



LENTEN MESSAGE 2016

This year again, the beginning of the Great Fast is overshadowed by the dark clouds piling up over the head of humanity. Wars with all the accompanying human tragedies which they cause, pollution of nature, upheaval in the Middle East where we cannot yet understand either causes and outcome or the suffering of poor nations faced with the increasing gulf between North and South. The common man, for such we are, confronted with such an apocalyptic scenario, feels as weak as the grass of the fields. As part of the « masses », he has the feeling that everything is controlled above his head and his own vision has no impact on the course of events. Our weakness is once more emphasized.

Yet Saint Paul tells us that it is precisely in weakness that strengths lies. Lent is the privileged time for spiritual awareness of our human weakness. Yes, what can we offer to God, other than this weakness, this sin that overwhelms us and that we see at work every day both in and outside of us, and whose existence is real. To be a Christian is to be aware of ones finiteness and sinful condition, that is to say a creature experiencing in the flesh the freedom to choose between good and evil, knowing that victory over evil can only be the conjoining of the work of God and that of man. Now our collective sin is great. This is why fasting within the Church is necessary. To be aware of ones personal weakness like the publican: « God, have mercy on the sinner that I am » is the absolute condition of the collective conscience. The Christian by his fasting says to the world that there are limits to even the most legitimate desires. It is a call and an reveille to overcome: solitude, separation, anxiety in the

face of insecurity, the need to gain a place in society, fear of the judgment of others, the desire to climb the ladder of power. All these characterize our consumer society and we are all tempted to identify with it by means of one or other of these desires.

Now, if we follow Christ, we see that witnessing to the Kingdom will actually make us outsiders in relation to these desires and this consumer society which reassures us. To fast is to be « marginalised », to reflect a different reality, a different mode of action in the world. God works through the weakness brought about by fasting. Fasting for God makes one more merciful to oneself and ones brothers, changes ones view of creation by developing sensitivity to the rhythms of nature and life. Fasting reminds us how, what Solzhenitsyn calls « self-limitation » of ones needs, restores to man his freedom and frees him from the vicious circle of consumption. Putting limits on ourselves for Christ and the love of others is the true fast which makes us grow spiritually and brings to the world a truly Christian response.

Our entire spiritual tradition teaches us that. But we have formalized and ritualized it to such an extent, that we no longer see what it is all about, and in particular why it is still relevant today. It is for us to embody this tradition in this time of Lent to make triumphant in our lives what Christ was: peace, love, mercy and joy for the glory of the Father.

Wishing you all a good and holy Lent

*†John, Bishop of Charioupolis,
Patriarchal Vicar and Locum tenens*

PRE-ELECTION- EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY 28 MARCH 2016

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATUTES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE (STATUTES) THE RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP JOHN OF CHARIOUPOLIS, PATRIARCHAL VICAR, LOCUM TENENS, WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESAN COUNCIL (AC), MEETING ON 25TH JANUARY 2016 CONVENES AN EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY (EGA) OF THE ARCHDIOCESE ON MONDAY 28TH MARCH 2016 AT THE COUVENT DE L'ANNONCIATION - 222, RUE DU FAUBOURG-SAINT-HONORÉ 75008 PARIS. THE ONLY ITEM ON THE AGENDA ALLOWED BY THE STATUTES WILL BE THE PRE-ELECTION OF THE NEW ARCHBISHOP.

Communiqué of the Archdiocesan Council of 1 March 2016

Following an examination of candidates proposed for the election of the archbishop to be held on 28 March 2016, the Council, meeting under the chairmanship of the Locum Tenens, has selected those of his Excellency, John, bishop of Charioupolis and the Reverend Hieromonk Porphyrios (Plant), Curriculum Vitae
In accordance with the Statutes and the Tomos by which the Archdiocese is governed, these candidatures have been submitted to the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Throne.

Timetable

8.30 am Meeting of delegates and checking of mandates
9.00 am Moleben
10.00 am Opening of the GA by bishop John
Election of officers of the Assembly. Report of the mandating committee
10.30 am Presentation of the candidates
11.30 am Voting (1st round)
Exchange of information during counting
1.00 pm Lunch
2.30 pm Voting (2nd round) if required
4.00 pm Voting (3rd round) if required
At the end of voting Announcement of the results
Address by the chosen candidate
Moleben

HIEROMONK PORPHYRIOS (Plant)



Fr Porphyrios was born in England in 1952. He was ordained a priest in July 1976 and received into the Holy Orthodox Church in May 2012 through concelebration at the Divine Liturgy with H.E. Archbishop Gabriel of Comana. He is assigned as a priest to the parish of the Holy Prophet Elias (Devon) and serves in Saint Anne's Church, Exeter, UK. He received monastic tonsure to the Little Schema on 13 September 2014, at Notre Dame de Kazan, Moisenay, France, by H.E. Archbishop Job of Telmessos.

Fr Porphyrios comes from the Roman Catholic Church. He attended the Gregorian University, Rome, where he received his training. He was attracted to Orthodoxy from an early age through the writings and work of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh.

He was a parish priest in several communities where he served. Before that he was private secretary to the local bishop. At the invitation of the bishop he trained as a Group Analytic Psychotherapist and eventually began to practise psychotherapy as a professional. Since 2002 he has been working as a mental health professional and from 2008 he stopped being a parish priest and instead held a mandate from

the Bishop to work with mentally ill people, using his training and skills as a psychotherapist. In 2008 he began to regularly attend Orthodox services.

MGR JEAN DE CHARIOUPOLIS



Bishop Jean (in the world Jean Renneteau) was born on November 13th, 1942 in Bordeaux (France). Father Jean (Renneteau) studied at the St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris (France) and was a disciple of Fr Sophrony (Sakharov).

In 1974 he was ordained priest by Archbishop Georges (Tarassov). For a long time, he was responsible for the television programme 'Orthodoxy' on French channel France 2.

Following this he became parish priest of the French speaking parish of St. Catherine and the Holy Trinity in Chambésy, Geneva, where he served for forty years.

On 13 February 2015, the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, at the proposal of His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew unanimously elected the very reverend Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne, Jean (Renneteau) as bishop of Charioupolis as auxiliary bishop to the Patriarch. The new bishop's assignment was to be at the disposal of the Exarchate of Churches of the Russian Tradition in western Europe.

The ceremony of the new bishop Jean of Charioupolis took place on March 3rd, 2015 in the patriarchal church of St. Georges in Fener, Istanbul. The episcopal ordination took place on March 15th, 2015 in the

stauropegic church of St. Paul in the Orthodox Center Of The Ecumenical Patriarchate In Chambesy, Geneva (Switzerland). On November 28th, 2015, by the decision of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, bishop Jean of Charioupolis was designated Locum Tenens of the Exarchate of Churches of the Russian Tradition in western Europe.

COMPOSITION OF THE EGA

The members of the General Assembly will comprise (in conformity with article 16 of the Statutes):

1. all members of the clergy (bishops, priests, and deacons) ex officio and whether or not retired, who are canonically attached to the Archdiocese. All priests and deacons must be assigned to a parish or community by an official document specifying their assignment;
2. all readers (psalomshchiki) assigned officially to a parish by the Archbishop, ex officio;
3. the members of the Archdiocesan Council;
4. lay representatives of the member associations officially registered by the Archdiocesan Council as parishes or communities. These representatives are elected as delegates to the General Assembly of the Archdiocese with a three-year mandate by the general assemblies of the member associations. The number of laypersons sent by each one is equal to the number of members of the clergy and readers assigned to the parishes;
5. a delegate representing the St Sergius' Institute of Orthodox Theology in Paris. This delegate is chosen from among the teaching staff and must be in the Archdiocese's jurisdiction;
6. two delegates for each monastic community comprising more than ten monks or nuns and recognized officially by the Archdiocese, and one delegate for monastic communities comprising between three and ten monks or nuns;

7. one delegate per Orthodox association placed under the spiritual authority of the Archdiocese, the list of which is established by the Archdiocesan Council;

8. one delegate for each chapel of an old people's home attached to a parish and served by the clergy of the Archdiocese, the list of which is established by the Archdiocesan Council.

Those parishes that have not fulfilled their financial obligations unless exempted, towards the Archdiocese may not send delegates to the General Assembly.

The AC specifies the following details regarding their application:

- Lay delegates are those who were elected in 2013 with a 3 year mandate. Those of the laity who have left (notably after ordination) or are otherwise indisposed can be compensated exclusively for by alternates elected in 2013 where possible. Changes in the status of clergy will not affect the status of laity elected in 2013
- Clergy on temporary canonical release are invited without the right to vote.
- Those serving from outside the archdiocese are invited without the right to vote
- Clergy who have no liturgical function are not invited

In conformity with Article 18 of the Statutes, no lay member can be represented at the General Assembly by a proxy other than an elected alternate. There is no voting by proxy.

Only those members present at the General Assembly may exercise a vote.

NICE - Cemetery Caucade, Longchamp church,...

Beloved brothers and sisters,

I must inform you of the serious events that have taken place in Nice over the last two days . On Thursday, February 18 people in charge of the Russian Cemetery "Caucade" which, we must remember, is the private property of the ACOR -Nice religious association, discovered in the late afternoon that locks on the cemetery gate had been forced, a chain and padlock had been placed on the grid and a sign had been installed stating that the cemetery was jointly owned by the Russian Federation and the Russian Orthodox Church since 1867, and indicating the visiting hours and telephone contacts of those now in charge.

On Friday, February 19 the warden and some faithful returned to the scene accompanied by a locksmith and a bailiff. Surprise! Father André Eliseev had also arrived accompanied by a bailiff and a few people. There followed a dialogue of the deaf because obviously Father André Eliseev claimed to be mandated by the Russian Federation but could not show any legal act authorizing his right to act. Finally with the agreement of the two bailiffs a compromise was reached and the locksmith put a new lock and each party has received a key to the gate of the cemetery .

In the meantime Father André Eliseev also demanded the key of the Chapel and the house located at the entrance but this was refused by the head of ACOR -Nice . To avoid any future controversy an inventory of the furniture was done by the two ushers.

Having noted the disappearance of a cemetery register , Mr. Alexis Obolensky , Head of ACOR -Nice , filed a complaint with the police for vandalism , trespass on private property and theft of a register against Mr. Frizet responsible the Association of the Nice cathedral.

Also in a statement , ACOR -Nice , the rightful owners of the "Caucade" cemetery , strongly protest against this new aggression by the Russian Federation and the Moscow Patriarchate against its existence which had during the Soviet period faithfully looked after the cemetery and paid all charges related thereto. They therefore reiterate their call for justice and protection by the authorities of the French Republic.

Brothers and sisters, you should know that the judgment of the High Court of Nice of 20 January 2010 gave as property to the Russian Federation only the land on which the cathedral is built under a long lease . That judgment related only to that plot of land.

You should know that :

1. In 2014 (on the 29/01, 29/04 and 23/09) , the Ambassador of the Russian Federation deposited a copy in a usurpatory manner and without the

knowledge of ACOR -Nice, of amendments with the Land registry services (« Mortgage») claiming ownership of the «Caucade Cemetery» site, three plots of land adjacent

to the St. Nicolas Cathedral and the church of Saints Nicolas and Alexandra on rue Longchamp, owned and managed by ACOR-Nice from the beginning.

2. On 24/04/2015 ACOR -Nice, under French law, filed a suit contesting this action against the Russian Ambassador and Me Hugounenc, the Nice notary who made the disputed claims

on behalf of the Russian state The court case is still ongoing ; and it is worth noting that the Russian Federation has chosen not to respond to the court summons. I must also tell you that during a meeting I had with Bishop Nestor of Korsun on the 10th of this month, it was pointed out to me that the situation in Nice was going to move on the 'Caucade' cemetery and the Longchamp church and in the similar vein, other historic churches would be returned to the Russian Federation.

These actions , brothers and sisters, shock us and make us question the intentions of the Patriarchate of Moscow via the Russian Federation. It claims to be the successor of the Holy Synod of Imperial Russia . Those who manipulate history forget that the Soviet authorities who succeeded the Russian Empire had for 70 years destroyed churches on Russian soil, eliminated the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church and savagely persecuted the Orthodox Christians in Russia and had no concern for the churches here in France.

History remains history and nobody can tamper with it at their will. Throughout this period of the agony of Russian Christianity, the faithful and the leaders of the Archdiocese of parishes of Russian tradition in Western Europe, under the canonical jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, have with great respect materially maintained all these places and piously kept the memory of those who rested there. So we do not understand the aggression of the state and of the Russian Church to forcibly evict those Russian and Orthodox fellow countrymen who kept these memorials alive, maintained them financially and whose ownership was recognized by French law on ownership of our legal code, demonstrated by the constancy and faithfulness shown by many generations of Orthodox faithful of Russian origin.

Beloved brothers and sisters , we will soon enter the time of Lent which prepares us to receive the Light of the Resurrection. I invite each and every parish community to pray and fast that the Lord may support our church wardens and the leaders of our churches who are struggling to assert their rights belonging to the associations of cult according to the decisions of French Justice, and also to bear in your prayers and fasting your brothers and sisters who are in severe pain, faced with threats of expulsions from their places of worship. We shall always resort to the justice of men, but we ask God to do justice and to enlighten the civil and religious authorities so that peace may reign in the « holy churches of God.»

+ John , Bishop of Charioupolis
Patriarchal Vicar and Locum tenens



CHURCH AND PEACE

Fr. Cyrille Argenti (1919-1994)

To talk properly of peace, we must study the substance and understand the root causes of the conflictual situations existing in ourselves, in the Church and in society.

Where do conflicts come from?

There appears to exist an interrelatedness, even a kind of vicious circle, between community conflicts and our own inner conflicts. Indeed, our conflicts divide us against ourselves: "What I desire to do is not what I do", saint Paul says (Rom. 7, 15). Because of that we often experience what we can call a schizophrenic inner state. But we also transpose our inner division outside ourselves. Our evil desires make us to adopt more or less aggressive attitudes and behaviours with others, who in their turn react accordingly. It creates a vicious circle, in which outside conflicts trigger an inside disturbance, and inside conflicts cause outside conflicts. Our own being, as well as the Church's and the world's beings, are made out of what God calls them to be. But obviously God has made us, or rather is making us and wanting us to be, unified beings. For each person, for the Church and for the world, God has a plan that makes what they really are. A person and a society are truly themselves only if they are rooted in the very source of their being, i.e. in God Himself. When all that constitutes our mind, our feelings and our instincts stops gravitating around our Creator, it compares to planets not gravitating anymore around the sun: the universe goes berserk. When man loses contact with his inner regulating centre, with the One who bestows him his being and his unity, his inner world sinks into madness. The same goes for the Church and for society. When men do not gravitate anymore around their Creator, when on the contrary each of us thinks he is the very centre, then we planets go mad. But even when a man is divided against himself and has lost his inner unity, he still remains a person. He cannot completely destroy the unity that our Lord has put inside him. The same goes for the Church. Whatever its level of division, its fundamental unity – our Creator's gift – is never totally destroyed.

How can we recover peace?

When the Church and the world suffer inside themselves such anguish and conflict, how can they recover peace? The ideal answer is self-evident: harmony, unity and peace will reappear in them as soon as man inside himself on one side, all Christian communities and the universe as a whole on the other side, connect again with the Creator. Praying is nothing else than the way to recover a connection that will unify us and restore



peace. Let us start with the place where we can exercise an immediate influence: the inner man. It is there that peace will first be relatively reachable. Inner conflicts are caused by desires and passions we have accepted, although they go against our deepest will which corresponds to the will of God. Therefore, our very first prayer for reconciliation and peace-making will be to repent. But it is not something we reach once and for all. We must return to it constantly. While we live in this world, nothing is acquired once and for all. Sometimes, we tend to lean back, to rest on our laurels as an earned capital. It is neither right nor true. Nothing is acquired forever, not until our very last breath. We need to be constantly vigilant – a word Orthodox like very much –, constantly careful.

It means that we must look after ourselves by being watchful and repentant. To repent does not mean to regret the evil we have done, but to be reconciled with God, to receive his forgiveness and his peace. The mystery, the sacrament of repentance, reconciles us with the Father – by Christ's grace; peace is given back to us. It also means that we must preserve it by killing, crucifying, pruning inside us all that is in contradiction with our deepest will, with the will of God. It is the price we must pay for peace. The flow of life, the joy of God will not reach us unless we live under the sign of the Cross, because there will always be some new hurdle to overcome. We shall have no peace unless we accept to die to ourselves.

But as such we are unable to hammer out our failings. Man cannot change if the Spirit of God is not present to change him. When praying for our repentance therefore, we need to implore always for us to receive the Holy Spirit. As flowers turn to the sun to receive its rays, we must turn to God to receive his peace; there is no peace outside God. Our thirst for God is the source of our inner peace.

.../...

We must pray together

But we are not alone. We live in the Church. Our communities constantly experience unrest and lack of peace. What can cure them? Our personal prayer is not enough. We need to pray together. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name..." (Matt. 18, 20). Hence, for the Church, for the communities, the importance of the liturgy when we pray together. By this I do not mean just praying together or celebrating the Eucharist together, but what I shall call a community epiclesis. We tend to believe that the epiclesis, the moment when we pray the Father to send the Holy Spirit unto the faithful and the holy gifts, is the priest's business. Indeed, all faithful, having received the royal priesthood when baptized and chrismated, are called and assigned to invoke the Holy Spirit. The community as a whole must feel responsible for the descent of the Holy Spirit and must appeal to it. Every faithful, through his prayer and his supplication, must feel that he is responsible together with the priest for appealing to the Holy Spirit. This is the community epiclesis. Peace will come back to our communities as soon as we fulfil it with complete sincerity. We must invite the Holy Spirit; we must call him.

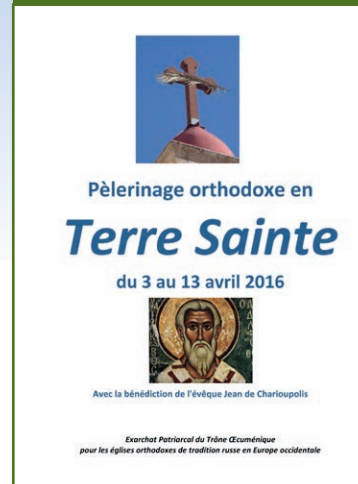
But let us not harbour any illusions. Whatever the degree of our inner peace, of the serenity we acquire from time to time, whatever the degree of peace that can be bestowed on a community, evil does not cease to exist. The diabolos remains the divider, the destroyer of peace. For 2000 years the Church has been praying for peace in the whole world. But war, conflicts and murders go on. Shall we give up, resign ourselves to failure?

The Day of the Lord will come. We continue to pray for peace. The patience of Job – figuring Jesus Christ – is at the very centre of our Christian life. But we must be careful with the word patience: it can be misleading, because all too often we connect it with passivity. The etymology of the Greek word comes from a verb meaning "to persevere", "to resist". The whole life of Jesus Christ was made of an active, resistant, persevering patience. Praying for peace means constantly endeavouring to place our own will on the same wavelength as God's will; at the same time, it is a fervent supplication for God's kingdom to come. It is the path to reach inner peace. There would be no need for such a prayer, if the Kingdom of God had already come. The Kingdom of God has started with the Incarnation; it has started inside us with our baptism. But it is not yet fulfilled. Our prayer for peace is the means for the world to reach the Kingdom. Although it is not yet fulfilled, we must not lose heart. We must go on calling out to the Holy Spirit until the Day of the Lord. Let us fervently persist for peace with prayer and patience, let us not lose heart and keep our trust. "The Lord is near." (Matt. 24,33).

*Extract of Cyrille Argenti, N'aie pas peur,
Le Sel de la terre/Cerf, 2002.*

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land from

April 3rd to 13th, 2016



Rens : Fr. Yannick Provost
18 allée Roland Dorgelès
29000 QUIMPER
+33 (0)2 98 90 53 98
+33 (0)6 08 54 72 96
yannick.provost@gmail.com

In Spring 2016, the Exarchate organizes a new pilgrimage to Holy Land from April 3rd to 13th. Participants will visit the main Holy Places where the mystery of our salvation took place, and will participate in many liturgical celebrations in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. In Nazareth they will participate in the celebration of Annunciation.

MOTHER MARY (SKOBTSOV)

an artist, a poet, a theologian, a monk,
a member of the resistance, a Righteous Among the Nations.



◆ Saint Mary of Paris : an artist at the very heart of a "burning world". Icons exhibition, conferences, accounts, performance. ACER-MJO invites you to a two-days event devoted to saint Mary of Paris, **on March 19th and 20th**, in the parish of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, 91 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris, France. More details : www.acer-mjo.org, +33 1 42 50 53 66

◆ "Mary Skobtsov, known as mother Mary, a Russian monk, a member of the resistance imprisoned and gassed in Ravensbrück in March 1945, a Righteous Among the Nations". Conference on Thursday, **March 23rd**, 2016 at 6.00 PM in the Paris Town Hall.

◆ Inauguration of the Mère Marie Skobtsov street in the 15th district of Paris **on Thursday, March 31st at 11.15 AM** (anniversary day of her death in Ravensbrück on March 31st, 1945, and 125th anniversary of her birth).