

Great Consecration of Church of the Protecting Veil takes place in Swiss canton of Ticino.



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On 9th June 2024 the Patriarchal exarch for Western Europe the metropolitan of Chersoneses and Western Europe Nestor celebrated the Rite of Great Consecration for the Church of the Protecting Veil of the Virgin in the municipality of Melide in the Swiss canton of Ticino.

Placed within the consecrated church were the relics of the ancient and especially venerated saints of the region: the martyrs Protasius, Gervasius, Nazarius, Celsius and Saint Ambrose of Milan. After the procession of the cross, metropolitan Nestor placed the relics with a letter of consecration within the reliquary inside the altar and sealed it with wax. This placing of venerable relics by the bishop within the foundation of the holy altar reminds the faithful of the fact that the Church of Christ during the period of persecution was founded upon the exploits of the holy martyrs.

Then within the newly-consecrated church the Patriarchal exarch for Western Europe celebrated the Divine Liturgy, at which concelebrating were: the rector of the church hieromonk Svyatoslav (Zasenko), the dean of the parishes of the diocese in Switzerland archimandrite Martin (de Caflisch), the rector of the Holy Cross monastery in Roveredo schema-archimandrite Gabriel (Bunge), the rector of the Church of Saint Ambrose in Milan archimandrite Ambrose (Makar), the rector of the Church of the Resurrection in Zurich archpriest Mikhail Zeman, Father Vitaly Korsakov, Father Vladimir Khomenko, hieromonk Irine (Pikovsky) and Father Antony Sidenko, who was accompanying the metropolitan. The diaconal part of the service was headed by protodeacon Ruslan Chopenko, reports the website of the diocese of Chersoneses.

At the Little Entrance, by decree of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill hieromonk Svyatoslav was granted the right to wear the palitsa (a rhomboid ecclesiastical vestment worn on the thigh) for his zealous labours for the good of the Holy Church.

Praying at the service were many of the faithful from among the parishioners, pilgrims and guests of the community from various parishes around Switzerland and Italy.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy metropolitan Nestor delivered a sermon to those gathered and congratulated the community on the consecration of the church. He also handed out episcopal certificates to the benefactors and members of the parish who had helped with the embellishment of the church building and the development of parish life.

In his reply hieromonk Svyatoslav thanked metropolitan Nestor for the consecration of the church and his attentive care for the community in Ticino. He presented metropolitan Nestor with a bouquet of flowers.

The metropolitan, clergy and parishioners then retired to mark the occasion with a festive meal.

The Orthodox community in the Italian Swiss canton of Ticino was established in 2010 and served by the rector of the parish of Saint Ambrose in Milan archimandrite Ambrose (Makar). The first services were held in a Roman Catholic church in Massagno.

Hieromonk Svyatoslav (Zasenko) became the rector of the community in September 2011.

In autumn of 2012 the community had the chance to purchase a small church building in the town of Melide, located directly next to Lugano. The church had been built in 1931 by the German Lutheran Evangelical community of Lugano.

In 2012 the Chiesa Ortodossa Russa della Svizzera Italiana ("Russian Orthodox Church of Italian Switzerland") association was established.

On 9th June the following year the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the new church by hieromonk Svyatoslav (Zasenko).

On 28th September 2014 the bishop of the diocese of Chersoneses (now metropolitan) Nestor paid his first visit to the community.

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