 116 in the student text

The Kingdom Tree

Add a branch marked The Church in a New Age, representing the unions of Ukraine, Uzhorod, Romania, and the Patriarchate of Antioch.

