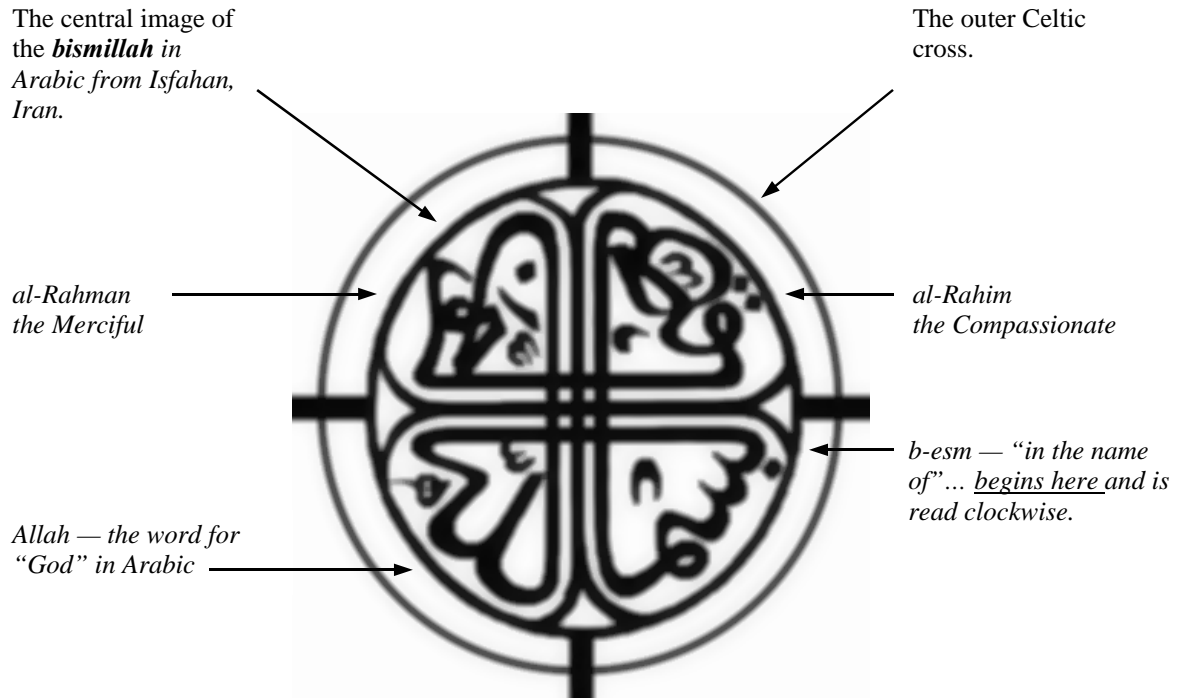

The Seal of The Oriental Orthodox Order in the West



In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate One
pronounced
Bismillāh ar-Rahman, ar-Raheem

The Seal (or the Medallion) used by the Order as its signature image came into being in a serendipitous way. The central image of the Seal was found many years ago in an Anglican Church in Isfahan, Iran where it is had been made a part of its architecture. The opening words of the Qur’an, *In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate One* (written as ***Bismillah al-Rahman, al-Rahim***) in Arabic are shaped calligraphically to form a cross. This unique image unites the predominant culture of the contemporary Middle East with an ancient Christian image.

When the original representation seemed appropriate for use by the Order, the Celtic cross with its four equilateral arms was placed around the central cross and the ***Bismillah*** (as it is normally called), uniting East and West in a beautiful combined image. For the Order, this combination expresses not only its Middle Eastern roots in Oriental Christianity, but also its new place now in the West. The two geographic extremes of early Christianity (Oriental and Celtic) were, from their beginnings, alternative expressions to the predominant Greco-Roman form that became the major Christian norm. Though they were separated geographically, yet in spirit they shared a common vision of their work and place in the world. These now frame what many considered to be the exclusive expression of the Christian faith.