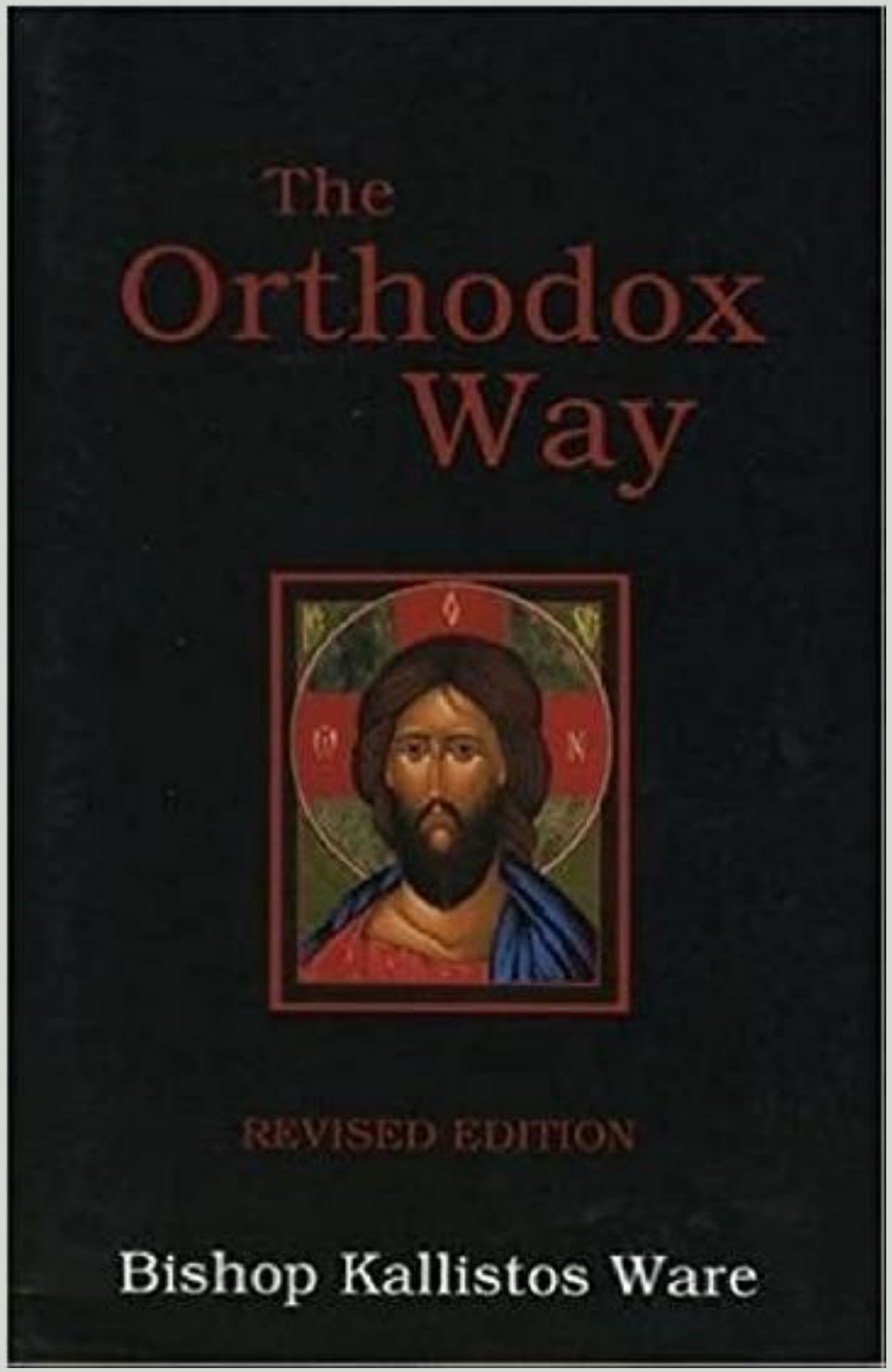
Greek Orthodoxy & Getting Around in Greece

Class #4 - March 22, 2023



The Orthodox Way

Good reference on Orthodox Christianity

- Synonymous with Byzantine Christianity (medieval Greek-Christian empire based in Constantinople)
- Founded by Saint Peter traveling through Greek-speaking Roman Empire
- Based in Constantinople/Istanbul since the early 300s AD

Monasticism & Mysticism

- Early Christianity, especially in the East, was based in small, rural monasteries

- Produced many great saints, like St. Makarios of Egypt, a Desert Father (300-391 AD)

Hesychasm

- Hesychia = silence, quiet
- A meditation technique containing both prayer and breathing
- Handed down through oral tradition
- “Let the remembrance of Jesus be with you in every breath.” in *the Ladder of Divine Ascent*, John Klimakos
- *Lord Jesus Christ, Have Mercy on Me*, i.e. *Kyrie eleison*

Meteora Monasteries

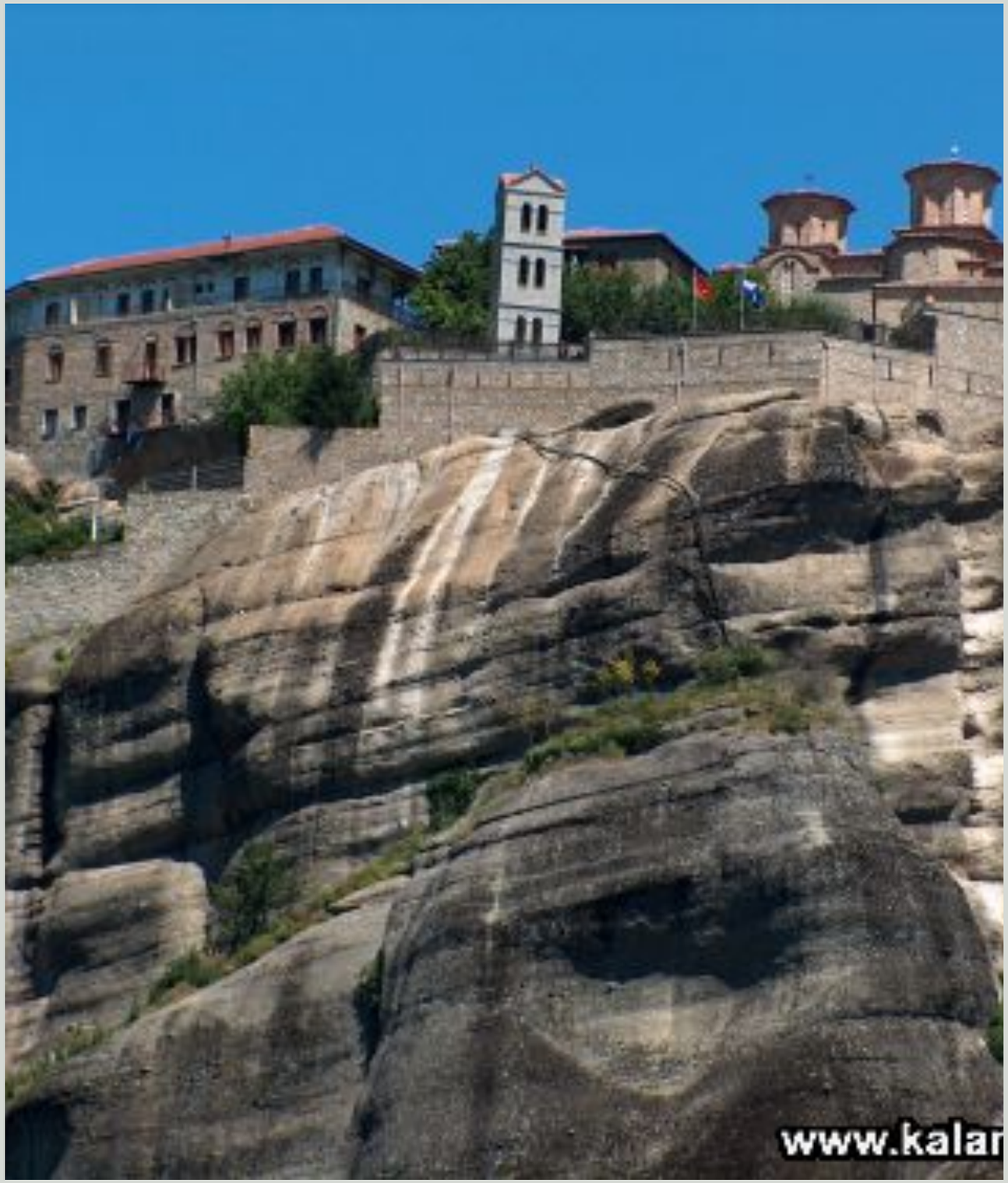
- Hermits living in caves and rock fissures first arrived in 900 AD
- Caves were inhabited from the paleolithic to the neolithic times
- There are many holy caves as well as monasteries
- Once there were 24 monasteries, now 6 remain
- Height offered protection from Turkish invasion
- Each monastery is a time capsule of Byzantine and Ottoman-era monastic life

Great Meteora (Transfiguration)

St. Athanasius the Meteorite

- Lived in the 1300s, sought a life of prayer and contemplation
- Lived in a cave *and* founded the great monastery
- Practiced hesychasm

Monastery of Varlaam



- Named after Varlaam, the first monk who ascended the rock and claimed it for his refuge (1300s)
- Accessed by ladders and ropes
- Turned into a proper monastery in 1500s

St. Stephen's- Convent

- Founded by St. Anthony and St. Philotheus (local saints/monks)
- Abandoned and re-inhabited as a nunnery in 1961; about 30 nuns today
- Contains the holy skull of St. Charalambos, an early Christian martyr (circa 200 AD)

Contemporary Greece

Water

- It is safe to drink water from the tap in the places we are going
- Nonetheless, bottled water is ubiquitous
- Water in Greek = neh-**ro** / νερό
- I would like some water:
  - Tha **ee**-thel-a neh-**ro**
  - **Θα ήθελα νερό**

Food

- Mediterranean Diet = vegetables, fruit, grains, beans, fish, and tons of olive oil
- Meat is popular celebration food and for tourists
- Meals are served family style
- Restaurants usually provide fruit, dessert, and cordials at no cost after the meal

Gluten Free

- I can’t consume gluten
  - Then bo-ro na kat-ana-**lo**-so glu-**ten**-ee.
  - Δεν μπορώ να καταναλώσω γλουτένη.
- Gluten-free
  - cho-**rees** glu-t**en**-ee
  - χωρίς γλουτένη

Food Preferences

- I would like… Tha **ee**-thel-a / Θα ήθελα
  - eggs— av-**ga** /αυγά
  - fish— **psa**-ree / ψάρι
  - vegetables— la-ha-ni-**ka** /λαχανικά
- I am a vegetarian
  - Ee-may chor-to-**fa**-gos / είμαι χορτοφάγος
- Without meat/no meat: chor-**ees kray**-as / χωρίς κρέας

Useful Phrases

- Where are the bathrooms?
    - Poo **ee**-nay ee too-a-**le**-tes? / Πού είναι οι τουαλέτες;
- Help! Vo-**ee**-thee-a! / Βοήθεια!
- Yes = Neh / Ναι No = oh-hee = όχι
- How much does this cost?
    - **Po**-so **ka**-nee? Πόσο κάνει;
- What's your name? Pos sas **leh**-neh? Πώς σας λένε;
- My name is… Me leh-neh…Με λένε…

Other Important Phrases

- I don't speak Greek:
    - όχι ελληνικά = **oh**-hee ell-ee-ni-**ka** (no Greek)
- Do you speak English?
    - Μιλάτε αγγλικά; = mee-**la**-teh ang-lee-**kah**?
- Thank you = Ευχαριστώ = ef-char-ist-**oh**
    - Quick mnemonic: F. Harry Stowe
- Good Morning = Kal-ee-**mer**-ah = Καλημέρα

The Difficult Truth

- Greeks smoke EVERYWHERE
- Toilets cannot handle toilet paper, use waste bin next to toilet
- Sidewalks in Athens are narrow and full of holes and dog doo– pay attention as you walk