Lesser Blessing of a church of All Saints in Strasbourg



On December 23, 2018, the Lesser Blessing of the stauropegial church of All Saints took place in Strasbourg. With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the rite was celebrated by Bishop Nestor of Kherson assisted by Hegumen Philip (Riabykh), rector of the Parish of All Saints, Rev. Maxim Politov, secretary of the Chersonese diocesan administration, Rev. Daniel Ecklein, rector of the church of St. Gregory Palamas and St. Attalia in Strasbourg, Rev. Yevgeniy Makushkin, Deacon Ioann Kulyak and Deacon Dimitry Stadnik, Strasbourg Parish of All Saints.

Present in the church were A. Meshkov, Russian ambassador to France, and his wife; I. Soltanovsky, permanent representative of the Russian Federation in the Council of Europe, and his wife; and Yu. Soloviev, Russian consul general in Strasbourg. Present at the celebration was also Mr. Michel Arnold, French architect of the church.

After the Lesser Blessing of the church of All Saints, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in it for the first time. The liturgical singing was performed by the parish choir conducted by Ms. Anastasia Ivanova.

The Lesser Blessing of the church of All Saints became a real feast for the whole community. There were tears of joy and emotion in the eyes of many of those present. Indeed, only recently there used to be an abandoned lot at the site of the church. The construction of the church of All Saints and the parish spiritual and cultural center began five years ago, on December 4, 2013. The plot is given to the Russian Orthodox community by the city of Strasbourg for rent for 99 years. All the construction work was carried out on private donations. Those who made nominal donations are listed in the Lepta (contribution) Book, and people pray for them. The book counts already about a thousand names.

'Donations for the construction were given not only by our parishioners, but also people from various countries. The largest part of the donations came from Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany but there also were money transfers from the USA, Canada, Poland, Great Britain and even Japan. I would like to underscore that there are many French people among the donators, who, though not Orthodox, regarded the construction of our church with love and attention', said the rector of the Parish of All Saints in Strasbourg, Hegumen Philip, pointing especially to the contribution of Russian commercial organizations, such as Chelyabinsk Iron and Steel Mill, Vneshtorgbank, and Transneft, which assumed the largest part of costs for financing the project.

The church was designed by Russian architect Dmitry Pshenichnikov and executed by French architect Michel Arnold. The construction works were carried out by local enterprises, but the cupolas, crosses, hipped roof and apse were produced in Russia. The mosaic and ceramic work was made by Oleg Shein, and the three icons of the Saviour, the Mother of God and St. Nicholas were painted by Dimitry Pipichim. The church built in the hip-roof style, will accommodate 300 people. It is 41 meter high.

Decisive for the successful implementation of the project was the participation of world-renowned musician V. Spivakov, artistic director and principal conductor of the Russian National Orchestra. It was through his efforts that the principal donators were found. In 2016, he also devoted the closing concert of the 6th Moscow Christmas Festival to the support for building the Strasbourg church of All Saints. The musician himself donated to the parish a 19th century icon of the Mother of God.

The construction of the parish spiritual-cultural center was completed in 2017, and it was opened in a solemn ceremony in May by the Strasbourg Mayor Roland Ries. Classes of the children's parish school are held in the center. There is also a multimedia library of Orthodox literature. Before the church was blessed, all the parish divine liturgies were celebrated in it. Before that, the community had to rent a garage re-equipped as a church for ten years. 'The old facilities became too small for our fast growing community long ago. On feast days, there were 200-250 worshippers. Now we have a large and bright church in which there will be room for everybody – clergy and parishioner of all ages'. Hegumen Philip said.

After the Lesser Blessing, the community will be able to use the church for divine services. It is expected that the Great Consecration will be celebrated by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia in 2019, the parish site reports.

DECR Communication Service

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