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We are very happy to be able to offer you the first issue of the English version of the news letter. It is not identical to the French version because we do not always receive the texts soon enough but the essential is there. We invite you to read an article on the Liturgy of Saint James which appeared in the French news letter for the month of November. Don't forget to display the news letter in your parishes, to send it out by e-mail and to put it onto the parish websites.

On the 11th November 2010, at the Institute of Saint Sergius, Paris, the annual pastoral assembly of our archdiocese was held, with a theme which directly concerns each member of the Church: the missionary conscious of the Church and the place of the Eucharist in the lives of our communities.

The discussions were very fruitful and will no doubt benefit from being continued in other situations.

But what is more striking during the assembly is the atmosphere of the day, its dimension of personal encounter, of the manifestation of the body of the Church, the reunion of the archdiocese around the person of its archbishop.

"We are not masters of the faith of the faithful, rather, we are workers with you for your joy" it is with these words of the apostle Paul (2 Co 1,24) that Archbishop Gabriel welcomed the participants of the assembly. These words, then taken up by other participants, punctuated the day. There were around 70 participants, coming from Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy, to celebrate the liturgy together, to reflect on practical pastoral questions, to debate, to try to identify answers or beginnings of solutions, but also to share a meal, enriched by friendly links.

Communication by internet is part of our life and our comfort, and has opened up vast horizons for information as well as for working together; real meetings, not virtual meetings, however, are still a necessary condition for the constitution of the Church. They show the body of the Church in a visible way, which is precious for all the faithful. Thanks to a variety of conferences, retreats, pilgrimages which are regularly organised by movements or parishes, many of the faithful have experienced an encounter with it; they know that it often involves defining moments in their lives as Christians, to experience living in communion. There they share their questions, find together their paths for living fully the mystery of the Church.

This is also what happens during a pastoral assembly, this one in particular was a gathering of priests and deacons.

The priests and deacons of our archdiocese, in an overwhelming majority, have a job, and only carry out their ministry in their "spare" time. Their professional activities do not allow them to travel easily during the week and their pastoral activities keep them in their parishes at the week-end. It is therefore almost impossible for them to meet up more than once a year.

Pastoral assemblies are still, in our archdiocese, even more precious events being rare by necessity and allowing members of the clergy to be together and to discuss the various questions which arise in their experience of daily parish life and in a ministry which they sometimes carry out in relative isolation.

Although the whole people of God constitutes the body of Christ and carries out the responsibility of the Church, those whom, among the faithful, have accepted ordination have engaged themselves to the regularity in the service and the permanence of their engagement. This singles out their ministry in the heart of the community and significantly accentuates the weight of their responsibility.

Archbishop Gabriel did not omit to underline the importance of that responsibility, at the same time stressing the no less great importance of a certain spirit of creative liberty which makes up some of the specific charismas of our archdiocese. He was very pleased to confirm that in the heart of the clergy of the archdiocese, a common accord is becoming more and more obvious.

The pastoral assembly, he said, comforts him in the joyful feeling that the atmosphere, in the heart of the clergy of the archdiocese, is that of a united family.

The Liturgy of St James

On Saturday 23rd October, the feast of St James the brother of the Lord and first bishop of Jerusalem, the Orthodox parish of Quimper, dedicated to this saint, celebrated the Liturgy of St James for the second consecutive year. This Liturgy was celebrated by me, rector of the parish, Fr Maxim Le Diraison of the parish of Lannion and Fr Jean-Michel Sonnier of the parish of St Brieuc / Dinan. Many faithful came from other Orthodox communities in Brittany and joined us for this celebration. Last year, following the Jerusalem usage, this liturgy was celebrated twice: on the feast day of the saint and on the 26th December, when we commemorate St Joseph, the prophet David and St James.

At this point we would like to consider briefly some aspects of this ancient liturgy. As this bulletin does not have the space for a complete analysis of the history and structure of this Liturgy of St James, we will confine ourselves to a few points

First of all it must be pointed out that this liturgy does not include the service of preparation (proscomidi) comparable to the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. After the initial prayers the priest recites Psalm 50 then unfolds the antimension and puts the diskos and the chalice onto the altar, cuts a lamb from the prosphora and places it on the diskos, then pours the wine and a drop of water into the chalice. The gifts are then covered with the veils. We find in the prayers accompanying these liturgical acts the essential elements of the usual words used in the proscomidi, but they are considerably shorter.

The liturgy starts with censing the altar, while the priest says some specific prayers, then the choir chants the hymn "Only begotten Son and Word of God"; the royal doors are opened, the clergy leave the sanctuary with the Gospel book during the singing of the troparia and go to the centre of the church, next to the lectern onto which the Gospel book has been put, until the end of the litany of the catechumens, which reminds us of the current usage at pontifical liturgies. Then the deacon sings a brief litany of peace, ending with an ecphonesis that is more elaborate than most of the ecphonesis of this liturgy: "Calling to remembrance our most holy most pure blessed and glorious Lady, Theotokos and ever virgin Mary, the glorious prophet Forerunner and Baptist John, the godly and all laudable Apostles, the glorious prophets, those who did heroic labours, and the martyrs, and all the saints and holy ones. Let us commend ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God."

Then come the singing of the Trisagion and the readings. In the Liturgy of St James, there have been traditionally more readings. They come from the Old Testament, followed by a reading from the Acts, an epistle and then the gospel. Today we only read an Old Testament text followed by the epistle of the day and the gospel. During the singing of the Alleluia after the epistle, the priest solemnly censes the Gospel book then the faithful. Next the deacon sings a litany of supplication, which ends with a prayer said over the faithful who are bowing their heads and then comes the dismissal of the catechumens.

Then, the choir sings the hymn normally sung on Holy Saturday: Let all mortal flesh keep silence…" during which the clergy go back into the sanctuary via the royal doors. Everyone says together the Symbol of Faith, before the kiss of peace which is exchanged firstly between the members of the clergy around the altar, then transmitted to all the faithful. It is interesting to note that this exchange of the kiss of peace with all the faithful occurs in all the ancient texts of the Liturgy of St James, and that it is announced by the deacon who turns towards the faithful and says "Let us love one another with a holy kiss." It is therefore an ancient usage which has been revived in some of our parishes and is sometimes described as a modern innovation by some people!

Next comes a long litany, composed of twenty petitions, repeating and elaboration the usual petitions. The ecphonesis which ends it is also associated with the first martyr Stephen and all the principle Prophets of the Old Testament. After this the veils are taken off the diskos and the chalice with some special prayers, just before the blessing and the prayer "Let us lift up our hearts!" The priest then starts the eucharistic prayer, then the choir sings "Holy Holy Holy Lord.."; the priest continues the Eucharistic prayer, which is quite elaborate and quite close to that of the Liturgy of St Basil. The reciting of the institution is that which is normally

used, however with an extra word "distributed", which applies to the bread and to the wine: "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you and distributed, for the remission of sins." Coming next is the epiclesis whose formulation is quite classic, but which is preceded by a reminder of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit: "he who has spoken by the law, the prophets and the New Covenant, which came down in the form of a dove upon our Lord Jesus Christ in the River Jordan, remained above him, and came down upon your Holy Apostles in the form of tongues of fire in the upper room of the holy and glorious Zion on the day of Holy Pentecost, send us the same most Holy Spirit, Lord, upon us and upon these gifts here present".

The deacon then says a long series of intercessory prayers to which the choir replies singing: "Remember us Lord God". This is how we commemorate the living for whom we particularly wish to pray (as there is no proskomidi we can use the prayer lists of the parish and the faithful who are present). The choir then chants the hymn to the Mother of God, then the priest commemorates the prophets, apostles, martyrs, ascetics, bishops, in the same order and with the lists of names quite similar to the usual prayers during the proskimidi. We also remember the faithful departed for whom we which to pray.

The rite of fraction follows immediately, the prosphora is separated in to two, a bit of the part marked XC-KA is put into the chalice, then comes a prayer of preparation and the singing of Our Father followed by a long prayer over the faithful who are bowing their heads. Next the priest lifts up the bread, then the chalice, then both together, crossing his arms an saying "The Holy things are for the Holy!" There is no mention of the rite of the zeon. The clergy then the faithful prepare themselves for communion. It seems that, in the past, everyone, clergy and faithful, received the body then the blood separately, because the method of distribution of the communion in this way has reached us. One of the priests puts the consecrated bread onto the tongue of the communicant saying: "the Body of Christ", and another priest brings the cup to the lips of the communicant saying: "the Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation"; the communicant replies "Amen".

Next the gifts are placed on the altar and covered with the kalmia. Then the deacon comes out for the last prayer of supplication, goes back into the sanctuary taking the Gospel book from the lectern and places it on the altar.

The priest gives the final blessing and there is not usually the distribution of the antidorion or the veneration of the cross.

It is interesting also to note that in Jerusalem, when the Patriarch or a bishop is protos, which is generally the case on the feast day of the saint, he does not wear the sakkos, but the phelonion, like the priest, over which he wears his omophorion; this ues of vestments is indeed visible in all ancient icons of the Fathers before the 15th century.

We note that this liturgy has evidently been written for celebration by many priests and deacons with the bishop. It seems quite difficult to celebrate alone, the presence of at least one other priest or a deacon is necessary for the service to function well.

The Liturgy of St James is the oldest known liturgy. It contains numerous texts that also occur in the Apostolic Constitutions (circa 380) and it is the origin of the Liturgies of St Basil and St John Chrystostom. It was celebrated regularly throughout Palestine, Syria, Cyprus, Alexandria, Sinai and in southern Italy until the 9th century.

After that it was only celebrated in Jerusalem, and in a few monasteries and parishes. The Syrian Orthodox use a version of this liturgy as their normal liturgy to this day. I myself have been able, at the beginning of this year, to participate three times in its celebration in Jerusalem.

For an unknown reason, it seems that it has never been used in the Slav world, and it was only in 1938 that Metropoliton Anastasios, of the Russian Church in Exile, together with many bishops celebrated this liturgy for the first time with a Slavonic translation of the Greek text. In France, it seems that it was Fr Alexandre Troubnikoff who celebrated it for the first time. Numerous parishes, in Greece, in Poland, in the United States, in Quebec other places have revived this ancient tradition. We are happy to have the privilege, with the blessing of Archbishop Gabriel, to celebrate this beautiful and moving liturgy every year.

Pere Yannick Provost

Translators note: An English copy of the Liturgy of St James is currently under preparation and can be optained from Fr Stephen Maxfield, Shrewsbury.

Keswick Chapel

Community of St Bega, St Mungo and St Herbert

Keswick, Cumbria, UK

Three people moved to Keswick in April 2007. Quite a long time before this Fr Michael Fortunato and Fr Kyril Jenner had celebrated an occasional liturgy, sometimes in people's houses and there is a small parish in Dalton in the South lakes served from Leyland in Lancashire. But otherwise Cumbria was an area without the public presence of Orthodox. We did not know whether we would find any Orthodox or not.

We have a small house in the centre of Keswick, what they call 'a two up and two down' referring to the number of rooms in the house and this included kitchen and bathroom!. The whole place had to be completely renovated so we decided to make a small extra room in the loft into a Chapel. We asked Aidan Hart to fresco the entire wall space. This was extremely effective.

English are known for their 'fish and chips'. Only 200 yards from the house we discovered a fish and chip shop run by Orthodox! They told us of 3 more fish and chip shops and one cafe run by Orthodox! We had an instant congregation. It made possible the ordination of a priest.

Our upstairs chapel rapidly became too small. Two miles from Keswick in the village of Braithwaite the Methodist Chapel no longer had any active congregation so we are permitted to use the Chapel as well as the facilities of the adjoining Youth Centre. The buildings look very attractive, being painted white on the outside and set in a beautiful natural setting of mountains and stream. Our people were overjoyed and straight away asked for a Liturgy every Sunday.

Two friends volunteered to paint the outside of the buildings and inside of the youth centre. This made a huge difference to the appearance of the place. Our church warden then offered to pay for the inside of the chapel to be painted. This again made a huge impact because we were also allowed to move out the old pews to form a sanctuary and open floor.

The parish is near the centre of the Lake District so there are many visitors. A lot of people see our small house with its sign outside 'Orthodox Community of St Bega, St Mungo and St Herbert'. The Chapel at Braithwaite is on a very popular walk for hikers. We hope to use the beautiful mountain pool for baptisms

It is extraordinary that such a small place as Keswick with a population of less than 5000 people should have three saints. St Mungo, also known as St Kentigern, preached here as a 6C itinerant bishop from Glasgow. St Herbert was a hermit on an island in Derwentwater and friend of the great St Cuthbert.of Lindisfarne. St Bega came from ireland, founded a monastery at St Bees and her tiny stone church at Bassenthwaite, keswick, almost certainly marks the site of her oratory and place of death. We are blessed to have such intercessors.

We have a regular congregation of about 20 plus several children, half of then from Cyprus. There are no Russian people. So we are in a very missionary situation. Our greatest innovation has been to conduct a full Vespers every day and Matins every weekday. Night prayer also plays a very important part for us.

Braithwaite Chapel