



METROPOLITAN EMMANUEL, LOCUM TEMENS



ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO THE EXARCHATE CATHEDRAL OF ALEXANDER NEVSKY IN PARIS, HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN EMMANUEL OF FRANCE, *LOCUM TENENS* OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN THRONE, CONCLUDED HIS ADDRESS TO THE FAITHFUL WITH THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have today the singular honour to be amongst you because of the changes which your Church has undergone. You are about to open a new page in your history. Such changes are never without a certain element of anxiety about the future.

My presence among you and my task up to the time of the election of a new pastor is to reassure you and give you encouragement. The history of the Church is made up of such moments of change, which bear witness to the continuing work of Christ in history. I shall be at your side and remain with you to give support in the election process to choose the person you would have as your new pastor.

Besides that, I must assure you of the special place that the Exarchate has in the heart of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and in the Orthodox Church. Be aware of this and be proud of it. You are the bearers of a spiritual legacy which must continue and bear fruit, as in the parable of the talents.

I wish each and every one of you a luminous feast of the Theophany. May God bless you

Paris, 19 January (Theophany - old calendar)

THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE 29 & 30 MARCH

The Extraordinary General Assembly of the Archdiocese (EGA) responsible for making the selection of a new archbishop is to convene on Friday 29 and Saturday 30 March 2013.

This assembly will be held at the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Paris with the following agenda:

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

(Friday of the second week of Great Lent)

7.00 pm : opening of the diocesan assembly

- introductory address by His Eminence the Metropolitan Emmanuel, *Locum tenens*,
- reminder of the statutes
- nomination of candidates

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

(saturday of the second week of Great Lent)

7.00 am : Divine Liturgy

9.00 am : session for the election of the Archbishop

In addition, the Council resolved to start the process for the call for candidates from within the body of the Archdiocese. All parishes and communities are invited to submit in writing the name of the candidate they wish to submit for scrutiny by the Archdiocesan Council, in keeping with the conditions for eligibility formulated in art. 41 of the Archdiocesan Statutes. The Council will then draw up a list of names which will be presented for election at the EGA (art. 41 and 42 of the Statutes). The final date for submission of such proposals is set for **12 February** this year. No other candidacy can be submitted at the EGA

Participants with the right to attend the EGA are all members of the clergy, and lay delegates of parishes and monastic communities who were entitled to attend the previous OGA (May 2010), or in their absence alternates selected for that occasion. Postal or proxy votes are not allowed.

THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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hen describing, even briefly, the role of the bishop within a local Church, it is essential not to reduce it to a simple list of powers and privileges. Unfortunately, under the influence of our secularized and individualistic society, such a legal view, distorted and fragmentary, is very commonplace. But, even if the bishop is the centrepiece around whom the local Church is concretely organized, we must never forget this truism: without the Church, there is no bishop.



The purpose of the Church established by Jesus-Christ is to save all men by leading them into the Trinitarian life, and to transfigure the whole world. Thanks to the revival of the Orthodox ecclesiology started during the 20th century in our diocese, and to the works of Fr. Nicholas Afanassiëff, we know that the apostolic and patristic vision considers the Church, before anything else, as a concrete, local entity. We may define it as a local community gathering under the chairmanship of its bishop or of his representative, to celebrate the Eucharist; this comprises all that is to be presupposed – first of all the orthodox faith – and all that stems from it, first of all the testimony to the world: indeed a Church that does not witness the salvation in Christ, fails in the mission it has received from above.

We recognize a true identity between participating in the Eucharistic Meal and integrating the unique ecclesial body. Indeed, the same syntagma – “Christ’s body” – refers to the Church and to the Eucharistic Meal. The Eucharist is the eschatological gathering to anticipate the coming of the Last Day. The celebration of the Eucharist is the very place where all ministries (*diaconia*), i.e. all services for the world’s salvation, take root in the unique ministry of Jesus-Christ: he is the only priest (*Heb 5,6*), apostle (*Heb 5,1*), prophet (*Mt 23,8; Jn 13,13*), “bishop” (*episcopos: 1Pi, 225*), deacon (*Rom 5, 8; Lk 22,27*). The unique priesthood of Jesus-Christ is born and assumed by the Church, who is His Body.

We must understand that

Jesus-Christ is not an individual, but a corporate being, head and body. “Christ is not simply in the head and not in the body, but Christ whole is in the head and body” (*Jo. Ev. Tr. 28*), Saint Augustine wrote. The ecclesial community exists by revealing in spirit the ministry of Jesus-Christ. Therefore no ecclesial ministry exist in parallel to the ministry of Jesus-Christ, but only as its epiphany, with a sacramental, mystical sameness. The ordained ministers, and first of all the bishop, are entrusted with the essential task of demonstrating and conveying, through words and sacraments, the gift God made to men, i.e. the truth, the grace and the salvation brought by Jesus-Christ risen from the dead. Laymen’s main calling is knowingly to return and offer to God the very existence and salvation they received: this is why when all baptized answer “amen” during a celebration, it is a momentum. Without an Amen there is no liturgy. The callings of laymen and of the clergy are not opposed, but complementary, together they constitute the people of God (*laos*).

The present structure of the local Church and of its main ministries has been attested since at least the 2nd century: the bishop presided over the celebration of the Eucharist, surrounded by a college of presbyters (“elders”), by deacons and by the people.

The bishop presiding over the Eucharist means that his duty is to dispense sacraments, but also to govern and teach the local Church in accordance with the faith, the Tradition and the Church’s canons. The bishop looks after (*episkopein* = to look after in Greek, hence his mandate, *episkopè*) the people that God entrusted to him through the Church.

The diocesan statutes currently in force provide that the election of the new Archbishop take place as follows:

- « Locum tenens » in agreement with the Council of the Archdiocese decides to hold an EGM and convokes it. This was decided at the meeting on 24 January last.
- The Council of the Archdiocese draws up the list of candidates. The Council of the Archdiocese previously decided to invite parishes and communities to send in proposals for potential candidates. However, it is not so far required to follow all the suggestions. The Council shall prepare the list at its meeting on 13 February 2013.
- The resulting list will then submitted to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for approval.
- The Ecumenical Patriarchate will return a list of names of candidates who have been endorsed.
- This list will be made public by the Diocesan Administration upon receipt.
- The AGE will meet on 30 March to vote on the list of names chosen (a 2/3 majority is required for election in the first round as well as the second round. If necessary, a third round will be organized this time requiring only a simple majority).
- The result of the poll will then be sent to the Patriarchate.
- The Holy Patriarchal Synod will elect the new canonical Archbishop.
- The new Archbishop will be enthroned at the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky, possibly after his episcopal consecration.

For the Diocesan Office, Michel Sollogoub

Starting from the 3rd century, local bishops appointed presbyters (= priests) to preside over the Eucharist in parishes. However the sacramental connection with the bishop was maintained. The priests, with the help of the deacons, “offer” the Eucharistic sacrifice (18th canon, Council of Nicea I – 325) and preside over the celebration in the name of the bishop. This is evident in three ways:

1° they mention the name of the bishop heading the diocese to which the parish belongs, not of the bishop who ordained them;

2° they use the antimimension (literally the “vice-altar”), a consecrated cloth representing the Laying in the Tomb of Jesus-Christ (the altar itself being the representation of the life-giving Tomb); the cloth contains sewn-in martyrs’ relics and bears the signature of the bishop;

3° they receive the Holy Chrism from the bishop, who himself received it from the Primate of the Autocephalous Church. Beyond the liturgical life itself, the bishop, due to his *episkopè*, has a central role in all the activities of the local Church, particularly for being an apostolic figure. Prayers said during the Episcopal ordination insist of the fact that the bishop is a light for the world, a mentor who teaches his people, that he impersonates the Good Shepherd who will give his life for his sheep. In accordance with the holy canons, the bishop presides over the diocesan council, having thus an administrative authority over persons and goods of the local Church.

Saint Ignatius the God-Bearer (2nd century) wrote: “Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop.” (*Epistle to Smyrneans*, 8, 1). Or else: “Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.” (*Idem*, 8, 2).

It seems relevant to include here a few comments:

1° There is interdependence between ministries: none may be isolated from the others, even if the so-called hierarchical ministries (episcopacy, priesthood, and diaconate) need a special ordination to be received. From this viewpoint, the ordination of a cleric does not give any power to an individual over others, but it strengthens their unity by creating new relationships within the community which the minister is in charge of.

The Church is a body, of who all baptized are the members. This means that there is a spiritual solidarity and an inescapable cooperation between clerics and laymen: all were baptized and anointed by the Holy Spirit, all were ordained to fulfil their particular callings as the “living

stones” of the Church; in Christ they are all together the members of a royal, sacerdotal and prophetic people.

2° The terms of management, administration, authority or power in the Church have not the same meaning in the Church than in the world. Indeed, the Church is not a secular society; she is not a purely human organization or institution: she is a gift of God. Notwithstanding the sins of her members, she was revealed since Pentecost as a divine-human body created and modelled after the Trinity, founded by Jesus-Christ who heads her, and built by the Holy Spirit.

3° Those – bishops and priests – who thanks to the grace of the sacrament of their ordination exert their authority in the Church, are not like any manager of a big company or any senior officials in an administration. They yield to Jesus-Christ and to the Church, to her Tradition, her teaching and her canons. They govern to maintain the community in the truth and to make it grow to the “measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (*Eph*, 4, 13). It is possible thanks to the charismas given by the Holy Spirit, in answer to the permanent invocation (Epiclesis) of God’s people praying for their shepherds.

4° Each local Church, even if not the whole Church, demonstrates in full the Church of Jesus-Christ. In the local Church we find the catholic fullness of the faith, the grace and the salvation. The bishop (in principle there should be only one) who presides locally over the Eucharistic gathering in front of the altar, is the representative of Jesus-Christ surrounded by the saints of the Kingdom to come. The local parish must respect conditions

The visit of His Eminence Gabriel

Tuesday, January 29, 2013, six Parisians went to visit Bishop Gabriel in Maastricht in the Netherlands. Led by Father Vladislav Trembovelski and accompanied by Deacon Alexis Deacon, the group included Denise and Catherine Makarov Zapolsky as well as Brigitte and Michel Sollogoub, who had the pleasure to meet with Bishop Gabriel Moleben after he celebrated in the chapel at the ground floor



of his house. Sharing a picnic in the living room led to an exchange of memories and news, and Mgr Gabriel expressed the joy that maintaining friendships with faithful has brought to him.



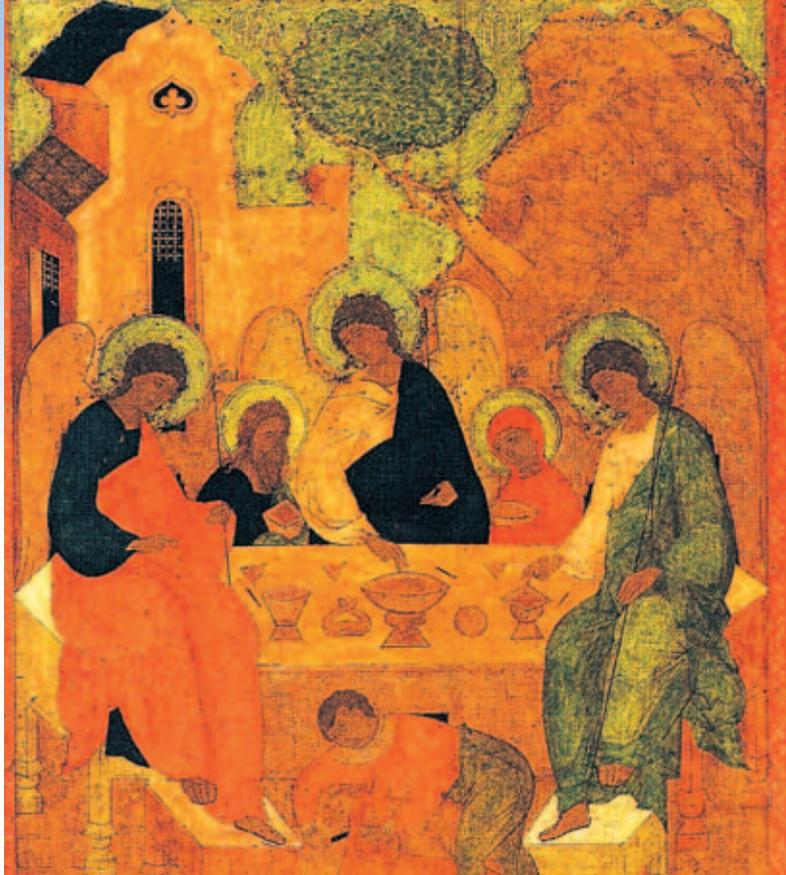
and limits defined locally; therefore it is from the bishop, from whom the priest has received his mandate, that it will directly receive its catholicity. In return the bishop maintains, via the priests, a direct link with parishes.

The Church is simultaneously a conciliary and a hierarchical entity, but both aspects must never be opposed. The conciliarity or “symphonicity” (in Russian *sobornost*) does not refer only to the councils (whose main actors are the bishops); it is inherent to the very nature of the Church, underlying every act of communion between her members. This characteristic is of a Trinitarian origin: to have the experience of the Church means to participate in the true life we receive from the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Indeed, every Trinitarian person is one because of his relation with the other two, no less than because of his relation with himself. This conciliarity is particularly vivid in the Eucharistic gathering.

If the Church is built as a hierarchy, it is because there is an order within the Holy Trinity (from the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit receive their existence) and because, from the Fathers’ viewpoint, the ecclesial being is a reflexion of the Trinitarian life. But the hierarchical aspect of the Church is not based on individuals: it can only have sense if relational, in tension with the conciliary aspect of the Church. In the Church the term “hierarchy” has another sense than in the army or in a State Administration, where all functions are disseminated.

The bishop concentrates in himself all the charismas referring to his episcopè, in the ecclesial conciliarity experimented through the liturgical co celebration of the Eucharist. God’s people as a whole co celebrate the Eucharist presided by the bishop. When the people say “Amen”, it has a global ecclesiological scope which goes beyond the liturgy: it enunciates the very function of the people, which is to say “yes” in the Holy Spirit, to receive, using his gift of discernment, the doctrine, the preaching of the faith, and finally to accept, with all the creative freedom of God’s children, the exertion of the pastoral power and of the teaching.

Before taking a decision, the bishop must consult the people entrusted to him, not only by practical wisdom, but most importantly so as not to ignore the conciliarity and the “ecclesial conscience”. As the metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedonia († 1989) a great bishop and a theologian, said: “This is a message belonging specifically to Orthodoxy: nothing is decided *ex cathedra* and arbitrarily, without considering the will and the conscience of the *pleroma*.” In the early Church, mainly before the 4th century, bishops were elected by the local community, then consecrated by neighbouring bishops (at least two or three), who symbolically represented the whole Church. It is very important – this is a privilege of our archdiocese, in accordance with the decrees of the 1917 Moscow Council – that the bishop be elected, not only by the synod of the autocephalous Church, but also by his people: 1° the people, having really been consulted via the delegates (laymen and clerics) assume their share of responsibility in the designation of their future shepherd; 2° it refutes the idea that the episcopate is a separate caste, standing above the Church and having their own rights and privileges, the believers being their subjects. This vision distorts completely the Fathers’ ecclesiology, which says that a bishop is the bearer of his local Church. Saint Cyprian of Carthage said: “The bishop is in the Church, and the Church is



in the bishop.” (Letter 66). The bishop weds his local Church; his calling is to remain truthful to her, by being sincerely at her service.

Conclusion

We must be careful not to idealize the bishop’s ministry. It is a difficult task for the person concerned, because his position is unique inside the local Church; not to mention the tricky situation, the *kairos*, experimented by the Archdiocese of Russian Tradition. This is why we must pray for the bishop and help him with his tasks. The ecclesial tradition knows about the dangers. The *Spiritual Meadow*, a jewel of the Orthodox monastic literature of the 6th century, tells us with great humour the following story: an Egyptian novice “was very careless so far as his own soul was concerned”. When he died, his spiritual father was worried: had he gone to hell because of his sins? So he prayed to be revealed the state of his disciple’s soul. All of a sudden, to his horror he saw a river of fire with the novice in the middle, submerged up to his neck. But the novice turned to him and said: “I thank God, father, that there is relief for my head. Thanks to your prayers, Abba, I am standing on the head of a bishop.” The episcopate is a difficult task, but it is also a path to holiness. Among many others, one may cite several holy bishops of our times: Nectarios of Aegina (1920), Nicholas of Ochrid (1956), Luke of Simferopol (1961), or saint John of San Francisco (1966) of whom in the fifties an admiring catholic priest said during a homily: “See, nowadays in the street of Paris walks Saint John Barefoot!” Saint Paul writes that the bishop must be for the faithful “a model in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 *Tm* 4, 12). In short, he must strive to be a father. But even if the bishop has a major role in granting and demonstrating the ecclesial unity, we all are, because we have been baptized, equally responsible for this unity, and we are called to preserve it (Eph 4, 3), being careful not to allow anybody degrade it: “There is one body and one Spirit [...], one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all...” (Eph, 4, 4-6).

Translation: Elisabeth Toutounov