

Another Presbyter is Ordained for our Holy Metropolis

## The Ordination to the Priesthood of Father Jirí Ján, from the Czech Republic

**O**n Sunday, December 10, 2007 (Old Style), His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, the Acting President of the Holy Synod, Ordained Deacon Father Jirí Ján a Priest at the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Phyle, Attica. Bishop Cyprian was the principal celebrant at the Hierarchical concelebration, with the participation of Their Graces, Bishop Chrysostomos of Christianoupolis and Bishop Johannes of Makarioupolis



(from Sweden). Hieromonks and Hierodeacons from the monastery also took part, as well as Hieromonk Seraphim (from Russia), Father Anders Åkerström (from Sweden), and Father Jeremias Cvak (from the Czech Republic), with a large throng of pious worshipers in prayerful attendance.

We would remind everyone that the new Priest was Ordained a Deacon two months ago, on Sunday, October 15, 2007 (Old Style), at the same monastery, by His Grace, Bishop George of Alania (from South Ossetia, in the Caucasus).

The new Priest, Father Jirí, was born in the Czech Republic, in 1973, and was formerly a Roman Catholic. He enrolled in the Protestant Evangelical School of Theology at the prestigious Charles University, in Prague, since, at that time, there was no other place in his homeland to pursue theological studies. During his student



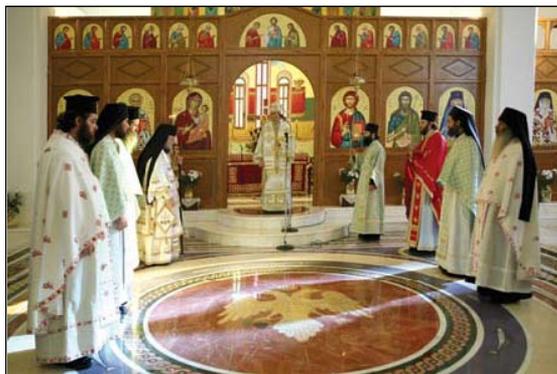
years, in his spiritual quest and out of deep interest in these subjects, he studied ancient Greek philosophy and the Holy Fathers of the Church in the original Ancient Greek.

He visited Greece for the first time in 2000, becoming acquainted with the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, in Phyle, where he discovered what he had been seeking—that is, a place where the true Faith was lived. With the help and guidance of his spiritual Father, His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian, he eagerly received Orthodox Baptism. Following this, his fiancée from the Czech Republic, Clara (Photine), who belonged to a Protestant church, was also Baptized, and the two were married. They already have two charming sons, Philip and Jirí.

The newly-illuminated Jirí later carried out academic research for a year and a half in the School of Theology at the University of Athens, in order to complete his doctoral dissertation, which he recently submitted to the Charles University. His dissertation, entitled “Christ and the Salvation of Man According to St. Hilary of Poitiers,” is about a great Saint and Father of the Church who battled against heresies in the fourth century, as a Western counterpart of St. Athanasios the Great.

In addition to Czech (his native tongue) and Greek (both Ancient and Modern), the new Deacon also knows Latin, English, French, and Russian. He is distinguished for his piety and humility and is beloved by all. He is to serve the pastoral needs of our ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Greece, since he and his family have already settled there permanently.

May our Lord, through the intercessions of the Most Blessed *Theotokos*, confirm and strengthen him in the service of His Vineyard!



## Ordination Address by the Reverend Father Jirí Ján

*Our Most Reverend Metropolitan and Father (present here in spirit, I believe);  
Holy Hierarchs; Honorable Presbyters;  
Beloved Fathers and Mothers; beloved brothers and sisters in Christ:*



**I deliver** this Ordination Address out of obedience to His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, who Ordained me.

It truly surpasses my powers to speak about the great, wondrous, and dread Mystery of the Holy Priesthood. At this moment, one feeling more than any other predominates in my heart: a feeling of gratitude. From the depths of my being, I thank the All-Good God for the two births He has granted me.

First, he granted me simple being through my parents according to the flesh. I would like to thank them warmly, though they could not be here today.

I am even more grateful, however, to my Mother and Father according to the spirit, through whom the Lord, in His love for Mankind, granted me well-being.

I feel great gratitude to the Most Holy *Theotokos*, the Mother of all Orthodox Christians—she who regenerated those conceived in shame. The Holy Virgin, the Light-receiving Lamp, did not abandon me, the sinner, but brought me out from a life of sin and the darkness of heresy and led me to the most beautiful and most radiant Light of Holy Orthodoxy.

My heart is equally full of inexpressible gratitude to my Father according to the spirit, our much-revered and beloved Metropolitan Cyprian, who, upon my first visit here, received me with true paternal love and affection, and literally regenerated me.

It is an undeniable fact that today's Ordination constitutes one of the many fruits of the sacrificial and pastoral care of our Most Reverend Father. My Ordination is yet one more testimony of the promise he gave to God that he would call out "stop" to young people running to sin.

Yes, my beloved Father, your sweetest evangelic voice has also been heard in the Czech Republic, resurrecting and giving life to many youths!

Our Most Reverend Father has frequently told us that the greatest mir-

acle is a spiritual resurrection from the dead, which our *Panagia*, through him, has also granted to me.

I was born in an atheistic country, the Czech Republic, where most parents were afraid of taking their children to Church. At the age of seventeen, however, I began to sense that there was a certain void inside me, which could not be filled by anything in the world surrounding me. I then began an ardent search for the Truth, which, after many years, was completed in the Apostolic embrace of our Most Reverend Father.

Within Western Christianity, I understood that my soul sought something greater than what Roman Catholicism has to offer. In order to find it, I turned to theological studies, and there found the Holy Fathers of the Church. For a time, I was satisfied with this. My soul, however, did not want to remain merely with the word, but thirsted for the Spirit. It did not want merely to read about God: it wanted to receive Him within itself!

Thus, wherever I heard there was a spiritual person, I would go to him. But, to my great sorrow, everyone told me that what I was seeking does not exist in this world, but rather is acquired only in life after death, and thus my hope began to fade that I would finally find that for which my heart yearned. In this way, I gradually reached the depths of despair.

Our *Panagia*, however, did not abandon me, and I became acquainted with a monk who told me that I would be able to find what I seeking in Greece, at the Monastery of St. Cyprian.

I cannot describe my astonishment upon visiting the Monastery! From the first day, I understood that what I had been seeking, and what everyone had told me did not exist in this world, was very small in relation to that which the Lord, Who loves mankind, offers to the faithful through the Holy Orthodox Church!



I cannot conclude my address without mentioning, and wholeheartedly thanking, my dearly beloved wife, Clara. As many years as she has been with me, she has always supported me in my search and never lost her faith that God would one day reveal His Truth to us. Her parents had raised her as they knew best in Protestantism. In her great love for God, she also studied theology, wishing to serve

the Church. At one point, she took up a book by Elder Justin Popović. Studying this great contemporary Father of the Church, she was enlightened and decided to accept Orthodoxy, though her parents were strongly opposed to such a move. She, however, preferred to grieve her parents than to grieve God; and thus she remained firm in her decision.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you and to ask you to pray for me, my Presbytera, and our children, that our Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercessions of the Most Blessed *Theotokos* and of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, and through the prayers of my spiritual Father and the Fathers of our Monastery, might uphold us in our calling until the final days of our lives.

In conclusion, I would like, as my first prayer as a Priest, to beseech our *Panagia* to work a miracle and grant our Father his health, if such be the will of God. Amen!

## Fifth Address

### Words of Exhortation at an Ordination (II)

#### *The ineffable Mystery of the Church through the Divine Eucharist*

*My beloved brother, Father Jiri,  
Fellow Priest and concelebrant:*

**I** embrace you with a holy kiss; with a kiss of love and peace, with a kiss of joy and gladness, and with a kiss of thanksgiving and doxology to our Lord, God, and Savior, Who loves mankind!

**Your** onerous journey to the Truth of the Orthodox Church has been made up of a series of miracles of the right hand of our Lord, the crowning expression of which is your Ordination today to the Priesthood, as a “*minister of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God*” (cf. I Corinthians 4:1).

**Justified**, then, are the wealth and multitude of feelings I express to you in my manifold salutation to your person and, by extension, to the person of your virtuous Presbytera, our beloved-in-Christ Clara, who has been your good and faithful fellow traveller in your journey from the shadow of Western Christianity to the Light of our Resurrectional Orthodoxy.

**And** I am absolutely certain that I am expressing, at this moment, the feelings, thought, and desire of our much-revered Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian, who has literally “*begotten you in Jesus Christ through the Gospel*” (cf.



I Corinthians 4:15).

**A couple** of days ago, late in the evening, I visited him in his bed of illness; and there, in the stillness, we discussed everything together. We experienced spiritual joys.... And have no doubts at all that, today, through me, the unworthy one, it was he

who performed your Ordination, which is something he ardently desired.

**We** said a good deal more. In a few days, he will be back with us, at his Monastery, in his little cell, in the Motherly embrace of the Immaculate *Theotokos*, as was always his prayer and hope.

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*Beloved fellow minister and fellow servant in Christ, Father Jiri:*

**L**ast Sunday, you took part in the Divine Liturgy during which our beloved Father Constantine was Ordained. At that time, in my address, I gave special emphasis to two great truths, which I humbly and fraternally urge you never to forget as you practice your heavenward ministry.

**Never forget**, that “the hands of the Priest are bearers of Divine Fire,” and that “the Immaculate *Theotokos* is his ‘concelebrant’” (*Fourth Address*, December 3/16, 2007).

**Today**, I would like to direct your attention to two events that took place in our times, through which I believe you—and, of course, all of us—will be able to explore in greater depth the ineffable *Mystery of the Church through the Divine Liturgy*.

**Our** Most Holy Orthodox Church has always been *liturgically-centered and mysteriologically-centered*; all of Her activities have always had the Holy Altar as beginning and end. Her *horizontal dimension* intersects with Her *vertical dimension* precisely at the Holy Table: at the preternatural, purifying, illuminating, and deifying Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. All of the other Mysteries of our Church also spring forth from the Divinely-founded and Divinely-established Fount of the dread Altar.

**The Divine** Liturgy opens the gates of Paradise, in order that we might commune with the Uncreated Energies of God. At the same time, however, it also opens the gates of gloomy Hades, that the Uncreated Light of the Resurrection might penetrate therein and vanquish the reign of death.

**I will** once again relate an event to which I had referred, about a month ago, in another connection; for it perfectly documents the centrality of the Mysteries in Orthodoxy.

*A few years ago, a young Priest recounted the following fearsome events:*

*My mother, who did not want her son to become a Priest, died three years after my Ordination. As a Priest, I, her son, did not take much account of her death. I did only what was required and nothing more.*

*Late one afternoon, towards dusk, I passed by the cemetery. I thought to myself: 'Why don't I go light her vigil lamp?' I indeed lit it and sat down on a rock. Not having an epitachelion with me, however, I did not read her a Trisagion.*

*I then felt a little dizzy, and suddenly had the impression that the graves were beginning to open and the dead bodies were rising up and shouting!*

*'HELP! HELP! Priest of the Most High, help.... Orthodox Christians, help! Liturgies, prayers, memorial services, Trisagia.... Christians, HEEELP!!!'*

*Soon after, seized with fright, I also saw my mother:*

*'HELP, my son' she said. 'Help! Help, now that you are a Priest: help for everyone, help, help!'*

*And she fell upon me, writhing with cries of despair, begging for help for her soul.*

*I then came to myself, terrified. By now, night had fallen. I raced off, tearing my cassock on the way. And in my fright, I could not sleep all night.*

*The next morning, I said to my Presbytera: 'Look. For three years, I will Liturgize every day—even during fasting periods—for my mother, for all of the dead, for all those written there, in the cemetery, and for all of the names of the reposed that I will be given from now on.'*

*I served 1,100 successive Liturgies, with no interruption! 1,100 memorial services with kollyva, Trisagia, and everything necessary, every day!*

*Often, at night, I would see the souls thanking me, some because their thirst had been quenched, some because they had been refreshed, some because their hunger had been satisfied, and some because they had been warmed within the bitter cold! 'Thank you, good Priest, I have been warmed up!' they would say. 'I was cold and now I feel*

warm. Thank you.’ Others thanked me because they had seen a little light, and others were holding a bit of bread in their hands.

Just think. Souls are shouting for HELP! My mother, my father, your mother, your father, your brother, your grandmother, your grandfather are all calling out ‘HELP!’ What are we all doing for them?\*

**In the light** of everything I have already mentioned, it is by now easy enough to understand the response of an Orthodox Priest to a Protestant Pastor:

*Once, a Protestant Pastor came across a venerable and devout Russian Priest, and said to him:*

*‘We perform acts of charity; build houses for the elderly, orphanages, halls, and hospitals; organize pop and rock music concerts, and the stadiums are always filled with the young. We go on excursions, go climbing, engage in tourism. We even get involved in the political life of the places and countries to which we belong. We are full of life and activity! As for you, what do you do?’*

*The Russian Priest could, of course, have answered that our Church has also been involved in charitable and social activities, beginning from the times of St. Basil the Great up to the many works that each Metropolis performs without ostentation.*

*But he did not respond in this way! To the question ‘As for you, what do you do?’ he answered differently:*

*‘What do we do? We celebrate the DIVINE LITURGY! And the Divine Liturgy freely fills Paradise and empties hell. This is what we do: the Divine Liturgy!’\*\**

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*Beloved brother in Christ and concelebrant, Father Jiri:*

**I**wholeheartedly pray that you ever possess a profound sense of the centrality of the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. When you Liturgize with “fear of God, faith, and love,” you will enter into the holy sanctuary of the Mysteries of the Church; and then you will come to understand that **the salvation of the world, of the living and the dead, literally hangs in your hands—in the hands of Priests.**

**The following** event will put a seal on my brotherly exhortations and will substantiate my thoughts, which, at first sight, may seem audacious.

*It was Sunday. Three Priests were Liturgizing in a diocesan Church. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, after the antidoron had been distrib-*

uted, one of the Priests cleaned the Chalice; that is, he consumed everything that remained, together with the portions for the Panagia and the Saints, as well as the portions representing the names of the living and the reposed, which were all saturated and fermented with the Blood of Christ. Finishing up, with a deathly pallor, he wiped the Chalice with the cloth, tremblingly washed his hands, and, beside himself, lay down in front of the Holy Table. It seemed that he could take no more.

After some time, when the Priest had come to, his son asked him:

‘What was wrong with you, Father? What happened?’

And he answered:

‘My child, as I was cleaning the Chalice, there took place in my chest—there in the depths of my heart—a soul-shattering event, as if a trial were going on.’

‘What trial, Father?’ his son asked again.

‘Well, my boy, **the souls of the dead**, whom we commemorated during the Holy Prothesis, and especially during the special Prayer of the Anaphora, after the consecration of the Holy Gifts, **were begging for mercy and salvation. And the souls of the living somehow besought the fulfillment of their requests.** This crushed me and I could not bear it. That is why I lay down, completely exhausted.’

That is what he told his son. To his spiritual Father, in person, when asked how he had experienced this trial, he answered:

**‘It was tremendously overwhelming to sense and to see the souls of the dead in the Chalice stretching out their hands and imploring, calling out in despair: “MERCY! MERCY! MERCY!” and also to hear the souls of the living beseeching with great pain for their various requests.** Some asked for healing and recovery from illness, others for resolutions to their family tragedies, others regarding the threat of divorce and for harmony at home, others for the enlightenment of their children, and many other requests. (For, as we know, the problems and sufferings afflicting Christians are many and diverse. God alone knows what pain and yearning each note containing these names hides.)

**‘I had yet another feeling, though... that a multitude of Priests dressed in white, who descended from Heaven, following the consecration, to the earthly Altars, running from one to the other, were taking up the various requests and offering them at the throne of Grace, at the throne of the Heavenly Altar of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.’**

*‘But where did you get this sense of a trial?’ his spiritual Father asked again.*

*And he replied:*

*‘In the pervasive presence of the Holy God, Who, in one instance, expresses, principally, His infinite love for man, His goodness, and His long-suffering, and in another instance, a sort of sorrow—I am speaking in human terms, since I cannot convey it with words—for heretics, those who fight against God, and unrepentant sinners.*

*‘And then a cry welled up from my innermost parts: “My God, have mercy on Thy world and on me, the sinner!” This feeling and experience was so intense that it shattered and melted me like a candle, and I fell down. Ah, Father! How will we wretched clergymen of every rank stand before His dread Altar?’\*\*\**

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*Beloved fellow minster and fellow servant in Christ, Father Jiri:*

**C**ontinue on your deifying ascent to Mt. Tabor, to the light-bathed Mountain of the Orthodox Church. Your ascent will be one of the Cross and Resurrection; for this is the nature of the *Philokalic* Ethos of our Holy Faith.

**Joyful sorrow** will lead you to an ever more profound experience in your life of the Mystery of the Church, the Mystery of Christ, and the Mystery of the *Theotokos*; these three Mysteries are inseparably distinguished, united without confusion, and vividly experienced in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist.

**Ascend**, then, ascend, Father Jiri, mystically chanting “*O Lord, shine forth upon us sinners Thine eternal light, through the intercessions of the Theotokos; O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!*”

**May** the All-Pure Mother of God strengthen you in your deifying ascent, that you might lift up with you the people of God to their mystical union with the Three-Sunned Light of the Holy Trinity.

**May** the greatly esteemed blessing of our much-graced Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian, be with you always, through the intercessions of the *Theotokos!*

*† Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi,  
Acting President of the Holy Synod*

† First Sunday of St. Luke, December 10/23, 2007  
Sts. Menas, Hermogenes, and EUGRAPHOS

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\* Protopresbyter Stephanos K. Avagnostopoulos, *Hermeneia sten Theia Leitourgia mesa apo Pragmatika Gekonota kai Empeiries Hagion Hiereon, Monachon, kai Piston* [Explanation of the Divine Liturgy Based on True Events and Experiences of Holy Priests, Monastics, and Faithful], §78 (Piræus: 2003), pp. 170-171.

\*\* *Ibid.*, §83, p. 181.

\*\*\* Cf. *Ibid.*, §159, pp. 388-389.