

Become an OCMC Parish Ambassador



On Sunday, 14th January 2024, Deacon Symeon Menne was ordained to the Holy Priesthood at the Church of St Anthony the Great in Newcastle. His Grace Bishop Raphael of Ilion presided during Matins and celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Amongst those concelebrating were the V. Revd Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne Dr Antonios Kakalis, Hieromonk Melchisedec from the Monastery of St John the Baptist in Essex, Revd Oeconomos Andreas Amirhom, Revd Presbyter Anton Caius Curgu and Revd Presbyter Nikitas Banev. Also present were the Revd Dr. Justin Mihoc (Durham) from the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Very Revd Lee Batson, Dean of the Newcastle Cathedral. Prior to the ordination, Andreas Lumsden was elevated to the order of Readers by His Grace Bishop Raphael.

In his ordination speech, Deacon Symeon expressed profound gratitude to His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain for blessing his journey to priesthood. Deacon Symeon recounted his own spiritual journey in Orthodoxy, starting with his Baptism at the Monastery of St Catherine in Sinai in 1991, which has ever since been lovingly supported by the Archbishop of the Monastery and the

Sinaite Brotherhood, including his Godparents, Hieromonk Arsenios and Monk Moses, as well as the Abbot and the Brotherhood and Sisterhood of the Monastery of St John the Baptist in Essex. He acknowledged with utter reverence the unfailing love of his first spiritual father, the late Archimandrite Symeon, of blessed memory, and his current one, His Grace Bishop Raphael. He also extended his deep appreciation to the priests, who guided him during his Holy Diaconate with love and patience, especially Fr Antonios Kakalis, Fr Andreas Amirhom, Fr Andrew Louth, Fr Justin Mihoc, and Archdeacon George Tsourous. He also cordially thanked his family, especially his dearly beloved wife Konstantina, his rock and support, and cherished children Savina and George Lucas.

After recounting all his blessings, he then reflected on a saying by St Sophrony of Essex about the purpose of the Christian Life, which is to 'ask the Lord Jesus to send the Holy Spirit into our hearts to cleanse us and make us like Christ'. Recollecting his experiences from several of his patients' last moments on this earth, Deacon Symeon reiterated the need to steadfastly live by the Saint's advice, whilst continually preparing for the afterlife through humility, discernment, prayer, fasting, faith, hope and love. He acknowledged that there is no better place on earth to get closer to our Saviour than in Church, most importantly through our participation in the Eucharist. Deacon Symeon humbly accepted his sacred duty, seeking forgiveness and vowing to be a diligent shepherd, inspired by the country's Christian Saints. He urged all to devoutly follow God, referencing St John Climacus' Spiritual Ladder of Divine Ascent to highlight life's trials. His moving speech concluded with a call for prayers for himself, for peace in our parishes and in the whole world.

Bishop Raphael warmly welcomed Deacon Symeon's ordination, marking it as the realisation of Archimandrite Symeon's (of blessed memory) desire. He lauded Deacon Symeon as a spiritual heir, destined to further the legacy of St Sophrony through genuine love for God and others. Bishop Raphael highlighted the dual nature of priesthood as both a cross to bear and a path to salvation, urging Father Symeon to cherish his blessings, family, and spiritual lineage, along with the growth opportunities presented by life's challenges. He counselled Father Symeon to maintain humility and attentiveness in his service and encouraged him to stay true to himself, being approachable and humble, and to continuously seek refuge in Christ and the Jesus prayer against trials and temptations. Representing the Archbishop, he expressed joy in welcoming Father Symeon to serve in the altar with unwavering dedication.

Following the ordination, the Parish of St Anthony the Great in Newcastle, under

Chairwoman Savina Iliadou's guidance, organised a grand reception to celebrate... ed by the... to support





































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