



In the Orthodox calendar, this year Easter is celebrated at a much later date to the western churches, as the Orthodox follow the Julian calendar.

The divine liturgy was celebrated by Father Sergios (Janosevic) of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa. It was attended by the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Russian Federation to Seychelles, Evgeniy Shalobanov as well as faithful from Seychelles, Russia, Ukraine, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria living here. This year they were joined by an even larger number of Russian tourists spending their Easter holiday on the islands, so that the Hibiscus Room was overflowing and the rejoicing was even greater.

During the liturgy Father Sergios read the Easter message from the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa Theodoros II, who said that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, abolished death so that man could acquire the prospect of salvation, where "all obstacles which darken the heart of mankind are abolished". He said that in order to experience the existence of God we must become like children, who have the ability to love and to trust openly, which adults have lost. The patriarch lamented that in today's society, particularly in Africa, children's right to experience the existence of God is threatened.



"Their right to escape from harsh daily reality is threatened. Their right to transcend the cynical mistrust of adults is threatened. Their right to what the world of adults often forgets, living in Christ, is threatened. Children fall victim to civil strife and religious fanaticism. Children are initiated from their early age for the service of self interest. Children become object of labour exploitation. They come to know family violence. Children are undernourished and have no health care. They live with the prospect of an environmental holocaust due to the abuse of God's creation," read the message of the Patriarch.

He reminded the faithful that "Christ said: Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:13-14). This command needs to be transformed into a large embrace of the children who, without being to blame, are scarred by the choices of adults. Through this command, a readjustment of childhood identity is needed, as it has been impaired by the instability of our times. It is absolutely necessary that this command means the return to the original beauty of childhood for the implementation of the Lord's words: "whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child, shall not enter it" (Mark 10:15-16).

Following the liturgy, the Orthodox faithful shared Easter eggs, cakes and a variety of dishes from various countries, in a lively celebration held at the Berjaya Beau Vallon Bay hotel.

