



WAITING

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We have entered the period of the pre-Lenten Triodion period, time to prepare and expect for the very heart of our faith, the Easter celebration. This year the expectation will be particularly long, as the extended calendar gap places Easter on May 5th, almost 1.5 month after the beginning of spring. We know that our method of calculating the Easter date is wrong and has nothing to do with the directives given by the Fathers of the Nicaea Council. During the first Pre-conciliar Conference, it was decided to hold a congress devoted to the subject of the Easter date. It took place in 1977. The congress asked for the elaboration of special tables, whose dates would be calculated according to modern scientific methods. The dates were calculated by several astronomical research centres in full consistency with the reality.

It is urgent for the Orthodox Church to adopt this reform as soon as possible, when Christians living on the Holy land decide to choose a wrong date, only to be able to celebrate Easter all together. If this seemingly good but actually bad idea starts to spill over, it will be a wrong thing, as it ignores the truth of the Creation. The Orthodox Church cannot bear for truth to be put aside for the benefit of unity: it does not correspond at all to her understanding of the ecumenical movement.

Of course, we should explain things to people, but to say it is not enough, we must also do it. The best way is to set a deadline to define the right date of Easter. It seems reasonable to fix it to the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, in 2025. It is a date neither too near, nor too distant. Not mentioning the fact that in 2025, we shall all celebrate Easter on the same date, following seven years with calendar gaps. In our diocese, expecting Easter will coincide with our expecting a new archbishop; as any expectation, it must be a time of fasting and prayer. Let us not forget to rely on the Holy Spirit. It is He who takes action through our vote. This is the very heart of the difficulty; we must always have in mind, that it is not a democratic vote preceded by an electoral campaign with all its flaws. We must avoid such a thing by all means, and prepare ourselves for the event as for any ecclesial deed, praying and having faith in the Lord, knowing that He will never desert us; we also must remember that it for us to do what He wants, it is not for the Lord to endorse our will. It means surrendering to God's mercy, just as during the Lenten fast, when we know that man does not live only on bread, but also on any word coming out of God's mouth.

The diocese went through a difficult period when it suffered of division further to the campaign preceding the election of Archbishop Gabriel. At a moment when divisions have started to be overcome, it will be catastrophic if others appear. Unity is a treasure in the Church; we must be very careful not to destroy it, even during so momentous circumstances as the election of a new archbishop.

Archpriest Serge Sollogoub – Rector of the parish of St John the Theologian

Retirement

Mrs Nathalie Schmemann, administrator
St Serge Institute



**THE EXTRAORDINARY
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE
29 & 30 MARCH**



*THE FORMAL SITTING
OF THE ORTHODOX THEOLOGY SAINT-SERGE INSTITUTE*

The formal sitting of the Orthodox Theology Saint-Serge Institute took place on Sunday, February 10th, 2013, under the high chairmanship of the Metropolitan Emmanuel of France. It is a momentum in the life of the institute and a particular time for an intense theological reflexion.

In his opening speech Metropolitan Emmanuel insisted on how important the mission of the Institute is in the 21st century. He declared: *“The Institute must find the words, the acts, the plans that will answer adequately to the interrogations of the third millennium.”* He also added: *“The liturgical and university lives tied together create a complex balance between faith and reason. In my view such a structure is the key, nowadays even more than before, to make theological work a space for freedom and communion. In a way, I think that this is*

the legacy that you need to fructify, notwithstanding the tribulations of our time, the financial difficulties consubstantial to your efforts, forming what is called “agona” in Greek and “podvig” in Russian, and that asserts you as the “salt of the earth”. Thus, my message is to encourage you all, teachers and students, in persevering in your mission. Indeed, we urgently need to answer to the expectations of a society in want of a meaning.” Metropolitan Emmanuel ended his address by relaying the salutation and the blessing of His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and by saying a few words of the Archbishop Gabriel of Comane, whose health condition requires the prayers of all.

The next to speak was the Dean of the Institute, the Archpriest Nicholas Ozoline, who gave a report of the Institute’s activities during the 2011-2012 university year. Among important events, the Dean reminded

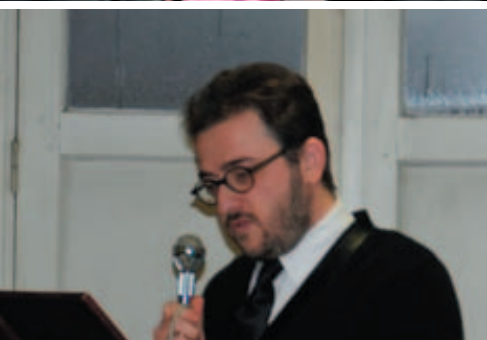
Communiqué from the Archdiocesan Council Meeting of 6 March 2013

The Archdiocesan Council met on Wednesday 6 March 2013 under the chairmanship of His Eminence the Locum tenens of the Archiepiscopal throne, Metropolitan Emmanuel, following an audience by a delegation of Council members with His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople on Saturday 23 February 2013. The list of three candidates for the rôle of Archbishop, selected by the Council at its meeting of 13 February was not approved by His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, who considered that all the conditions were not yet favourable to proceed in peace with the election of a new archbishop.

By letter dated 4 March 2013 His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch has made a proposal to be considered by the General Assembly. This proposal consists of the following points:

1. His Eminence the Locum tenens, Metropolitan Emmanuel will «continue temporarily to carry out the functions and responsibilities as patriarchal Exarch».
2. The General Assembly of the Archdiocese may put forward a candidate suitable as an auxiliary bishop under Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, who will be responsible for «the religious and liturgical needs of the faithful of your parishes (of the Archdiocese) in their own mother language and traditions».
3. The implementation of this proposal should be carried out in accord with the statutes of the Archdiocese which underpin its existence and functions with constant reference to His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Holy Synod.

After deliberating on the means of implementation of this proposal, the Archdiocesan Council, taking into account the situation which has arisen has decided to put forward the proposal of His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, to the EGA of 30 March 2013, and thereby to amend the agenda of the EGA.



that the Institute, thanks to its teachers and students, has developed international relationships. He addressed his particular thanks to Mrs. Nathalie Schmemmann for the decisive role she played during more than 20 years in the administration of the Institute, congratulated her for her remarkable career and wished her a long and peaceful, well-deserved retirement.

As a highlight of the day, Professor Paul Meyendorff of the Saint-Vladimir Institute was granted a doctorate honoris causa. In his laudation, Deacon Andrew Lossky, teacher of liturgical theology, spoke of the significant researches led by Professor Paul Meyendorff, in particular in the ecumenical field. *“The audacious considerations of Professor Paul Meyendorff stem from his strong commitment to give an ecumenical testimony, as opposed to superficial talks striving to minimize our differences. Indeed, the in-depth analysis of our differences leads us to real and creative advances, whose liturgical scope is an integral part of our vision of the Church.”*

In his answer, Professor Paul Meyendorff spoke not only of the very special relationship between the saint-Serge Institute and the American Saint-Vladimir Institute, but also of the latest developments in baptismal theology. In Professor Paul Meyendorff’s view, we should not consider the Eucharistic ecclesiology as the only paradigm on the basis of which the life of the Church is organized. We should also return to the theology of baptism, “restore the ecclesial experience of Baptism”, as well as “the whole process of catechesis”. The baptismal sacrament is the very starting point of our reflexion on Church. It is important to note that Professor Meyendorff repeatedly mentioned the “baptismal ecclesiology”.

After an interlude, during which a group of students of the Institute sang liturgical chants, Mr. Goran Sekulovski, lecturer in patrology, offered us an academic discourse entitled: “Topicality of the pathological work of Father Georges Florovsky”. Mr. Goran Sekulovski sought mainly to prove the significance of “acquiring the Fathers’ spirit” and the interaction with modern thinking in father Georges Florovsky’s theological study, which is far from being a “patristic fundamentalism”. Mr. Sekulovski then went through the recent publications and researches concerning the “return to the Fathers” initiated by Florovsky. The recent works aimed at revisiting the approach of the Fathers’ theology that prevailed in the Orthodox thinking during the second half of the 20th century, and at promoting a so-called “contextual” post-patristic theology, “going beyond” the neopatristic synthesis of father Georges Florovsky. Mr. Sekulovski demonstrated the strength and the vitality of Florovsky’s creative thinking, and wondered why it is still essential to refer nowadays to the Fathers of the Church: “There exists in the Fathers a source of inspiration, a thinking centre that transcends all conceptual categories (wording, languages, cultures, contexts...) and has an everlasting value”. As a conclusion, Mr. Sekulovski insisted that the next step for patrologists will be to pay more attention to the diversity of the Fathers’ sayings, and to open to topical issues (for example bioethics), without losing sight of the main idea: the thought and the spirit of the Fathers, their « φρόνημα ».

The formal sitting ended with a convivial reception.

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