

recorder was hidden under the table. Complaining that their children were being questioned without the mothers being present, and that they had been given no food all day, the mothers gathered their children and took them home. At that point, the children who had not been questioned were also released.

#### 4. *A Moscow Sermon*

*Towards the end of 1972, news reached the West that Fr. Vsevolod Shpiller of St. Nicholas-in-Kuznetsy, and Fr. Dudko – both Russian Orthodox priests in Moscow and well-known for their pastoral ministry especially among young people and intellectuals – had been dismissed from their churches. The news was contained in the final number of the Chronicle of Current Events, the Soviet human rights journal suppressed by the police in late 1972. A few weeks later, however, a Russian Orthodox émigré, recently arrived, reported that the two priests were still serving in their churches. The CSRC ensured that corrected reports appeared in Church Times, Baptist Times and Church of England Newspaper.*

*The Chronicle mentioned that at the time of this trouble Fr. Dudko preached a sermon to his parishioners, appealing for their support. The sermon is printed below.*

SERMON BY FR. DIMITRI DUDKO OF THE MOSCOW CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS ON PREOBRAZHENKA (*Vestnik RSKhD*, No. 106, 1972, pp. 339-340)<sup>1</sup>

I greet you all this Sunday! I greet you all on the day when we remember Christ's Resurrection.

In order to experience this day to the full, in order to attain it on the eternal day of the Kingdom of God, we have to endure much. Many obstacles stand on our path. But inasmuch as we have believed in Christ, we must follow Him through any obstacles, wherever He leads us. Whoever looks back is unworthy.

It is especially difficult for us at times when misfortunes overtake us – the raging elements, times of war. There are probably still many who remember the last war for our Fatherland, when countless fascist hordes fell upon our country, trampled her, destroyed our material and spiritual values, shot and tortured law-abiding citizens.

The Church never stands aside . . . From this place, from which I have just greeted you on the day of Christ's Resurrection, people were exhorted to rally round and help those suffering at the front.

There are other difficulties, perhaps as great as times of war – pervasive sin, when vice, like rust or vermin, is corrupting our families and morally crippling the rising generation, when moral standards are disintegrating, when drunkenness, hooliganism and murder are increasing, when spiritual and material values are being destroyed – values which our ancestors have built up over centuries. Many of our newspapers and magazines have begun to scream – literally to scream – about this and the Government is issuing special decrees. In such times it is more necessary than ever before to proclaim the truth from this place (lit. *amvon* – raised area in front of the iconostasis).

<sup>1</sup> This journal, published by the Russian Student Christian Movement in Paris, urgently needs new subscribers. The Russian or French version can be ordered by British readers through the CSRC.

Unfortunately, during the war many were calling for help, but today for some reason they are either unwilling or afraid. But the danger today is no less great.

I have served as a priest for twelve years, ten of them in this church of St. Nicholas. I have made it my aim always to speak and never to remain silent. The words of Christ are clearly before me: "Go and preach . . ." A priest's first duty is to preach, his second to celebrate. We must preach, in the Apostle's words: "in season and out of season". Whoever celebrates and does not preach is deprived of his priesthood – these are canonical rules.

All of you have heard my sermons. You have heard what I have spoken about. I have looked in your faces and seen with what attention you listened to me. People have told me that some come from other churches into ours to hear the sermons, and I have been glad – I rejoiced along with you. I have had problems, but these have been overcome . . .

Among those who come into the church there are probably some who are sent here on purpose by someone else, people wishing to disturb our church order, who try to interfere in internal church affairs which they have no right to do under existing laws.

The day before yesterday the warden of our church gave me official notice that she had been instructed to end my contract – that means to deprive me of a place to celebrate services, to throw me out to the mercy of fate. You all know what a sad state it is for a priest to be without a place to serve. Therefore from this place I appeal for your help.

There have been times of lawlessness in our country. Then I was subjected to slander and served a term of 8½ years. Now times have changed. Now it is possible to attain justice. In ten years I am sure you have come to know me, you know my intentions, my wishes, my actions; I want to be of service. I ask you to defend me from calumny. I ask for your support and help, I ask for your prayers.

They want to drag a new cross on top of me – help me to bear it so that afterwards we can sing together: "Seeing the Resurrection of Christ . . ." Once again I greet you all on this Sunday. I greet the communicants who will receive the Mysteries of Christ. Listen to the prayer after Holy Communion. Glory to Thee, O God. Glory to Thee, O God. Glory to Thee, O God . . .

*Sunday, 1 October, 1972.*

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"Blessed are those in whom the affliction which enters their flesh is the same one that afflicts the world itself in their time. They have the opportunity and the function of knowing the truth of the world's affliction and contemplating its reality. And that is the redemptive function itself." (Letter from Simone Weil to Joë Bousquet, 12 May, 1942.)