



A NEWSWORTHY MEETING AT LA SERVAGÈRE



EVERY YEAR IN JULY ACER-MJO (ACTION CHRÉTIENNE DES ÉTUDIANTS RUSSES – MOUVEMENT DE JEUNESSE ORTHODOXE) ORGANISES A CAMP FOR CHILDREN IN THE VERCORS MOUNTAINS (FRANCE). IT HAS BEEN GOING ON SINCE 1927.

200 YOUNG ORTHODOX GATHER DURING A MONTH, ARRIVING FROM ALL OVER FRANCE, BUT ALSO FROM THE UNITED STATES, GREECE, INDIA, CHINA, THE NETHERLANDS, GEORGIA, GERMANY... SOME 30 GROUP LEADERS BETWEEN 18 AND 25 YEARS OLD TAKE CARE OF THEM. ABOUT 30 GROWN-UPS GIVE A HELPING HAND BY TAKING CHARGE OF THE EVERYDAY WORK: COOKING, DISHWASHING, LOGISTICS, LAUNDRY, WORKS... TWO PRIESTS ARE ALSO PERMANENTLY PRESENT, LEADING

EVERYDAY PRAYERS AS WELL AS THE VIGILS AND THE LITURGY DURING THE WEEKEND.

ON JULY 16TH AND 17TH, 2016, ARCHBISHOP JOHN OF CHARIOUPOLIS, PATRIARCHAL EXARCH OF ORTHODOX PARISHES OF RUSSIAN TRADITION IN WESTERN EUROPE, CONSECRATED THE NEW CHURCH IN LA SERVAGÈRE, ON WHICH WORK WAS COMPLETED A FEW DAYS BEFORE. THE CHURCH IS DEDICATED TO SAINT WLADIMIR OF KIEV AND SAINT MARY OF PARIS.

TWO YOUNG GROUP LEADERS, ELIE ASLANOFF (22) AND MARINA VON ROSENSCHILD (21), INTERVIEWED ARCHBISHOP JOHN DURING HIS VISIT. THE FRIENDLY AND GOOD-NATURED TALK WAS FILMED BY BARBARA CHVABO (20) AND IS WORTH SHARING.

EA & MVR : *Your Eminence, in the name of ACER-MJO, of the camp and of all the children we want to thank you again for coming and being with us at the consecration of our church.*

Archbishop John: It was a great joy.

EA & MVR : *As well as for us. We should like to ask you some questions, and pass on to those who are absent, and to the future generations, the message you wish to deliver. Our first question is concerning the signification of the consecration of our camp's church. The camp has been existing here for quite a few years. We have always celebrated on the same altar. So, what is the sense of the church's consecration? What is the gain?*

Archbishop John: The church is growing up. Not in size, but in sacredness. The consecration is also the confirmation that a certain work has been achieved, and that another one, more spiritually-oriented, can start. For example, the blessing confirms that the iconographic work is completed. However,

what is paramount is the consecration of the antimins. You know, this piece of cloth on which we poured rose water and Holy Chrism, inside which we put some relics and which we laid on the altar? Henceforth, the Liturgy will always be celebrated on it. By this the whole place is blessed. You prayed in your church before it was consecrated, and you will go on praying here. But thanks to the blessing, your prayer itself will be blessed. Indeed, your church has now become the legitimate place to share all liturgical celebrations, all sacraments: confessions, marriage, etc. All the highlights of a Christian life.

EA & MVR : *Does it mean that, because the camp has now a consecrated church, its own status will change?*

Archbishop John: Yes, it will. You now have a consecrated church, a church blessed for the sake of you all. Your camp is now under the protection of the church, and of Saint

Wladimir of Kiev and Saint Mary of Paris. You will invoke them in your prayers.

EA & MVR : *We have spoken of our church in La Servagère, a tiny church with a small "c". Now we have a question concerning the Church with a "capital C". Is it necessary to reconsider the role of the Church in a society where she has ceased to be prominent in the process of socialisation? In a world where the political community does not build itself within the Church, should we reconsider the role of the Church that is no more the centre of life, of socialisation?*

Archbishop John: Indeed, nowadays our society's socialisation depends much less on the Church than in the past. When studying history, you will see that during certain periods the Church was at the very heart of life, and that she shared the everyday life of many persons and communities. The Church was recognized as part of the social life. However today – it started with the French revolution – the Church is marginalized, and it has become difficult to hear



her message and to spread it. But I am convinced that, while marginalised, Christians have a strong witness to bring: the witness of a disciple of Jesus Christ, who endeavours to live up to the spiritual experience of a Christian life. Indeed, the Church is not only a church, a sanctuary; together we are the Church. Our Christian community is the Church; our communion is the Church. By our life in the Church, by our awareness of our Christian faith, by the responsibility we feel towards the world, we shall witness: we shall confirm that Jesus Christ is still alive amid our communities. Christ is still alive in our ecclesia. Ecclesia means “the assembly of those who gather”; Jesus Christ is alive, and we recognize his life and live by it, by this exchange of life, because we are faithful to the faith in Christ who died and resurrected for us. We are faithful to this good news that is taught to us by the Gospel and by the word of Christ, and faithfully we pass on the Tradition in our lives, as our parents and our ancestors did who taught us to live our faith. They entrusted the faith to each of us. We must experience it. We must experience that our life is transformed by the word of Christ. To live does not mean just eating, working, breeding and dying. Our life has a meaning, an in-depth discovery of who we are as humans, in our relationship with Christ, in our relationship with God, in our relationship with the Spirit. This will create a new relationship with the men and women with whom we live, with our brothers. This is what the life of the Church is nowadays. It means becoming a witness. We might consider the Church from the sociological point of view, but it is not enough. We must consider the Church as a place to witness our faith, a place where we commit our faith and where humanity is redeemed

EA & MVR: *Thank you very much. We also have a question regarding the role of an archbishop in the Church. Perhaps precisely in connection with this witness: how do you consider the authority you exercise, although in the Gospel (Matt. 23, 9:10) it is written: “Do not call anyone on earth your father or your Leader”. So what place do you give to authority; to the archbishop?*

Archbishop John: In my opinion, authority in the Church does not have the same meaning and is not experienced in the same way as in the army for example. In the Church, it is more a service, a diakonia. I believe that the Archbishop has a duty of diakonia to fulfil, a duty of listening, a duty of sharing. But a duty to speak, to teach as well. A duty to proclaim the Gospel. Also, to call for the involvement of young

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Ordinary General Assembly

During his meeting on October 10, 2016, the Archdiocesan Council finalized the preparation of the Ordinary General Assembly to be held this year in Paris.

The Ordinary General Assembly (OGA) of our Archdiocese will take place on November 11th and 12th, 2016 in Paris. Earlier this year an Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) was convened, because per our statutes it has exclusive authority to pre-elect the Archbishop. The EGA pre-elected Fr. Jean (Renneteau). Bishop Jean was then elected by the Holy Synod, thus becoming the Archbishop of our diocese.

As any General Assembly, the upcoming OGA is essential. Its purpose is to ask for the Church’s approval on all the aspects of the community life of our Archdiocese. The Church is represented by the clergy (all the clerics are summoned to the OGA) and by the delegates of the parish communities (there are as many delegates as there are titular clerics in a parish). Among the discussed topics, financial decisions hold a significant place (approval of the accounts and of the budget), as well as the activity reports of the Institute Saint-Serge and of the diocesan administration.

A major agenda item will be to discuss the “statement of identity of the Archdiocese”. It was discussed and amended during the pastoral Assembly in November 2012, and should have been discussed during the 2013 OGA, if held as planned. However given several circumstances (the illness and the death of Archbishop Gabriel, the election of Archbishop Job), it proved impossible. The statement describes what the Archdiocese is, or at least what it meant to be, and its position in Western Europe before the various challenges confronting it.

Finally, Archbishop Jean has always voiced his wish “not to be alone”: upon his request the Ecumenical Patriarchate has allowed the OGA to pre-elect one or several auxiliary bishops to the Archbishop, who will relieve him, at least partially, from his heavy tasks.

The agenda also includes another important item: the election of incumbent and deputy members of the Archdiocesan Council. The Council is composed of 12 members – six members of the clergy and six lay persons. The Council is renewable by half. Therefore, the delegates will have to find three members of the clergy and three lay persons to replace the outgoing clerics – fr. André Drobot, fr. Eugène Czapiuk and Archimandrite Syméon, and lay persons – Serge Runge, Nikita Struve (deceased and replaced by Elisabeth von Schlippe) and Michel Sollogoub. As specified in the Statutes (and in the originating Patriarchal Tomos), the Council is the permanent executive body attached to the Archbishop to assist him “in all aspects of the ecclesial life he is responsible of”.

people in the life of the Church, because today our biggest issue is “recruitment”. We need new vocations for our ecclesial life, for our life in Church to continue: people to carry on our involvement, as singers, as readers, also as deacons, or even as priests. The bishop is the shepherd who leads the flock. He makes sure that all is in order, that the Church suffers from no disorder. All that has been transmitted to us by the Tradition, by the Fathers of the Church, must go on and be fulfilled. The Church is to be governed orderly. But above all the bishop is a pastor. He is not an authority whose duty is to punish. Not at all. The bishop is here to fulfil a pastoral service. The bishop fulfils a pastoral service. The role of the bishop is to be at everybody’s service.

EA & MVR: But surely, from time to time, you must take difficult decisions! How do you know what is best done to guide us?

Archbishop John: Look, here is how I function. I never take any decision alone, in abstracto, but in the first hand I shall ask for the diocesan council’s advice. When a decision is particularly difficult, I may also discuss with several priests. Having listened to the opinions of many people, I then decide in good conscience. I do not decide alone. Together with all my collaborators I endeavour to discern what is best for the life of the Church. This is what matters.

EA & MVR: Is this an institutional implementation of the bishop’s service role?

Archbishop John: Yes, it is. In the Orthodox Church our life is based on a Eucharistic vision. From the very beginning of the Church there has always been someone to preside over the Eucharist. If you need a vision of the Church, here it is. This is how our diocese, our Exarchate is organised. The bishop presides over the Eucharist in the cathedral and sends priests into parishes to preside over the Eucharist. On the other hand, when a decision must be taken, the bishop presides over a Council that will help him decide. This is how it should always be. There is always somebody who presides over the Eucharist and over the life of the community. A priest in his parish presides over the life of the community, and is seconded by a parish council which helps him take decisions. In the case of particularly difficult decisions he must turn to his bishop. The bishop, either together

with the priest and the parish council, or together with the diocesan council, looks at the question and suggests a decision. This is how I work. Together with others. Sharing with others the decisions I take.

EA & MVR: The philosopher Feuerbach used to say that Christianity’s characteristic is to shed the abstract moral law in favour of the power of the feeling which is the strength of the model. Hence the replacement of the law of life with the Jewish moral law. Christ is the living law. The moral law does not produce any model, only commandments. Christianity exists through models. Are saints these models, and is this the specific role of saints in the Christian Church?

Archbishop John: Yes, I believe that a saint is a model. A saint’s life shows a charisma, the grace of living in accordance with the Spirit of the Christ and the Gospel. This is how we identify holiness in people. Because we see that a person has lived in accordance with the Spirit of the Gospel and the Spirit of Christ, and that he/she implemented them in his/her life.

Your church has been consecrated to two saints. One of them is Mother Mary. We have seen the beautiful play you staged (the day before a group of 18-19 years old students showed a play on Mother Mary’s life). We see that saint Mary has accomplished the Spirit of Christ in her life. The Spirit who does not despise but who welcomes the others. The saint greets the others. Remember Saint Seraphim of Sarov. When he met someone, he used to say: “O my joy!” Joy in meeting another being and another face. When I look at your faces, I also see Jesus Christ in them, because we all have been made in the image and likeness of God. The saint greets all faces. Also, he dedicates himself to the service of the poor, of those who are in sorrow, who are lost in their life. The drop-outs, so to speak. We all are sort of lost, and a saint knows how to turn us again towards what is essential. But what does that mean, essential? It means becoming aware that we have a life a communion with Christ, and recovering it. Having understood this, we proceed to canonize some persons. Because of what we see in them. But it does not mean that the assembly is not saint. During the Divine Liturgy, when we elevate the Lamb before the communion, we say: “The holy Gifts for the holy people of God”. It means that

this holy bread will be given to holy persons. There exists an overall holiness of the Church. We must never forget it. We all are within this holiness, during the Liturgy we are called holy. We must keep this in mind. We must see the holiness of our life. What does it mean? It means that we give up some or a lot of our selfishness, that we stand in front of God, that we listen to the word of God, and that we endeavour to implement the Gospel. Not only in theory, but also in our real everyday life. You see? In the humbleness of everyday life. This is holiness. You know, many saints are not known as saints. But there are also many people who have lived their holiness in simplicity, purity, listening to others, sharing, being merciful, compassionate to those who suffer, etc. Many people have lived in holiness.

EA & MVR: Again, as faithful what should be our relationship with saints? Should we admire them? Should we try to imitate them? Is it not a little dangerous? Is it possible to admire too much? What sort of relationship should we develop?

Archbishop John: I think that our relationship with saints should be very simple. First, it should be veneration. Then, we could listen to their message to us. The idea is not to mimic them or to do the same things as them. I think that all saints are different. The call of the Lord to each of us is different. We cannot copy the way others are called. Each of us is called to the Christian life differently. We look at a saint as at a model, and we think: “here it is.” For example, Mother Mary took on her to love the poor, the sick, and why should I not be able to do the same, as much as I can of course, according to my capacities. Not to do something extraordinary, only simple things, as much as we can. Saints did not mean to do extraordinary things, but using their own abilities they did what crossed their way, and experienced the spirit of the Gospel. Above all, they did it in the spirit of the Gospel.

EA & MVR: Is it the nature of an incarnate religion to have such living examples: indeed, we know these saints?

Archbishop John: Yes, it is. The Christian experience is of the incarnation. We say that God became flesh. That He was made flesh and lived among us. These are the



words we hear, aren't they? He lived among us, he lived the life of the people of his time; we know, thanks to historical researches, that by then the life of the people was really terrible. Now we have laws, social welfare, lots of things. But then there was total arbitrariness. There were rich people and poor people. Poor worked hard and rich enjoyed themselves.

EA & MVR: *But there was the law on bread, and others...*

Archbishop John: Well, yes, there were some limited laws of that sort. But if you look at those who followed Jesus, they were poor, they were hungry, they tried to improve their life a little, and they thought: "Well, here is a

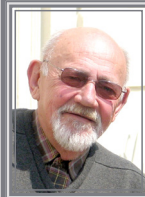
prophet, we shall follow him, perhaps he will shed a new light on our life and will help us change our so difficult life." Indeed, this was the beginning of Christianity. And we must be honest and say, even if nowadays the society denies it, that Christianity and the Christian faith have brought about personal respect. In many civilisations, there is no respect to the person. Christianity has produced respect for life conditions. It led to respect of working conditions, and so forth. Reading the Constitution of human rights, we note in it many things that obviously derive from the Spirit, the very Spirit of the Gospel. I think that we should be aware of this, and bring such joy, peace, compassion and love in this world. This is what saints have done in their own time. When you read the life of the saints, often you do not find anything extraordinary, but they were present in the "today" that God asked them to live in. They expressed their presence by love, compassion, service. All for free. This is the grace. It is to give freely to the other, it is what the saints showed us.

EA & MVR: *In conclusion, as we are in a youth camp, a word to the young.*

Archbishop John: I am very happy to be here in your camp. Very happy to have prayed with you. I loved the morning prayer, the evening prayer, the Liturgy, all those moments together, moments of joy and celebration. I saw the dances today, it was splendid. I think that the camp is, for you all and each of you, a time of break in your life. It is an opportunity to recharge your batteries, to find again the taste of what is important, the taste to listen to the word of God, the taste to pray a simple prayer. To pray is not something complicated, it is as simple as the taste of nature, to pray in this nature; the taste for the praise of God, for being at each other's service, for the deepness of friendship, the service and the respect to one another.

I think that all this is the reason why to live for a fortnight or a month here is so salutary. You recharge your batteries, regain confidence in yourselves, fill up with inner energy and physical energy. Because you rest (laughs), because you pile up knowledges of all that is given to you, of the sharing of life before Christ. This the reason why the Church is here. Your chapel is here. Under the eyes of Christ, you live in joy, simplicity, mutual love. Yes, I always come back to the old basics. Do you know what we are told of the first Christian communities? How did one recognize the first Christian communities? Did they wear special clothes? Not at all, not at all. But they loved each other. It means that they knew how to listen, to serve, to share. That's it. I believe that this is what is important: to be able to listen, to serve, to share, also to say thank you. To have deep in heart the capacity for thanksgiving. You know, saint Paul said: « *in everything give thanks to God* ». Well, I thank God for my coming here and having spent two and half days in your camp.

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IN MEMORIAM Lecteur Vsevolod Gousseff

Paroissien de la paroisse Ste Trinité (crypte de la cathédrale) à Paris le serviteur de Dieu lecteur Vsevolod s'est endormi dans le Seigneur le 18 septembre 2016. Les funérailles, présidées par Mgr Jean, ont été célébrées le 26 septembre en la crypte. Que ce soit par son engagement au sein de sa paroisse ou du diocèse Vsevolod se mettait toujours au service de la crypte discrètement mais réelle. Il était également ancien trésorier de la Fraternité orthodoxe en Europe occidentale, actif dans l'association «catéchèse orthodoxe», sa générosité il la mettait au service de l'église...

Que le Seigneur l'accueille dans son Royaume.
Mémoire éternelle ! Christ est ressuscité !



IN MEMORIAM Père Bengt Hagström

Malade le père Bengt est né au ciel le 22 septembre 2016 ses funérailles ont été célébrées le 30 septembre par le p. Angel Velitchkov, doyen de la Scandinavie et recteur de la paroisse de Stockholm, 5 prêtres concélébrants et de nombreux fidèles.

P. Bengt Hagström, prêtre de la communauté Saint Tikhon à Göteborg en Suède, baptisé dans la tradition luthérienne, médecin en Laponie puis à Göteborg entre dans l'église orthodoxe en 1980. Mgr Gabriel l'ordonne diacre en 2005 puis prêtre en 2008.

Que le Seigneur l'accueille dans son Royaume.
Mémoire éternelle ! Christ est ressuscité !

EA & MVR: *A very last question. There is a rapper singer whose name is Booba.*

Archbishop John: Booba?

EA & MVR: *Yes, Booba.*

Archbishop John: What a very nice name, Booba!

EA & MVR: *He said: "I am afraid of God, I am afraid of the devil. Not afraid of men". And you?*

Archbishop John: I am not afraid of God. I think that God is so great that He can erase all our fears. Of the devil? I think that we must not be afraid of the devil, if we are tied to God and we have an inner life. The devil will always be there, the tempter, Satan. The very devil who is in the Bible and who, in the beginning of the book of Job, tickles us and says to us: *"Do you really love God?"* This is what is said in the book of Job. *"Do you really love God? If yes, you will endure trials to see whether you love God."* Indeed, we may be faced in our lives with very difficult ordeals. But we must keep our grace, our love for God.

Fear of men? No, I do not think so. Christians do not fear men. I do not fear men. But I am afraid of men with no conscience. You

saw what happened in Nice a few days ago (*the assault perpetrated on July 14th, a few days before, in Nice*). One can be afraid of men who suddenly lose their humanity and throw themselves into evil. They commit evil. The devil is present and we must know him. Killing one's neighbour is unacceptable. Gratuitously, just to commit evil. What for? For some crazy idea that evil has instilled into them. Well, this is the representation of evil! Here we find ourselves very, very close to the mystery of evil in man's heart!

Saint Maximus the Confessor said: *"Inside you there are two strivings. One drives you to God, the other pulls you back to yourself, to your egotism, to evil. The inner struggle will consist in always retaining the driving toward the good, toward the beautiful, toward the mystery of God."*

EA & MVR: Thank you very much.

Archbishop John: *You are welcome. It was a real joy.*

EA & MVR: *Now, we are going to watch the football match (a traditional match opposing the group leaders and the children, every Sunday after the Liturgy).*

Archbishop John: Yes. Let us go and watch the football match...



ORDERS IN THE CHURCH

Fr. Nicholas Afanassieff has described the special ministries in his book "The Church of the Holy Spirit", chapter 4: "Life in the Church, to which every one of the faithful is called, is unceasing ministry through the Church to God and to the Church." He then recalls the words of Christ: "Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10.44–45).

Finally, Nicholas Afanassieff reminds us that: "Through the communication of the gift of the Spirit everyone in the Church is ordained for the ministry of kings and priests. But the same Spirit, by whom all were baptized, distributes particular gifts to each person for the ministry in the Church as he wills. All the members of the body of Christ, participating in the common ministry of the Church, fulfil in the Church their particular functions."

There are 5 orders in the Church: two minor orders and three major ones. The ordination to the subdiaconate and to the readership (minor orders) is performed outside of the Liturgy; several candidates

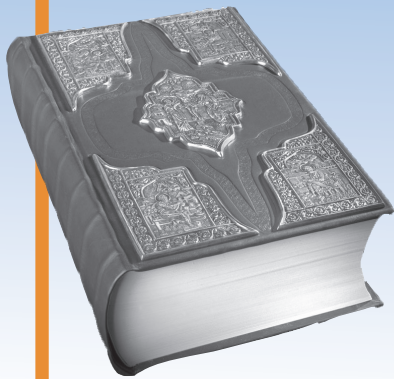
may be ordained at the same time. The ordination of deacons, priests and bishops (major orders) takes place during the Holy Liturgy, one candidate at a time, thus proclaiming the unique character of Christ's calling. These may seem trifles, but they reveal the consistency between faith and liturgical action (*lex orandi, lex credendi*).

Readership is conferred to cantors and readers. A prayer inducts the reader as the Torchbearer preceding the Holy Mysteries. At the end of the celebration, the bishop reminds the candidate that readership is the first stage to priesthood, and instructs him to read Scriptures daily for the enlightenment of that those who see and hear him.

A subdeacon has no specific role outside the Hierarchical Liturgies. His calling is to "love the beauty of the house, standing before the doors of the holy temple, and lighting the lamps of the dwelling place of the glory". A subdeacon is also of great help to take charge of the cloths of the Holy Table, care for the beauty of the house, and look after the Table of Oblation.

(To be continued)

Father. Serge Sollogoub



READERSHIP

Archbishop Gabriel tonsured me a reader almost 8 years ago before the Theophany Liturgy in the “Crypt” parish of rue Daru (Paris). Although the celebration was very short, the “ordination” – as it is how it should be called – has remained in my memory for several reasons.

First, the liturgical rituals (the donning of a special garment – the “short phelonion” – and the tonsure itself) carry a special significance still meaningful nowadays. They etch in our body the prayer of the bishop: “preserving him in blamelessness of life”. The tonsure is an offering; it introduces a reciprocal relationship with God who has bestowed his blessing. It reminds the reader that he must proclaim the text with his best voice, intonation, intelligence, while stepping aside to let the words addressed to God (Psalms for example) or inspired by God (any biblical text) be filled with the Holy Spirit. To incarnate the divine message with our character but not to impede it: to find the right equilibrium is a very difficult task, the task of any Christian life, actually. The fact that we use psalmody to read the texts, facing the altar, can protect us against overdramatization (although such a risk persists elsewhere).

The second memorable moment of my ordination was when Archbishop Gabriel addressed himself to me at the end of the celebration, with the talent he possessed. “Immerse yourself in the Word every day at home”, he said to me, reminding me the very words of the ceremony. Far from being a moral obligation, it exhorts and invites us to understand that we cannot proclaim the Word to others, if we did not first make it our own. We must endlessly strive to maintain the connection between the Sunday celebration and the rest of the week, so that the Word will rise naturally to your lips, as a prayer, a part of ourselves, a breathing. Psalms are particularly adapted for a sort of eating, of relentless reading that will come not only from the eyes but from the very bottom of our being, “Let the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight” (Ps. 18).

Finally, for a reader to be ordained in front of the community is essential. The tonsure did not occur (although I initially thought it enough for me) on an inconspicuous Saturday evening. It took place on a Feast day, at the beginning of the Liturgy, in front of the whole parish. A reader is, above all, in service of the others, at the disposal of a parish that

I became a reader during the last summer camp of ACER-MJO. My decision had been in my thoughts for a long time. I was looking for a way to thank God for protecting my family. Thinking of it brought me closer to God. Reading the Scriptures daily is a time of prayer, which is often considered as an obligation; but for me it is way to increase my faith.

Besides, our Church is in great need today of people wanting or being able to be committed in her, especially young ones. It is our responsibility to take over the service of the Church from the present generation. We, the young, are the future of this Church who is becoming more and more fragile in our modern world; I do hope that my own pledge will incite others to do likewise, for the sake of the Church.

*Dimitri Sollogoub,
18 years old, first year student,
IT Technology University*

needs him. Texts are read in the name and for the sake of a community. Thus, the ordination attached me even closer to those with whom I progress and who support me in the same faith.

I should like now to raise two questions concerning the role and the place of a reader within a community.

The first question is concerning the naturally established connection between readership and priesthood. The prayer said by the bishop underlines the fact that the ordination of a reader is only temporary, that it “prepares for a higher degree”. Without excluding the special callings each of us might have, it is not unreasonable to envisage readership as an independent ministry with no direct connection to priesthood, instead of an honorary degree preparing to priesthood. To read in the middle of the church is a particular charisma, as well as conducting a choir, accompanying the bishop, bearing the prayer intentions or even presiding over the consecration of the offerings. By extension we could ask ourselves whether other parish functions (churchwarden, catechist, florist, etc.) will not be better off if sealed by a more solemn blessing – not just for the sake of it, but to receive a genuine, renewed in the Spirit inspiration. The idea is not to set up new institutions (with the risk of losing any spontaneity and of scaring people out by implying that all parish services have no time limit which everybody is not able to

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cope with), but on the contrary to break down the barriers around ministries, so that all faithful may find in the parish their calling(s) and fulfil them under the seal of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, we might take the risk of asking whether readership could not be open to women. In practice women are often requested to read the Hours, the Hexapsalm, Old Testament texts (especially when there are 15 or 13 of them on certain Feast days...), or even the Epistle. If readership were disconnected from an eventual priesthood (inasmuch it is not the place here to discuss women's priesthood...), it would be appropriate for women reading regularly in their parish to receive a blessing that would settle and proclaim the gift bestowed on them – provided of course we look at the sayings of Saint Paul concerning the women keeping silence in the assembly (1Cor. 14,34) and compare them with the joy he expresses that in Christ there is “neither male nor female” (Gal. 3, 28).

My second question concerns the level of understanding of the readings by the youngest ones. We know that saint Paul's texts are difficult to understand even for grown-ups, so of course nobody will blame children for not being very attentive during the reading of the Epistle. It is also true that the Psalms and the Old Testament are usually read outside the Liturgy. So, children have few occasions to hear the voice of the reader on Sundays. Nevertheless, the way we read in church (and this

concerns the reading of the Gospel as well) is difficult to understand for those who are not familiar with it, and can well be perceived as a monotonous stream of pious words.

Earlier I praised psalmody for its neutral character. However now I'd like to underline one of its drawbacks. Of course, we can rely on catechists to “translate” (before or after the reading) the text into something easier to understand. But it does not remove the risk of children being excluded from the Liturgy itself. Therefore, I welcome any effort reducing the risk. Several solutions already exist: gathering the children together during readings (mainly of the Gospel), printing the texts so they see them, teaching (by a reader perhaps) older children to read Psalms or prayers (for example before the Communion), in certain cases addressing children during the reading of a specific text...

My only wish, asking these questions, is to deepen and to invigorate the heritage of the Church; the very heritage that the reader is called to make present in the Liturgy of today, to make everybody aware of “Christ in us, the hope of glory” (Col 1, 27). Beyond the necessary “appropriation” of our heritage, however sometimes difficult, above all there is the joy: the joy of the gift received, the joy of working (however imperfectly) to make our gift bear fruit.

Jean-Jacques Labam

ORDINATIONS FOR ARCHBISHOP JOHN

► Deacon **James Burns** was ordained **priest** to serve in the Parish of St Anne (Northampton - G.B.) at 29th May 2016.

► Lector **Igor Tatarintsev**, was ordained **hypodeacon** then **deacon** to serve in the Parish of Protection-de-la-Mère-de-Dieu et Saint-Alexandre-de-Neva (Biarritz - Fr) at 3th july.

► M. **Dimitri Sollogoub** was tonsured **lector** at 17 july 2016 for the parish Saint-Jean-le-Théologien (Meudon - Fr)

► Fater rasophore **Alexis Azoulay** was ordained **deacon** in Church Saint-Silouane of monastery Saint-Silouane (Fr.) at 10th august 2016.

► **Monch Michel** (Aleksandre Evelson) was ordained **lector** then **hypodeacon** for parish of Sainte-Trinité-et-des-Saints-Côme-et-Damien, (Bruxelles - B.) at 11th september 2016.

► M. **Sebastien Kersten** was ordained **hypodeacon** for the parish of Saints -Apôtres Pierre et Paul (Deventer - Netherlands) at 25th september 2016.

► M. **Baudouin Rempt** was ordained **hypodeacon** for the parish of Saints -Apôtres Pierre et

Paul (Deventer - Netherlands) at 25th september 2016.

► Deacon **Rafaël Kommers** was ordained **priest** to serve in the Parish of Saints Apôtres Pierre et Paul, (Deventer - Netherlands) at 25th september 2016.

► Lector **Nikola Trifunovic** was ordained **hypodeacon** and **deacon** to serve in the parish Saint-Serge-de-Radonège (Paris - F) at 8th october.

► M. **Serge Rehbinder** was ordained **lector** for the parish Saint-Serge-de-Radonège in Paris (Fr) at 8th october.

► Lector **Basile Vrancea** was ordained **hypodeacon** and **deacon** for Cathedral Saint-Alexandre-Nevsky (Paris - F) at 14 october.

► Lector **Igor Khodorovitch** was ordained **hypodeacon** and **deacon** for the parish Saint-Jean-le-Théologien (Meudon - Fr) at 16 october.

► M. **Andrei Sirbu** was ordained **lector** then **hypodeacon** for Cathedral Saint-Alexandre-Nevsky (Paris - F) at 16th october 2016.