

# Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia (1934–2022)

Valerie A. Karras



I was heartbroken when I learned of the death of Metropolitan Kallistos (Timothy Ware), my academic and religious hero, my mentor, and my friend.

after that. I was flattered by his interest in my research into patristic views of sex and gender, and we enjoyed many lengthy discussions on this and other topics, including his own work, over the years. For example, when I was a professor at Saint Louis University, a Jesuit Catholic school, the university brought him to give a lecture. Meeting with him privately, I told him that I used his book *The Orthodox Way* in my “Theological Foundations” classes because it was really basic *Christian* theology. He confessed that a colleague of his at the University of Oxford—where he taught for decades at Pembroke College—once asked why he hadn’t just titled it *The Christian Way*. He was matter-of-fact and even humble about his own work, although he always spoke about it enthusiastically (if with a certain amount of weight, because he was inevitably behind schedule).

Metropolitan  
Kallistos of Diokleia.  
Photo: Veronique  
Magnes.

I first read his seminal 1963 work, *The Orthodox Church*, when I was a teenager and he still bore his baptismal name of Timothy (he took the name Kallistos—ancient Greek for “the most beautiful” or “the best”—upon monastic tonsure and ordination to the clergy). Many years later, in 1993, I had the pleasure of spending time with him at the international conference of the World Council of Churches’ Commission on Faith and Order, at Santiago de Compostela in Spain. We got to know each other as seatmates during an afternoon bus trip that took us to several of the churches along the “Way to Santiago” pilgrimage, a trip that thousands do on foot every year. Beyond lively theological discussion, we also shared personal stories, and I came away from that afternoon seeing Kallistos as not simply a bishop and widely-respected theologian but as a warm and caring human being who had dealt with many of the same emotional experiences as everyone else as a child and youth.

Kallistos was an excellent and well-regarded scholar of Byzantine church history, Orthodox theology, and related areas. More importantly, he was an excellent *person*: genuinely good and caring and humorous (and frequently enjoying his own humor as he chuckled when giving the punchline to a joke or anecdote). He was strong in his faith and his commitment to Orthodoxy while remaining intellectually curious and honest, invariably thoughtful and open-minded as he pondered the distinctions between Tradition and traditions in the face of our broader society.

We remained in occasional contact, punctuated by an even more occasional meeting in person for tea or lunch,

I watched with respect and admiration as that intellectual honesty and spiritual thoughtfulness led him over the years to question and even change his views on the liturgical roles of women in the Church.

I am very sorry that I missed seeing him the last time I was in the UK, about

three years ago. We were scheduled to have tea at his home, but he was called to the Patriarchate unexpectedly. As it turns out, it would have been my last chance to share an embrace and to see in person his twinkling eyes as he cracked a joke. He is truly among the saints. May his memory be eternal—  
Αἰωνία αὐτοῦ ἡ μνήμη! ✨



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#### IN MEMORIAM

## On the Loss of Kallistos

### Jonathan Tobias

1989: I wander into the tiny library of my wife's native Orthodox Church. I find an old, thin, four-by-nine-inch copy of *The Orthodox Church*, by an Englishman, Timothy Ware. It is printed in tiny, cramped paper that has gone brittle and musty over the years.

*Tempus fugit.* Fast forward.

Metropolitan Kallistos reposed in the Lord on August 24, 2022. I pray, along with many others, "Memory Eternal! Vechnaja Pamjat." And while I pray this, other thoughts arise.

The passing of this wonderful, generous teacher and hierarch will become an inflection point. His departure from us who remain in the "church militant" means the loss of his physical presence, his voice, and the possibility of new writings. It is also likely to signal a high

tide mark, after which the waters will turn and recede.

Decades ago, in 1990, I was converted from Evangelical Protestantism to Eastern Orthodoxy. It was a hard journey. I had been brought up with the certainty that the only possible real Christianity was my particular sectarian upbringing. It was a "fundamentalist" experience. There was a constant hyper-vigilance about—even a fear of—modernism. We were bound by a literalism that was, I discovered later, inconsistent.

It was also emotional and experiential: we were all bound by a shared, self-reported crisis experience, something Billy Graham called "the hour of decision." We sought "mountaintop" moments of cathartic ecstasy, unbound and unlimited by "programmed worship."

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