

October 14 Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky Bishop of Shanghai, 1906

The story of Joseph Schereschewsky is unique in the annals of the Church. He was born on May 6, 1831, of Jewish parents, in the Lithuanian town of Taugoggen. His early education was directed toward the rabbinate, but, during graduate studies in Germany, he became interested in Christianity through missionaries of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews and through his own reading of a Hebrew translation of the New Testament. In 1854, Schereschewsky immigrated to America and entered the Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh to train for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. After two years, he decided to become an Episcopalian, and to finish his theological studies at the General Theological Seminary in New York City, from which he graduated in 1859. After ordination, and in response to Bishop Boone's call for helpers in China, Schereschewsky left for Shanghai. Always facile in languages, he learned to write Chinese during the voyage. From 1862 to 1875, he lived in Peking and translated the Bible and parts of the Prayer Book into Mandarin. After Bishop Williams was transferred to Japan, Schereschewsky was elected Bishop of Shanghai in 1877 and was consecrated in Grace Church, New York City. He established St. John's University in Shanghai, and began his translation of the Bible and other works into Wenli. Stricken with paralysis, he resigned his see in 1883. Schereschewsky was determined to continue his translation work, and, after many difficulties in finding support, he was able to return to Shanghai in 1895. Two years later, he moved to Tokyo. There he died on October 15, 1906. With heroic perseverance, Schereschewsky completed his translation of the Bible, typing some 2,000 pages with the middle finger of his partially crippled hand. Four years before his death, he said, "I have sat in this chair for over twenty years. It seemed very hard at first. But God knew best. He kept me for the work for which I am best fitted." He is buried in the Aoyama Cemetery in Tokyo, next to his wife, who supported him constantly during his labors and illness.

Collect

O God, in your providence you called Joseph Schereschewsky to the ministry of this Church and upheld him in his infirmity, that he might translate the Holy Scriptures into Chinese languages: Inspire us, by his example and prayers, to commit our talents to your service, confident that you uphold those whom you call; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lessons

2 Corinthians 4:11-18

For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of

God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Psalm

84:1–6

1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! *My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

2 The sparrow has found her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *they will always be praising you.

4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, *for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

6 They will climb from height to height, *and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

Luke 24:44–48

Then he said to them, “These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.