



Communiqué N° 03-11 of the Diocesan Council

Meeting on June 22nd and 23rd 2011

The Council of the Archdiocese met under the chairmanship of His Eminence Archbishop Gabriel.

Session on June 22nd:

1. Deanery of Great Britain and Ireland

- Archbishop Gabriel presided at the annual conference of the Deanery of Great Britain and Ireland, held from May 27th-30th at St Albans.
- Archbishop Gabriel met with Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira, the Bishop of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's diocese in Great Britain, in London on June 16th. During this meeting, which took place in a brotherly atmosphere, the state of relations between the parishes of the Diocese of Thyateira and those of the Exarchate in Great Britain, and the possibility of deepening collaboration among them, were discussed. Archbishop Gabriel was accompanied by the Dean, Archpriest John Marks and Archpriest Alexander Fostropoulos, a member of the Archdiocesan Council.

2. The Jubilee of the Cathedral of St Alexander Nevsky in Paris

Archbishop Gabriel told the Archdiocesan Council about the progress of preparations in Paris for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Cathedral, the seat of the Archdiocese. This celebration is being organised by the Cathedral parish, with a Jubilee Committee chaired by Archbishop Gabriel as the parish's Rector.

- The committee has planned the organisation of an exhibition on *150 Years of Russian Orthodox Presence in Paris*, which will be held from September 16th in the Town Hall of the 8th district; two concerts of liturgical music given by the choir of the Cathedral, on September 14th in the Church of Saint-Philippe-du-Roule, and on September 18th in the Basilica of Ste-Clotilde; the publication of a book on the Cathedral's artistic heritage and the organising of a seminar on the Cathedral.
- Concerning liturgical celebrations, two significant days are foreseen:
 - on Monday September 12th, the Feast of Saint Alexander Nevsky and the day of the church's dedication 150 years ago, the Divine Liturgy will be celebrated in the Cathedral in the presence of civic and religious representatives, among whom will be members of the Conference of Orthodox Bishops in France. On the Archdiocesan Council's initiative, an invitation will also be sent to the Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew I;
 - on September 18th, the Divine Liturgy will be followed by the traditional procession around the church, followed by a meal organised by the parish in the cathedral gardens.

3. Nice

Those responsible for the Religious Association have published a final document concerning conditions for the use of the Cathedral of St Nicholas the Wonderworker in Nice. This can be consulted on the internet: <http://www.cathedrallerussenice.org/spip/spip.php?article61>

In addition, following the judgement given by the Court of Appeal in Aix-en-Provence on May 19th 2011, the Religious Association ACOR decided to take the case to the final court of appeal.

4. Saint Sergius Hill

The Archdiocesan Council agreed to to a survey to establish the possibility of renovating the old candle workshop on the site of the Saint Sergius Monastery in Paris.

5. The Clergy

- After his elevation to the sub-diaconate, Reader Alexis Miloutine, a former student at the St-Sergius Theological Institute, was ordained deacon by Archbishop Gabriel during the Divine Liturgy of the Ascension, celebrated on June 2nd in the Church of Saint Sergius of Radonezh in Paris. He will carry out his diaconal duty in this church.
- Archpriest Nicolas Rebhinder is confirmed as Rector of the Church of the Presentation of the Most Holy Virgin in the Temple.

6. Pastoral Assembly

A pastoral assembly, bringing together the clergy of the Archdioce, will be held this autumn on November 11th, at the Saint-Sergius Institut in Paris. All the clergy are asked to note this date and to do everything possible to attend.

Session on June 3rd

The second session of the Archdiocesan Council, augmented by the presence of the regional Deans, addressed the question of the future direction of the Archdiocese and its internal organisation.

The meeting had the opportunity to discuss the present situation of the Archdiocese in its different aspects. After an introductory report by Archpriest Jean Gueit, Rector of the parish of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker in Nice and Dean of South-Western France, a broad exchange of opinions resulted in a re-assertion of the importance of constructing a vision of the common future of the Archdiocese on a purely ecclesiological basis. An outline for a statement on this vision of the Archdiocese was discussed and needs to be re-worked to reflect the different sentiments expressed.

In this respect, Archbishop Gabriel recalled the particular vocation of the Archdiocese, formulated by his predecessors of blessed memory, notably Metropolitan Evlogiy and Archbishop George of Evdokias, which consisted in testifying to the one thing necessary: salvation in Christ in the fullness of the Orthodox faith and the liturgical and spiritual life, independant of any cultural or national contingency or political interference, whatever its source.

The meeting also priveded an opportunity to clarify the organisation and function of the deaneries: the role of the deans, the degree of local initiative in relationship to the diocesan bishop and the rectors of the parishes, the geographical limits of the deaneries and the possiblity of organising local deanery meetings. For reasons of geographical proximity, it has been decided to return the parishes of Tours and Poitiers, which had belonged to the Central Deanery, to the Western Deanery

Finally, Archpriest Wladimir Yagello, the Rector of the parish of Notre-Dame-du-Signe in Paris and chairman of the diocesan ecclesiastical Court presented a plan for the regulation of this Court, which was discussed, amended and then adopted.