



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE OF ARCHBISHOP JOB OF TELMESSOS



Dear Fathers, beloved Brother
and Sisters in Christ,

Year after year, the approach of the Feast of Christ's Nativity fills with joy Christians who are preparing to celebrate this solemn Mystery. And it is right to so rejoice, for the prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled: today, «unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given» (Isaiah 9.6). In truth, the feast we are celebrating today is the feast of the God Who gives Himself by becoming incarnate and humbled for the life of the world. This is precisely what the Apostle John the Theologian declares, saying: «God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.» (John 3:16). Without this sacrificial gift from God, humanity would never have been able to truly know God and unite with Him, as much as this is possible for human nature, and so have access to the Heavenly Kingdom. This gift, generously offered to all mankind by the merciful God, calls for a generous response in return from all of creation. On this festive Day the Church proclaims in its hymnody: «What shall we offer

you, O Christ, Who appear as a Man on earth? Each of Your creatures offers You its thanksgiving: the Angels - a hymn, the heavens - the star, the Magi - gifts, the shepherds - worship, the earth - a cave, the desert - a manger, and we - a virgin Mother. O God eternal, have mercy on us!» (4th Sticheron of the Lucernary). And the Church continues to this day to offer thanksgiving, celebrating the Eucharist, in which, remembering everything that was done for us in the Mystery of salvation in Christ, it offers to God that which belongs to Him, and comes from Him, «on behalf of all and for all». Yet the event joyfully celebrated today, with all its cosmic and eternal implications, invites us to respond concretely with a generous gift, each day of our lives. First, each of us, as a priest of creation, is called to give thanks to the Creator for the gift of creation. This means that we have to recognize the world we inhabit as a gift from God for which we must be grateful. For this reason, we are invited to lead a life which is «Eucharistic» and «ascetic», since the created world is not our possession, but a gift from God, which effectively means that we must be respectful and responsible vis-à-vis the material creation, avoiding pollution and waste. Furthermore, we must be generous every day of our lives by seeing, in every human being created «in the image and likeness of God» (Genesis 1: 26-27), the image of Christ Who gives Himself to us. Each time we support a human being

we encounter in our daily lives by our kindness, our generosity, our moral support and our material assistance, we are responding to the generous gift of God incarnate, since, as He Himself told us, «inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me» (Matthew 25:40). Finally, we should also support the Church which is the Body of Christ, the extension of the incarnation of God through the centuries, which, through its missionary initiatives and, especially by the celebration of the Sacraments, without which the mystical union with Christ through God's grace would be impossible, incarnates in our lives the saving Mystery of Christ. For without our synergistic commitment and support, the Church cannot effectively accomplish this divine and essential mission in the world.

Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, Beloved in Christ, I wish, for all of us, that the joy of this celebration may truly reflect the incarnation of God in our everyday lives. Extending to you my best wishes on the occasion of the Nativity of Christ and the New Year, I implore upon you all the blessing of God incarnate, and wish that each of us may say, together with the Apostle Paul, «it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me» (Galatians 2:20).

† Job, Archbishop of Telmessos,
Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch,
Paris, The Cathedral of Saint Alexander
December 25, 2014/ January 7, 2015

GREAT IS GOD IN HIS SAINTS — MAASTRICHT (PAYS-BAS)



The Orthodox parish in Maastricht - one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in the Netherlands - is dedicated to St. John Chrysostom and St. Servatius. When, back in 1985, the chapel was consecrated by Archbishop Georges of Evdokia,

he brought a relic of St. John Chrysostom to be placed in the altar. And now, almost thirty years later, the parish has received relics of the second patron saint: St. Servatius, the first bishop of Maastricht



(+384) whose name, its Greek form (Sarpati), occurs in the documents of the Council of Sardica; he was of Armenian descent.

And another relic of a holy bishop was offered to the parish: one

of Saint Amand (+675 or 676). A relic of a third holy bishop of Maastricht Monulph (+597) was already present in our church. Enough reasons to celebrate the arrival of those relics.

Because in those early days the bishops of Maastricht were also bishop of Liege in Belgium (as well as of Tongeren) we also invited for the Moleben, which was celebrated on Saturday, December 13th, the clergy of the parish in Liège: father Guy and father Alexander, as well as father Nikolaos of the Greek parish in Liege. Unfortunately, they were unable to concelebrate since they were held up by traffic jams on their way up to Maastricht. So our rector, father Theodore celebrated, assisted by deacon Rafael, who offered both relics.

The festive Moleben was followed by a modest meal.

Holy bishops Servatius, Amandus and Monulphus, pray for us.

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AT PARISH LEVEL – THE STORY OF A LINK BETWEEN ORTHODOX COMMUNITIES IN ENGLAND AND UGANDA



AN UNEXPECTED APPEAL

In July 1990, Deacon Peter Scorer of Holy Prophet Elias Parish in the South West of England received a letter from Father Basilios Nsubuga, an Orthodox priest in Uganda, asking if we could help his community at a difficult time. Prior to this no-one in our parish knew of his existence – indeed, the existence of any Orthodox presence in East Africa was news to most of us. How or why his request came to our small, scattered parish remains a

mystery, but whatever the case, we decided that we needed to respond. Since 1990 we have developed an ever closer link with the parish of Saint Cyprian, centred on the village of Bulami, some 50 kilometres north of Kampala in Central Uganda.

ORTHODOXY IN UGANDA

The Orthodox Church in Africa grew from the work of two men, Reuben Mukasa Spartas and Obadiah Kabanda Basajjakitalo. Both grew up as Anglicans, but in the early 1920s came through their reading to believe that the Orthodox Church was the true successor to the undivided Apostolic Church. Reuben Spartas also dreamed of a truly African Church, rather than one “imported” by colonial missionaries. At first he made contact with a bishop of the “African Orthodox Church”, established in America in 1921, and he and Obadiah were ordained priests by the South African AOC Bishop Daniel Alexander in 1932. However, their ministry brought them into contact with the Greek community in East Africa, and they soon realized that the AOC had no legitimate connection with the Orthodox Church. Instead they made contact with Patriarch Meletios of Alexandria, who after due enquiry recognised the validity of their priesthood. In 1946 their growing community of around 10,000 was formally recognised as part of the Patriarchate of Alexandria under the name of the African Greek Orthodox Church, serving both the indigenous and Greek communities throughout East Africa. The Constitution of the new body reflected Reuben Spartas’ vision of a truly African Church:

The African Greek Orthodox Church shall be controlled by the Africans under the supervision and guidance of the Holy Ghost through the spiritual, physical and fraternal help and protection of the Holy Patriarchal See of Alexandria. It shall be an absolutely independent church in all internal administration.

Father Reuben was one of three Ugandan priests to be elected Bishop (Christopherous) in 1972. (He was responsible for translating the key liturgical texts into the Luganda language.) Another was Theodoros Nankayama, who later became the first African Metropolitan (of Kampala and All Uganda). He was succeeded in 1997 by the present Metropolitan, His Eminence Jonah (Lwanga). Since 1946 the African Greek Orthodox Church has spread throughout sub-Saharan Africa, comprising 14 Archdioceses from Mali, Chad and Sudan in the north to Cape Town in the south.

OUR GROWING FELLOWSHIP WITH SAINT CYPRIAN'S

At first contributions from our parish helped provide school fees, uniforms and educational resources for the children of Saint Cyprian's – many of them orphaned during Uganda's troubled recent history. More recently the scope has widened to include funding for church and school buildings, livestock and land for horticulture. In addition, we have from time to time responded to more specific requests, and have sent out old (i.e. sturdy) manual sewing machines, woodworking tools and typewriters for young people to learn skills that could help them earn a living. We have also printed Orthodox prayer books in the Luganda language.

In 1998 Father Basilios was succeeded as parish priest by Father Daniel Kaddu, who has maintained and deepened our relationship ever since. In addition to his responsibility for his parishioners at Saint Cyprian's and his key role in the development of both the primary and secondary schools attached to the parish, he has established two "sub-parishes" – St Mary of Egypt at Mayindo and St Procopios at Vvumba – and reports regularly on the development of the churches and of the schools he sees as so important in strengthening the Orthodox community. His letters, often inspiring in their faith and tenacity in the face of enormous difficulties of poverty, illness and warfare, are always read out in our church on arrival. Most importantly, we remember at every Liturgy 'all those in the parish of Saint

Cyprian in Uganda', reminding ourselves that we are truly one with them in Christ.

A DREAM COME TRUE

From the time of our first contact with Father Basilios, I dreamed of the possibility of visiting Saint Cyprian's, but I was always aware that the cost of the air fare would pay for building a classroom or employing a teacher for a year, so had resigned myself to dreaming. However, in 2012 a member of our parish who has long had connections in Uganda told me he thought I should go, and that he would pay for two plane seats. So, after more than twenty years of growing love and trust through our correspondence with Father Daniel, Deacon Peter and I finally flew to Uganda to join him in his community for their Patronal Feast on 2nd October.

Our base during our week's stay was a comfortable guesthouse in Kampala. The afternoon of the day we arrived, Father Daniel and Deacon Joseph travelled the 50km from Bulami through a tropical rainstorm to welcome us. After warm embraces of greeting we sat and talked on the guesthouse verandah. Father Daniel



told us the details of the Sunday services at Kampala's Saint Nicholas' Cathedral, and most importantly gave us detailed instructions for our journey to Bulami on the following Tuesday.

On Sunday we attended Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral. What struck me at once was how very much at home I felt, in spite of the language being totally unfamiliar and the fact that Deacon Peter and I were the only pallid people in an otherwise healthy-looking congregation. Also impressive was the youthfulness of the congregation – children outnumbered adults by at least two to one. (During the

service I was adopted by Constantinos and Andreas, aged about seven, who later took charge when I began to distribute the icon cards I had brought – making sure that all the children got one, and that no-one came round a second time!) After the Liturgy, we were warmly welcomed by Father Nicholas, the Dean, and were then taken by four young men on a tour of the Cathedral and its surroundings, including the graves of Bishop Christopherous and Metropolitan Theodorus, the cathedral



guesthouse, the small seminary, and the hospital. These were impressive young people, open, hospitable, serious in their commitment to their Church and to the wider community. We have kept in regular contact with them, and have helped two of them as far as we can to meet the cost of their secondary education.

The Guesthouse driver called for us early on the morning of Saint Cyprian's Day to take us to Bulami. The road had been recently paved and the journey took little more than an hour. My lasting impression is of a constant stream of people walking – men pushing cycles loaded with building materials, women balancing huge baskets of clothes or vegetables on their heads, children as young as 4 or 5 making their way to school in their (invariably) immaculate uniforms. At Saint Cyprian's, Father Daniel had already begun celebrating Matins, so we were shown around the village and the school by his nephew, Father Andrew. Near Father Daniel's house I was able to





light lamps I had brought for the graves of his much-missed papadhia Josephine, his father Joseph who had died earlier in the year, and two daughters who died in childhood. The Liturgy was celebrated by Father Nicholas from the cathedral, Father Daniel, and several priests from surrounding parishes. Deacon Peter and Deacon Alexandrous from the cathedral shared diaconal duties, and Deacon Peter was invited to preach on the Gospel reading of the parable of the Good Shepherd,

Father Nicholas interpreting. Again, the atmosphere was warmly welcoming; again I felt wholly at home, and hugely grateful that my distant dream had become reality. Deacon Peter presented Father Daniel and his parishioners with an icon of the Holy Prophet Elias specially painted for this purpose by Simeon Row, a member of our Devon congregation, based on a 13th Century Ethiopian original. After church we were treated with the visiting clergy to a festal meal (plantain, sweet potato, yam, rice, some stewed meat, and small pieces of dried fish – probably as much as most parishioners would eat in a week) and then a programme of entertainments by the schoolchildren and the choirs of the three communities, punctuated by speeches – all but Father Daniel’s in Luganda, so wholly unintelligible to us, but some of them clearly very funny. A high point for the children was Father Daniel’s distribution of sweets we had brought from Kampala.

Father Daniel wanted to show us what had been achieved with our help in the sub-parishes, so we located our driver and were guided to Mayindo (Saint Mary of Egypt) and then to Vvumba (Saint Procopios). Each community now had a brick building serving as a church on Sundays and as a classroom and community centre on weekdays. Mayindo had a second classroom already in use but still requiring a lot of work before it could be considered complete. At Vvumba the whole community had returned from Bulami to welcome us and wish us well.

Briefly we returned to Bulami to unload the two suitcases of gifts from members of our parish – mostly school and clinical materials. And then it was time, with heavy hearts, to say goodbye to Father Daniel. He is a gentle man, small in stature and self-effacing, but we had seen throughout the day his



quiet authority in his community, and the obvious love and respect in which they hold him. To me, he has been and remains an inspiration.

Since our visit the sub-parish at Vvumba has become a parish in its own right, led by Father Joseph Muwonge, formerly Deacon at Saint Cyprian’s, and Saint Anne’s parish in Northampton has established a link with Father Joseph similar to ours with Father Daniel. If any other parishes in our Archdiocese would be interested in establishing such links, please contact me at martinolsson827@btinternet.com.



DIFFICULT TIMES

The Archdiocese of Uganda has, apart from its remarkable people, very limited resources. Most of the faithful are by our standards desperately poor. If they are healthy and have land to work or other employment, they will be able to feed their families and hopefully pay for their children’s education, at least at primary level. Many are not well, do not have land, or employment. So the Archdiocese has always relied heavily on support from outside the country for funding its mission. In the past, generous support has come from Greece, from Cyprus, and from the Greek diaspora. Since the financial upheavals of 2009, this support has entirely dried up. Already during our visit, we were told by young people hoping to go to University that Metropolitan Jonah had announced there could be no more Church scholarships. More recently, we have heard that the parish priests can no longer be paid their very modest salaries of \$50 per month. Father Daniel wrote recently of the situation in the Metropolis:

Most of the offices are closed. The priests are out of place, some of them are not able to work. Most of the work from the top to the lowest level is on a standstill. Amidst all of that, God is very much aware of the situation and has an answer. In the meantime, we very badly need your intensive prayers that the situation will not prolong. Pray for the Metropolitan, the priests and the whole Orthodox Church in Uganda in the appalling situation.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Martin Olsson, Holy Prophet Elias Parish, Devon, England

FIFTY YEARS OF THE CRYPT

(the parish of the Holy Trinity crypt of the cathedral, Paris)

It was a festive, solemn and prayerful Moleben which opened the celebration of the fifty years of the parish of the Holy Trinity, on the 6th December. For everyone, parishioners and friends, who feel close to the community of "The Crypt", this ceremony was experienced like a beautiful big family reunion, gathering together all its members in the emotional recollection of its so rich past and in the joy of reunion.

In the absence of our Archbishop Job, who could not be with us because of the obligations of his schedule, many celebrants participated in the ceremony. Great was our joy to have Fr Boris, the emblematic rector of our parish, who took on its young and still fragile flame after the premature disappearance of its founder Fr Pierre Struve. What a moving symbol of continuity it was to see Fr Alexis Struve, our Rector until last summer who came from Kiev for the occasion, holding Fr Boris' hand to help him go down the steps of the ambon at the beginning of the ceremony. How happy to see the continuity maintained by Fr Elisée, a "pastoral son" to both of them, who in his new position as rector of the parish presided at the assembly.

Our deceased – great spiritual figures and parishioners who preceded us – as well as those now living and attending with their fervour palpable – present and past parishioners (some of



whom had come from afar for the occasion), friends of our "Association Œcuménique Étoile-Champs Elysées" – we were all united in the same joy of thanks giving. Henceforth we have an ardent obligation as custodians of this precious heritage to ensure its longevity, under the protection of the Holy Trinity

Marina de Prémonville

PASTORAL VISITE — TOULOUSE (FRANCE)



ON SUNDAY 6TH DECEMBER 2014, HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP JOB CAME TO TOULOUSE TO SHARE WITH THE PARISHIONERS THE JOY OF THE CELEBRATION DAY OF THE PARISH DEDICATED TO ST NICHOLAS.

The parish was founded in 1927 with the blessing of Metropolitan Eulogios (Georgiuievski) to spiritually feed the flock of the faithful driven from their homes after the painful events which destroyed Russia in 1917 and ended up in the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks. Having left their homeland millions of uprooted people were dispersed throughout the world, bringing everywhere the light of the Christian faith in the Orthodox Tradition. Thus the West was once again brought closer to the East, the centuries-long monologue of the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches naturally changed

into a dialogue, a symbiosis of cultures and traditions started, as well as the development of theological thought and mutual comprehension. Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians and Romanians progressively assembled in the newly created parish. It lost its national characteristics and became an original spiritual centre, open to all who have met Christ in the Orthodox Tradition. Over the past decades the Catholic Church has generously provided buildings for the celebrations, thus helping in the development of the parish. In 1987, thanks to the efforts of the parishioners and the rector, then Hieromonk André (Wade),

the parish was able (with the help of the Archdiocese) to acquire a house and to transform it into a magnificent church, the result of nearly sixty years of work by the clergy and the faithful parishioners in the South West of France.

It was the first time since his enthronement that His Eminence Archbishop Job visited the parish in Toulouse to celebrate the Patronal Festival. Before entering the church, Jean Philippe Delage, the church warden, together with his predecessor Vassili Vassilievitch Solnychkine, gave a welcoming speech. Referring to the heritage of the Fathers of the Church,



he mentioned the spiritual importance of the bishop in the life of the Church. Then Vassili Vassilievitch spoke of the role of Hieromonk Léonid (Khroll), one of the founders of the community in Toulouse, who had contributed to develop, through word and deed, an ecclesial spirit and a deep feeling of sobornost among parishioners.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Job with the concelebration of the priests of the parish and of the neighbouring ones: Archpriest Georges Ashkoff (Dean of the South West), Hegumen Jean (Vesel), priest of the Orthodox community of the Patriarchate of Moscow in Toulouse, Archpriest Maxime Politov, Hieromonk Alexis (Milioutine), Deacons Jean Drobot, Joachim Berton and Henri Coloumiès. The mayor of Toulouse, Monsieur Jean-Luc Moudenc, as well as the mayor of the district Madame Marthe Marti attended the Liturgy. At the end of the service, the Romanian community joined into the joy of the parish, headed by its rector Fr Gabriel Hlade and Deacon Jean-Paul. After the liturgy, the feast went on in the parish hall, where a meal was served, prepared by the parishioners.

The Catholic Archbishop of Toulouse, His Eminence Robert le Gall, also came to the church to congratulate Archbishop Job and the parishioners on the occasion of their patronal festival.

Hieromonk Alexis (Milioutine)

FIFTY YEARS OF THE CRYPT

(the parish of the Holy Trinity crypt of the cathedral, Paris)

THE FIFTY YEARS OF THE PARISH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, KNOWN AS THE PARISH OF THE CRYPT, WAS CELEBRATED WITH A SERIES OF EVENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER 2014: A MOLEBEN IN THE CRYPT ON THE 5TH DECEMBER FOLLOWED BY A FESTIVE APERITIF; A SYMPOSIUM AT THE INSTITUTE OF SAINT-SERGE ON THE 6TH, THE LITURGY ON THE 7TH DECEMBER; AT THE SAME TIME A SPECIAL BULLETIN WAS PUBLISHED DEDICATED TO THE COMMEMORATION. THE ORGANISATION REQUIRED A LOT OF ENERGY. UNEXPECTED OBSTACLES APPEARED. BUT FINALLY IT WAS UNIVERSALLY REGARDED AS A SUCCESS.

The Moleben was celebrated in the evening in the Crypt by Fr Elisée together with the previous rectors of the parish Fr Boris Bobrinsky and Fr Alexis Struve, as well as Fr Nicolas Kazarian (Greek Metropolis) and Fr Serge Sollogoub (parish of St Jean in the Exarchate), and deacons Joseph Quemeraye and Dominique Beaufils. Among the faithful, some came from far away, for example Fr Jean Gueit's wife Anne-Marie Gueit, and Bénédicte Robichon (parish of Saint Basile and Saint Alexis in Nantes); others came from parishes members of the "Association Œcuménique Etoile-Champs Elysées", amongst them was the president - Frédéric de Maack and his wife. This very moving celebration fully reflected the gratitude experienced by the parishioners for 50 years of liturgical life and of spiritual communion: for the eldest ones, these memories went back almost to the very origins.

The symposium organised by Michael Stavrou at the Institute of St Serge was composed of two parts: the morning was devoted to the history of the community of the Crypt, the afternoon – to the evolution of Francophone orthodoxy. It has to be said that in most of the talks the past and the future often overlapped.

After the prayer of the Holy Spirit, Fr Elisée opened the talk in the presence of Fr Boris and Fr Alexis and in front a large audience representing all generations.

The first speaker was Fr Michel Evdokimov. He related how, under the impetus of his father the lay theologian Paul Evdokimov, it became usual, in the students' centre of the CIMADE at Sevres, to celebrate the liturgy in French; the same group of persons later founded the community of the Crypt. Naturally he spoke about the necessity of adapting the Slavic melodies to the French liturgical texts and of the important role played by Mrs Serikoff, the wife of Fr Georges Serikoff, who was committed to a French-speaking orthodoxy.

With regards to the enculturation of Orthodoxy, Fr Michel also spoke about Fr Cyrille Argenti who passionately defended the idea of a local orthodoxy respecting the ancient canons (Nicaea, 325), according to which there must be only one bishop in each town, thus manifesting the unity of the body of Christ.

Then Danielle Gousseff presented the origins of the Crypt from a historical point of view, briefly mentioning those who in 1964 were its forerunners, and the important role played by Archbishop George Tarassov. She described the beginning of the parish under the guidance of Fr Boris, who took over the action of Fr Pierre whom he succeeded. She spoke briefly about all those who at that time were there to help Fr Boris, particularly Fr Nelidoff. In her conclusion she reminded us of the important link between the community and its rector, thanking Fr Boris and Fr Alexis on



behalf of everyone and voicing our confidence in Fr Elisée.

Georges Nahas, vice-president of the University of Balamand (Lebanon), gave a particularly moving account of Fr Pierre Struve whom he had known in Lebanon even before he was ordained. He showed how much his priesthood had been intimately intertwined with his work as a doctor, the latter being compared to an apostle to the poor. He shared this apostolate with all his family and had the full support of his

wife Tatiana Borrissovna. Georges Nahas depicted the Crypt at the time of Fr Pierre as a parish of a new type, where young Russians rubbed shoulders with older ones, where converts and native orthodox mixed, where the liturgy would become foremost in the evolution of the believers. He concluded abruptly by saying that in 50 years we haven't made the slightest progress towards a French orthodoxy.

Olga Laham concluded the morning with a very thorough presentation about the influence of the Crypt, which she considers manifests itself in all sorts of activities or events, first of all the Bulletin of the Crypt which aims at offering spiritual food and at reflecting our contemporary life. She cited a few personalities among the elders who have particularly contributed to this influence, Fr Boris firstly for his charisma as a theologian and a pastor, Elisabeth Behr-Sigel for her many roles in the parish until her death and Olivier Clement, a very discreet parishioner. In the second part she outlined with the fervour of youth those perspectives for the future which will support and enhance this influence among the younger generations.

After a lunch served by the students, which as usual was relaxed and friendly, work began again with an intervention by Michel Stavrou concerning "Liturgical celebrations and the ecclesiastical conscience in francophone Orthodox communities". His aim was to show how the liturgical conscience of the faithful can be related to their ecclesiastical conscience when they become themselves actors in the celebration of the Liturgy. This does not happen by itself and depends on the celebration itself. Here comes the liturgical renewal, stemming from the so called Paris School, of which Fr Cyprien Kern was one of the leading advocates. The renewal mainly concerns the Eucharistic celebration, giving back to the people the very role they must assume as the body of the Church and the guardian of the faith. The fact that they can hear the "secret" prayers now said audibly and that they can answer with the triple Amen at the Epiclesis shows that they are concelebrating with the priest. This renewal, agreed to by our successive archbishops, has been introduced by the majority of the French speaking parishes; we may still need more understanding for its full acceptance.

Elie Korotkoff spoke next about the translation of liturgical texts from the Greek and Slavonic menaions, by a commission of the Orthodox Fraternity led by him for the last thirty years, in collaboration with the liturgical commission of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France (AEOF) of which Fr Nicholas Lossky is the president. It is a considerable work requiring much competence, based on such criteria as faithfulness to the text, true theology and the search for a coherent translation in good French. Looking back over the work of the commission, Elie Korotkoff expressed disappointment over the circulation of too many different translations of liturgical texts in French speaking parishes. Concerning such important texts as the Symbol of Faith there exists many different versions, interfering with the common prayer of Orthodox of different traditions or parishes.



Cyrille Sollogoub, the last to speak, was to talk about Orthodox liturgical chant in French language parishes. He started by paying homage to Nicholas Ossorguine, recently departed, who had been a cantor at Saint-Serge for a very long time. In the current hymnal liturgical music he identified three great traditions and several ways of singing, depending on the origin of the melodies: westernized Slavic, byzantine and less well-known Gregorian melodies. He spoke of the important role played by Maxime Kovalevsky and insisted on the tradition of adapting Slavic melodies to the French text used by him, of which the parishes of Our lady of Sorrows and of the Crypt played a pioneering role.

A round table led by Michel Sollogoub then gathered, with Fr Alexis Struve and representatives of many French speaking parishes: Fr Marc Genin, priest of the parish of St John of San-Francisco (Serbian diocese) in Asnières, Michele Nikitine from the parish of the Greek metropolis in Le Mans and Bénédicte Robichon from the Parish of Saint Basil and Saint Alexis in Nantes. They told of their own personal, liturgical and community experiences in using French where they live. Fr Alexis said a few words about the Ukraine where he presently lives. He also underlined the importance of what had been said during the symposium and concluded that we have to accept diversity. The Church becomes a reality here and now.

After a conclusion improvised by Nicolas Grimal, an academician, an Archon Prothonotary of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and a parishioner of the Crypt, the assembly rose to sing the hymn to the Theotokos before leaving.

Danielle Gousseff

The Acts of the symposium will be published in the periodical Contacts which was a partner in its organisation.