



THE RT. REV.

KYRILL A. W. JOHNSON

With the passing of Fr. Johnson on August 7, 1947, the Syrian Orthodox Church in America has lost one of its most eminent Priests, and the Parish of St. George in Lawrence a dearly beloved Pastor. Fr. Kyrill was born in Ipswich, Massachusetts, on June 24, 1897, the feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. He received his early education in his home town, and in 1921 was graduated from William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. While at William and Mary he was editor of the college literary magazine, and associate editor of the college weekly paper. He was elected to the leading academic honor society, Phi Beta Kappa.

In 1921 he was received into the Orthodox Church by Archbishop Alexander Nemelovsky, Archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church in America, and that same year began graduate study at the University of Virginia, from which he received the degree of Master of Arts in 1922. That same summer he was ordained to the Diaconate by Bishop Aftimios

Ofesh, at that time Syrian Missionary Bishop in North America, and was assigned to the Church of St. John of Damascus in Boston, as assistant to the late Rt. Rev. Solomon Fairney.

In the fall of 1922 he entered Harvard Divinity School, from which he was graduated in June, 1925, with the degree of Bachelor of Theological Science. After his graduation from Harvard, he joined the Harvard-Athos Expedition under the direction of the late Professor Kirsopp Lake of Harvard, and proceeded to Greece, where he spent the summer at Mt. Athos and on the island of Patmos, and became a brother of the famous Greek Monastery located there. In the fall of 1925 he entered the Greek Theological School at Halki, Constantinople, as a special student. The following summer he spent at Mt. Athos, and on Patmos and Andros, and returned to the United States in October.

In December, 1926, he returned to Europe, to join the Harvard-Michigan Expedition to Mt. Sinai. The following year was spent at Sinai, Cairo, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Rhodes, Patmos, and Mt. Athos. At Serabit-el Khadim he discovered many new Proto-Semitic inscriptions in the course of investigations there.

Upon his return to the United States in 1930, he was ordained to the Priesthood by Archbishop Aftimios, under whom he became a Missionary Priest. On October 16, 1938, he assumed the Pastorate of St. George's Church in Lawrence, and directed all his efforts to the building up of the Parish. In recognition of his services to the Church, he was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite in August, 1941, by the Most Reverend Metropolitan Antony Bashir.

Under Fr. Kyrill's guidance, the present Church of St. George in Lawrence was purchased and remodeled into one of the finest Orthodox Churches anywhere in the United States. The first services in the new Church were held in January, 1946, and on May 12, 1946, the building was ceremonially consecrated by His Eminence, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Antony.

During the years he spent in New England in the service of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Fr. Johnson was most instrumental in establishing a strong youth organization, the Federation of Syrian Orthodox Clubs. Together with the Church in Lawrence, this organization is a brilliant monument of his achievement.

In addition to his many ecclesiastical activities, he found time for numerous outside interests. He was President of the Ipswich Historical Society; a founder of the Ipswich Art Association; a trustee and director of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities; a trustee of the Cable Memorial Hospital, Ipswich, and until recently, Vice-President of the Chronicle Publishing Company.

At the time of his death, Fr. Kyrill had been in Holy Orders in the Orthodox Church more than twenty-five years. Because of his illness, no official celebration of his Silver Jubilee was possible, but all his many friends and parishioners were thankful for his long service, more than a quarter of a century, to the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Continued

Fr. Johnson's body was laid in state in the Lawrence Church at 4 P. M. on Tuesday, August 12, and prayers were said by a number of Priests from the neighboring Churches. On Wednesday, August 13, the Church was thronged by mourning parishioners and friends, come to pay their respects to the memory of the late Pastor. In the evening, the Requiem Office for Priests was sung by the assembled Clergy, under the direction of His Eminence, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Antony. Following the singing of the Office, memorial eulogies were delivered in the Church Hall by officers of the Parish, by representatives of Parish Societies, and of the neighboring Churches. Mr. Monsour H. Laham, President of St. George's Church in Boston, expressed the sincere sympathy of our Parishioners for the great loss sustained by the people of Lawrence.

A Solemn Pontifical Liturgy of Requiem was sung at 10 A. M. on Thursday, August 14, by His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, assisted by the Very Rev. Archpriest Constantine Abou-adal, St. George's Church, Worcester; the Rev. Dimitri G. S. Nicholas, acting pastor of St. George's Church, Lawrence; the Rev. Abdallah J. Shaker, St. John of Damascus' Church, Boston; the Rev. Seraphim R. W. Carpenter, St. George's Church, Albany, N. Y.; the Rev. Spiridon Dora, St. George's Church, Norwood; the Rev. Stephen H. R. Upson, St. George's Church, Boston; the Rev. Cosmo Ansara, St. George's Church, Lowell; the Rev. Antony H. G. Woolf, St. George's Church, Niagara Falls, N. Y., and the Rev. Gregory Economou, SS. Constantine and Helen's Greek Orthodox Church, Lawrence.

Following the committal service in Highland Cemetery, Ipswich, when the burial took place, many of those who attended the Liturgy and Funeral Service returned to Lawrence where a dinner was served by the Lawrence Parish.

It is expected that the Forty-Day Memorial Service for Fr. Johnson will be held in St. George's Church, Lawrence, on September 21, by the Acting Pastor, Fr. Dimitri G. S. Nicholas, who has been serving the Church in Lawrence during Fr. Johnson's illness.

from THE MESSENGER

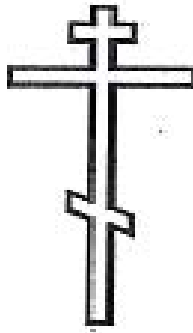
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August 25, 1947.

"Be it noted that the Rt. Rev. Kyril A. W. Johnson, pastor of St. George's Orthodox Church of Lawrence, died August 7, 1947, in the service of God. He died with a prayer on his lips, a prayer for the welfare and spiritual safety of his flock.

Therefore, be it resolved that this board, and any other board to follow, shall strive to keep his memory bright, and shall remember him each Memorial Day by placing flowers on his grave."

Parish Council Minutes
St. George, Lawrence



THE RIGHT REVEREND
KYRILL ARTHUR WARREN JOHNSON
JUNE 24, 1897 - AUGUST 7, 1947
BACHELOR OF ARTS
COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY
MASTER OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
BACHELOR OF THEOLOGY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
BROTHER OF THE HOLY AND IMPERIAL
MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN
PATMOS IN AEGEAN
PRIEST OF THE HOLY ORTHODOX
CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH
AND OF THE
RANK AND DIGNITY OF ARCHIMANDRITE
SOMETIME PRESIDENT

Syrian Church Pastor Dies At Ipswich Home

Rt. Rev. Kyril A. W. Johnson Was Noted Scholar, Lecturer and Historian--Long Active in Civic Organizations

RE. Rev. Kyril A. W. Johnson of Ipswich, pastor of St. George's Syrian Orthodox church here since October 16, 1938, a noted world traveler, author and lecturer, died Thursday afternoon at his home. He had been confined to his bed since early in June because of a heart ailment.

A native of Ipswich, Father Johnson received his early education in that town. He was graduated from William and Mary college in 1921 with a bachelor of arts degree and had the honor of being elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest honorary academic society in America. In college he was editor of the William and Mary literary magazine and associate editor of the college weekly. The following year he grad-



Late Rt. Rev. Kyril A. W. Johnson

Syrian Church Pastor Dies At Ipswich Home

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uated from the University of Virginia with a master of arts degree and was a scholarship holder. He entered Harvard university the same year, graduating in June, 1925, with the degree of bachelor of sacred theology.

Travelled In Near East

Upon his graduation he joined Prof. Kirsopp Lake of Harvard in his work on the manuscripts of the New Testament in such Orthodox centers as Mount Athos, Athens, Alexandria, Mt. Sinai, Jerusalem, Patmos, Thessalonica, and other Near East cities. While in the Sinai peninsula, he made the difficult journey to Serabit-el-Khadeem where he discovered a new series of proto-Semetic inscriptions. He also took part in the first Harvard-Michigan expedition to Mt. Sinai the following year.

Father Johnson, a noted scholar, held fellowships in the Royal Academy and also at the Imperial Russian academy.

He held a unique place in the history of the Holy Orthodox church in America. Born with nine generations of New England heritage and traditions before him, he was a candidate for Holy Orders in the Protestant Episcopal church when he became converted to the ancient historic Church of the East. He was received by the Most Rev. Archbishop Alexander of the Russian Archdiocese of the Aleutian Isles and North America. He was confirmed in the Orthodox Faith in the Russian Cathedral in New York by Archbishop Alexander, the Orthodox church not recognizing the validity of Protestant confirmations. After this he received Holy Orders up to and through the diaconate at the command of Archbishop Alexander at the hands of Bishop Aftimios, the then Syrian bishop of Brooklyn. He was assigned to the Church of St. John of Damascus in Boston, where he trained under the direction of Archpriest Rev. Solomon Fiarneny.

He was ordained in 1930 and served as a missionary priest under Archbishop Aftimios.

Built New Church

Immediately following his arrival in this city in 1938 to assume the pastorate of the local church, the second oldest Syrian Orthodox church to be gathered in the United States as far as can be determined, he began making plans for a new church edifice.

It was through his untiring efforts and devotion to his congregation that the present church on Lowell street was purchased from the Congregationalist Church Building society of New York and that extensive repairs and alterations were made. Services were held in the new church beginning in January, 1946 and on May 12, 1946, the edifice was officially consecrated to Orthodox-Catholic worship at impressive ceremonies performed by Most Rev. Antony Bashir, Metropolitan Archbishop of New York and all North America, who five years ago elevated Father Johnson to the rank of Archmandrite of the Eastern Orthodox church.

Father Johnson was president of the Ipswich Historical society; one of the founders of the Ipswich Art association; a trustee and director of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities; a trustee of the Cable Memorial hospital, Ipswich;

Funeral arrangements have not been announced pending contact with Archbishop Bashir. It is expected that services will be held in St. George's church.