

A FIRE WAITING TO BE LIT

a new opportunity

When Father Smith went on sabbatical in 2021, he spent part of that time in Istanbul, Turkey, and was amazed at the opportunities for mission and evangelization there in a place with few resources. Bishop Guglielmone gave him permission to return in 2022 for a missionary experience. Part of that experience was to forge a new link between the local church in South Carolina and the Church in Turkey.

catholicism in turkey

Turkey is the only majority Islamic country in the Middle East where it is legal to convert to Christianity. While most of the Catholics in Turkey are immigrants or descendants of Western Europeans from centuries ago, there are now native Turkish converts as well as new Christians from other countries in the Middle East. The Church in Turkey has few resources and no legal recognition.



foreign missions

“Go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” the LORD gave His Great Commission to all His disciples before He ascended to heaven. Prince of Peace Catholic Church exists to fulfill the command on our own local level. As a community of faith, we support the mission of the Church for evangelization here in our own back yard, and also support many other worthy causes as a parish. Yet the Church is a worldwide institution, and resources like we have here are lacking in other parts of the world. The Church is called to help missions in other places as well, particularly the foreign missions where the Church is new.





awareness of the church in turkey

Father Smith has a presentation called *A Fire Waiting to be Lit* on the history and future of Catholicism in Turkey. We invite you to come and listen to this important talk to learn more.

- The Vicar Apostolic of Istanbul, Massimiliano Palinuro, has asked Prince of Peace to adopt the Catholic Community of Bursa as a twin parish.
- Bishop Palinuro has been invited to come and visit Prince of Peace, where he will talk about the life of the Church in Turkey and how we can help.
- The parish has set up an account called The Anatolian Fund, where parishioners with a heart for mission can donate.
- The parish in Bursa is the church closest to the site of the first ecumenical council at Nicea in 325. To prepare for the 1700th anniversary of the council, we can help bring this church back to life after 50 years without a stable presence.



Sulemaniye Mosque

You were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another.

Istanbul has been called the Heart of the World. At the crossroads between East and West, straddling Europe and Asia, this ancient city is a true melting pot of cultures, religions and worldviews. The Latin Catholic presence in this part of Turkey is small but historically important. The Church makes a vibrant contribution to the colorful landscape of faith, hope and charity that have made this city and country a destination for pilgrims, travelers, traders and adventure seekers for centuries.



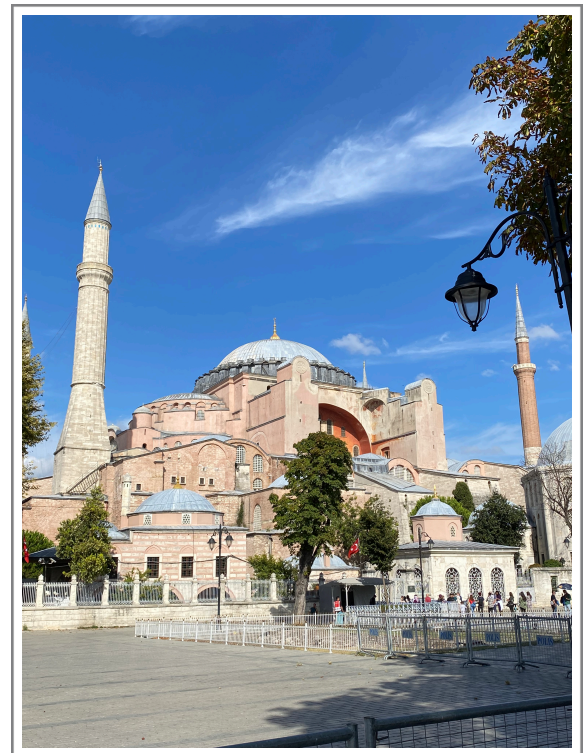
Aya Sofya - Hagia Sophia

CATHOLICS IN TURKEY by diocese	people	priests	parishes
Izmir	14.000	15	12
Istanbul	17.000	36	12
Anatolia	3050	8	8
Eastern Catholics	21.514	9	16
TOTAL	55.564	68	48

In Acts 11.26, we read, *In Antioch the disciples were first called Christians*. For that reason, if we call Holy the Land where Christ lived, died and rose, the area we now call Turkey is the Holy Land of the Church. Most of St Paul’s missionary journeys were in Asia Minor. The Seven Churches of the Book of Revelation and the first Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church before the schism between East and West in 1054: they’re all in Turkey. Constantinople became the greatest Christian center after Jerusalem and Rome. The Conquest of the City by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 meant that both Jerusalem and Constantinople were in the hands of an Islamic Empire. The struggle for the foundation of the Turkish Republic after the fall of the Ottoman Empire led to a complicated demographic shift.

Before World War I, one in every four inhabitants of Turkey was a Christian. Today, less than 0.5% of the population is a Christian. The Roman Catholic Church is not a recognized legal entity in the Republic, and as such, the situation of the Catholics in this country is very precarious. The Church does not have legal claim to its own buildings, and expropriations of property, as well as emigration of Catholics outside of the country means that there are very few resources to go about the work of evangelization and mission. At the same time though, new waves of immigration and conversions to Christianity are placing strain on the limited resources of the Church in Turkey.

The Catholic Church in Turkey needs your help to maintain what precious little it has, and also build a future. The Church’s call for authentic inculturation means that there is a real possibility of building a local church, not just of foreigners or descendants of minority ethnic groups, but of Turkish Christians.



An Invitation from Your Pastor

The Church is more than just our own parish. The Catholic Church is truly universal, and so we have a sacred responsibility to help our brothers and sisters throughout the world. There are many needs out there, and many worthy causes. I ask you to prayerfully consider becoming a partner with me in offering our spiritual and financial assistance to the Vicariate Apostolic of Istanbul. We are so blessed to enjoy the resources of a large and vibrant parish. Even a modest offer of assistance on our part can change the lives of many Catholics and new Christians in the Holy Land of the Church in ways we can't imagine. I was edified by the love these heroic people have for Christ and for the Church. And I was shocked by the poverty of resources of a Church where so many people are coming to find Good News. Together we can have a link with a very real place, Bursa in Turkey, and by twinning with that community, answer Our Lord's call to preach and teach, even in the midst of the Islamic world.

Will you help?

Father Christopher Smith



how can we help?

1. Pray

First we ask that you pray a Rosary, a Holy Hour or offer your Holy Communion for the priests, religious and laity who minister to the Christians in the Holy Land, as well as for those Catholics and new Christians who live in Turkey. Your spiritual sacrifice can gain many graces for the Holy Land of the Church.

2. Give

Prince of Peace Catholic Church has set up The Anatolian Fund where you may earmark financial donations for the use of the Church in Turkey. We will have occasional asks at the parish, or you may set up a recurring donation via the parish website:

www.princeofpeacetaylors.org.

3. Bring Bursa Back

The current greatest need of the Vicariate of Istanbul is to revive the Catholic presence in the fourth largest city in Turkey, Bursa. This is the closest church to the place of the first ecumenical council, Nicea, whose 1700th anniversary is in 2025. Presently, Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox all share a church space but there is no residence for a priest or any place for catechesis, meetings or welcoming those interested.

4. Educate

Become an advocate for Christians in Turkey by sharing this information and inviting others to learn more and be a part of the renewal of the Church in this ancient land.