

THE NARTHEX

May-June 2016

'And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch' (Acts 11:26)

The Orthodox Church of St Dunstan of Canterbury, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 9JG

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland. Archbishop: Metropolitan Silouan
The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East. Patriarch: His Beatitude, John X

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Harmony

Here in the time of the bright and joyful Paschal feast, every Christian soul must experience something of renewal - a foretaste of that final entry into the kingdom of heaven. That for which we strive now in this life, will be revealed fully in us when we shall have acquired the mind of Christ; when, free from passions, we shall dwell in eternal harmony.

If that be our hope, there is every reason for doing all we can, even now, to manifest something of that same harmony here on earth and especially in the Church of the living God.

In April we had the great joy and privilege of welcoming to our parish our Archbishop, Metropolitan Silouan. To have him among us, especially for the Vespers and Liturgy was of particular importance after so long in waiting, for it revealed the true order of the Church in her ministries and hierarchies, serving God to reveal that sacred order of heaven that is beyond human sight or mind.

Many of you will have been able to meet and talk with *Sayedna* (Master, as we address him in Arabic); over simple, Lenten food, blessed and shared, we got to know something of our pastor, of whom I am merely his steward, a representative in his absence - which is why, when he is present, you should not ask my blessing. Not least, it was with immense satisfaction that I saw my friend of over thirty years, David, elevated to the rank of Subdeacon. David, who is my senior in Orthodoxy (for he was an Orthodox Christian before me) is now the head-attendant of the altar and although venerable in years, becomes once again like the child Samuel, serving the priest Eli and occupying himself with the holy things in order to serve the people of God.

Clearly, Fr Dc Filip and I took

full advantage of the opportunity to talk with Sayedna on how we should exercise our ministry and, more particularly, how we might conform as fully as possible with the tradition as received in the Church of Antioch.

Here it is important to bear in mind that for over twenty years our original deanery and now diocese, was ostensibly without direct guidance. In the early days, many of us were very grateful to the help and direction given to us by clergy of other jurisdictions. Furthermore, our congregations themselves, coming from various Orthodox backgrounds, brought their native traditions with them. Naturally, this has made for an interesting mix but, of course, also a certain confusion at times.

It might be thought or even hoped that, eventually, a British form of Orthodoxy might emerge from the melting-pot. Well, that might well happen given a century or two; who knows? But meanwhile, I for one am glad that at last we have a pastor who is getting to know us and has come with much wisdom and quiet authority from the homeland of our mother church. Among the churches of God, the Church of Antioch holds a revered place, mentioned in the Holy Scriptures and founded by SS Peter and Paul. Thus it is fitting that, as far as lies in our power, we should be in harmony with our bishop. That is in no way to denigrate or dismiss the many other Orthodox traditions and practices, for the Orthodox Church is a union of local (*not* national) churches. And as far as we are able, we have striven to accommodate and serve all.

Bearing this all in mind, yet glad at last to have direct contact with the ways of the Antiochian tradition, Fr Filip and I tirelessly drew from Sayedna his instructions and advice on how things *ought* to be done among us

now. This has entailed a number of ritual changes and some reorganisation within the altar, most of which will seem minor to those within the nave. For example, I was in the habit of leaving the lance, spoon and kalima (red napkin) always on the holy table, which is what I have always seen in other churches. In fact, they should be on the prothesis table (where the bread and wine are prepared and the holy vessels kept) when not in use. Outside of the service times, all that should be on the holy table are the Antimension cloth (signed by the bishop, upon which the holy oblation is offered) the gospels, the blessing cross and a service book (Liturgikon), covered with a fine cloth. Similarly, there should really only be two oil lamps at the back of the holy table with the bishop's Trikerion and Dikerion either side of the Artiphorion (that holds the reserved Holy Gifts). The seven-branched lamp is now behind the holy table, before the cross. The holy Chrism and anointing brush used at Chrismation, are now kept in the wall-safe in the ambulatory at the east end and not on the holy table.

Are such things important? Some might rebel but one must therefore consider the alternative: liturgical confusion as St Paul says:

'Let all things be done decently and in order' [I Cor.14:40]

Furthermore, just as in the Old Testament there were commandments by which the old people of Israel were to show their love of the Lord, so we, the New Israel, who strive for eternal life, we too must learn in humility and obedience to show our love in harmony with our bishop.

Between the 23rd and 25th May, together with others from our parish, I shall be at the Archdiocesan Conference at Swanick in Derbyshire. As part of the conference I have to deliver a lecture on the life of St Ignatius the God-bearer of Antioch. This has, naturally, sent me back to re-read the seven epistles that St Ignatius wrote to the churches along his route to Rome where he suffered martyrdom in 107AD. One of the essential messages presented in all these letters is that anyone who professes faith in Jesus Christ must live in harmony with the bishop as Christ's representative; that in all matters: theological, pastoral, liturgical, moral, the flock must follow the pastor. For example, writing to the church at Philadelphia, he says:

'As children of the light of truth, therefore, see that you hold aloof from all disunion and misguided teaching; and where your bishop is, there follow him like sheep.'

St Ignatius is among the great saints of the patriarchate of Antioch; alongside, St John Chrysostom, Theodore of Tarsus (Archbishop of Canterbury) St Simeon Stylites, St John of Damascus, St Barbara, St Palagia the Penitent. St Romanos the Melode, St Ephraim the Syrian and St Theodora of Tyre - too many to mention, we have a patrimony of faith and witness worthy of our emulation. If I may borrow an analogy from Metropolitan Kallistos, the faith proclaimed by the one apostolic, Orthodox Church of Jesus Christ is like a wheel with many spokes, each one a local Orthodox tradition. If it is a good tradition it will carry us to the centre of the wheel where Christ is. And as we travel closer along the spoke to the centre, not only do we get closer to Christ but we also, like the spokes, find ourselves closer to one another. Christ is the guarantor of our unity and the bishop is in the seat of Christ on earth.

If you travel about this country and attend the churches of the various Orthodox jurisdictions, you will come across a rich variety of custom and practice. As St Ambrose told Blessed Augustine of Hippo: *'when in Rome, do as the Romans.'* So here in Poole we do as they do Antioch.

Fr Chrysostom

Deacon Filip Lommaert

Filip was born 10/10/1961 in Menin, Belgium, and baptised in the Roman Catholic Church. After his baccalaureate at the Royal Atheneum in Menin he joined the Belgian Armed Forces, training as a Medic, specialised in Hyperbaric Medicine. He achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant in the Cavalry, and Chief Petty Officer in the Navy, the two arms to which he was detached during the 8 years he spent in the Army.

Having met and married his wife, Annemieke, in Great Britain in 1986, he left the Army and moved to the UK, working as Hyperbaric Technician, diver and H&S consultant on compressed air tunnelling projects, as well as accompanying his wife to Cyprus from 1991 to 1993, where she was on a temporary assignment. In Cyprus he became interested in the Orthodox Church, and on their return to the UK he became a member of the Greek Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour in Welling, London, and was baptised in the Orthodox Church on 12/10/1997.

As compressed air tunnelling became unpopular in the mid-nineties, he worked for various insurance companies and public opinion polling companies. In 2002 he and his wife moved to Dorset, which they had visited many times, and in 2003 Filip started working for Dorset Police as police staff in the Custody Suite in Weymouth. His wife established herself as a freelance translator. Upon finding the Orthodox Parish of St Edward in Athelhampton, he became a parishioner there, and in 2008 was ordained Reader there.



In May 2012 he was ordained Sub-Deacon by Metropolitan (now His Beatitude) John X during the Antiochian Conference in Swanwick, Derbyshire. At the end of 2014 he resigned from Dorset Police to also work as a freelance translator, in order to be able to devote more time to the Church. He was ordained a Deacon in May 2015 by Metropolitan Ignatius of Western Europe in St Botolph's, London. In October 2015, the newly enthroned Metropolitan Silouan moved him from St Edward's to St Dunstan's, Parkstone.

SERVICES

Vespers is normally served on Saturday's at 5.00pm in the Saints of Britain chapel. Fr. Chrysostom is available for Confession afterwards.

MAY

Sun 8th 2nd Sunday of Pascha Thomas Sunday St John Apostle & Evangelist Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 15th 3rd Sunday of Pascha The Holy Myrrh-bearing Women Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 22nd 4th Sunday of Pascha The Paralyse Man Divine Liturgy 10.30am

23rd - 25th Archdiocesan Conference

Sun 29th 5th Sunday of Pascha The Samaritan Woman Divine Liturgy 10.30am

JUNE

Sun 5th 6th Sunday of Pascha The Blind Man Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Wed 8th Vespertal Liturgy 7.00pm
Eve of The Ascension of Our Lord



Sun 12th 7th Sunday of Pascha Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council Divine Liturgy 10.30am

Sun 19th 8th Sunday of Pascha Holy Pentecost Divine Liturgy 10.30am



Sun 26th 1st after Pentecost Sunday of All Saints Divine Liturgy 10.30am