



Freedom in Christ

Deanery conference - Deanery of Great Britain and Ireland –23-26 Mai

« Metropolitan Anthony on Freedom »

by Irina von Schlippe

SINCE THE THEME OF THIS CONFERENCE IS “FREEDOM IN CHRIST”, I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO REPORT TO YOU AT LEAST SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT METROPOLITAN ANTHONY, THE FOUNDER OF OUR COMMUNITY HERE, SAID ABOUT FREEDOM. OF COURSE, BY THE EXAMPLE OF HIS OWN LIFE HE SHOWED US THE REALITY AND THE NATURE OF FREEDOM – AS LIVED BY A TRUE CHRISTIAN - BUT ALSO METROPOLITAN ANTHONY WROTE AND SPOKE REPEATEDLY ABOUT THE **CONCEPT** OF FREEDOM, AND GAVE STRIKING EXAMPLES OF THIS WORD’S MISUSE AND MISUNDERSTANDING.

Thanks to the efforts of the Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh Foundation we have two huge volumes of “Труды”, of collected works of our late Bishop – we have them in Russian only, presenting texts in the original where possible and in translation from English, French and German. There is hope of a third volume soon, and with luck and a great deal of work there will be more. An immense amount of work is being done, mostly in Russia, and now mostly by people who never knew Metropolitan Anthony in person but who follow the path towards God which he opened for us. I very, very much hope that it will be possible to have the equivalent of this work carried out in England too, since this country too does need Metropolitan Anthony’s message! I looked through « Труды » and translated some of his statements on freedom for this conference. Please forgive the clumsiness of this translation, particularly in cases when I translate back from Russian a text which started life in English.

Part One. 1967: St Alban and St Sergius conference

First – here is Metropolitan Anthony’s answer to questions following his talk entitled “Body and Matter in Spiritual Life” given at the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius in 1967, with additions from later talks, fragments of which were published in the Moscow Journal of Psychotherapy.

“..... Where is the limit of our freedom, and what exactly is our freedom? If we think that we may do anything we like – it is obvious that we have no freedom at all. We cannot fly. We cannot do a multitude of easier things.

Where then are the frontiers of our freedom?

The first is our very beginning: God has created us without asking, and each of us is born without us being asked. There is no freedom at all here, there is only a given, and we know that at the end of time there will be some reckoning of the life of all creation. We will all stand before God and God will pronounce some judgement or, if you prefer, some verdict on us.

How much are we free or pre-determined between this beginning and this end? To a great extent we *are* pre-determined: by the very fact that we are human, we have flesh, blood, a heart; we are pre-determined by the circumstances into which we are born and by the influences which act upon us. We cannot say that we are free in the sense that God is free.

May I give an image – I feel that we do very much resemble a beetle which has been put into a jam jar. When the beetle tries to fight its way out through the

IN MEMORIAM : FATHER JOHN LEE

THE ARCHIPRÊTRE JOHN LEE FELL ASLEEP IN THE LORD IN THE EVENING OF JUNE 18TH, 2014 IN LONDON. ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT CLERKS OF THE DEANERY OF GREAT BRITAIN,



HE WAS THE RECTOR OF THE PARISH OF DORMITION IN LONDON (HOLBORN). THAT THE LORD WELCOMES HIM IN HIS KINGDOM. ETERNAL MEMORY!

*Father John's funeral
1st July 2014*

Father John's funeral was magnificent, befitting the man. As the large congregation gathered to

venerate his body while the clergy read the Gospel, we were given time to reflect on just how important was the occasion; and how large a part Father John had played in so many lives. There was an air of expectation, which was fulfilled when Shanta and family, with the women resplendent in white saris, processed with great dignity into the church.

That not only the congregation but the clergy, too came from diverse parishes and jurisdictions underlined the fact that Father John had touched so many people over the years of his ministry. We were all so moved by our loss. Both Father Patrick, our Dean, and Father Stephane from Father John's own parish spoke with breaking voices. Somehow the two and a half hours passed in an instant, as we were caught up in the prayer of the Church for its beloved priest.

Father John was not my spiritual father, but he had been my confessor since the death of Metropolitan Anthony. He had led our parish, wisely and with good grace. We all knew him as a man with no 'side': very human, but always a priest; reverent in his bearing, dedicated to the Church unswervingly; conscientious despite years of poor health. Now we had before us the opportunity to sing our thanksgiving for this dedication and to pay our last respects to an outstanding pastor.

And so we said our farewells. But we did not bury Father John. We buried his tired, worn body, which we are confident will rise again renewed and glorious on the Last Day, to be reunited with his spirit which is now face to face with the Lord he served so faithfully. Eternal Remembrance, Father John!!

Gillian Crow

Father John (1938-2014)

Father John Lee was born on 12 August 1938 in Pennsylvania, USA. He grew up on a farm, living there with his grandparents. After finishing high school, he decided to join a Catholic seminary. Upon completion of his studies, he decided not to become a Catholic priest and instead travelled to distant places to teach. He taught the Inuits in the regions of Saskatchewan and Manitoba in Canada. He then moved to South America and taught in Bogota, Colombia. After the Second Vatican Council, Father John was received into the Orthodox Church, the faith of his maternal grandmother. Then came a move to England where Father John trained as a nurse at St Mary's hospital in London. He was one of the first male nurses at St Mary's. There, he met Shanta, whom he married in late 1975. In London, he also met Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh. Father John had a special relationship with Metropolitan Anthony with whom he stayed very close throughout his life. Father John was ordained to the priesthood on 18 March 1979, later becoming Archpriest and Dean of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral at Ennismore Gardens. He was a very good and popular priest, loved by many, and remembered fondly by many generations who attended the children's summer camp he ran for many years. Since 2006 when it became part of the Exarchate in Western Europe, Father John had been Rector of the parish of the Dormition of the Mother of God. Father John had two children, Nathan and Hannah, a son-in-law Marc, and two grand-children, Gabriel and Jude.

bottom – it can't; through the sides – it can't. It only has one way of escaping: to fly out by flying upwards.....

We cannot fight our way out of our humanity - biological and psychological – but we can grow into the measure of God made Man".

This was said at an Anglican-Orthodox conference in 1967, talking primarily to lay believers.

Part two: 1970 Salamanca (to professionals of Christian churches), 1996 talk on the Creed, London parish.

Libertas and Discipline

In August 1970 Metropolitan Anthony spoke at an International ecumenical conference in Salamanca, talking to most eminent theologians and dignitaries of Christian Churches. His subject was "The children of God and their liberty in the church". I shall give a selection of quotations in his original English.

... "We live in a world that is fallen and spoiled, in which all our knowledge of God, our living and our thinking are, therefore, distorted. It is not strange, therefore, that notions of particular importance like that of freedom would be largely and widely misunderstood and misrepresented. When we ask what freedom means, we almost always get the answer that freedom

is the capacity which a person has to make choices unhindered.

This freedom of uncertainty...is a sign of our fallen state. To be able to hesitate between God and the power of darkness, between life and death, between good and evil; not to be able to make unerringly a choice for what is life, what is God, what is good, is already a sign of a deep sickness of all our fallen being.

... In a passage by the prophet Isaiah we read that the Child Who is to be the Saviour of the world will, before He can distinguish good from evil, have chosen good. This is the state of a completely healthy, normal being who cannot err in choosing life, the good and God, against death, destruction and evil. Let us therefore leave aside this false liberty of choice, this freedom of self-determination conditioned by our Fall, and reflect on the meaning of words that signify the freedom of the creature as posited by God and as understood through the ages by the great saints and teachers of the church."

And then Metropolitan Anthony discusses at length the three words which in different language groups convey the meaning of freedom – this is the approach which he takes each and every time: The Latin "libertas", the Germanic "Freiheit" and the Russian "svoboda".

I quote – still from his Salamanca talk:

"Libertas" is usually associated (thanks primarily to the French Revolution) with social, political and civic liberties: the freedom of men, in their relation to other men, to live as fully as possible without oppression, discrimination or persecution for what they believe is right – provided that they do not impinge on other men: on their dignity, their honour, their living conditions.

And yet, the Latin word *Libertas* has a very definite significance in Roman law. This is the condition which a child, born free, in a free household, enjoys with

regard to his family and to the social group to which the family itself belongs. But the condition of a child born free, or of a man in his free estate, is given at the outset as a present of fortune – or of Providence – that must be conquered and possessed. It cannot endure unless the person born free acquires the ability to remain free...."

Here I would like to add a quotation from a talk on the Creed which Metropolitan Anthony gave in 1996: "

Libertas gave a person the right to be a citizen of Rome, but it also imposed the duty of total mastery over one's own person: if I am in thrall to a bodily passion, to some psychological leaning or emotion – I am no longer free.

Do bring to your mind Christ's parable on the bridal feast. One of those called refuses to come to this feast because he bought a bit of land and he needs to work it. Another because he bought five teams of oxen, he needs to try them out. Yet another has just got married, he can only live his own joy. And each of them thinks that he is free, that he owns the piece of land, he owns the oxen, he owns the happiness of marriage – but in real fact he is a prisoner of his piece of land, of his oxen, of his self-centered happiness. Therefore in antiquity the state of *libertas* was also linked to extreme discipline...."

And this is how the theme was developed in Salamanca: "This situation of freedom results in social, human relationships which are apparently, seemingly paradoxical. The education of a man called to freedom is a strenuous, ruthless discipline that must lead him to a complete mastery of self, so that he cannot be subdued either by fear or greed or hatred, either by external coercion or by his passions that would have the upper hand upon him.

Though it may seem strange to many who have not given sufficient thought to it, the corollary of the call to perfect human freedom – freedom before men, freedom before God, freedom before oneself – stands in the words: discipline, obedience, power and authority.

... These words too have acquired distorted meanings in our distorted fallen world... The word discipline in the biblical sense defines the state of the younger person vis-à-vis the older person who is his teacher, from whom the younger person *wants* to learn something and who possesses the knowledge of this 'something'. Discipline is linked to freedom of choice – the choice to give and to receive in a condition of voluntary submission..... "Discipline" designates the state of the disciple with regard to his guide and to his master:..... primarily, a state of trust.....



Deacon Peter Fr Ian Wallis Irina v Schlippe

This relationship between the master and his disciple, whether the master is our spiritual father or the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God spoken to us in the Gospel or the voice of the Holy Spirit resounding in the depths of our conscience, this relationship is one of obedience. ... Not submission or subjection, but... listening with one's whole being, in order to learn what hitherto was unknown, to develop beyond the boundaries of one's own knowledge and understanding, to widen one's heart and perception, to make one's will supple and vigorous, disentangled from passion, to make one's body capable of responding to the commands of one's mind, of one's heart and of one's will, enlightened and quickened by the power of the Living God... "

And we may not forget that obedience presupposes that the person who has authority, the one who teaches, also has the duty to listen, and his listening must go both ways – he must listen to the voice of God and he must listen to the person who asks him questions or who asks for help in his need..."

Part three - Note on ПРΟΙΖΒΟΛ

I would like here to move from the talk which Metropolitan Anthony gave to – what I would call “professionals of the Church” - to one which he gave to his parishioners and those who came to listen to his regular talks in his Cathedral, and in which he developed this particular explanation.

21 years after Salamanca, he gave another major statement on freedom: on 14th November 1991. It was entirely a meditation on Freedom. Its genesis lies in the events of August 1991 in Russia, and more specifically in the fact that the revolutionary changes started on the Feast of the Transfiguration. The talk was given in Russian, I am afraid you will hear my very clumsy translation.

Metropolitan Anthony saw in the Transfiguration both the Glory of God manifested in Man and the tragedy of Man who is called to build on earth a city, a society, fit for God Christ to live in.

In the challenge of the revolution that happened in Russia after the Feast of the Transfiguration in 1991 he appealed to see a “genuine freedom” as opposed to *произвол*, “arbitrary action”. And here I must enter into a brief technical aside: Metropolitan Anthony warns of «*произвол*», a word which is usually translated as “arbitrary action”, sometimes as “licence” in its traditional philosophical meaning, but if one delves more deeply into dictionaries and into various contexts, one finds that this word «*произвол*», when applied to social, civic, political activity, in Russian is usually connected with disorder, tyranny, lawlessness and even “terror” as in the French “La Grande Terreur” – the unpredictable and murderous actions of the State which prevailed once the freedoms of the French Revolution could no longer be contained by any laws, any constraints, organisations

or structures. «*Произвол*» is a word that is used in Russian mostly in a meaning which the English under Henry VIII would recognise – an unpredictable but invariably threatening activity of those who have power.

Our late Bishop in his analysis seems to take this threatening condition as a starting point, but he eventually shows us the true meaning and the genuinely deep threat of the word: «*произвол*» is self-will, human will divorced from and thereby opposed to the Will of God.

I felt it essential to give this background note, because on the one hand Russian speakers may be mesmerised by the political context in which the word usually appears and therefore may lose out on the deep analysis, while those who are not familiar with it might miss out on some of the meaning.

Part four– СВОБОДА and FREIHEIT – 1991 talk to Russian-speaking parishioners in London

I now return to my main text, that is to Metropolitan Anthony's talk to the Russian-speaking parishioners in November 1991: here too, as was his invariable custom in his many statements about freedom, he delved into the etymology of the word “freedom”, but this time he started with the *Russian* word for freedom, which is “свобода”.

First, he presents the etymology given by Khomiakov, who translates “freedom” as “being true to self”. Though our bishop queries this etymology, he analyses the idea and says that in the final analysis it means “finding in oneself the person who is an icon of God”. This, of course, is a job for life and will never be completed, but it can be undertaken if we see in ourselves not only our sinfulness but also the eternal light of which Christ spoke in John 12:35-36: “believe in the light while you are walking in the light”. John also says (8:32) “know the truth and the truth will make you free”...

Metropolitan Anthony says (as he so often did) and from now on I quote:

“Read the Gospel. We can see Christ in it, we can read His words, we can follow His actions, we can listen and follow with all our might. Each time our heart quickens, each time our mind is struck by something which pierces like a ray of the sun, each time our will responds with a joy, a striving, an adoration, we can say that the words of Christ have reached us. At this moment there is a sort of fusion: I have found a tiny fraction of the icon of Christ in myself. This needs to be preserved as a holy treasure.

If we continue to contemplate Christ piercingly and attentively as if in a mirror, we will gradually find this icon in ourselves. It is worth living and fighting to make sure that Good triumphs in us. If we seek freedom, we must seek it primarily by seeking the icon of God in ourselves, by gradually growing into this icon, by allowing this icon to permeate us – just

as light gradually increases and chases darkness, and eventually everything becomes light.

This is of course our final aim, and it is also our vocation. We must know this: we will be free when people can say about us: this person has Christ's mind, Christ's feelings, this person acts as Christ acts. We see this in some Saints.

What else can we say about freedom? How can we see freedom as a path to follow, rather than a final destination to aim at?

There are two more meanings to this word. The Latin "Libertas" is a specific legal term designating a child who was born "free", that is whose parents were both "not slaves". But we know that such a child may well grow into a slave: a slave of his own passions, of drugs, of alcohol, of smoking, of his fears. Being born technically free does not mean that we will be able to keep, to preserve this freedom, to make it truly our own. In order to remain free, we must overcome in ourselves everything that may enslave us – this means adopting the strictest discipline.

When I say "discipline", I am not talking about the imposition of a foreign will upon my will – not about military discipline where someone has the right to dictate your actions and where you have no right to resist. I am talking about discipline as discipleship, where a person chooses a teacher – someone who possesses the beauty, the wholeness, the state of being which are the aim of the disciple. The person thus is ready to listen, ready to study, ready to treat the teacher as the image – the icon – of his own possible perfection. This is not an imitation, because a person has no right to imitate another, he has the duty to be himself. But he can observe how somebody else has managed to become what he is – what the seeker hopes to become in his turn. By learning from one's teacher – be it a starets, Christ Himself in the Gospel, or just another human being who has grown into a higher being than oneself – one can gradually grow beyond the limits of one's own self.

But to achieve this one must be ready to sacrifice one's right to be what I want to be right now, this very minute, in order to become what I want to become as my final goal.

Here I want – says Metropolitan Anthony – Here I want to quote another word: the English "Freedom"

or German "Freiheit". Its Sanscrit root means "to love" and "to be loved". One can only admire the wonderful clarity of vision of the Ancients who saw freedom as the ultimate manifestation of love, of a mutual love, which strives to allow the Other to grow into the full measure of his being, which strives to avoid any limitation of this growth, any defacing, any restriction. This is a relation to the Other as to the Beloved, for whose sake I am ready – and I quote the word of the Gospel – to lay down my life (John 15:13). But laying down one's life does not always mean to die, it sometimes means to live for years and years with the aim of allowing the Other to reach the full measure of his greatness, his beauty, his holiness.

And here we see how Khomiakov's understanding of freedom gradually takes on new shades of meaning. To be "true to self" means to grow to such a measure that there is nothing left in me apart from the love which I give and from the vastness of my soul which allows me to accept all the manifestations of love from another person who loves me – to accept them whatever they are without any bitterness or constraint.

I wanted to present to you these various elements of freedom right now ([in](#) Autumn 1991) because in Russia right now more than anywhere else there is a crying out, an immense striving for freedom, which is natural after many decades of enslavement. But how easy it is for freedom to turn into arbitrariness, into «*произвол*», how easily the desire for freedom can mutate into «*произвол*», which is the enslavement of the Other – be it a person, close or far away, an individual or 'a collective person'."

In his talk on the Creed (1996), Metropolitan Anthony says:

"These different understandings of freedom must fuse into one if we think about what sort of freedom our Lord gives to us. He gives us a freedom that is born out of His love, and we can be free only if we respond to this Love with all the love of which we are ourselves capable. And in order to achieve this, we must become masters of our own self. In terms of the fallen world, we must overcome everything that is sinful and become no longer the servants God, but children of God, to become capable of calling Him our Father in terms of the overflowing love of the Two Who give Themselves to the Other without any limitations, who die to all that is a limitation and who come to life as if through the resurrecting power of love."

End of quotations.

I shall end my talk here, in the hope that you will be able to access more of this man's insight not only into the meaning, the beauty, the perfection of striving for the freedom that is salvation, but also of methodology – how to find the path, how to find a teacher, how to see God and the work of salvation in everyday life.

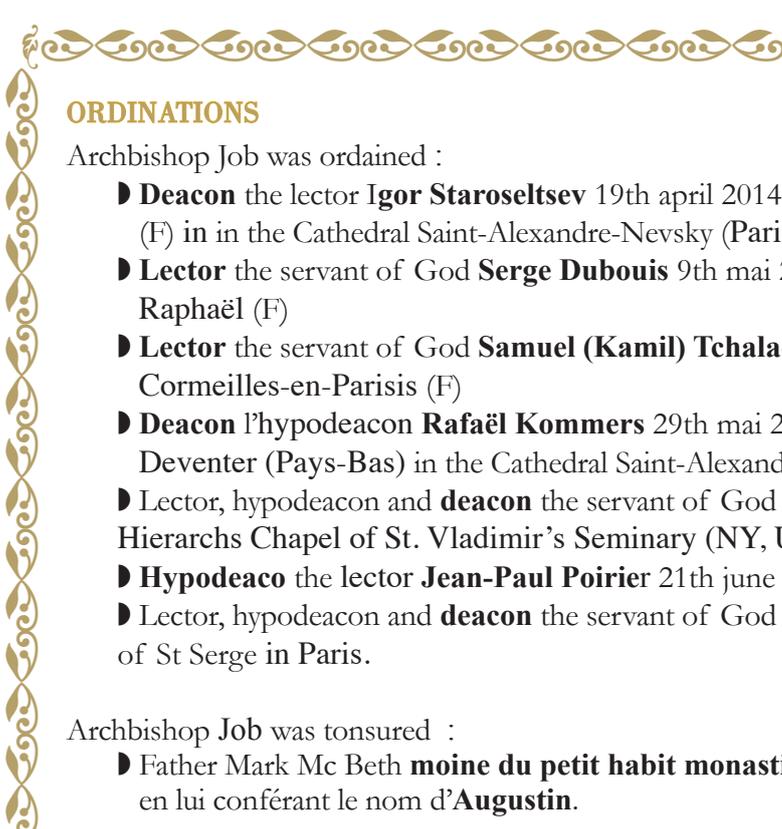
If time, i would like to add the following:

he loved talking to young people and once after a talk that he gave at the school where I taught some girls came to me to express their indignation at his mentioning the need for self-discipline and self-control in one's spiritual life. I reminded them that he had made a specific choice in his life: he chose God as his main priority. Surely everyone chooses some priority – and of course one's priorities influence and usually determine one's life.

I asked the girls how they approached their sport and their music – did they restrict their diet, did they give up parties on the eve of a match? Did they refuse entertainment in order to practise their musical skills? Did they in fact sacrifice their pleasures to a higher goal (higher in their estimation if not mine?) We had a most vivid and positive discussion and they compared their own values and their own methods of self-discipline and self-control. This very disparate and non-religious group accepted without question that it is perfectly acceptable and even desirable to subordinate one's life to one's values, the group also accepted that choosing to serve God was entirely admissible, normal, modern, maybe even desirable.

This is what I mean by saying that Metropolitan Anthony was showing us and anyone who cared to listen - how to see God and the work of salvation in everyday life, how to feel free to choose God even in an entirely non-religious environment.

*Irina von Schlippe,
2014 Deanery Conference
"Freedom in Christ"
Sunday 25th May*



ORDINATIONS

Archbishop Job was ordained :

- ▶ **Deacon** the lector **Igor Staroseltsev** 19th april 2014 for the parish of Holy Trinity in Chalette-sur-Loing (F) in in the Cathedral Saint-Alexandre-Nevisky (Paris - F)
- ▶ **Lector** the servant of God **Serge Dubouis** 9th mai 2014 for the parish of Archangel Raphael in Saint-Raphaël (F)
- ▶ **Lector** the servant of God **Samuel (Kamil) Tchalaev** 10th mai 2014 for the chapel Saint-Nicolas in Corneilles-en-Parisis (F)
- ▶ **Deacon** l'hypodeacon **Rafaël Kommers** 29th mai 2014 for the parish of St Peter and Paul von Deventer (Pays-Bas) in the Cathedral Saint-Alexandre-Nevisky (Paris - F)
- ▶ Lector, hypodeacon and **deacon** the servant of God **Theodore (Tor) Svane** le 1th june 2014 in Three Hierarchs Chapel of St. Vladimir's Seminary (NY, USA).
- ▶ **Hypodeaco** the lector **Jean-Paul Poirier** 21th june 2014 for the Skite Notre Dame de Kazan (F)
- ▶ Lector, hypodeacon and **deacon** the servant of God **Denis Letunovski** le 18th july 2014 for the parish of St Serge in Paris.

Archbishop Job was tonsured :

- ▶ Father Mark Mc Beth **moine du petit habit monastique** au Skite Notre Dame de Kazan le 21 juin 2014 en lui conférant le nom d'**Augustin**.