

Orthodox Easter celebrations: 10th anniversary of the Orthodox community in Seychelles



The Orthodox Christian faithful in Seychelles celebrated the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Sunday 28th April at the Berjaya Beau Vallon Bay Resort, in a service held by Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Sergios Janosevic, which marks the 10 year anniversary of the parish's establishment in Seychelles. The parish is part of the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria and All Africa and is overseen by the Archbishop of Tanzania and Seychelles, Metropolitan Demetrios (Zacharegkas) of Irinopolis.

"We are still a small community but we then remember the words of our Lord who said 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.'(Luke 12:32). It doesn't matter how many of us there are, what is more important is the quality of faith [...]," said Father Sergios.

“10 years is not a small period but is also not a long time. Our wish is to build a church, this is a very expensive endeavour and we are a small community so we cannot raise that much money but we are hopeful because God always gives opportunities.”

The Easter liturgy was attended by the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Seychelles, Mr. Vladimir Belous as well as Seychellois, Russian, Ukrainian, Greek and Serbian faithful living in Seychelles, and a number of Russian and Serbian tourists spending their Easter holiday in the islands.

During the liturgy Father Sergios read the Easter message from the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa Theodoros II which spoke about the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Africa who are stifled financially during these times while others live on the verge of poverty or in the midst of raging wars and disasters.

“In the midst of the gloom brought by human suffering, the eternal light of the Resurrection of the Saviour radiates in splendour....Faith in the Lord who suffered and was buried and rose and the existential relationship with Him divert patience and endurance, spiritual strength and inner peace in the soul,” said the message from Patriarch Theodoros II.

“This Faith encourages us to lovingly be besides those who are suffering. Respect and care for those who are afflicted express in the most essential manner our worship of Christ, who was resurrected for our salvation. Even more so does our comprehension of our neighbours and the care for their relief, manifest our faith in the Resurrection and our practical love.”

Father Sergios concluded the service with the greeting “Christ is Risen, Indeed He is Risen” and added a note of gratitude for the donation a new portable iconostasis which was made in Russia at the initiative of a Russian Orthodox priest who visited Seychelles.

Arrival of the new iconostasis

The iconostasis arrived in Seychelles on 6th April 2019 on the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary.

This iconostasis was made at the request of the crew of the Russian Navy's oceanographic research vessel «Admiral Vladimirsky», its captain Alexander Pyshkin and Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Oleg Artemov, the spiritual father of the

ship, which was on its expedition to Antarctica when in 2016 they stopped in Port Victoria in Seychelles.

During the ship's stay, Father Oleg met with Father Sergios and many of the members of the Orthodox community and Father Oleg offered to obtain a portable iconostasis for the parish. An iconostasis is a wall of religious icons separating the altar, the Holy of Holies where the Eucharist is performed, with the rest of the church where the faithful are praying.

The donation was made possible with the assistance of the «Omofor» Charitable Foundation and the iconostasis was made under the supervision of Mr. Gennady Alexandrovich Saliakin. Its transportation to Seychelles was aided by the Russian Embassy in Seychelles.

Since 2009, the «Omofor» Charitable Foundation has donated to the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation over thirty portable sanctuaries, made under the supervision of Mr. Saliakin. Most of them represent fabric-based brocade of iconographic images and ornaments crafted in the laid embroidery technique.

The pictorial works, presented by Mr. Saliakin for expertise in the iconostasis for the Seychelles parish includes the images of Jesus Christ, the Mother of God with Jesus Christ, the Archangel Michael, the Archangel Gabriel, the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel to the Mother of God, Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki as well as the Four Evangelists; Matthew, John, Luke, Mark – all characterized by the authors' deep understanding of the works' objectives, as well as by the craftsmen's flawless mastery of laid embroidery technique. These works bring up a proverbial phrase, which compares pictorial embroidery to 'painting with a needle'.

The mentioned sanctuary was made in compliance with all the Orthodox Church canons and relates to the iconographic and colour scheme traditions of the Old Russian icon painting school. Applied technique and visual formats serve the purpose of revealing the intrinsic nature of the images. The first icons in the Christian Church tradition were painted by the Saint Apostle Luke, with depictions of the Virgin Mary, which have survived to date.

The iconostasis was made and installed in the Kazan area of the Church of Saints Peter and Paul at Yauza Gates – the Representation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow.

It was consecrated on 3rd December 2017 by the rector of the Representation, Bishop Antonije of Moravica, while co-serving with Abbot Alexander and Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Oleg Artemov. The brotherly choir of the Danilovsky

Monastery sang at the consecration.

The blessing took place during the same day of the visit of His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia to the Church of Saints Peter and Paul at Yauza Gates.

During Lent 2018, the iconostasis was installed in the 'Ellada' high school in Moscow, a school which is connected not only with the study of ancient education, but, above all, Christian culture in its Byzantine tradition, which naturally includes the development of Orthodox Christian values. The children of the school students prayed in the days of Lent before this holy sanctuary.

While for the 2019 Easter and Christmas celebrations in Seychelles the iconostasis the rest of based at









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