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ROCOR Diocese of Great Britain and Western Europe - New Clergymen Are Ordained by Bishop Irenei During an Archpastoral Visit to the Parish of St John the Wonderworker in Colchester, England



12th / 25th OCTOBER 2020: On the Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, on which day were also commemorated St Martin the Merciful and St Edwin the King and Martyr of the British Isles, His Grace Bishop Irenei of London and Western Europe headed the Divine Liturgy at the Church of St John the Wonderworker in Colchester, England. Making a two-day Archpastoral visit to the parish, His Grace celebrated the all-night Vigil on Saturday evening, followed by a meeting with the local clergy of the Parish; and on Sunday morning the Liturgy was

joyously celebrated, with Vladyka Irenei co-served by the Rector and fellow Priests of the Colchester Parish, Archpriest Andrew Phillips, Priest Ioann Iana and Priest Georgy Petrovsky. Joining the local clergy for the Divine Services was Priest Evgeny Selensky (MP), Deacon Andrei Borisas and Reader George Sultan (both of the Diocesan Cathedral in London), who travelled to Colchester for the occasion; as well as a host of local Altar servers.

The prayers of the Vigil and Divine Liturgy were piously lifted up by the parish choir, which, like the parish itself, has grown in numbers over the preceding months. A multitude of faithful from Colchester and the surrounding region attended the Liturgy, the majority of whom — including a great many children — partook of Confession and Holy Communion, which was offered from three chalices.

During the Third Hour preceding the Liturgy, Bishop Irenei tonsured as Reader the servant of God Serghei Novitchi, who, later in the services, read the Sunday Apostle in English and Romanian. At the Sixth Hour, His Grace ordained Reader Sergiu Smantana as Subdeacon, and the newly-ordained Subdeacon fulfilled his traditional liturgical 'first act' by washing the Bishop's hands before the commencement of the Liturgy. Following the consecration of the Holy Gifts, Subdeacon Timothy Phillips, son of the Parish Rector, was ordained Deacon. Deacon Timothy, who is assigned to the Colchester Parish and the Diocesan Cathedral, will now serve daily Liturgies at the latter over the coming week as part of the normal custom following ordination, before returning to Colchester next weekend to take up his new service in his home parish.

During his homily at the conclusion of the Liturgy, His Grace Bishop Irenei spoke of the importance of heeding the instruction and life of the Church in difficult times. 'The Church does not cower in fear before the temptations of this world,' said Vladyka, 'rather, she is the rock upon which those stand, who will not be tossed about by them. Her teachings are sure and true, because they are God's. Her practices are right and proper, because the Holy Spirit Himself has forged them and sanctified and blessed them. Her message is clear and unequivocal, and she does not bow before time, or history, or powers, or temptations. And so, my dear faithful, cling to her — and you, too, shall have this stability and strength. We will never change our beliefs or our practices out of fear' ([the full homily can be read here](#)).

Immediately following the Divine Service, the Bishop presented a diocesan Gramota to Reader Jacques Sardo and his wife Anne, and Sabine Phillips, in honour of fifty years serving the Church on kliros and in parish choirs. 'Many years' was proclaimed for the honourees, which was joyfully sung by the whole parish.

Welcoming the Archpastor back to the Parish, the Rector, Archpriest Andrew Phillips, congratulated the many faithful who had received Holy Communion and the three men who had been tonsured and ordained during the services. Fr Andrew then presented His Grace with a carved wooden Panaghia as a gift from the parish.

While current Government restrictions prevented the possibility of a large-scale Parish banquet following the Liturgy, which is its normal custom on episcopal visits, Bishop Irenei nevertheless was able to spend time in conversation with both clergy and laity, before being bid farewell.

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