

Thanksgiving for Fr Michael Harper London, August 21, 2010

St George's Orthodox Cathedral was full for the memorial service, which opened with an Orthodox thanksgiving liturgy, with a choir beautifully led by Jeanne Harper. This was followed by thanksgiving contributions from Fr Jonathan Hemmings (UK: Antiochian Orthodox Deanery), Rev Larry Christenson (USA), Rev Hans Weichbrodt (Sweden), Eija Kemppi (Finland), Rev Don Brewin (UK: SOMA) and Charles Whitehead (UK: ICC). A splendid eulogy was given by Fr Tom Forrest (USA but mentioning his Irish origins!), and the service finished with a song of praise and a blessing by Archpriest Fr Samir Gholam of the Cathedral.

Later in the afternoon there was an informal reception for about 40 people at a hotel nearby. This was mostly for people associated with Michael through ICC or SOMA, but other friends and relatives were there also. Among those who contributed some reminiscences there were John Noble (UK), Bishop Graham Dow (UK), William Kay (UK), Marcel Dietler (Switzerland), Kalevi Lehtinen (Finland), Bob & Mary Smith (Canada), John Wyndham (Australia).

All these remembrances resulted in a thankful recognition and appreciation of all that Michael had been enabled to initiate and sustain: so many expressions of renewal in the Holy Spirit in the course of his ministry, both before and after his move to the Orthodox world. And in all his activities, he was faithfully supported and helped by Jeanne, who also has her own music and intercession ministry.

There was a short time of praise at the end of the reception and two prophecies were given:

You rightly celebrate a harvest today but there has also been a sowing of seed today - anything that has stirred your heart, anything that has moved your spirit - let that also bear fruit.

For that seed to bear fruit there will need to be obedience; there will need to be faith; there will need to be self-giving,

You rightly celebrate a harvest today - but let the seed sown in you today also be fruitful.

You have heard that a door will open. You will not need to wonder where it is, for the handle will glow like pure gold.

It was a very good event, with much thanksgiving for Fr Michael, and also a wonderful opportunity for many people to renew long-standing friendships and associations, face to face. We trust that the seeds from this harvest will indeed develop according to God's plans, and bear fruit in the future.