



150th : CATHEDRAL OF ST ALEXANDRE NEVSKY - PARIS

On Monday, September 12 in Paris, a formal liturgy was celebrated in the Cathedral of St. Alexandre Nevsky for the 150th anniversary of its consecration. A delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarch was sent to take part in the event. Its leader, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Myra, presided the Eucharistic Liturgy together with five bishops: His Grace Gabriel de Comane; His Grace Michel (Diocese of Geneva and Western Europe- ROCOR); His Grace Athenagoras of Sinope, auxiliary bishop of the Orthodox diocese of Belgium (Ecumenical Patriarch); His Grace Irénée of the OCA (Montréal, Québec), and His Grace Ignacius (auxiliary bishop of Metropolitan John, bishop of the Antiochian Orthodox diocese of Europe). Many other priests and faithful also took part.

Also present in the sanctuary were Metropolitan Emmanuel, Bishop of the Metropolitan of the Ecumenical Patriarchat in France; president of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in France, Metropolitan Joseph (Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan in Western Europe); as well as His Grace Luka (diocese of France and Western Europe of the Serbian Patriarchat). Several notable guests also came to take part in this commemorative liturgy alongside numerous faithful, including His Grace Gérard Daucourt, Catholic bishop of Nanterre, Father Richard Escudier, ecumenical delegate of the Catholic diocese of Paris. At the end of the Divine Liturgie, Bishop GABRIEL of Comane delivered a speech, and a message from His Holiness BARTHOLOMEE 1st, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, on the occasion of this ecclesial event, was read by Metropolitan Emmanuel.



Address of His Eminence Bishop Gabriel at the 150th Anniversary Commemorative Liturgy
for the Cathedral of Saint Alexandre Nevsky (PARIS, 12 SEPTEMBRE 2011)

Eminences, Excellences, My Reverened Fathers,
Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of the State authorities and local communities,
Dear brothers and sisters,

IT IS WITH GREAT JOY THAT I welcome you here today for the celebration of this liturgy, which marks the 150th year of our cathedral. It was in fact on this very day 150 years ago, on the feast of holy prince Alexandre Nevsky, that the formal dedication of this Church took place. Thanks to the tenacious efforts of a man of God, Archpriest Joseph Vassiliev, to whom we owe homage and recognition, this temple was built in the face of all sorts of difficulties. It was built for the praise of the Lord and the glory of His holy Name, to welcome the souls of all Russian Orthodox Christians as well as other nationalities, concerned with finding spiritual comfort and reconciliation with God through prayer and the holy sacraments. This temple was also built to serve as a bridge between Russia and France, to be a witness of Orthodox faith to the West and to show to all willing men the richness of liturgical and spiritual life of the Eastern Church, as the Russian people received it from Byzantium. Incidentally, this filiation is inscribed in the architecture of a very particular edifice that a great French art historian of Russian origin qualified as "byzantino-moscovite."

From the time of its consecration in 1861, this church has been the place of communal life of Russian Orthodox in Paris. After the tragic events of 1917-1920, thousands of "white" Russians followed the road to exile all the way to Paris. The church of Rue Daru (Daru Street) has become the spiritual centre of the Russian emigration, a place of informal meeting on Sundays and great feasts, and a sort of shelter for all those in exile, who after the turmoil of civil war, had plunged into the unknown. In 1922, this church became the seat of a diocesan bishop, the cathedral and the mother church of an ecclesial entity composed of parishes spread throughout France and in numerous other countries of

Western Europe. Since 1930, this structure has been found attached, under the various statutes that have evolved with time, to the jurisdiction of His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch. The Patriarchat of Constantinople has granted us its protection, respecting our Russian tradition and our internal autonomy. I should like to express our gratitude and our respect to His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew 1st, who sent a special delegation, composed of Metropolitans Chrysostom and Emmanuel and Bishop Athenagoras, to represent him personally in the Golden Jubilee celebrations of our cathedral. We all still remember the visit of His Holiness here in 1995, and the beautiful liturgy when he presided in the church. We are pleased to hear the words of encouragement and blessing that come to us again today in his message of greeting. We ask the delegation of the Ecumenical Throne to send our best wishes of thanks and filial affection.

Since the date of the consecration of this Church, nothing has changed- or almost nothing. Of course, electricity was installed a long time ago, and now I preach in French- but of that which is essential, nothing has changed. Our cathedral retains its religious significance and symbolism for all the Orthodox in Paris, including those of Russian descent having become French, those recently arrived in this country or natives of the former Soviet Union now in Paris. Our cathedral remains true to its mission: the liturgical services are celebrated according to our Russian liturgical tradition in the slavonic language (the services in French take place in the parish in the crypt of the cathedral); the choir- you have all noticed the celebrations embellished by its mastery of its often renewed repertoire and the two concerts that will be given on the occasion of the jubilee; the catechism remains rigorous, notably for children and adolescents, thanks to our small parish school on Wednesdays; and especially the pastoral service of support and spiritual assistance lead by our priests, this often invisible work, such as the visiting of the sick, of families, of lonely or aged people, is accomplished through selflessness and devotion. More recently, we have also set up in Paris a catechesism in Russian for recent immigrants from the former USSR, to teach them basic things about faith and the Church as well as to give a foundation in French to assist them in their administrative procedures, facilitating their integration into the society of their host country while preserving their largely Orthodox Christian roots.

Since its foundation, the cathedral has received renowned religious, political and artistic figures- emperors, ministers, patriarchs, writers and painters- as the simplest and humblest of the faithful. It has seen men and



women sanctified by their life of prayer and asceticism, it has seen sinners in search of salvation. Who in this Russian Orthodox community in Paris has not celebrated a baptism, a wedding or the funeral of a parent in this church? Through these celebrations recorded in our parish registers, thousands of individuals, anonymous and well-known, have experienced both joy and sorrow in this holy and venerable temple. This church truly is, as we say in Russian, “намоленная”, that is to say, “filled with the prayers that have been sent from here up to heaven.”

150 years is already quite a long time of Jubilee: we must pay tribute to all those who brought life to our cathedral every day, who maintained and restored it against time and wear. Although I cannot name them all, we pray for them incessantly, the living and deceased. I must, however, mention the contractors of the last two complete restorations, the first made in 1969, the other between 1980 and 1999: Mr. Vladimir Zagarovsky, now deceased, and Mr. Vadim Tichonicky, here present, both put as much time and effort as they could into their work. Many thanks to them. I would also like to thank various French civil institutions and ministries- The Ministries of Interior and Religious Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Culture; the Municipality of Paris and the City Council’s 8th District, which in accordance with the laws of the Republic, but also with concern for the sustainability and proper maintenance of this great memorial site, have, one way or another, always given aid to this building that is classified as a historical Monument. It must also be stressed that without the support of Monuments of France the cathedral would not be as beautiful as it is today. So thank you as well.

I have expressed to you my joy, but I must also tell you of my pain. “If one member of the Church suffers, all the members suffer with it”, the apostle Paul tells us

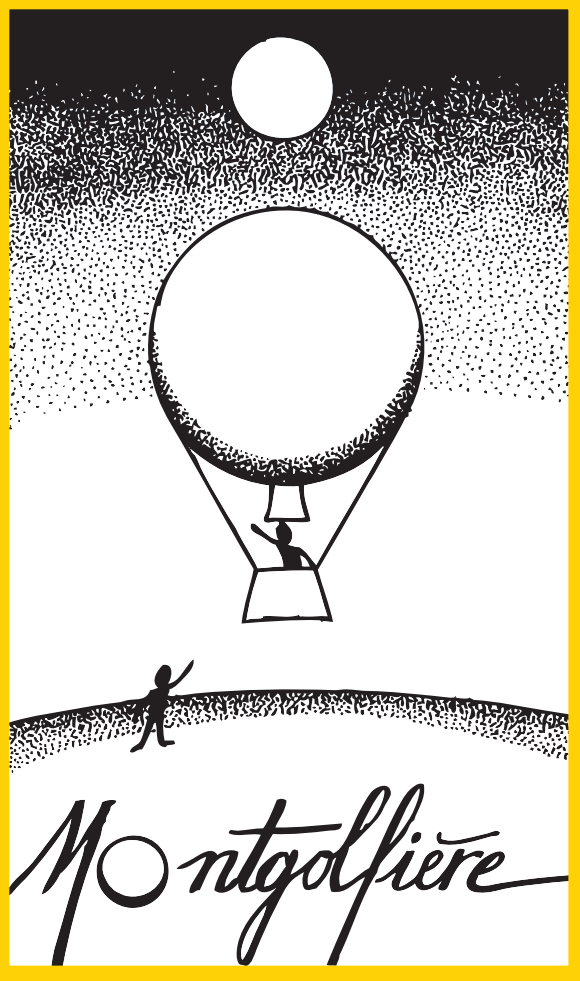
(1 Cor 12:26). I am sad because not all the members of my spiritual flock were able to be with us here today. I am thinking in particular of the clergy of our Cathedral of St. Nicolas in Nice, which will celebrate its jubilee next year, the centenary of its foundation. Our two churches in Paris and Nice are linked by a common history, they both wear the title of “cathedral” in our diocese. It is not the time nor the place to get into the conflict over the cathedral of St. Nicolas, but I nevertheless want to reiterate here what I said two weeks ago in Nice: the title of property is one thing, that depends on civil justice and I don’t meddle in that, but canonical jurisdiction concerning place of worship is my business as a bishop, as a religious leader of an ecclesial entity to which this church and its parish community have been linked for 80 years- a link which had not been contested until now.

I repeat, our message is above all spiritual, in a spirit of openness and fraternity: Orthodox Christians are certainly a minority in France, but we wish to promote the spiritual force and beauty of Orthodoxy. We hope to do so in accordance with the fundamental principles of this country that guarantee religious freedom and the rights of religious associations, but we also wish to preserve our archdiocese, this cathedral in Paris and all our other parishes in France and elsewhere from any and all interference or intervention outside of the Church. The freedom of the Church and the universality of the Orthodox faith are the two treasures that we are trying to conserve. And that enables us to concentrate on that which, in the eyes of Christ’s disciples, is “uniquely necessary”: “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”, the Lord Himself commands us (Matt 6:33).

It is in this spirit and with this commitment that I congratulate you for this beautiful and great feast of Saint Alexandre Nevsky and his church in Paris.



ASSEMBLÉE PASTORALE ANNUELLE
11 novembre 2011
Institut st Serge - 93 rue de Crimée 75019
Paris



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HO BETTER THAN TATIANA MOROZOV COULD TALK ABOUT MONTGOLFIERE?

This association which she created in June 1996 is an image of her faith in God, in her faith in Love and her faith in the Person.

Meeting Angelo, the Angolian who repeated for more than six years that he couldn't go back to his home, and who tirelessly kept asking for refugee status, was the catalyst for the creation of Montgolfiere. This man who fought for the right to live in a decent way, far from any danger to himself and his family, is just one representative of a population of victims of violations of human rights in France: asylum seekers who feel denied of their right of existence.

Montgolfiere decided to help asylum seekers to live in a dignified way until their rights are recognised. This help, individual and personalised, is part of the objective to defend the notion of the right to asylum in our country.

For Angelo, the first "Balloon" (Nacelle) was created in an emergency. It is a form of solidarity, of material and moral support in favour of a family or of a person seeking political asylum. It is a network of solitary people. Each participant of a balloon undertakes to pay a small amount each month to an

asylum seeker in difficulty, and continues to do so until the situation of the recipient is resolved. In return, the recipient undertakes to keep the members of the network informed as to the evolution of the situation.

After this, other forms of help, always voluntary, were progressively put into place.

- ❖ Help with writing the files for the asylum seekers.
This consists of untangling chaotic and painful stories of being uprooted from home and of exile, experienced by the asylum seekers, the determining elements for the acceptance of their application for refugee status.
- ❖ Accompanying
This consists of being at the side of an asylum seeker presented by the Association, in the administrative stages at the Prefecture, at the OFPRA (Office of the Protection of Refugees and Stateless people), at the Commission for Help for Refugees, at the local council...
- ❖ Legal process
This is designed to ensure effective legal assistance to asylum seekers. It is powered by donations.
- ❖ Rapid or regular assistance for families of people with no resources.

IN MEMORANDUM

Tatiana Morozov, née Lodyginsky; doctor serving the humble and poor, founding president of the Montgolfiere Association and member of ACER-MJO, fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday the 16th July. She was buried on Wednesday the 20th July in the cemetery of Ste Genevieve des Bois (France) close to her husband, Serge, who died three months before her.

In the 1970's Tatiana and Serge left France to live in Africa, in Senegal for 10 years. There Tatiana looked after a hospital which was a health centre that was very much appreciated. Serge was expelled from Senegal in 1985 for having contributed to the training of an Amnesty International group there. She joined him in Paris in 1988 and worked first of all for Comede (Medical comity for exiles). After she left Comede she founded Montgolfiere, an association helping asylum seekers that she led with dedication, humor and selflessness until her death. She remains for those who knew her an example of how to serve your neighbour to which we are all called. May her memory be eternal...

She was the only Orthodox member of the team at the beginning, and she considered that it was indispensable that she made the people in the parishes that she went to aware of the work she was doing. Gently, without big speeches, but with persistence that was her nature, she awakened in many of us the feeling of responsibility to our neighbour. Prayer is necessary and indispensable, but prayer without love is sterile, and abstract love without practical action is not love. Without the support of prayer this Love is impossible. Who is my neighbour? For Tatiana, our neighbour is he that is at our side, in the physical sense and who needs you. He needs you, not always materially: sometimes a word is sufficient, or a smile, some attention. Sometimes it is sufficient to make him understand that you consider him as a Person, and that you respect him even if according to the society which surrounds us he is nothing.

Around Montgolfiere, a network of friends, Orthodox and non-Orthodox, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, social workers and translators, has been created and is permanently renewed to meet the urgent needs of asylum seekers without resources.

The volunteers try to offer them some rest from

their worries by offering them themed outings in Paris, some afternoon refreshments, a few days holiday for the children (the ACER-MJO Association provides a holiday every year to several Montgolfiere children).

More widely, a network of friends supports the Association by regular or single donations, which are vital for the running of the Association. It is the only way that Montgolfiere answers the material needs of the asylum seekers who come to us asking for help.

Tatiana has left us, but she would have wanted her action to continue. We hope that the network that she was able to create around Montgolfiere will stand up to her having gone and that in due time new people will join us either in the field or with financial support.

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INTER-FAITH DAY OF REFLECTION ON CATECHISM

The sixth inter-faith day of reflection on catechism was held at the Institute of St Serge on March 5th 2011 on the theme of the place of the Old Testament in the catechism of the incarnation. It was structured on the model of previous ones, meaning that a representative from each of three confessions, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, gave a talk on the theme of the day followed by discussions and then workshops (ateliers). This created an original experience which started in 2006 so at the end of the 6th day we can try to draw some useful conclusions for anyone who, near or far, is interested. Over the years the themes have varied and covered liturgical feasts: Christmas (2006) and Easter (2008), participation of children in the services (2007), prayer (2010) and finally the role of the Old Testament in catechism (2011).

Right from the first time they met the

differences between the faiths were obvious. It didn't surprise anyone that the Protestants give great importance to the Scriptures and use many Biblical texts taken as much from the Old as from the New Testament. The Catholics have documents and directives prepared by the bishops. From these they establish catechetical courses according to the ages of the children and it seems that the adaptation at a parish level is flexible taking into account the sociology of the young teachers and the children's parents. The Orthodox make a lot of reference to the liturgical feasts and hymns and also use iconographic representations as supports in our catechism. The way in which Easter was tackled during the 3rd day was striking in this regard, particularly between the Protestant speaker and the Orthodox speaker. The Pastor Mrs Agnes von Kirchbach, who is responsible for Protestant catechism at a national and international level

in the French speaking world, immediately put at the heart of her presentation of the story of the Passion and what was painful, unacceptable and unjust about it for us – “the suffering and the death of God in human flesh”. She aims in her catechetical course to make the children “experience” all the elements of the Passion narrative and make them active, rather than them being spectators, capable of identifying with some of the actors in the drama which stimulate a response in them. The Orthodox speaker, Ivan Karageorgiev, a young catechism teacher and student at the Institute of St Serge, began by talking about the love of God, then the awakening of spring as the beginning of Paschal joy. In his catechism he gets the children to live in their daily life the preparation for the tremendous event of the Resurrection, by explaining to them the meaning of Great Lent, by making them aware of what is happening in the services which bring to life the events of the Passion and by getting them to take part as much as possible in the traditions of the feast of Pascha. As for the Catholics, the speaker, Mrs Sophie Delarue, who at the time was in charge of catechism for the children in the Diocese of Nanterre also emphasised the importance of the services in Holy Week, in particular the Easter vigil which is open to all. But the catechism of Easter is based around particular activities to make the concepts of passage tangible (hades, light, death, life) and to feel the reality of the Passion by making an Easter garden.

This year a teacher, at the moment of the conclusion of the last day, expressed his regret at not having found more specific catechetical propositions during his encounters with people during the day. It is true that the afternoons dedicated mainly to practical workshops were more and more taken over by prolonged discussions of the morning’s talks. Certainly, it will be necessary in the future to take this demand into account and organise the schedule accordingly, but at the same time it is certain that during one day per year we cannot pretend to train teachers of catechism, neither to give out ready made lessons.

The aim of these gatherings is contained in the title itself: day...of reflection on catechism...

This reflection made by three voices in a climate of trust allows a distancing from the standard way to understand catechism and therefore opens up new questions, from which the new teachers can benefit. They can benefit as well from what is said on fundamental questions, for instance the relationship between a child and God. This was the case during the 5th day dedicated to prayer. Mrs Olga Victoroff, who has much experience with children, made a psychological analysis about pray in the home and Agnes Von Kirchbach has studied the question of the relationship of a child with God depending on its age, from very a young age until he stops believing that he is the centre of the world (about 10 years of age). This is when the teacher (and the parents) can help the child put God in the centre of his life and want to serve him rather than expecting him to answer the calls for help when things turn bad. If the child is not exposed to the transcendence of God there is a risk he might fall into disbelief.

Other examples could be given like the re-telling of biblical stories, which was the centre of a discussion after the last days’ talks about the place of the Old Testament in catechism.

We would like to thank all the people who, for various reasons, attended these meetings, and we would like to express our gratitude to Fr Nicholas Cernokrak, dean of the Institute of St Serge for his hospitality as well as to all the speakers, Sophie Delarue and Florine, Helena de Maack and François Moog for the Catholics, Archimandrite Job Getcha, Sophie Stavrou, Ivan Karageorgiev, André Lossky, Olga Victoroff and Fr Elie (Ragot) for the Orthodox and Agnès von Kirchbach without whose enthusiasm I don’t know if these days would still take place.

Danielle Gousseff

article in the «bulletin de la crypte» mai 2011