



HOLINESS

In the Eastern Eucharistic liturgy, right before the Holy Communion, the priest proclaims: « Holy Things are for the holy! », and the choir – i.e. the assembly of the faithful – answers: “One is Holy..., Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father”. Thus holiness means becoming an integral part of Jesus-Christ’s body, dying and living in Christ, and finally becoming aware of one’s own resurrection within the Resurrection of Jesus Risen from the dead. Yet Christ’s Body is filled with the Spirit’s energies. “We have received the heavenly Spirit!” those who have received the Communion sing, for the Eucharist is “the fire and the Spirit”, as the Syriacs say. Therefore, holiness is not living anymore in death but in the Spirit, in the great “life giving” Breath. Holiness reveals that the Church is the House of the Father, Who is the Principle of the Trinity and the Source of any communion. The saint is the one who is not separate. To say “the communion of the saints” is to express the obvious: holiness is communion.

Whatever the way of life of a saint (each of them has his own), all the powers of his passion are metamorphosed in Christ’s Passion, he is “separated from all and united with all”; he really is able to love without expecting to be loved. Without knowing it (for a saint will never say he is holy), he acquires the beauty of the icon, the beauty that stems from the broken heart “comforted” by the Comforter. Throughout all his life, he remains a man of the metanoia that overturns our vision of the reality, with our ego no more the centre of the world and replaced instead by God and the other.

The path is always the same, more or less, as described in the Beatitudes: to be poor, strong and meek altogether, to hunger for righteousness and be persecuted for righteousness’ sake, to be pure in a heart to which our intelligence must unite, to love enemies, to accept in peace any abuse and slander... and to pray of course, always having in mind that we pray when we open ourselves to the mystery, when we repeat, humbly and confidently, the Name of Jesus... St Symeon the New Theologian said that the saint is “the poor who loves his brothers”. Macarius the Great said: “Those who were deemed worthy of becoming God’s children and of being born anew, out of the Holy Spirit [...] are praying and shedding tears for the total Adam. Sometimes their spirit is set ablaze with such a joy and such a love that, if it were possible, they would take all men inside their heart, bad and good alike...”

Blankets of peace and light spring from the triple divine Sun and crop up among the density of beings and things, and our hearts “are set ablaze”.



All saints are unique, any status may be sanctified. The Orthodox Church identifies such orders as “Unmercenary physicians” (who heal for free), “saint iconographers”, “saint princes”. But it seems to me that she has a predilection for the glorified sufferers and the fools for Christ. Being a martyr is the highest level of the glorified sufferer. He is not an ascetic, but a man whose faith is total, who in most tragic circumstances surrenders himself to God, who identifies with Him, who foresees the joy of the resurrection, who prays onto the end for his persecutors. The exploit of the true monk carries on the exploit of the martyr. We also include among “the sufferers” those who willingly suffer their passion, refusing to defend themselves at the cost of other deaths. Among them are innocent children. On the other hand, fools for Christ live the “foolishness of the Cross” in its fullness, making a mockery of the heavy solemnity of this world, offering the Realm with a sort of higher humour. [...]

The inaccessible God transcends His own transcendence to become our friend. He gives His life for those He loves, for all men and for each of us. And everything becomes so simple: there is nothing else, only the Risen from the dead, in Whom everything lives. And so we end up with the obvious mystique of our everyday life. The creation is a gift of God (Dumitru Staniloè), a great parable of His presence, a cross born by Jesus day after day, hour after hour, to become the real Tree of life... [...]

Olivier Clément, 2005

Excerpts from “*La Sainteté, témoignage de la communion*” (Holiness, a witness of the communion), published in the new edition of “*Chant des Larmes*” (Song of tears), 2011, BBD

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

30 March 2013

ON SATURDAY MARCH 30TH, A DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY WAS HELD IN PARIS AS SCHEDULED. THIS GATHERING STARTED IN THE PARISH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, CRYPT OF THE CATHEDRAL, WITH THE CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY USING ALL LANGUAGES OF THE DIOCESE. THE ASSEMBLY WAS MADE UP BY 188 DELEGATES, CLERGYMEN AND LAYPERSONS, AND WAS CHAIRED BY METROPOLITAN EMMANUEL (EXARCH OF THE ECUMENICAL THRONE FOR THE GREEK CHURCH IN FRANCE AND CHOSEN AS LOCUM TENENS). THE WORK MAINLY CONCERNED THE WRITTEN PROPOSITION ADDRESSED TO US BY HIS ALL HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE. THE MEETING STARTED OFF IN A POSITIVE CLIMATE OF OPEN-MINDEDNESS AND DIALOGUE ALLOWING ALL DIFFERENT OPINIONS TO BE EXPRESSED, SOMETIMES FIRMLY, BUT ALWAYS WITH DUE RESPECT TO EACH OTHER. AS A CONCLUSION THE ANSWER GOES ALONG THE PATRIARCHAL PROPOSAL SO THAT HIS GRACE EMMANUEL CAN TEMPORARILY RULE OUR DIOCESE UNTIL THE ELECTION OF THE NEXT ARCHBISHOP. HIS GRACE EMMANUEL HAS, ON HIS SIDE, ASSURED THE ASSEMBLY ABOUT HIS TRUE INTENTION TO PRESERVE OUR ARCHDIOCESE IN BOTH ITS INTEGRITY AND ITS SPECIFICITY ; HE ALSO WILL WORK WITH THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL TO ORGANIZE THE ELECTIONS NEXT AUTUMN. IT ALSO WAS DECIDED THE COUNCIL WOULD FORMALIZE AN ANSWER TO THE PATRIARCH, BESIDES A COMPLETE SUMMARY OF THE MEETING WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY Metropolitan Emmanuel of France

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

«Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed» (Mk 1, 35). These are words from the Gospel of Mark that we have heard this morning during the Divine Liturgy. If our Lord incarnate got up early and went to pray, then let us also try to pray like the Lord. Let us seek Him early before we do anything else so we can listen and hear from God before the cares of the day interfere with the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives. To pray means to hold a dialogue—asking and receiving from God the answers we need. In a similar way, it is through dialogue that we confirm with each other what the Holy Spirit is revealing during our prayers. This is the truest spirit of prayer: listening to Christ as well as each other, and demonstrating respect for all. Respect, dialogue, and listening are pre-conditions that create assembly, communion, Church, and freedom.

With this in mind, dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I have the blessing of chairing this diocesan assembly. His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, our spiritual father, extends his paternal blessing and his Patriarchal prayers during this assembly. He prays for peace for all of us, for these meetings, and for the future of the Exarchate that it will be a continual witness to the glory of Christ and of His Church.

Thanks be to God that over the last several months as we have been going through this process regarding the future leadership of the Exarchate, we have been able to dialogue individually and collectively about some very difficult issues. I want you to know that my office as a Bishop and my heart as an Orthodox Christian are always open for discourse and fellowship. I ask for your prayers as I seek guidance for what will be beneficial for the Exarchate, and pleasing to God. The fact exists that we are all human and in our fallen nature we are vulnerable to misunderstanding, confusion, contradiction, anger, pain, and division. This is one of the reasons

why we are meeting here today to foster clarity, truth, healing and unity in Christ.

I also want to express my heartfelt respect and appreciation to His Eminence Archbishop Gabriel of Comana for his continued support and prayers. We all join here together in expressing our best wishes to His Eminence on his retirement and pray that he may be blessed with health and many years.

The Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in following protocol, and upon review and acceptance of His Eminence Archbishop Gabriel of Comana's request for retirement, has appointed me as locum tenens. Indeed, it is a privilege and an honor to serve you in this manner. I express my commitment to all of you, clergy and laity, and promise to work diligently as we prepare for the Extraordinary General Assembly and the appointment of a new Archbishop.

In accordance with the established procedure regarding the election of a new Archbishop, a list of three names, which included Archimandrite Symeon Cossec, Archimandrite Job Getcha, and Archimandrite Grigorios Papatomas, was submitted as possible candidates. However none of the three candidates met the requirements for selection. For example, Archimandrite Grigorios Papatomas is not part of the Exarchate or the Ecumenical Patriarchate and thus cannot be considered as a candidate at this point. I appreciate Father Grigorios' support in acknowledging to His All Holiness that he did not meet the selection criteria. It is true that all candidates serve the Church faithfully and many of you have advocated on their behalf indicating the love that you have for them. However, we as a Church must hold steadfast to the standards that our Fathers and Mothers, our Saints, and Christ Himself established. We must always be reminded as we go through this process that the Church will not adapt to us, and that we need to adapt to the Church.

Our mission is to maintain the unity and integrity of our Archdiocese. My goal as the appointed locum tenens is to ensure that this selection is in accordance with the Orthodox Canonical order, and in the best interest of the Church. This is the will of the Holy Synod. This is the will of the Church. His all Holiness has expressed concern regarding the absence of consensus on a particular candidate. Perhaps, it is because certain conditions on behalf of the candidates were not met, and the standards of the selection process were not followed. There are strict guidelines that we must employ in selecting the new spiritual leader of the Exarchate. Although we are all open to dialogue we are not open to changing that which has been handed down to us. We are followers of Christ now and always. We trust His Word. His all Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, realizing the difficulties we have encountered with this selection process of a new Archbishop and with the support of the Holy Synod, is submitting a proposal for our review.

I will share with you parts of His all Holiness' proposal addressed to Arch priest John Gueit, and Mr Michel Sollogoub:

« After having thus carefully examined the matter with the necessary attention, we propose by this Patriarchal Letter of ours, to you and to the Clergy-Laity Assembly, the following: that His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, appointed locum tenens of your Exarchate, continues to temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities that come from this position, in his function as our Patriarchal Exarch. At the same time, on your proposal, our Holy Synod shall elect a suitable person to serve as his auxiliary bishop, and to meet the religious and liturgical needs of the believers of your parishes, in their native language and their tradition.»

« We bring this proposal to the attention of the archiepiscopal Council of our Exarchate and await his opinion on it to in order to continue and take all the necessary steps provided for this purpose, concerning as well where necessary, the Regulations governing the existence and functioning of our Patriarchal Exarchate.»

His all Holiness' words quoted from His proposal are pastoral and grounded in the spirit of ecclesial communion. The brotherly bond that was sealed in the Patriarchal Tomos in the year 1999 is evident and guaranteed. He is calling us to love one another as he loves all of us. In my last conversation with His all Holiness, he alerted me to be mindful of the need to maintain unity in the Church as we work together to elect a new Archbishop. It is not uncommon that our faith and commitment to Christ is tested. Therefore, we must maintain our faith in Christ and the Tradition of the Church.

I therefore invite you to receive this proposal as a gift to be prayerfully considered. Preserving the canonical inscription that the Patriarchate offers paternally to the Exarchate is the primary purpose of offering this gift. I do not wish to alarm you, but to take up the extent of your responsibility not only in relation to such a proposal, but also in relation to the preservation of the life of the Church and its integrity is a crucial decision that will need to be made

To clarify, the Patriarchal proposal responds to a state of « force majeure », implying that my appointment as locum tenens be extended until the election of the new Archbishop. This intermediary step is necessary because for the first time in the history of the Archdiocese there is no auxiliary bishop in place that could serve at the same time as both the locum tenens and the candidate for the election of archbishop. This is a reality that must be acknowledged. Secondly, the Patriarchal proposal invites you, to the extent that the statutes permit, to renew your confidence in me so that I may carry out the mission with which I have been charged. To assist me in this task, an auxiliary bishop will be appointed in order to ensure the liturgical life of the parishes of the Exarchate continue to run smoothly and efficiently.

I want to emphasize that this new proposal in discussion is temporary and will expire next autumn, thus providing sufficient time for prayer and reflection allowing us to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the election of a new Archbishop. I am confident embracing this process will strengthen the uniqueness and ministry of the Exarchate.

During this transitional period, the life of your communities will not change; it will always be centered around the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and sacred offices. I will pay particular attention to the protection of your liturgical and spiritual tradition.

The fact that your tradition has Russian roots makes us joyful and determined to preserve its beauty and meaning. However, the tradition is not limited to the Slavic world because this tradition brings the faithful together in a single parish from diverse backgrounds. Your liturgical tradition makes it possible to integrate the multiethnic reality of Orthodoxy in France. Moreover, even

NEW MITRE

Among the honours granted by the archbishop there is the right for an archpriest «to wear a mitre».

This was recently the case for father André Fortounatto, distinguished as such by Vladyka Gabriel last June (2012).

On February 23rd, in Vichy (France), a sparkling white- and silver coloured mitre was given to father André by the local parishioners after the divine liturgy in a friendly and festive atmosphere. This was a good opportunity to explain the significance of wearing a mitre as liturgical honours.

The mitre actually is a royal crown worn by kings or queens exercising their sovereign ruling functions. In Heaven there is only one King, the King of Kings, Jesus Christ the Son of God. This explains the absence on the icons of crowns on the head of holy kings or bishops ; except the holy martyrs, who have demonstrated moral sovereignty in Christian martyrdom. Here, on earth, the King's crown and the Clergy's mitre are granted to the deserving ones as a distinction for their work realized in this world. As the Church exists «in the world» though not being of this world, the mitre is a true recognition of an exceptional ruling on earth.

A triple «Many Years» marked the end of the celebration.

Père Michel Fortounatto

within our Metropolis, we have the parishes that follow the Slavic rubrics, precisely for the reasons I have just mentioned, because it facilitates the coexistence of Orthodox faithful from diverse backgrounds. I would like to think that this tradition, especially when it comes to our Diaspora communities, serves not only a certain number of faithful, but it is the heritage of all the faithful. I personally experienced it during my years of study at the Institute of Saint-Serge and that is why it seems essential to me to protect it with openness and without any fundamentalism.

I pray that I have been able to express through these words the heartfelt respect I hold for all of you. I respect your Exarchate for its essential contribution to the theological and liturgical life of Orthodoxy. I accept and embrace your Exarchate's history as it comes to life with its traditions, culture, and people.

Let us experience the peace of unity that comes through wisdom and discernment as we, together, continue building the future of the Exarchate. To do this, I invite you to participate in the discussion to review the situation and act so that you have a voice in stating what you desire from your next Archbishop.

I propose that we organize debates in two stages:

1. Questions regarding the Patriarchal proposal.
2. Questions regarding the main themes you want to send in response to the Patriarch.

to better organize the speeches, I'll ask Archpriest Andre Fortounatto, if he will accept, to kindly be the moderator.

These discussions will then be compiled into a report prepared by the Council of the Archdiocese and that will be forwarded to His all Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew by me. It is our prayer that from this compilation, the Council of the Archdiocese and I will be Divinely guided as we devote ourselves to the preparation of the new elections.

In the spirit of St. Ignatius of Antioch, in his letter to the faithful of Smyrna, «Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let community also be; as well as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate an agape; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God» (Smyr. 8, 2). In this sense, we cannot separate the respect he should have towards the people of God and the respect toward his servants, his clergy, who work tirelessly in his favor.

Amen and God bless you!

May our work be inspired and constructive!

† Metropolitan Emmanuel of France



Pilgrimage to the Holy Land 19 - 28 October 2013

Terre Sainte



Pèlerinage orthodoxe

19 - 28 octobre 2013

Archevêché des Eglises orthodoxes russes en Europe occidentale
Exarchat du Patriarcat œcuménique de Constantinople

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DEANERY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Ecumenical Patriarchate
Deanery of Great Britain and Ireland
Festival and Conference
24-27 May 2013



Provisional Programme

High Leigh Conference Centre,
Hoddesdon, Herts. EN11 8SG

DEANERY FESTIVAL AND CONFERENCE,
24-27 MAY 2013

MISSION AND VISION

The Annual Conference in 2013 has a different emphasis. We shall explore a very important and central aspect of our life as Orthodox Christians whilst providing for all age groups and encouraging attendance for young people, families and children. This annual event now renamed Festival and Conference has become the principle event within the Deanery when we gather with our Bishop, meet together in fellowship and learn, study and enjoy in each other's company.

The programme this year is arranged and presented by senior members of our clergy and there are some differences but we intend to uphold the tradition and quality of recent years whilst providing an event which is inclusive of all.

Mission is at the heart of our life in the Church and we are all involved whether by kindness to each other, providing a warm welcome to strangers or by any of the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" as St Paul lists in Galatians 5:22,23. Some will be engaged in preaching, teaching, guidance and counselling, but all of us, by the life we lead and the example we give, are witnesses of the Church in the world. We have been baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ and by this very fact, we are involved in Mission.

We hope that as many as possible will attend in 2013.

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