



Memory Eternal ! – Many Years !



ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL OF COMANA, FORMERLY BISHOP IN CHARGE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PARISHES OF THE RUSSIAN TRADITION IN WESTERN EUROPE AND EXARCH OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE, DIED ON 26 OCTOBER IN MAASTRICHT (THE NETHERLANDS), AT THE AGE OF 67, AFTER A LONG ILLNESS. THE FUNERAL WAS HELD ON SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER BY BISHOP EMMANUEL AT THE ST. ALEXANDER NEVSKY CATHEDRAL AFTER THE PONTIFICAL LITURGY. HE IS BURIED IN THE CRYPT OF THE CHURCH OF THE RUSSIAN CEMETERY IN SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE DES BOIS TO ALL METROPOLITANS AND ARCHBISHOPS WHO HAVE WORN OUR DIOCESE.

Memory Eternal !

IN MEMORIAM : ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL OF COMANA

Homily of Metropolitan Emmanuel, delivered during the funerals celebration

Paris, November 2nd, 2013

ENTERING INTO THE ETERNAL KINGDOM, Archbishop Gabriel enters into history. The history of his life is intertwined with the history of his Church. His sufferings are gone, like a true witness of Jesus Christ he has passed through the purifying fire of his illness; henceforth he has found rest in the peacefulness of the saints

Today is the day when the creature meets his Creator.

Today is the day when the calling of any Christian is fulfilled as he stands facing God.

Today Christ welcomes his servant with a miraculous yet unthinkable embrace.

Before our eyes, once again, the tragedy of the fallen human nature is being played. The silence of death is no absence. It is the peak of the meeting between two beings, one bearing the weight of his finitude, the other eternal and infinite. Not a word, even less a phrase is said during this meeting. The absence of talk fills our hearts with emotions. Indeed, it cannot be otherwise. How not to feel sadness, when we see him

whose life we shared, or whose path we crossed, now lying in front of us. Although our prayer does not forbid us to feel a deep sadness, it forces us not to lock ourselves in our own feelings, and first of all to think of the other one, whom we are surrounding today. Let us put aside our selfish sadness. Father Alexander Schmemmann speaks of the "sad brightness: the sadness of my exile, of the waste I have made of my life; the brightness of God's presence and forgiveness." In substance this is the mystery of Christianity which covers all, sums up all.

On Friday 1 November 2013

Archimandrite Job was elected Archbishop

by General Assembly meeting in Paris



It was canonically elected November 2, 2013 by the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople at the head of the Archdiocese of Russian churches in Western Europe with the title of Archbishop of Telmessos

He will be consecrated bishop in Constantinople on 30 November 2013, and his enthronement will follow in Paris on 5 December on the feast of St Alexander Nevsky. He will celebrate his first Liturgy as Archbishop at the St Alexander Nevsky cathedral on Friday 6 December 2013.

Many Years !

I dare not speak of Archbishop Gabriel's life; others will do it better than me. However, I should like to turn to three decisive aspects of the personality of my brother bishop.

First and foremost, Archbishop Gabriel was a man of truth.

Archbishop Gabriel was a bishop who called for truth, who had devoted all his life to serving Orthodoxy. His relationship with truth destabilized some, made others sceptical. But truth had become his course of action, one might say his second nature, and it drove him to protect the Exarchate with all his strength. Even if he suffered, he proved inflexible in maintaining the specificities of the ecclesial body he was in charge of, even if at the same time he agreed that the communities which composed might question their own identity.

He was a man of truth, but it did not prevent him to be extraordinarily open to others. In a way, he helped the orthodox episcopate enter into the 21st century, because he reassessed authority as a duty of love, instead of a coercive strength. It seems that the evolution of our societies gives him reason. Faced with the growing complexity of our world, the models of authority, particularly the episcopate, will have to be the symbols of a rediscovered brotherly simplicity.

Archbishop Gabriel was also a man of communion

He was fond of saying that, even if not competent in everything, at least he was a liturgist. In the liturgy he found his strengths. In the liturgy he found his courage. In the liturgy the Church acquired sense. He knew that he obeyed to a Word greater than his, so he offered himself, through a Christian mimesis, for the life of the world. Archbishop Gabriel was the power of the powerlessness, the Eucharistic man par excellence; he insisted that the life of the Church must concentrate in the Divine Liturgy, the very beating heart of his spirited parishes. Through the liturgy he was in pursuit of the sacramental unity in Christ. Nothing is more difficult for the

episcopate, than to maintain the unity of the ecclesial body while respecting the diversity of opinions. Indeed, it is what Apostle Paul invites us to do in his Epistle to Ephesians: "be eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph 4, 3)

Finally, Archbishop Gabriel was a man of calling

Of calling for him, but above all of calling for others.

Indeed, many among you have been ordained by him. You have a duty of memory to him. Every time you stand in front of the altar, pray for him who placed you there. If Archbishop Gabriel has ordained so many of you, it is also because he knew how to arouse in the hearts of more and more people the calling necessary to realize the various gifts that nurture the life of the Church. He made pastors of you, because he was one himself, going as far in his identification with the Good shepherd as to allow attacks and unfair calumny against him.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Death is Easter. Death is a passage. Death is going out of the Egypt of our existence to enter the promised land of the grace. It is our duty, a duty of love, to keep the memory of Archbishop Gabriel, and to remember, at odds with what Malraux said, that: the greatness – not the tragedy – "of death is that it changes a life into a destiny". Indeed, while entering into history, through death Archbishop Gabriel has become immortal in God.

To end, I want to cite some words from the paschal homily of Saint John Chrysostom: "Let no one fear death, for the Saviour's death has set us free. He that was taken by death has annihilated it! He descended into Hades and took Hades captive! [...] O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown! [...] To Him be glory and might unto the ages of ages. Amen !





Memory eternal !

Mother Olga, superior of the Monastery of the Protection of the Holy Virgin in Bussy-en-Othe, France, fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, November 3, 2013, at the age of 98 years. .

Mother Olga, or Helen Slezkina in the world, was born into a family of the Russian nobility in St. Petersburg, October 29, 1915. She left Russia with her parents during the civil war in 1920 and settled in France, where she studied and worked in private education as a professor of mathematics in Paris. Later, she wrote her doctoral thesis on the Slavophile thinker Ivan Kireievsky and the monastery of Optina.

Mother Olga's whole life was closely linked to the Archdiocese. She knew each metropolitan and archbishop personally, from Bishop Eulogius to Archbishop Gabriel. For many years her spiritual father was Bishop Method (1902-1974), rector of the parish of Christ the Merciful in Asnieres, of which she was one of the closest collaborators. She was most notably involved in the edition of the journal of spirituality, *Vetchnoïé* ("The Lord"), and in the organization of the annual diocesan pilgrimages to the Holy Land between 1953 and 1974. In 1988, Helen Slezkine, who had already made her monastic vows to Bishop Method in Jerusalem, while continuing to live in the world to care for her elderly mother, finally retired to the monastery of Bussy-en-Othe with which she was linked since the founding of the community in 1946.

In 1992, after the death of the Abbess Theodosia, Mother Olga took charge of the community and was elevated to the rank of abbess (*hégouménia*) the following year. Upon her initiative and under her careful guidance, the construction of a new church for the monastery as well as a new dining hall large enough to accommodate the increasingly numerous visitors, was launched. Mother Olga obtained both the funding and mobilized all necessary forces. The church dedicated to the Transfiguration was completed and formally dedicated in 2005. More importantly, Mother Olga gave a new impetus to her monastic community, while remaining faithful to the spirit upon which the monastery was founded, thanks to Mother Eudoxia (1977+) and Mother Theodosia (1992+): a regular liturgical life centered on the Eucharist, Orthodox spirituality lived simply and authentically, an international dimension of community, and an openness and hospitality to those in search of comfort and evangelical love.



The Archdiocese of the Churches of Russian Tradition in Western Europe held an Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) on Thursday 31 October and Friday 1 November, followed by an Ordinary General Assembly (OGA) as required by the Statutes, under the chairmanship of metropolitan Emmanuel as temporary administrator of the Archdiocese.

The meeting on Thursday 31 October brought together 195 delegates, both clergy and laity, representing all the communities of the Exarchate, and dealt with the amendments to two articles of the Statutes of the Archdiocese (art. 41 and 43) to broaden the conditions of eligibility for candidates for the position of Archbishop, by allowing as candidates clergy from outside the Archdiocese. These amendments, which had been subject to a postal consultation last July, were formally ratified by the EGA in accordance with the Statutes (out of 195 ballots 163 were in favour and 32 against). The results of this ballot were immediately sent to the Ecumenical Patriarchate for approval by the Holy Synod. After receiving approval for these amendments from the Holy Synod on the morning of 1 November, the list of candidates which had been approved by the Archdiocesan Council at its session of 31 July was sent to the Patriarchate for approbation by the Holy Synod in accordance with the Archdiocesan Statutes (art. 41) and the Patriarchal Tomos of June 1999.

On Friday 1 November the Divine Liturgy, attended by all the delegates of the Assembly, was celebrated in the St Alexander Nevsky cathedral, where the body of Archbishop Gabriel of blessed memory reposed.

The work of the General Assembly recommenced at about 2.45 pm with a general report by His Eminence metropolitan Emmanuel and the report of the Archdiocesan Administration by Michel Sollogoub, secretary of the Archdiocesan Council. During the afternoon the Assembly was informed of the response of the Holy Synod, which contained the names of candidates which was different from that submitted by the Council: it

Archdiocesan Council Elected

President : arch. Job, archevêque au 30 novembre

Clergy : Archimandrite Syméon, father Eugène Czapiuk, André Drobot, Jean Gueit, Alexandre Fostiropoulos and Serge Sollogoub.

Layty : Mme Lydia D'Aloisio, MM. Michel Ribault Mennetière, Serge Runge, Michel Sollogoub, Nikita Struve and Alexandre Victoroff.

Deputies : f. Yannick Provost, f. André Kremenzoff, deacon Richard Vaux, Mme Elisabeth von Schlippe, M. Didier Vilanova et Mme Irène Mojaïsky.

Control Board : father André Fortounatto and Jean Maquart, MM. Basile Kotschoubey and Kirill Khartchenko.

consisted of the names of archimandrite Job (Getcha) and those of archimandrite Vissarion (Komzias) and hieromonk Mihail (Anischenko), both clergy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, accompanied by their CVs. After a long debate, during which all those who wished to could speak about the new situation which had arisen, a vote was taken to decide on whether the conditions for the election of a new Archbishop were or were not favourable. The results of this ballot were as follows: 113 in favour and 79 against and one spoilt paper. On the basis of this result the meeting proceeded with the vote for the new Archbishop. In the first round of the poll (191 total ballot papers, 40 spoilt or empty, 151 valid ballot papers) father Job received 109 votes (more than the two thirds majority of the valid votes required to be designated at the first round). Father Vissarion received 33 votes

and father Mihail 9. Father Job had thereby received a sufficient number of votes as required by the Statutes. On Saturday 2 November 2013 the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate proceeded to canonically elect archimandrite Job as bishop of Telmessos and raise him to the rank of Archbishop. His consecration will take place on 30 November 2013, on the feast day of the holy apostle Andrew, the patron saint of the Church of Constantinople, in the Patriarchal cathedral of St George at the Phanar, under the presidency of His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. His enthronement will be held at the St Alexander Nevsky cathedral in Paris on 5 and 6 December, on the occasion of the patron saint of the cathedral. Furthermore, during the meeting on 1 November, following the election of the new archbishop, the OGA proceeded to elect half

of the members of the Archdiocesan Council (3 clergy and 3 lay members) for a period of six years, as well as electing deputy members of the Archdiocesan Council and members of the Control Board for a period of three years. Duly elected to the Archdiocesan Council were: protopresbyter Jean Gueit, archpriests Alexander Fostiropoulos and Serge Sollogoub, Mme Lydia D'Aloisio, M. Michel Ribault Menchetti and M. Alexandre Victoroff. Elected as deputies: archpriest André Kremenzoff, priest Yannick Provost and deacon Richard Vaux, Miss Elisabeth von Schlippe, Mme Irène Mojaïsky and M. Didier Vilanova. Elected to the Control Board: archpriests André Fortounatto and Jean Maquart, MM. Basile Kotschoubey and Kirill Khartchenko.



THE FUNERAL OF ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL

THE FUNERAL OF ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL WAS HELD ON SATURDAY 3 NOVEMBER AT THE ST ALEXANDER NEVSKY CATHEDRAL IN PARIS. PRECEDED BY THE DIVINE LITURGY BY BISHOP MICHAEL OF GENEVA SURROUNDED BY EIGHT PRIESTS OFFICE FUNERAL WAS PRESIDED OVER BY BISHOP EMMANUEL SURROUNDED BY METROPOLITAN JOSEPH AND BISHOP MARK OF THE ROMANIAN METROPOLIS, WAS ALSO PRESENT MANY PRIESTS, CLERGY AND FAITHFUL. BISHOP GERARD DAUCOURT, CATHOLIC BISHOP OF NANTERRE, ACCOMPANIED BY FATHER RICHARD ESCUDIER, IN CHARGE OF ECUMENICAL RELATIONS FOR THE DIOCESE OF PARIS, AND AN ARMENIAN BISHOP, CAME TO PRAY WITH US. THIS IS THE PASCHAL TROPARION «CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, TRAMPLING DOWN DEATH BY DEATH, AND UPON THOSE IN THE TOMBS BESTOWING LIFE!» SUNG SPONTANEOUSLY BY THE CLERGY AND FAITHFUL AT THE TIME OF BURIAL THE CRYPT OF THE CHAPEL STE GENVIÈVE DES BOIS WE LEFT ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL. CHRIST IS RISEN !



When you go to a funeral, you are often tired, sad and too busy to have time for memories and nostalgia.... The sorrow of the parting...

It was the same for the funeral of Archbishop Gabriel.

But there was the cathedral, a small crowd deeply in prayer, and a lot of light. It was obvious that everyone loved and prayed for this man who had given his life to Christ and to the Church, committed to the end to the service of his brethren.

The chants, the presence of four bishops, of twenty or so priests, of officials, of representatives from the sister churches: all this gave to the celebration a solemn and appropriate character. But it was easy to discern the emotion felt by the officiants, the fondness of all present; our hearts "warmed up". It was a very long celebration, but you need to take time to part, take time to come nearer to the mystery of eternity.

At the end of the celebration, we all sang "Memory Eternal", remembering the man who had left us to meet Jesus-Christ, the man we were lucky to have known, who was a good guide, a good bishop at the service of our Church. Someday, we shall meet again!

Brigitte Vilanova, France

WHEN I THINK OF VLADYKA GABRIEL, the first image that comes to my mind is from the time when he was still Father Guido, a simple priest at the parish in Maastricht. He brought Adrianne and I to Paris to introduce me to Vladyka Georg Wagner at his ordination. As Vladyka Georg had responded favourably, he wanted us to have a festal meal together. Without looking at the menu, forgetting to look at the prices, it was only when the bill arrived that he realized he had spent all his money. On the way back, no longer having the means to pay for gas, he turned off the engine going down every hill, working, constantly worried that he wouldn't make it home...

This is, for me, an example of what best describes Vladyka : a

man who knows how to give. He was a man who gave himself, through, as a priest, crossed the North, South East and West of the

Netherlands to support growing parishes, to replace sick priests, to give conferences. As Archbishop, he went all over Western Europe...

He was a man who gave himself to what he loved, the Church, and most notably our archdiocese. He was a bishop who was always there for his priests, who knew a large number of the faithful by name... Vladyka Gabriel loved to be among us, to make us feel happy, to encourage us.

He also gave himself to the vision of the Church: he was open, rooted in our time, in our cultures, close to the people appealing to young people. And in this context, he greatly suffered due to his peers from other ecclesial entities as well as some of his own priests and some minorities from within the archdiocese who seem to see only the historical forms, the glorious past, the Mother Church, the languages of their childhood... He suffered to see that the horizon of the local Church was constantly receding so as to make room for a multitude of national entities, if not nationalists. And yet, he loved them just the same, and was in continuous dialogue with them, recognizing the beauty in that which

was dear to them. Here as well, we can say that he gave of himself, to the point of giving his life.

This being so, Vladyka Gabriel was not a saint. He was, however, whole and real. He was certainly able to get angry, but he knew how to ask for forgiveness. He was at times very difficult for those close to him, but he loved them deeply. He sought his personal path, friendly and intimate, not necessarily finding it, but always trusting God with it. He was not so much a man of interior prayer, as much as one who lived fully through all that was liturgical.

That was his strength: the prayer of the people of God, the proclamation of the Word, the Union in the Body of Christ. There was joy in the celebrations, which he presided. And this is a second image that comes to my mind, that Father Guido who celebrated in Maastricht, enthused, was often carried away by prayer, singing until «Holy is our God» on such a high-pitched note that the choir could not keep up.

The last thing that comes to my mind is that of Vladyka Gabriel, bishop, who was sent by Vladyka Serge, suffering, to place the cornerstone of the



future church of Nantes. He was wearing his new Bishop's clothing, new shoes too, and it was raining, pouring rain. Despite the wet ground, Vladyka got down on his knees for the prayers of genuflection. And my son, barely three years old, followed Vladyka's example, except that he knelt right down in a puddle of muddy water. Of course, all children imitate, but this was more than that. Vladyka Gabriel was a man, a Bishop, who knew how to lead us towards something new, audacious, even hazardous. Evidenced by the large number of people who dared to enter the priesthood after meeting him, the number of communities founded upon his inspiration. Evidenced by this diocese that, through and despite everything, continues to believe and to construct a Church of our time, faithful to Christ, where each and every one is called towards "freedom in Christ."

*Father Lambert van Dinteren,
Nantes — France*



DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE IN THE HOLY LAND IN 2013

For the third year, a group of pilgrims went to Israel/ Palestine from October 20th until 28th.

This pilgrimage started this time in Galilee: Mount Tabor, Cana, the lake of Tiberiade and Nazareth. Afterwards the group went to the Jordan river and Jericho, going through Samaria. After this the pilgrims got in Judea for three more days visiting the area starting from Bethlehem. Finally, the last three days were dedicated to visit Jerusalem.

The group could partake the divine Liturgy in the Nativity cave in Bethlehem on October 23rd as well in the Anastasis church during the night of Saturday 26th till Sunday 27th. On this occasion the memory of Vladyka Gabriel was evoked ; he actually left a deep and strong souvenir during his visit, two years ago.



*Le groupe de pèlerins entourant
SB Théophile III, Patriarche de Jérusalem*

AT THE ORTHODOX YOUTH FESTIVAL- FRANCE 2012

« I never met such an approachable bishop. » said a Libanese friend recently ; he actually is a regular visitor at this Festival.

In 2012, we once more got the pleasure to welcome Vladyka Gabriel at the Orthodox youth Festival. It was the last time he was able to partake this gathering. It was the same for Rev. father Nicolas Laccaille.

I still can see them celebrating together on Sunday morning. We, as organizers, were worried about them, specially about their tiredness : how would they celebrate the Liturgy until it's end ? Father Nicolas did not appear very fit neither did the Bishop ... Fortunately a third celebrant, father Spiridon Tsimouris (he came from Piraeus, in Greece) helped father Nicolas while archdeacon Athanase, using his naturally gifted discretion and his goodwillness prompted Vladyka the few words or gestures that slipped his attention due to extreme fatigue.

Though, bit by bit, the prayer grew nicer and stronger, carried by all the celebrants and the assembly.

I still can remember Vladyka's homily, real final climax of the 2012 Festival. It seemed like as if all his illness was set aside ; he once more repeated with strength, conviction and love the messages he liked so much to transmit to young people for many years : he called us once again to follow and serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

The figure of our bishop standing simply amongst the youth, talking to each of us in simple and very strong words was noticed by all.

I also remember how he watched the workshop of an English nun living in South Korea. She described us with many photographs and typical anecdotes her missionary work and life at the opposite end of the planet. Vladyka asked lots of questions and received the nun's enthusiastic answers with much interest and great admiration.

And then at evening time, as the tiredness not completely had overcome Vladyka, he came to join us for a while at our barbecue party.

Moreover he started to dance some «Sirtaki» taken by the good sphere. Yes, truly, Vladyka «Gabi», as we used to call him amongst us, was so easily approachable to young people so we sometimes almost would forget he is a bishop. We could talk with him as a friend of the same age ... And I do believe he very much appreciated this.

Marie Arkhipoff, France



WHEN I CAME TO PARIS IN JUNE 2007 in order to work for Archbishop Gabriel, there were three things which impressed me immediately: His deep love for the celebration of the church services, especially the liturgy, his pleasure in being with people and his ability to ask forgiveness when his sometimes a little bit choleric character was stronger than his good heart. A day of rest for him meant to take the car, to go to Brussels or Bussy or another place, to meet some friends and spend a nice afternoon with them and then to drive back to Paris the same day. We had, by the way, from time to time discussions about the definition of a "day of rest". I also appreciated his enormous competences as pastor with his deep love for his flock who was always ready to travel, to visit parishes and to encourage people, but from time to time I deplored his weaknesses as administrator and his good heart that put him sometimes in embarrassing and complicated situations. But in everything he did he was always motivated by love and care for his flock and I learned a great deal of things from him.

Hierodeacon Athanasius, Germany

FENOUILLET, 2008

It was in summer 2008. We invited Archbishop Gabriel to come to Fenouillet (Cevennes, France) to take part in the annual '15th August' session. He accepted, too happy to spend a few days of rest far away from all the worries of his office. This historical place has a bond with the Archdiocese, because in the beginning of the 20th century Russian exiles found here a refuge. It is an exceptional site, and its beauty made an impression on Archbishop Gabriel, even if by nature he was not really prone to the rough and silent solitude of the Cevennes. Vladyka Gabriel like the company of others, to have a laugh and a chat with them. On the day when an excursion to Mount Aigual was organized, rather than go with the hikers, he preferred to stay with the "gourmets" sitting in a good restaurant in Valleraugues! In our minds we shall keep the memory of a simple and warm pastor who, despite a his difficult ministry fraught with pitfalls, always kept his joie de vivre, was attentive to others and deeply human. Memory Eternal!

Brigitte Sollogoub, France



L'institut Orthodoxe Saint-Serge — Paris Colloque international sur l'exégèse patristique Écriture et Tradition

vendredi 29 — samedi 30 novembre 2013

Institut Saint-Serge 93 rue de Crimée 75019 Paris
M° Laumière.

Inscription aux conférences : 5 €/session, 12 €/repas, les 2 jours
35 € (repas compris) ; étudiant : 50 % du prix

Renseignements :

01 42 01 96 10 – ito@saint-serge.net

I HAVE KNOWN VLADYKA GABRIEL for about forty years and lost recently not just my Archbishop, but also a good friend. We first met in Maastricht in 1973, when he still was a layman, recently received in the Orthodox Church. Maastricht, a town in the Southern part of the Netherlands, was to become the place where he would be staying for many years to come. From Maastricht he extended his pastoral activities to the most remote orthodox parishes of the Netherlands and to the Monastery of the Prophet Eliah. The parish in Deventer, founded by Russian emigres in the nineteen-fifties, enjoyed his particular interest. He told me that he always exaggerated the number of persons present at the Liturgy, in his regular reports to Archbishop Georg (Wagner), just to prevent a possible remark that he should not go there anymore, because of such a low attendance. Thank to his care the parish in Deventer survived and could become the biggest parish of the deanery. When he was our Archbishop he remained open minded. He welcomed the idea of biannual visits by a delegation of our deanery, consisting of young deacons and altar boys. He used to spend the whole Saturday with us, visiting the Eiffel Tower and the catacombs, making a boat trip on the Seine, and having lunch and dinner with us. The celebration of the pontifical Liturgy in the cathedral with Archbishop Gabriel on Sunday morning was always the apotheosis of our visit. We hope that Archbishop Job will give his blessing to the continuation of these biannual visits, but even then we'll certainly miss Archbishop Gabriel.

Archpriest Theodore van der Voort, Dean for The Netherlands and Flanders



I have wonderful memories of our late Archbishop Gabriel but four come to mind immediately when I think of him. The first was his welcome speech in 2006 at what is now our Deanery Assembly. We all felt bruised and wounded following the events of 2006

but with a strong and generous welcome speech, he found the right words to comfort us, direct us and give us strength. We were all energised by his words and many who felt lost suddenly found a home. Secondly I remember his sermon at the last conference he attended in Britain. He was tired and worried about not finding the right words in English but, as he said himself, the Holy Spirit guided him and he delivered a memorable sermon about the joy of life in Christ, a joy with which he radiated, a joy which I always saw in him after celebrating the Liturgy. His talk was about the privilege of celebrating together, the joy of living in Christ together. The sermon was heartfelt and genuine and I remember noticing how everyone was visibly moved and uplifted. The next two memories I will mention are more personal. One was the open and engaging discussion on a great number of varied topics he and I had during a couple of lengthy walks at our annual conference. We talked about everything and anything, from the way the Catholic and Orthodox churches are organised to the daily life of parishes. He was interested in our personal lives and that made him a very good pastor. Finally my family had the privilege of having him stay with us overnight. After a long day journeying from Paris and singing at our Vigil service in London I drove him home where we had a lovely family meal. He made us all feel at ease. He was so humble in the way he spoke to the children and laughed with us that it felt like having an old friend visiting rather than an Archbishop. These little snapshots reveal attributes that I always associate Archbishop Gabriel with: strength of conviction, joy in Christ, pastoral kindness, humility. Memory Eternal Archbishop Gabriel!

ITALY AND PRIESTHOOD

The first time I met Archbishop Gabriel was at St. Serge hill, in Paris, in the beginning of June 2006. Vladyka had encouraged me to go to Paris and meet him to talk about my priesthood application. Previously, we had corresponded so I had been able to introduce myself, but later on he even called me at home so he could learn to know me better by hearing the sound of my voice. He reiterated his offer ; what a wonderful encouragement I received from this unexpected contact !



As I could observe on many other occasions, Vladyka was sort of gifted and had a spiritual intuition that led him choosing amongst the candidates to collaborate inside the Church and it's work : he did not trust in superficial feelings but rather had the right premonitions about the still unknown development of both their clerical and human routes.

In many times , helping him to manage the Italian deanery, I could notice the merit of his worries as the righteous way he was choosing, without any hesitation. Nevertheless, although Vladyka did not lack carefulness, he never was calculating : there was very little space for political or diplomatic calculations. His way of acting was inspired by a Church intuition, based on seeking an obvious relationship with the people.

He naturally was aiming to trust, confident as for other's sense of responsibility. He rather would ask in return the trust of others to him without trying to impose it by his episcopal rank and it's authority or by any paternalistic observations This surely was due to his very sincere love towards his fellowmen, a love that arose out of humility and grew in a deep respect to others, whatever they might be and whatever their rank were ; This particularly occurred when meeting with true joy. I do believe none of the people who met him and knew him will ever forget his radiant smile and the very sincere happiness that flew out, blossoming in his meetings with others.

Vladyka's smile remains to us as an icon of love and Church communion.

Archpriest Sergio Mainoldi, Dean of the Exarchate in Italy

Father Stephane Maikowsky, London - Great-Britain

ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL DISTINGUISHED himself by his approachable and warm personality. When he visited a parish, he liked to meet parishioners, to take time with his priests and to answer their questions concerning pastoral care. We knew that we always could, without any fear, ask him questions on any tricky subject, and that he would give us a useful answer.

F. Serge Sollogoub, France

WE ARE BEREFT AT THE LOSS OF OUR BELOVED ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL. Although he was with us for only a short time, he made a great impression on us and did much to rebuild our faith and self-confidence after our break with the Moscow Patriarchate. He is the third bishop we have lost so far in this century and we have become wearied by this seemingly endless cycle of bereavement: Metropolitan Anthony, Bishop Basil, Archbishop Gabriel. We were in great need of Orthodoxy with a human face and heart, to offer us a new inspiration, to lead us into an understanding of what it might mean to be Orthodox Christians living in our native countries in Western Europe. Archbishop Gabriel was essentially just such a human being. He did not present himself as a great spiritual father or a prince of the Church, he was a down to earth and blunt Christian – characteristics that are in tune with the English temperament. He enlivened our conferences and our celebrations with his joie de vivre. I believe he was as happy to be in our company as we were in his, even after he had been traveling through the Tunnel to arrive in London in time for a deanery assembly or clergy meeting. Even during the disappointment following Bishop Basil's departure, he did not allow either himself or us to be brought low.

He was just the man we needed during at that time; he was our father and our brother!

Archpriest John Marks, Devon- Great Britain

ACER — MJO youth



Vladyka Gabriel was undeniably gifted to communicate with young people : were it at the ACER-MJO camp (under the limetree) or at Paris evening parties, he enriched, more then once, his presence : he knew well how to move youngsters and less young ones thanks to his simplicity and his cheerfulness.

Most among us will keep in mind a very attentive person, someone patient and intersted who knew how to listen and to answer with both much humor and profoundness. It surely does not provide from a happy coincidence that so many Acer-Mjo youngsters keep very personal reminders of their meetings with Vladyka Gabriel....

Benoît, Natacha, Valentine

PILGRIMAGE 2011

The best way to evoke the memory of someone who has left us is simply to relate several very special moments, true encounters, rather than a long list of remembrances even though our minds are full of them during these particular minutes.

Remembering my first encounters with our Archbishop Gabriel, first of all there come to my mind the congresses organized by the Orthodox Fraternity, during which we all appreciated his presence; I discovered his human warmth, his spontaneous cordiality, his sense of humour, particularly during the relaxed evenings when we sat down to drink some good beer...

But above all else, I remember those 12 days we spent together during the pilgrimage to the Holy Land in October 2011. The pilgrimage, organized at someone's very opportune initiative, was meant to restore a lost tradition of annual diocesan pilgrimages. Unfortunately it was the only one in which Archbishop Gabriel took part... The least that can be said is that we lived these days in a true

brotherly communion; I think that it was also due to the personality of our archbishop. I shall always remember the "small" homilies – small in length not in substance – so spontaneous and so deep. In the different places where we went, whether in the church of the Resurrection, at Jacob's well, at the Lake Tiberias, in Magdala, on the Mount Tabor, or any other place, he found the way deep in our hearts and spirits with inspired, sincere, direct words.

At a time when he could still move around, we – my wife, my son and me – had the joy to receive him in our home; for no other reason than to be happy together and to share an hour of our life.

Undoubtedly we, as many others, regret not to have been more present, not to have sent more often a word to him during the last moments of his life. We must now apprehend a new style of presence, to live a shape of relationship.

Other moments full of emotion come to my mind: some joyful, others more painful. Yes, I saw him laugh, but I

saw him cry as well, our Archbishop. And I laughed and cried with him, taking my small share of the strong and contrasting feelings which compose the life of a human, indeed very human, being.

As I write, an idea comes to my mind: a good way to pay tribute to him would be to write out and publish the "small" homilies he pronounced in the Holy Land. We would pass on these words of life, of the real life that draws us together, on which death and time will never have any control.

Yves Pointurier, France

