



PARISCH FEAST OF CATHEDRAL

Saint Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Paris



According to a rather « old » tradition is the church celebration of the relic's transfer of saint Alexander Nevsky from Vladimir to St.-Petersburg taking place on the first Sunday after September 12th. This saint patron's feast is duly and solemnly celebrated inside the Cathedral church.

The divine Liturgy was chaired by metropolitan Emmanuel of France. He concelebrated with the local clergy as well as with the invited members of clergy. The liturgy was celebrated in common by the two parishes of the Cathedral, Russian from the main church and French for the crypt assembly. The singing of both choirs was splendid and duly praying. The holy Scriptures were read in both languages. This truly was an opportunity to experience the universality of Orthodoxy.

During the celebration, Costel Popa got ordained as a priest; he will actually be working as a pastoral minister in our parishes in Italy. Before the candidate was ordained, the metropolitan spoke to him in Italian.

On this very same day, father Elisée (hieromonk) was honoured to wear the golden pectoral cross; deacon Oleg Chabbah, presently studying at St. Serge Institute was conferred the double orarion.

A festive procession around the church building concluded the liturgy; meanwhile, the prayer to st. Alexander Nevsky was read and the Magnificat sung.

Before the « many years » singing to all the officiating clergy, the members of the chorus and to all those who work and pray in this sanctuary, the metropolitan Emmanuel spoke out his homily in French. Simultaneously, Russian translation was done by deacon Alexis Milutin.

Finally a feastmeal was shared in the surrounding gardens of the church thanks to the home made preparations each one brought.





HOMILY OF METROPOLITAN EMMANUEL OF FRANCE

SAINT ALEXANDER NEVSKY CATHEDRAL

SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2013

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

There are certain holy people who make a deep impression on Christian consciousness because of their piety, their desire for God, and the radical change in their lives brought about by repentance. St Alexander Nevsky is without doubt one of those people who show saints to be examples, intercessors, even friends, in a closeness that only faith can bring about. The importance of St Alexander Nevsky goes without saying for Slavonic Orthodoxy has to a great extent put itself under his protection, like St Olga, St Vladimir and so many others who moulded the piety and spiritual experience of the whole Orthodox Church.

I can only rejoice at being among you again today on the occasion of the patronal feast of this magnificent cathedral. The connection between a church and the saint to whom it is dedicated is a determining factor in the life of the community that gathers there. It is not only a matter of using a label to mark the existence of an Orthodox enclave in the religious landscape of Paris. It is above all a question of a spiritual agenda. So the choice of St Alexander is not insignificant. It goes back to the desire of the founders of this cathedral to say something about the identity of its community.

The signs of the holiness of St Alexander Nevsky must also be yours: faith, courage, patience, and constant witness to Orthodoxy in its openness to Western culture, here in France and in Paris. The lessons of history teach us that the patronage of St Alexander has a profound meaning. It flows from a desire to gather together, to bear witness, but also and especially from a pastoral concern for the faithful who have been forced by the tribulations brought upon them throughout the twentieth century to leave their homeland, family, social life and culture. Exile became the lot of numerous

Orthodox in the last century, and that is still sadly the case today in the Middle East. We pray that peace will come quickly there. Within such displacements, the authentic experience of Slav Christianity continues, marked by the faces of sufferers for Christ, passion-bearers, in the image of the brothers Boris and Gleb. Exile is a form of suffering that finds its consolation in Christ, the source of all consolation. It is true that times have changed drastically. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, pastoral needs are not the same as those in the 1920s and 1930s. And as much as St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, your cathedral, continues to be the sign of an ecclesiastical reality firmly linked to a particular liturgical tradition – and I don't deny that – it is also at the heart of a spiritual engagement that offers many promises. As I see it, these promises are at the same time vows. The promise of faithfulness to the message of the Gospel contained in the liturgical celebrations, of the regular participation in the sacraments and of personal prayer. I urge you to do nothing but what the holy apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians: *"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4: 1-3).

I rejoice particularly to see today the communities of the two parishes reunited around your priests, celebrating with one voice and with one choir the glory of God and the memory of St Alexander. Seeing the parishioners of the cathedral crypt, as we say with some familiarity, gathered together, is a sign of a shared vitality, the work of the Holy Spirit or the "fruits of the Spirit" that St Paul speaks of: *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,*

generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things" (Gal. 5: 22-23). No, there is no law, except the law of love that binds us to each other as we are bound to God. The essence of this love is found in the eucharist, for, as Archbishop Basil Krivochéine used to say, "The eucharist is the Mystery of the love of God for mankind."

Dear brothers and sisters,

The exarchate, as you know, has embarked upon the path of change with continuity by moving in the coming weeks to the election of its new Archbishop. I have already told you, and I repeat it now, that this is a central event in the life of our community and so even more of this cathedral, for it remains the episcopal seat of your diocese. I urge you to pray in the intimacy of your hearts that, at the end of October and the beginning of November, the grace of the Spirit will be revealed and bring one of the three candidates into the apostolic succession. A call to prayer is also a call to pray for peace so that the unity of the body of Christ with which each one of you is entrusted may reveal the glory of God and it will not be the weakness of man

that is exalted. The path is complicated and difficult and there are often pitfalls along the way, but this is a test of our commitment to our faith and our heritage. This is why the Ecumenical Patriarchate insists above all on making the calmest possible space for these elections so they will not become a battle or a fight, but, quite the opposite – a semi-liturgical ecclesial event that takes place with respect and dignity.

Next, I must warmly congratulate Fr Costel Popa who has just been ordained priest. I can only wish you many years in the service of the Church of Christ and remind you of the words of Fr Isidore in Fr Paul Florensky's book *The Salt of the Earth*: "To become a priest is to desire to be on the cross with Christ." That is the meaning of the cross that has just been given to you today. You have been judged worthy of being on the cross with Christ. *Axios and Mnogaya leta!*

May I end these few words by congratulating each one of you on the feast-day of the St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. I invite you to rejoice and hope, for, in the eternal words of Dostoevsky, "to live without hope is to cease living".

May God bless you all !

translated from French

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15TH 2013,

GATHERED TO CELEBRATE ST. ALEXANDER (NEVSKY) AND SHARE THE EUCHARIST, both communities of the Cathedral and the Crypt joined each other for a strong time of unity, prayer, maybe a little unexpected but simultaneously sweet in each one's heart...

We fell like « home » in the cathedral and quite happy to surround this young priest, father Costel Popa, who was about to be ordained. Emotion and smiling were visible when hearing metropolitan Emmanuel's message and advice in Italian. In the meantime a seat was brought forth, quite hastily, for matushka Michele who is close to pregnancy's delivery.

We got closer to each other and both choirs gathered, alternating church Slavonic and French, lifting our prayers to the luminous dome and even further to our heavenly Father : « Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am present among them ».

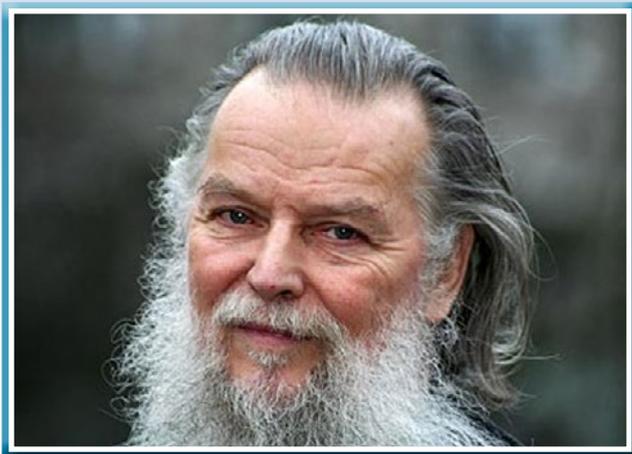
A very nice procession and metropolitan Emmanuel's homily, a call to open mindedness and peace concluded the three hours service ; it passed so quickly, finally!

The sun had been shining and a very convivial and well organized slap-up meal brought us all together : smiling and exchanges. Brotherly life was experienced and this truly was comforting. Everything happened smoothly, simply, in a serene sphere ; we should keep on going this way.

Brigitte Vilanova, Crypt parishioner

To the luminous memory of father Paul Adelheim

Witness of God's tenderness



Archpriest Paul Adelheim, aged 75, was murdered in his home in Pskov on August 5th, 2013, during the 48th year of his priesthood. The murderer was a mentally ill man whom father Paul had received. This horrible event, which took place on the eve of the Transfiguration (NS) has awakened in our minds memories of not so many years ago. Father Paul Adelheim had been invited to the ACER-MJO 2008 annual congress. We cannot express enough gratitude to those who organized this encounter. We marvelled at the love radiating from him. This man had become wholly love, by the grace of God, the work of prayer, the ordeals which, far from hardening him, strengthened him in proclaiming his faith. I remember a short paper published around 1972 in the "Vestnik" (the Russian version of the "Messenger de l' ACER"): "Of what is father Paul Adelheim guilty?" His family name, so unusual for a Russian priest, remained engraved in my memory. It was indeed because of his family name that his grandfather, Paul Bernhardovich, was shot in 1938, the very year when the future father Paul was born. This grandfather had studied in Belgium before the Revolution; he was an outstanding specialist in kaolin, owned a china factory, which was nationalized after the Revolution. After that he managed another factory, until the steamroller of the great terror annihilated him. Four years later his son suffered the same fate. His daughter-in-law, Paul's mother, was arrested and sent to a camp. However several years later she settled in Kazakhstan, where she found her son and succeeded in getting him out of the orphanage.

They lived exiled near the city of Karaganda, where they found a great solace: the Lord allowed them to become acquainted with father Sebastian, who had been a monk and a deacon in Optino, then a prisoner in Gulag, and who has now been canonized as a Confessor of the Faith. Archimandrite Sebastian celebrated offices at home, by night, secretly, together with a few faithful: the vigil started at 11.00 p.m., the liturgy ended at 5.00 a.m. It is here that young Paul learned to love the liturgy, and wished to become a priest.

Several years later, the young boy went to Kiev-Pechersk Lavra; He was 16 years old, i.e. too young to be there, so he hid in the cell of one of the elders. One of his obediences was to read for himself the Psalms and the Hours, another to show the Lavra to tourists and pilgrims (allowing them to catch a glimpse of spiritual

visions). At 18 years old, he joined the Kiev seminar. But here he crossed the path of the inspector Philarete Denisenko (nowadays the dissident "patriarch" of Ukraine), who forced seminarians to sing soviet patriotic songs on the 1st of May... which on this particular year coincided with Holy Friday. Paul protested and was sacked.

Providence made him meet His Eminence Hermogenes (Golubev), the bishop of Tashkent and a courageous confessor of the faith. Hermogenes willingly came to Kiev and ordained Paul a deacon. However, Paul had to make a choice: would he become a monk or would he marry? He prayed the Lord to show him the way, while he was excluded from the monastery. Starets Kuksha of the Pochayev Lavra said to him: "Go, Vera is waiting for you." In the house of the Tshernigov bishop (where seminarians loved to gather), he met with a country priest who took interest in him: come with me, he said to Paul, and he introduced him to a deeply faithful young woman belonging to a close-knit family with their grandfather at their head. Vera Mihailovna was 17 years old (he was 21), and she was passing her last school exams. After having prayed and read the Gospel for a long time, Paul proposed to Vera. Soon said, soon done. Their love never stopped increasing during the 54 years of their marital life. They had three children (twins and a sick adopted child), six grandchildren.

They went to Tashkent with next to nothing of their own. It was an interminable trip of four days and four nights by train. She had never travelled before (kolkhozniks had no passport), never left her family. She wept, he comforted her. They finally reached their destination and took time to warm up under the sun before knocking at the door of Vladyka. Father Paul served in Tashkent as a deacon during 7 years, celebrating with Archimandrite Boris Kolchev (disciple of saint Alexis Mechov of Moscow; he might be soon canonized), another great Confessor of the Faith. Then Paul was ordained a priest, and assigned to Kagan near Bukhara, where he earned the love and esteem of all. Even the mullah said once to his childless flock: "Go to the Russian mullah, I cannot do anything for you." Father Paul said to this Muslim: "Pray in your own fashion; and I shall pray in my own fashion." Matushka Vera recalls: "I do not know what happened, but several months later, we found on our doorstep a table with lots of oriental sweets on it as a thank you."

Father Paul built a church in Kagan. He pretended repairing the old one and surrounded it with new walls. It was something completely unheard of in the Soviet Union. But the police searched his home and found some Samizdat documents. Among the typewritten manuscripts they found the poem Requiem by Anna Ahmatova and a text by Boris Pasternak (though of course their name did not appear, because they were well known and in disgrace). Father Paul, himself a poet at his hours, had a good taste, but the Bukhara KGB was not very well informed. They accused him of being the author of the texts! He had no means of disabusing them... In short, he was condemned to three years of imprisonment in a camp for "anti-Soviet activities". He spent the last part of his sentence in a camp for disabled, after he was hit by a trolley violently pushed on him, because he was studying law to know his rights and to help his fellow inmates write appeals. It was necessary to amputate his right leg. This was not the only time he suffered an attack against him: several years later, somebody sabotaged the steering wheel of his car. Thankfully he drove very slowly, and suffered no serious damage after he collided with a wall.

After the end of his sentence, he resumed his priest's duty with the same energy as before, although he suffered great pains. However, he had to move to another diocese, so he knocked at the door of many bishops. But they refused to make any request to the Council of religious affairs, with too uncertain a result; on the advice of the head of one of the councils, he even turned to KGB, although only recently he was a prisoner in a camp, saying: "I have to feed my family". He finally managed to settle in Pskov. He entirely restored two churches, including the Holy Myrrh Bearing Women church, and built the St Matthew's church in the village of Piskovichi. There he created an orphanage for mentally-handicapped children. He also built a church in Bogdanovo, near the psychiatric hospital. Out of nothing he founded an Orthodox secondary school with a specialization in music. Many choirmasters were educated there. The school had an excellent reputation; its pupils won highest ranks in "Olympiads". It lasted 16 school years, before it was sabotaged (with the help of city authorities) by the bishop Eusebius. The Bishop, immediately after his arrival in Pskov in 1993, took a violent dislike to father Paul ("I know a

lot of things about you; we cannot celebrate together, go away from here", he said to father Paul on their first encounter). But father Paul was unable to leave his orphans, his school, and his spiritual children who loved him so! Then the bishop closed the orphanage, withdrew him from the rector's position of the Holy Myrrh Bearing Women church (the very church father Paul raised with so many difficulties from ruins). After 30 years of priesthood the only right he had, was to celebrate under the orders of a young rector favoured by the bishop. He must be happy not to be excluded.

Father Paul was able neither to hold a grudge to anybody, nor to lose heart. Indefatigably he campaigned for the canonical law to be "cleaned" from the significant contradictions between the decisions taken during the Council of 1917 (never implemented) and those imposed by the Bolsheviks and never deleted by the new measures taken after the perestroika. In particular, he campaigned against the arbitrary position of priests at the mercy of their bishop.

Father Paul rushed to the rescue of others, particularly of the defenceless. He always forgave. His house was always open. And because he took into his home, on the request of a woman from Moscow he knew, a mentally ill man in full crisis, he met death at 75 years old. Photos published on www.pravmir.ru of father Paul in his coffin, show us his beautiful face not covered with an aër, glowing with peace. His dear hands, holding the Cross and the Gospel, look living and strong. A flood of faithful people, from close around, from far away, from very far away, lined up to kiss these hands for the last time. The atmosphere is full, not of overwhelming sadness, but of gratitude for a life wholly given. It was said – but it was obvious – that Easter hymns were sung at the cemetery.

O Lord, give comfort and strength to his family, and send worthy workers for your harvest.

There is no doubt that our heavenly Father opened wide His arms to welcome His devoted servant: "Paul, my priest, enter into the joy of the Realm!"

Memory eternal!

*Françoise Lhoest
published in « Bulletin de la crypte », september 2015*

ORDINATIONS

Metropolitan Emmanuel was ordained :

- deacon the servant of **André Trofimoff, diacre** sunday 8 september to the parish Saints Peter and Paul (Chatenay Malabry - France)
- the deacon **Constantin Popa, priester** to the community of Busto Arsizio in Italy, the 15th september of the cathedrale Saint Alexandre Nevski (Paris-France)

ELECTION OF THE
ARCHBISHOP
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1

MORE INFORMATION
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