

The Orthodox Church

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



The Election of Metropolitan Jonah

**The 15th
All-American Council:
"A Watershed Moment"**

**The Orthodox Church
in America:
Vision, Vocation, Mission,
and Identity**

■ EPISCOPAL CHANGES

[SWAIKO], Metropolitan Herman was granted retirement by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ September 4, 2008.

[ROYSTER], Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas, in addition to other duties, was appointed Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan's See by the Holy Synod of Bishops; Locum Tenens of the Diocese of Alaska, the Bulgarian Diocese, the Military Chaplains, and the Exarchate of Mexico; and President of the three Seminaries/ September 4, 2008.

[STORHEIM], Archbishop Seraphim, in addition to other duties, was appointed Administrator of the Metropolitan's See by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ September 4, 2008.

■ ELEVATIONS

[PAFFHAUSEN], Archimandrite Jonah, Abbot of the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Manton, CA, was elected Bishop of Forth Worth, Auxiliary to Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America on September 4, 2008. Bishop-elect Jonah will be consecrated October 30-November 1, 2008 at St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX.

■ RECEPTIONS

POLATAIKO, Protodeacon Nazari is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Herman from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. He is transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ August 1, 2008.

[WEBBER], Archimandrite Meletios is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Herman from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. He is transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin and attached to the Diocese of the West/ July 9, 2008.

■ ORDINATIONS

BOERIO, Daniel was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa at Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, ON, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ September 7, 2008.

[FLORES DEL RIO], Andres was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Alejo of Mexico City on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at Catedral de la Ascension del Senor, Mexico City, Mexico. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman and attached to the Exarchate of Mexico/ June 15, 2008.

[MENDOZA SEGUNDO], Hierodeacon Serafin was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Alejo of Mexico City on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at Catedral de la Ascension del Senor, Mexico City, Mexico. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman and attached to the Exarchate of Mexico/ June 15, 2008.

PAVLOV, Deacon Roman was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa at Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, ON, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ September 28, 2008.

THOMPSON, Gregory was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Job of Chicago at St. John the

Baptist Church, Campbell, OH. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Job and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest/ July 19, 2008.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

ASKOAK, The V. Rev. Alexei is released from duties at Transfiguration of Our Lord Church, Ninilchik, AK, and appointed acting rector of St. Seraphim Church, New Stuyahok, AK/ August 26, 2008.

ASKOAK, The V. Rev. David is released from duties at St. Seraphim Church, Dillingham, AK and appointed acting rector of Holy Transfiguration Church, Newhalen, AK/ August 26, 2008.

BEAL, The Rev. John is released from duties at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA, and from the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada; and appointed second priest of St. Peter the Aleut Church, Calgary, AB, Canada/ September 10, 2008.

BERNARDI, The Rev. John is released from duties at Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Chelsea, MA, and attached to Holy Resurrection Church, Berlin, NH/ October 1, 2008.

BOERIO, Deacon Daniel is attached to Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, ON, Canada/ September 7, 2008.

DEMKO, The Rev. Michael is released from duties at St. Basil Church, Simpson, PA, and appointed acting rector of Holy Annunciation Church, Berwick, PA/ August 10, 2008.

FINLEY, The Rev. Nicholas is released from duties at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville, CT, and from the omophorion of Bishop Nikon of Boston and the Diocese of New England/ August 25, 2008. He is transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Job of Chicago and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest, and appointed acting rector of Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Church, Royalton, IL/ September 26, 2008.

[FLORES DEL RIO], Deacon Andres is attached to Mision San German, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico/ June 15, 2008.

GULIN, The V. Rev. George, who was awaiting assignment in the Diocese of the West, is appointed acting rector of Holy Myrrbearing Women Church, West Sacramento, CA/ September 17, 2008.

GUST, The Rev. James is released from duties at Holy Transfiguration Church, Newhalen, AK, and appointed acting rector of St. Nicholas Church, Chignik Lake, AK/ August 26, 2008.

LARSON, The Rev. John is released from duties at All Saints of Alaska Chapel, Kodiak, AK and Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK and appointed acting rector of St. Peter the Aleut Church, Mountain Village, AK/ August 26, 2008.

LARSON, The V. Rev. Nikolai is released from duties at St. Sergius Church, New Stuyahok, AK and appointed acting rector of St. Seraphim Church, Dillingham, AK/ August 26, 2008.

[MENDOZA SEGUNDO], Priestmonk Serafin is appointed rector of Mision Santa Cruz, Pisaflores, Veracruz, Mexico/ June 15, 2008.

[PAFFHAUSEN], Bishop-Elect Jonah is released from duties at the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and

San Francisco, Manton, CA, and from the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West/ September 10, 2008. He is transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Dmitri and attached to the Diocese of the South for consecration to the Episcopacy.

PAVLOV, The Rev. Roman is attached to Christ the Saviour Sobor, Toronto, ON, Canada/ September 28, 2008.

POLATAIKO, Protodeacon Nazari is attached to Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, ON, Canada/ August 1, 2008.

RENE, The Rev. Richard, who was priest-in-charge, is appointed rector of St. Aidan of Lindisfarne Mission, Cranbrook, BC, Canada. He is also released from duties at Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut Church, Calgary, BC, Canada/ August 31, 2008.

RUSSIN, The Rev. John is released from duties at St. John the Baptist Church, Nanticoke, PA. He awaits assignment/ July 31, 2008.

THOMPSON, Deacon Gregory is assigned to St. John the Baptist Church, Campbell, OH/ July 19, 2008.

[WEBBER], Archimandrite Meletios is assigned to the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Manton, CA/ July 17, 2008.

■ ON LOAN

CRAWFORD, The Rev. Benedict, who is attached to St. Symeon the New Theologian Mission, Birmingham, AL, is placed on loan to the Serbian Orthodox Church of North and South America/ September 25, 2008.

■ RELEASED

RESIGA, The V. Rev. Michael is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Miramar, FL, and from the omophorion of Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; transferred to the omophorion of the Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan's See; and immediately granted a canonical release to the Romanian Orthodox Church/ September 17, 2008.

■ RETIRED

CARRIGAN, The V. Rev. Neal, who is suspended, is granted retirement/ September 1, 2008. His suspension is still in effect.

[SWAIKO], Metropolitan Herman is granted retirement by the Holy Synod of Bishops/ September 4, 2008.

■ SUSPENDED

[IUHOS], Archimandrite Nicholas, who was Abbot of Holy Cross Monastery, Niagara Falls, NY is suspended from all priestly functions/ September 30, 2008.

■ DEPOSED

KOZIN, The Rev. Sergey, who was associate priest of St. Stephen the Protomartyr Church, Longwood, FL, is deposed from all sacred functions of the Holy Priesthood and his name is removed from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America/ September 4, 2008.

ROGOZAN, Deacon Richard James, who was attached to Holy Transfiguration Church, Livonia, MI, is deposed from all sacred functions of the Holy

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His Beatitude, Jonah

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The Cover

A new Metropolitan is elected.



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The road ahead

When the 15th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America convened in Pittsburgh at the beginning of November 2008, our Church had been reeling in disarray for some three years. Inside and outside our Church, there were voices insisting that we were not likely to survive the challenges confronting us. At the time the Council was announced, the serious financial and administrative challenges were clear.

In September 2008, Metropolitan Herman, our Primate, together with the Holy Synod of Bishops, discerned that it was time for his retirement. This meant that the Council in Pittsburgh, in addition to the difficult agenda already set forth, would also elect the new Primate of our Church.

We came to Pittsburgh with heavy hearts. We could not see a way forward. The road ahead seemed to bring us to a dead end.

On the first day of the Council, we dealt primarily with the routine matters of organizing the Council. The agenda set before us, however, was clearly not routine, and it was full of potential for acrimony.

The services of the first day brought us into the spirit and experience of worship. It was in the context of the liturgical worship that I concluded that the Orthodox Church in America was not about to dissolve. I had a strong sense that our Church might well face a prolonged time of troubles, but that it would hold together. Liturgical life had been the heart of our Councils for some 30 years. The powerful stream of liturgical worship was carrying forward again in this Council.

In this, the 25th year since the death of Father Alexander Schmemmann, the strength of the liturgical experience in the Council, and the central place of the Eucharist, remind us of Father Alexander's witness and teaching in our Church. His legacy of liturgical theology is a living legacy.

The second day of the Council, as we began to address substantive matters, at times appeared to bring us to conflict and confrontation, threatening to slide into either chaos or paralysis. Some of the speeches on the floor brought up legitimate points and asked legitimate questions. Yet the Council as a whole seemed to be less than the sum of its parts. During the proceedings, our newest and youngest hierarch, Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth, Vicar Bishop to Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South, consecrated as bishop only eleven days earlier, went to the microphone. As I listened, it was clear to me that he made sense, speaking calmly about our Church's crisis and its dysfunction at every level, identifying by name our failures, yet conveying the message of the Gospel – namely, that the path to the future lies through repentance and forgiveness, that if we refuse to repent and fail to forgive this will poison us.

I recall thinking that Bishop Jonah was saying important and necessary things, and saying them well, but that Council delegates would not hear him because his words would be drowned out by the emotions of frustration and anger, by doubts in all

episcopal leadership. I am grateful to God that I was wrong.

The next morning, on the third day of the Council, we moved into the election procedure. We received ballots and were instructed to write one name on our ballots. During the counting of the ballots, the delegates stood in prayer, singing hymns, psalms, troparia (especially to American saints). When the votes were announced, we heard that Bishop Jonah had received more votes than others, but not two-thirds. This required a second ballot. Again we prayed during the counting of the votes. The announcement of the vote told us that Bishop Jonah was first and Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest was second in the voting. In accordance with our rules, these two names were presented to the Holy Synod. The Holy Synod at this point has the duty of discerning which one of the two is to be called to the office of Primate. The hierarchs retired behind the icon screen, and in due course emerged to announce the election of Bishop Jonah as Archbishop of Washington and New York, Metropolitan of All America and Canada.

The election surprised us with new energy, new possibilities, and a new and enthusiastic commitment to the mission and vision of the Orthodox Church in America. The road ahead was now open.

There will be difficulties and challenges in the period ahead. The spiritual leadership of our new Primate will be fully engaged in the rebuilding of trust within the Church. The collaboration of bishops, clergy, and laity needs to be renewed and strengthened. As our new Primate said in Pittsburgh, leadership in the Church is not power, but service in the name of the Gospel, characterized by accountability to one another. Our central calling is to bear witness to Christ and the Gospel, and all aspects of Church life must be focused on Christ. There is much to be done to advance Orthodox mission in the United States and Canada. Metropolitan Jonah's meetings with heads of other Orthodox Churches in North America are evidence of the commitment of the Orthodox Church in America to communion and collaboration with all Orthodox, in this way showing the unity we already have, and building a fuller unity for the future.

Metropolitan Jonah has also made it evident that his ministry as Primate will include and must include signs of our communion with the Orthodox patriarchates and autocephalous churches. To this end, our Metropolitan intends to make the traditional visits of a newly elected Primate to the Orthodox Churches, starting in 2009 with Moscow and Constantinople.

Our 15th All-American Council has given us new hope. Indeed, the Council has renewed faith in the Church. When we confess our faith in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, this confession is for many the most difficult article of the Creed. After all, when we know the empirical Church, when we know the difficulties, contradictions, failures, and sins in the life of the Church and its members, the confession of faith in the Church appears to be contradicted by experience. The Council in Pittsburgh bears witness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church – not theoretically, but in the very real life of the Church. All of the delegates to the Council – some 700 clergy and lay members of our Church, together with our episcopate – were witnesses and participants in the miracle of God's grace in Pittsburgh in 2008. ■

Father Alexander's last sermon

Thanksgiving Day 1983

Everyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy.

Thank You, O Lord, for having accepted this Eucharist, which we offered to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and which filled our hearts with the joy, peace and righteousness of the Holy Spirit.

Thank You, O Lord, for having revealed Yourself unto us and given us the foretaste of Your Kingdom.

Thank You, O Lord, for having united us to one another in serving You and Your Holy Church.

Thank You, O Lord, for having helped us to overcome all difficulties, tensions, passions, and temptations and restored peace, mutual love and joy in sharing the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Thank You, O Lord, for the sufferings You bestowed upon us, for they are purifying us from selfishness and reminding us of the "one thing needed;" Your eternal Kingdom.

Thank You, O Lord, for having given us this country where we are free to worship You.

Thank You, O Lord, for this school, where the name of God is proclaimed.

Thank You, O Lord, for our families: husbands, wives, and especially children, who teach us how to celebrate Your holy Name in joy, movement and holy noise.

Thank You, O Lord, for everyone and everything.

Great are You, O Lord, and marvelous are Your deeds, and no word is sufficient to celebrate Your miracles.

Lord, it is good to be here!
Amen. ■

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. • Isaiah 4:18

Remembering Father Schmemmann

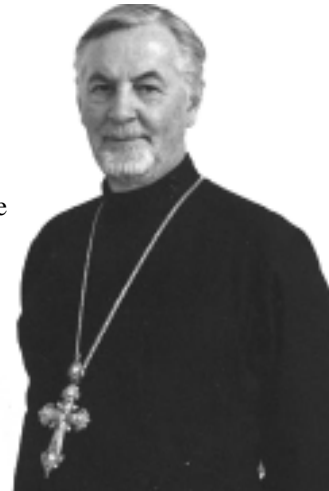
The quote our Lord used in His local synagogue to announce His ministry to the world can be used as well to remember the service of Father Alexander Schmemmann as we honor his memory 25 years after he fell asleep in the Lord. In struggling to express his life and dedication to God, I start with his commitment – to Christ, to the Holy Trinity, and to the Church. That could be a platitude with which we all agree; however, he discerned the distance between what is and what ought to be, and he did something about narrowing the gap.

When I reflect on Father Alexander's lectures a half century ago, especially in liturgical theology, I am reminded of the reason my notes are so scanty. He mesmerized all of us with his descriptions of the services we – or at least I – knew from my childhood, but which came alive through his revelation of what they had been intended to convey to the Christian soul and how they had been treated through the centuries. Liturgics was his forte; the classroom was the arena in which he stripped the dross from the accretions as the scales fell from our eyes.

Most professors are experts of their discipline and masters of the ways to convey their thoughts in the classroom. But Father Alexander was so much more. He was unlike any other person, clergy or lay, in his efforts to transform the Church, its leaders, its assumptions, and its parishes from what is into what ought to be. Nobody else attempted to change the attitudes we take for granted into a viable and formidable expression of what the Holy Spirit is struggling to work out in our time through the holy Orthodox Christian faith. Proof of that is the number of times his name arose in the sorrowful, shameful years just ended, as the Orthodox Church in America dealt with the scandal of financial mismanagement and deceitful, sinful attempts to disguise, ignore, and cover up that shook the very foundations of our beloved Church. Where was he when we needed him to stand up with courage and accuse the wrongdoers, regardless of their rank? Who cared about all that pertains to Christ's Body in us, the way he concerned himself constantly?

Yes, Father Alexander had the temerity to confront the bishops because he demanded that they fulfill their responsibilities. He insisted that they not let challenges to the Church play themselves out, that they take measures that would benefit the structures and the people of God. It's not a secret that they tried to keep him out of the loop, but he would not be denied. And besides his academic status, his obligations to his classes, and the responsibilities on the desk of the seminary dean, he found time to appear in the courtrooms of villages in remote Pennsylvania regions, struggling to explain to confused and disinterested courts what the issue was over a Julian liturgical calendar that judges had never heard of. He could work through the intricate details of the Tomos of Autocephaly with the scholars and canon law experts of the Russian Orthodox Church, then explain it to the dioceses, deaneries, priests, and people of our country. He came to know contemporary America as he knew Russian history and literature.

Finally and foremost, Father had a unique way of expressing his observations and thoughts, capturing the moment and the issue so that the listener could not forget it. He never veered from authentic, traditional Orthodoxy, but he was able to give self-evident, refreshing, exciting insights appropriate for the times in which we were and still are alive. Vacancies in ecclesiastical offices can be filled by consecration, ordination, and appointment, but Father Alexander, the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ's holy Church, has left a presence unmatched since his passing. ■



Fr. Alexander

Vision. Vocation.

Our identity, vocation, and mission – both as individual members of the Church and together as the one Body of the Church – derive from the Church's vision. Her vision is not that of any particular leader but is shared by the whole Body of the faithful.

Mission. Identity.



His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah

The Holy Spirit gives the Church her vision, which comes from our identity in Christ as His Body. This vision is identical with the vision of all those who have gone before us precisely because it is the same Body, with the same vocation, mission, and identity: to be the Body of Christ: the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Whenever we add elements to that vision, we distort it, no matter how noble our qualifications and agendas may be. Whenever we subtract from or diminish it, we do likewise. If we change the vision in any way, we exclude ourselves from it and from the Body which it constitutes.

Taking responsibility and repenting

There is a lot of interest in the sad scandals that are plaguing the Orthodox Church in America, in the East and in the North. Dire warnings of doom, betrayals, and speculations of perverse motives are all over the Internet and discussed widely. In particular, much is being said and written to the effect that the OCA lacks vision and that this, in turn, is due to a lack of good leadership.

Such talk points to a truth: it is certainly the task of our ecclesiastical leaders constantly to announce and renew the Church's vision. But how, exactly, is this to happen? Is there a specifically churchly way to go about this task? For we are not a corporation or secular organization, and in this instance we cannot take recourse to secular models. Our identity, vocation, and mission – both as individual members of the Church and together as the one Body of the Church – derive from the Church's vision. Her vision is not that of any particular leader but is shared by the whole Body of the faithful.

Our task is to turn away from our own petty individual worlds, causes, and dreams – the delusions of our own reasonings. And our leaders' task is constantly to call us back to this repentance. This they must do so that we can share the vision given by the grace of the Holy Spirit and accept our calling from Christ to be the Church, His Body, which constitutes the very core of our personal and corporate identity.

Vocation to 8

Vocation from 7

But when this leadership fails to occur – when our leaders do not call us to repentance by word and example, but instead cause scandal, sorrow, and pain – what then? For undoubtedly there has been egregious wrongdoing, and these matters are serious and profoundly affect the lives of many. Thus there is a tremendous need for healing and for restoration of confidence.

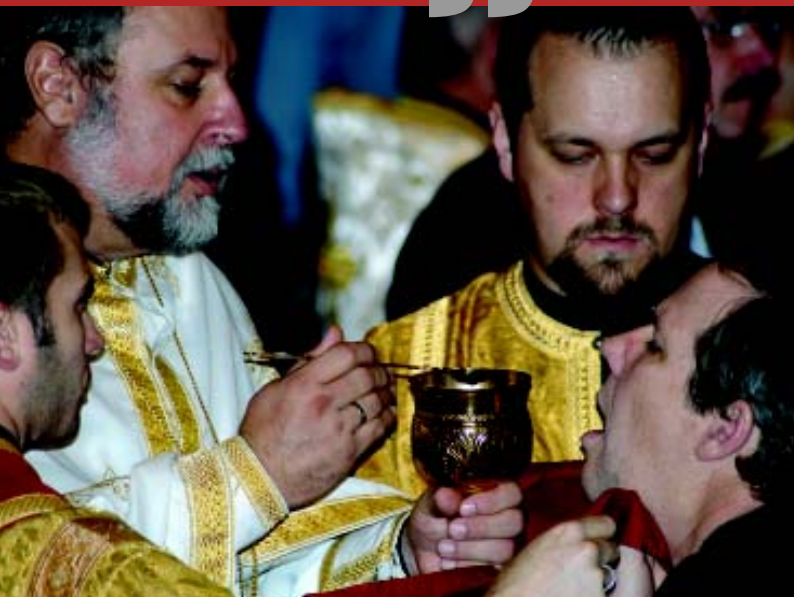
When one is suffering, all suffer together. When one member is honored, all rejoice [cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26]. This is the basic principle of our communion in Christ. The bishops have a particular kind of responsibility, but they are not the Church by themselves; nor are the clergy, nor the rest of the laity. How do we support our bishops so that they can bear their portion of responsibility for the life of the whole Body? Christ is calling us to take the responsibility for the Church that is already ours by virtue of our baptism and chrismation. It's not about how "they" deal with it. It's about *us*. It's *our* life, *our* union in Christ with one another.

If there is a lack of accountability and transparency in the hierarchy, is it not our responsibility to correct it? How would it have arisen, had we not abrogated our responsibility to demand integrity from the very leaders we put into office?

If we judge those in positions of authority who have fallen, we only accuse and judge ourselves. It is easier to blame hypocritically than simply to accept the responsibility of cleaning up the mess. We should grieve over our brothers' sins, not judge them. And in so doing, we come together in compassion. This strengthens our unity and welds us together in a common task: to take responsibility for the life of our Church.

Authority is responsibility. When authority degenerates

“ If as an organization we had lost our vision, then we would have ceased to be the Church. But this is not the case here. That vision, and the grace to actualize and incarnate it, is bestowed at every Eucharist. ”



into power, egoism, and position, it destroys the image of Christ which those positions of responsibility are meant to depict. “Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” [Mark 10:44]. The chief pastors of the Church are called to be that image of Christ, as are all of us, the faithful. They fall short; we fall short. But we must constantly return in repentance, and encourage our fathers and brethren in that same repentance, supporting those who bear the responsibility for our souls. It is a heavy burden. But if we all bear it together, in a synergy of love and communion, it becomes the easy yoke and light burden of Christ, in Christ, by Christ. When we try to bear it by ourselves in isolation, we will inevitably fall, because it becomes something outside of Christ, about our own ego.

Thus, we must not become despondent or fearful. Instead, we must repent as a body. We must turn towards God and away from the abstractions of petty personal agendas, which can include a vindictive and worldly desire for the punishment of those who have offended us. We must not be blind to our own sin and corruption. “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone” [John 8:7]. We must open our minds and hearts to Jesus Christ and to one another. Then we will see with great clarity the vision of the Church of Christ, and this will show us how to set our house in order, cleaning up the mess that we as a body have allowed.

The Vision of the Kingdom

So, what is the vision of the Orthodox Church in America, and thus her identity, vocation, and mission? It is nothing other than Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. This vision is revealed to us when we celebrate the Eucharist, and the Eucharist, in turn, sends us on our mission: to bring Christ's Gospel to America in all its Orthodox integrity. We do not need the ways of the corporate world (vision- and mission-brainstorming, etc.) to determine this. Rather, we need prayer and discernment – together as the body of the Church, and in particular on the part of our Holy Synod of archbishops and bishops – in order to renew the vision of the Kingdom and to preach and proclaim the unity that exists in Christ by the Holy Spirit and constitutes us as the Church.

This vision is not about programs, institutions, administrations, budgets, or bureaucrats. Even less is it about the personal ambitions, agendas, or self-aggrandizements of bishops, clergy, lay leaders, or anyone else. It is only about Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. All the concrete projects we undertake, all the offices and positions of authority and responsibility, flow from this source. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well” [Matthew 6:33].

If as an organization we had lost our vision, then we would have ceased to be the Church. But this is not the case here. That vision, and the grace to actualize and incarnate it, is bestowed at every Eucharist.

The blessed and ever-memorable Father Alexander Schmemmann clearly saw and clearly articulated the Kingdom of God, imparted in the Eucharist, as the focal point of the Church's life. It was this clarity of vision which gave such great strength to his leadership. We need to get back in touch with

Mission. Identity.

that vision. We must return to our first love. It is the Liturgy that gives us our identity and sends us on our mission, renewing our vocation to be the Body of Christ – the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in the world.

The Marks of the Church

The Church's four characteristic "marks" – unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity – are at once the Church's content and identity, constituting both her vocation and mission. They are our goal; it is our challenge to actualize them in our lives, both personally and corporately, in order for us to be the Church.

Before anything else, these characteristics are marks of Christ Himself. Jesus Christ is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit; He is the focal point of our unity, and the very context of our relationship with God and one another as His Body. Jesus is the ultimate criterion of holiness: the man transparent to God, revealing God, incarnating God, and imparting that holiness which is participation in God's very life, which lifts us up from the world of sin and corruption. Christ is the essence of catholicity or wholeness, in that "all things were created through Him and for Him... and in Him all things hold together" [Colossians 1:16-17]. He is also the source of universality because He embraces all things and permeates all things, and all things exist in Him. And He is the foundation of apostleship, the apostle and high priest from God [Hebrews 3:1], Whose obedience reveals Him as transparent to God, speaking only the words of Him Who sent Him [John 3:34], and doing whatever He sees the Father do [John 5:19], transforming and redeeming the world.

Our vision as Orthodox Christians is always first and foremost Jesus Christ. His message is our message: the coming of the Kingdom. His life is our life. His mission is our mission: the salvation of all mankind and its union with the Father in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Our task in the midst of this is constantly to repent, to have this vision renewed in us, and to purge our lives of everything contrary to the vision and incarnation of Christ in our lives. These are the marks of Christ; and if we share His life, we also share these marks.

The Role of Autocephaly

The unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity of the Orthodox Church cannot be the exclusive possession of Middle-Eastern, Mediterranean and Slavic countries and peoples. The Orthodox Church in America has the vocation to manifest all the fullness of Christ's Church here in America. Her autocephaly was sought and granted in 1970 precisely to facilitate this. Many today look on that event as a grave mistake, the sad fruits of which we are now forced to reap. But if we make the effort to build up and not to tear down, [1 Corinthians 3:10] a more constructive approach to our autocephaly becomes apparent.

For, in fact, the greatest strength of the Orthodox Church in America is that in her we have taken full responsibility for the life and integrity of our Church and do not rely on anyone



“The greatest strength of the Orthodox Church in America is that in her we have taken full responsibility for the life and integrity of our Church and do not rely on anyone anywhere else.... Thus we are responsible for our own mistakes, as well as our own victories. And when we are faced with a problem, we are responsible... to deal with it in a Christ-like manner.”

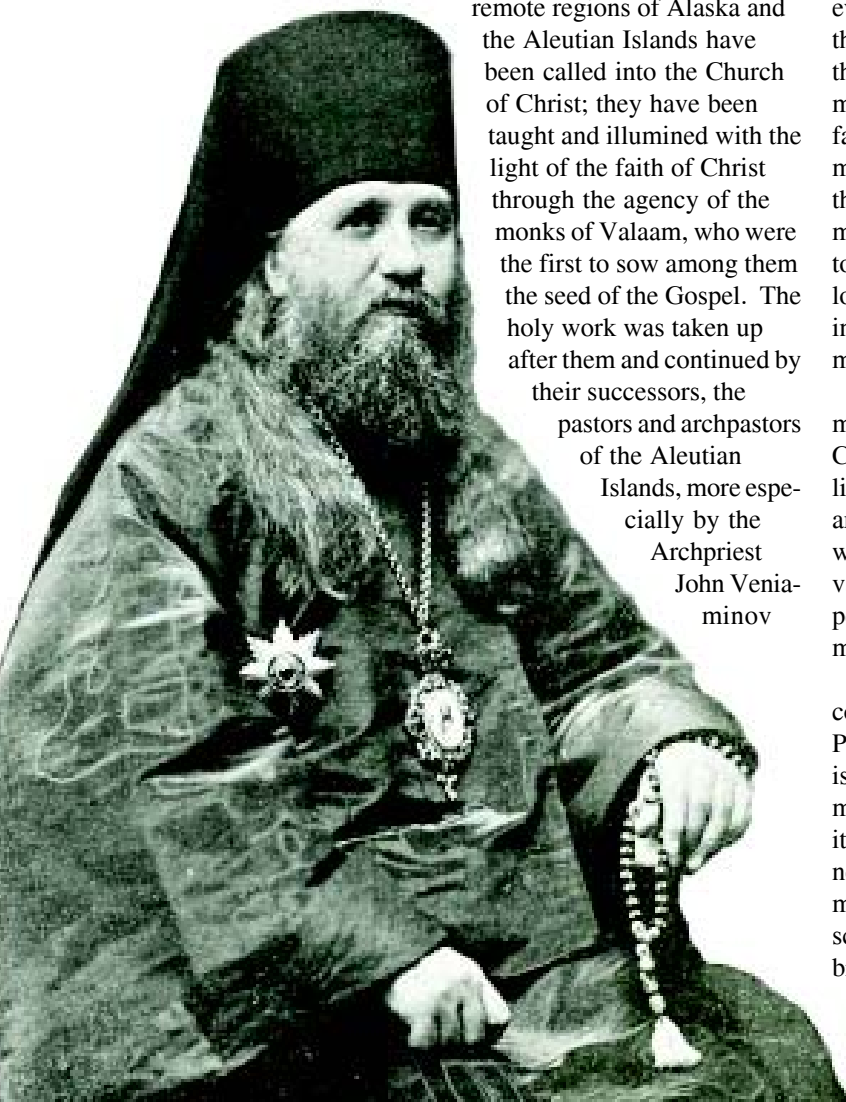
anywhere else. Of course, we preserve sisterly relations and Eucharistic communion with the other Orthodox Churches. But we elect our own bishops, we oversee our own finances, and we support our own ministries. None of the other Orthodox communities in America can say that. Thus we are responsible for our own mistakes, as well as our own victories. And when we are faced with a problem, we are responsible, as a single Body in Christ, to deal with it in a Christ-like manner. Yes, we sin; and the sins of one, ultimately, belong to all of us – the healing and reconciliation of those who have been hurt by sin are the responsibility of us all.

Therefore, our problems will not be solved by someone from the outside. No one overseas can come to the rescue. No one will impose one more set of foreign ecclesiastical bureaucrats answerable only to a distant despot somewhere in the Old World. Thank God. This is the beauty and the responsibility of autocephaly. It is our great strength. We simply need to put aside the distractions of our passions and accept this responsibility given by God: to be the Orthodox Church in this country; to reveal the presence of Jesus Christ here in America to souls perishing in darkness, ignorance, and despair; to give them hope; and to lead them to repentance in the knowledge and love of God. ■

Our common ministry

At this, my first coming among you, beloved brethren, I bring to mind the words once uttered by the Lord through the lips of the Prophet Hosea: “And I will say to them which were not my people, ‘Thou art my people,’ and to her which was not my beloved, ‘Thou art my beloved.’” [2:23]. These words were spoken of pagans and meant that when many in Israel, the people chosen of God, did not know Christ, then the Lord made Himself manifest to them that asked not after Him [Romans 10:20; Isaiah 65:1], and called pagans into His Church.

By the ineffable mercy of God, the pagan people of the remote regions of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands have been called into the Church of Christ; they have been taught and illumined with the light of the faith of Christ through the agency of the monks of Valaam, who were the first to sow among them the seed of the Gospel. The holy work was taken up after them and continued by their successors, the pastors and archpastors of the Aleutian Islands, more especially by the Archpriest John Veniaminov



(later Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow), and by my predecessor, the Right Rev. Nicholas, “a man strong in word and deed.” And now by the will of God, I, albeit unworthy, am called to this apostolic ministry, “and I will say to them which were not my people, ‘Thou art my people,’ and to her that was not my beloved, ‘Thou art my beloved.’” Until this day we have, you and I, been strangers to one another and did not know one another. From this day forth the Lord Himself establishes a close bond of union between us, laces us into the mutual relation of bishop to flock and flock to bishop. In the writings of the Fathers, this relation is likened to the conjugal relation – the bishop being as the bridegroom and the flock as the bride. And as a husband bears his wife such love that he, for her sake, leaves father and mother and cleaves unto her, becomes as of one kin and lives one life with her, even such love must a bishop bear to his flock. And as a wife is obedient to her husband, for he is her head and her protector, even so a flock must be obedient to its bishop. Understanding thus the relation of a bishop to his flock and being betrothed to the Aleutian flock, I left my beloved native land, my aged mother, my friends, all near and dear to my heart, and made my way to a far distant land, to you, men to me unknown, in order that you might henceforth become “my people and my beloved.” From this day on, to you and to your welfare, I direct my thoughts and my care; my strength and my faculties I dedicate to ministering to you. With love I come to you, brethren; I pray, receive me with love also. My love will find its expression in caring for you, in serving you; you are to show yours in obeying me, trusting me, cooperating with me.

The request for cooperation I address more particularly to my more immediate collaborators, the pastors of the Aleutian Church. I come to this country for the first time, knowing it but little, while you have labored here long before my coming. Many among you have become familiar with this country, and several were born in it. I trust that in this, my ministry, you will do me valuable service by your knowledge of this country and its people, by your experience, that you will be, really and truly, my co-laborers of sound judgment and counsel.

It is not only from the pastors that I request assistance and cooperation, but from my entire beloved flock. The holy Apostle Paul wisely likens the Church of Christ to a body, and “the body is not one member, but many” [1 Corinthians 12:15]; and as all members have not the same office [Romans 12:4], but each has its own: the eye one, the hand another, and every member is necessary and cannot do without the others – and as all the members have the same care one for the other and there is no schism in the body [1 Corinthians 12:21,25,26] – even so, brethren, “you are the body of Christ and members in particular” [1 Corinthians 12:27], “and to every one of you is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” [Ephesians 4:7]

Classics to 26

When the 33-year-old Bishop Tikhon arrived in America on December 12, 1898 as the newly appointed ruling hierarch of the Diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska – he had just completed his first year as an auxiliary bishop – it was hard to imagine that this seemingly unremarkable hierarch would emerge as one of the key visionary personalities of Orthodox Christianity in the 20th century. Central to his vision was his commitment to ministering in the midst of the flock – not above of apart from them – as revealed in the words of his inaugural address.

Father Lawrence Farley

Outsiders no more!

Holiness isn't something to which only the clergy are called!

Every Sunday at our little church in Langley, British Columbia, we do what our deacon tells us to do when he exclaims, "Let us love another!" – we exchange the Peace, each one offering the Holy Kiss to those beside him or her [it takes about 10 seconds or so]. This would not surprise Saint John Chrysostom, since of course his flock exchanged the Peace as well. What would surprise him is the fact that our catechumens are present, and that they participate in this exchange.

In Chrysostom's day, the catechumens were not present for the exchange of the Kiss of Peace. They were gathered together by the deacon and prayed for in the Litany of the Catechumens, given a blessing by the celebrant under his extended hand in the Prayer for the Catechumens, and then dismissed. That is, they were "kicked out" and the doors were closed behind them. There was no coffee hour following the service. Presumably they just went home. Some people have suggested that the reason why the catechumens were dismissed after hearing the Scripture readings and the sermons was because they could not receive Holy Communion. That is true, but only half the story. The real reason they were dismissed is that they couldn't do anything. Not only could they not receive Holy Communion, they could not exchange the Holy Kiss with the baptized laity since, as Hippolytus in his *Apostolic Tradition* tersely says, "their Kiss is not yet holy." They could not offer the intercessory prayers with the faithful, since they were not yet a part of the Royal Priesthood, which alone had the right of access to offer those prayers. [The intercessory Great Litany was not then at its present place in the beginning of the Liturgy, but was offered later, after the catechumens had left.] Everything done at the so-called "Liturgy of the Faithful" – the intercessions, the Holy Kiss, the Anaphora, the reception of Holy Communion – could only be done by the faithful, by the Holy People of God. And since the catechumens were "not yet holy," they had no reason to remain.

I say all this not necessarily to critique or change our present practice of allowing catechumens to pray the intercessory prayers and exchange the Peace, but rather to focus more closely on the holy nature of the baptized and chrismated communicants, the faithful laity. When the celebrant invites the laity to come

forward and receive the Holy Gifts, he chants, "The Holy Things for the holy!" That is, the Holy Gifts of Christ's Body and Blood are offered to the laity precisely because they too are holy. It is too easy to forget the holy status of the initiated communicant, and to dismiss them as "just lay people."

Since the effective collapse of the catechumenate as a living institution centuries ago, the temptation has been to consider laity as the "outsiders," and the clergy as the holy "insiders." The clergy got to hear the prayers (though all the laity said "Amen" to them, even if they hadn't heard them). The clergy received Holy Communion. Assuming that more than one priest was serving, they exchanged the Peace. In the classic pattern of worship in the 19th century, the laity were reduced to all but passive participation. Theirs it was to watch and listen –



and, of course, to pray, but silently. Verbally expressive worship was the task of the clergy and their helpers, the choir. Indeed, one label for the laity was the *kosmikoi*, the "worldly" – outsiders indeed. In this understanding, holiness began at the entrance to the altar. Actually, it begins at the entrance to the nave, which is why in our Rite of Consecration of a Church Temple, it is not just the Holy Table that is consecrated, but the entire interior of the nave; the altar area receives no special or separate consecration.

The resurgence of the catechumenate as a living institution in our day helps to correct this erroneous and untraditional understanding of the laity. Even when they are not dismissed, even when they participate in the intercessions and the Peace,

Outsiders to 12

Outsiders no more

the fact that an identifiable body of persons exists in the Eucharistic assembly, who cannot yet receive Holy Communion, places greater prominence on the initiated status of those who can. That is, the presence of catechumens reveals that it is the chrismated laity, the communicant faithful, who are the real insiders. Holiness is not the preserve and possession of the clergy alone. Holy status belongs to the laity as well. Indeed, in this sense the clergy are a part of the laity, the *laos*, the People of God.

I sometimes think that the greatest challenge facing the Church today is not educational or financial. It is not how to convince our people to read more theology or give more money. Rather, it is to see themselves as they really are – as the Holy Church of God, called by Christ, separated from the world, living as pilgrims and exiles in this age, belonging to the age to come and the eternal Kingdom. If we can recover this Biblical and patristic vision of *who* we are, then our educational reading and financial giving will take care of themselves. As long as the laity regard themselves as the outsiders, as the *kosmikoi*, of course they will act like the world around them. It is only when they regard themselves as called to holiness, as saints, as belonging to God and called to strive to share His holiness, as being in the world, but not of it, that the Church will begin to regain its full strength and vigor. Through the prayers of our father among the saints, Saint John Chrysostom, may God hasten the day. ■

Fr. Lawrence Farley is rector of St. Herman of Alaska Church, Langley, British Columbia.

On fasting

Monday, March 2: “Let us begin the honorable fast with joy”

Fasting is not an “option” for Christians. Neither are prayer and almsgiving. Our Lord did not say, “*if* you fast” but, rather, “*when* you fast.” He Himself fasted. Those to whom He directed His words fasted. Perfecting their tradition by coupling it with prayer and almsgiving, Our Lord revealed that the very heart of our lives as Christians is rooted in fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

Our Lord chastised those who fasted, prayed, and gave alms for the purpose of being noticed and applauded by others or merely as a means of “fulfilling the law.” Indeed, He noted, they received their reward – praise from others. But their actions were to no avail, and brought with them no heavenly blessing. Hence, Christ insisted that we fast “in secret,” pray “in secret,” and give alms “in secret,” not allowing our left hand to know what our right hand is doing, so that our heavenly Father will reward us openly.

Our Lord fasted for 40 days before beginning His public ministry. This indicates that one aspect of fasting is preparation.

In terms of the Church’s lenten seasons, fasting prepares us to celebrate, to feast, and to focus our attention on that which we anticipate celebrating, rather than on the mundane things that all too often compete for or dominate our attention.

While food is an essential element of any celebration – we are reminded of this on Pascha, as our festal food is blessed, or as we bless fruit on the Great Feast of Transfiguration – it can also be a preoccupation, something that can dominate our time and attention. We fret over what to eat and what not to eat. We agonize over trans fats, cholesterol, carbs, and calories. We drink Ensure to gain weight, and then patronize weight loss clinics to lose it. We have an entire TV network devoted to food! Instead of “eating to live,” we “live to eat.” And sadly, before major celebrations, we spend so much time planning menus and testing new recipes, hoping that our celebration will be memorable, enjoyable, and tasty, that the very thing we gather to celebrate is obscured, misplaced, and lost.

This is especially so in the days leading to the celebration of Pascha. Great Lent reminds us to prepare ourselves spiritually, to bring under control those things we have allowed to control us even though they are well within our control – and food is surely one of those things – and to apply the self control that fasting teaches us to other areas of our lives. During the first week of Great Lent, we are reminded that, while fasting from food, we must fast from our passions – anger, gossip, jealousy – while intensifying our vigilance, our prayer lives, and our ministry to others, especially the least among us. Hence, fasting as a preparation is quite the opposite of the worldly preparations that focus our celebration on *us*, rather than on Our Lord and the joyous mysteries He so lovingly shares with us and engages us in celebration.

Of course, fasting is at the very heart of the ascetic life. Food can be a passion, a preoccupation that can easily dominate our lives. But this does not mean that merely by avoiding certain “prohibited” foods while partaking of others that are “approved,” we are really fasting.

Years ago, I was given a lenten cookbook that, in the preface, offered an extremely detailed explanation of the Church’s fasting tradition – no meat and meat products, dairy products, fish, wine, and oil. It also noted that eating shellfish – lobster, scallops, crab, prawns and shrimp, clams, and the like – does not violate the fast, although it warned that shellfish should be accompanied by drawn margarine rather than butter. How ridiculous, I thought! Emptying ourselves of our passion for food not only involves reducing how much and what we eat, but also how much time we spend thinking about food, preparing food, reading about food, discussing food, and manipulating food to “fit” the fasting tradition of the Church. [The same cookbook offered a recipe for a “lenten chocolate cake,” at the end of which was noted, “your family will enjoy this delicious cake so much that you’ll want to serve it all year ‘round!’”] Consider this: one could devise a lenten weekly menu that, while fully avoiding meat, dairy products, fish, wine, and oil, would be anything but ascetic – lobster tail on Monday, grilled prawns on Tuesday, King Crab legs on Wednesday, lemon-drenched shrimp on Thursday, and scallops on Friday, all with melted margarine, of course!

Fasting to 26



AAC delegate prays before voting.

Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera

Feeling the Spirit

A personal reflection on the 15th All-American Council

I have been involved in the Church for many years, which means I have attended numerous meetings and gatherings – preconciliar commission, task forces, diocesan councils and assemblies, parish council, and so on. The recent 15th All-American Council, however, stands out in my mind as undeniably the “best.” While it may sound corny or questionable, I am sincere when I say I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The opening of the Council on Monday night was sobering. While anger and scorn may have been the tone of numerous town hall meetings and on-line blogs regarding the Orthodox Church in America’s “crisis,” the mood that evening was somber. Our first task was to come up with questions to ask the Holy Synod, which I felt was an attempt to help restore trust and openness. The plan was to have the Holy Synod review the questions and answer them at a later session. We would find out the next evening how instrumental this assignment was in the outcome of the Council.

The untimely death of clergy delegate Father Stephen Karaffa the next morning – he suffered a heart attack at the All-American Council and died immediately – reminded me how unexpectedly our lives can be whisked away. It also made me realize how easy it could be to take anger and resentment to the grave. A memorial service for Father Stephen later that day made the mood even more subdued. I now wonder if his memorial service symbolized the “death” of the “old way” of administration.

We heard the report of the Special Investigative Committee [SIC], in which the crisis was labeled as a “systematic failure” – particularly with regard to record keeping. During the course of the AAC, it was repeatedly stated how important it was to “demand receipts” and how “record keeping protects everyone.” Recommendations were also made by the SIC. I found a ray of hope in their demand for competency and qualifications in the

a strategic plan, even best practices! Would sound (and godly) administrative practices really be implemented by the OCA?

From reports given by the new administration, I was greatly impressed by the professionalism and attempts for transparency. Father Michael Tassos, OCA treasurer, stated that it was not a good idea to put “unqualified and untrained people in positions of authority.” I was overjoyed! I firmly believe that good business practices are a gift from God, regardless of whether they come from the “secular” world; hence, we are being “wise stewards” when we implement them in the Church.

The highlight of the AAC for me were the events surrounding the election of the Metropolitan. The night before the election, I (and many others) got my first exposure to Bishop Jonah when – as a bishop for a mere 11 days – he addressed the questions that had been submitted to the Holy Synod the night before. This new bishop had only been speaking a few minutes when I felt something happen. [I encourage you to log on to www.oca.org or <http://ancientfaith.com/specials/oca15aac> to listen to Bishop Jonah’s response titled “Bishop Jonah Addresses Questions and Concerns.” I must admit, however, that when I listened to it on-line, it did not “feel” the same for me as it did when it was first delivered at the Council.] I was convinced that the Holy Spirit visited us that evening and proceeded to touch the hearts of many. The former head of a monastery, consecrated as Bishop of Forth Worth less than two weeks earlier, delivered energy, passion, and love at a time when we desperately needed to be healed. “It is over,” he said with a confidence that soothed my broken spirit.

I had to know more about this bishop. I returned to my hotel room that evening and looked up his biography on-line. The next morning, I queried acquaintances: “What did you think?” Others had been struck in the same way. As the session for the election began at 11:00 a.m., the room was packed and the doors were sealed. We were asked to make the Sign of the Cross and then write one name on our ballots. The entire process lasted until 2:30 that afternoon, as two votes had to be taken. [A 2/3rd majority vote was needed, which was not reached the first time. There was a second vote, for which we had to write two names on our ballots.] While the ballots were being counted, we sang numerous hymns, again and again. When the proclamation was finally made that Bishop Jonah was to be our new Metropolitan, there were shouts of joy, shouts of “Axios,” and ringing of the bells just outside the doors. From that moment, the entire tone of the assembly shifted. We now had a Metropolitan with no history or ties to the earlier administration or Holy Synod. Throughout the rest of the Council, Metropolitan Jonah continued to deliver messages of hope, change, ministry – and even tithing!

It feels immensely good to come away from the All-American Council with a sense of hope for our beloved Orthodox Church in America. Our work, however, has only just begun. Metropolitan Jonah needs our prayers, for the evil one will attempt to thwart God’s goodness. Let us pray to the Lord. ■

Ann Marie Gidus-Mecera is a member of St. Gregory of Nyssa Church, Columbus, OH, and serves on the Midwest Diocesan Council.

An end and a beginning

Two major events recently occurred in the Orthodox world. They took place on opposite ends of the world, but both are noteworthy for us. The election of Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth as Metropolitan at the 15th All-American Council last November will obviously affect the Orthodox Church in America. The other event, the passing away of Patriarch Aleksey II of Moscow, had no direct impact on the Orthodox Church in America, but it does symbolize the end of an era that had significance for us. Let us look at these two coincidental events and consider what connections may exist between them.

The late Patriarch Aleksey will be remembered as one of the great Orthodox hierarchs of our time. As the Patriarch of the enormous Russian Orthodox Church, he had to possess unquestionable spiritual integrity and the capability to be an efficient ecclesiastical leader. But his position required that he also be an adept political diplomat and an articulate spokesman on social issues. In all of these areas, Patriarch Aleksey was outstanding. His years as Patriarch coincided with what was a very complicated period in Russia's history. He was elected Patriarch just before the fall of Communism, which ended 70 years of the violent anti-Christian regime that almost destroyed the Russian Church. Charting the course of renewal and reconstruction, Patriarch Aleksey maintained an ideal balance of essential leadership qualities: determination and negotiation, conviction and compromise, courage and compassion.

Patriarch Aleksey's influence was felt throughout the world. Any serious discussion about Orthodox Christianity could not overlook him. He was universally recognized as one of the premier religious leaders. That being the case, the Orthodox Church in America was privileged to know that he was a real friend. Especially comforting was the fact that this friendship was not motivated by possibilities of gaining a political advantage. There was a real bond of endearment, full of genuine mutual respect. Perhaps because he was born in pre-Communist Estonia and raised in a more "European" climate, Patriarch Aleksey showed an "openness" to the West not always evident among Russian churchmen. As a young bishop, he was the chancellor of the Russian Church during the period that led to the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America in 1970. But it was during the early years of his Patriarchal tenure, just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, that Patriarch Aleksey and the Orthodox Church in America developed a very special relationship.

The Patriarch made two official visits to the United States in the early 1990s. These were memorable media events. Here



we had the Patriarch of Moscow, a living, visible survivor of the Communist holocaust and the leader of the largest Orthodox Church in the world, who was also a friendly and enthusiastic supporter of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America. His presence in America automatically put our Church into the limelight, lifting morale and confidence. It was as if the

resurrection of our ecclesiastical mother, the Russian Church, also signaled the emergence of its youngest daughter, the Orthodox Church in America, into the major leagues of Orthodoxy. A mutually beneficial relationship with the Russian Church and the Orthodox Church in America resulted in ongoing discussions, frequent visitations between Church hierarchs and administrators, and the establishment of a Representation Church in Moscow. All of this involved the Patriarch, in some cases very directly. Patriarch Aleksey was also instrumental in the planning and execution of the return of the Tikhvin Icon of the Theotokos to Russia. In some ways, the return of the Tikhvin Icon in 2004 was a magnificent celebration of the wonderful reciprocal affection of the two Churches, yet it also marked a gear shifting in that relationship. Soon after, Patriarch Aleksey became involved in negotiations that led to the reconciliation of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. That was a phenomenal ecclesiastical accomplishment, but it did change the special status that the Orthodox Church in America had enjoyed during the previous decade. Our financial and administrative crises during the past several years only added to a distancing between the Churches. Now, with the passing away of His Holiness,



The legacy of the Russian Church in North America is the missionary spirit of our first saints – Saints Herman and Innocent – and the evangelizing teachings of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Priest-Martyrs Alexander Hotovitzky and John Kochurov.... The great value of the legacy of those saints is that they did not employ their time and talents to establish a "Russian Mission" in North America; rather, they were dedicated to the establishment of an indigenous Orthodox Church here.



Patriarch Aleksy, and the unknown prospect of what his successor will be like, the future relationship between the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church remains to be seen. All this simply begs the question: What should be the relationship between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church in America?

The new Primate of the Orthodox Church in America will play a decisive role in answering that question. What can be said from the outset is that everything is going to be different because Metropolitan Jonah is unlike any of his predecessors. He was consecrated to the episcopacy a mere 11 days before his selection as Metropolitan; he is the first convert to lead this Church; he is young, energetic and visionary. He brings to the Orthodox Church in America new life, new ideas, and new expectations. And his arrival as Primate happens to be in a Church that is in the midst of change. The changes that are needed will take place on many levels, involving different categories. One area will be in discerning how the Orthodox Church in America sees its role in relations with other Christians and religions. The nature of the relationship with the Russian Church will be a major part of that effort. In this area, Metropolitan Jonah's background will give him a head start. His monastic formation took place at the great Valaam Monastery in northern Russia, and he also worked for the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate. He speaks Russian and has a genuine appreciation for the history and contemporary life of the Russian people.

The connection to the Russian Orthodox Church can never be forgotten. But it is important to understand the historical context of that relationship and that it was not built on ethnic orientation or nationalistic identity. From the very beginning, the vision of the Russian missionaries was inclusive rather than exclusive. The legacy of the Russian Church in North America is the missionary spirit of our first saints – Saints Herman and Innocent – and the evangelizing teachings of Holy Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Priest-Martyrs Alexander Hotovitzky and John Kochurov. The achievement of these men was the implantation of the missionary imperative into the fabric of the North American Orthodox Diocese, which is now the cornerstone of the Orthodox Church in America. The great value of the legacy of those saints is that they did not employ their time and talents to establish a "Russian Mission" in North America; rather, they were dedicated to the establishment of an indigenous Orthodox Church here.

As he begins to take the helm of the ship, Metropolitan Jonah will face a variety of issues, and some of them will be complex and difficult. Past failures, like past accomplishments, need to be considered. Wise and learned counsel, prayerful reflection, and intelligent pragmatism, as well as spirited bold leadership, will all have to be brought into the processes of forming strategies and actions. Then too, we know that our contemporary world is in the state of interminable and unpredictable change. Standing still is simply not an option. Social, political, and technological changes are occurring with astounding frequency. There are no signs that there will be any slowing down in the near future. Adjusting to these changes has become a necessity for survival. "Wisdom is more mobile than any motion" [Wisdom of Solomon

7:24]. Leaders, whether in politics or business or in churches, are those who can manage to change with the circumstances in the most effective ways. For us, Orthodox Christians, there always will remain the commitment to remember and treasure the past. Our planning for the future can never overtake the remembrance of the past, but neither can the past hinder the process of going forward.



Prayer, moral and financial support, volunteer work, creativity, initiative, enthusiasm, sacrifice.... It is easier to talk about these things than to actually do them. But we prayerfully hope to see the emergence of a new, vibrant, and stable Orthodox Church in America.



Metropolitan Jonah can profit by taking some lessons from the late Patriarch. Although the Orthodox Church in America is not experiencing anything like that experienced by the Russian Church, it is now facing a period of critical transition. Key elements of Church structures, ecclesiastical identity, and mission require reassessment and renewal. This is similar, in significant ways, to what Patriarch Aleksy faced as the Russian Church came out of its repressed dormancy in 1991. And like the Russian Church of the 1990s, the Orthodox Church in America is composed of people from diametrically opposed viewpoints, many of whom refuse to compromise. The Patriarch was able to achieve success because he was able to bring people together, to listen to their opinions, to take the best that was offered, and to make hard decisions with resolute confidence. His spiritual maturity and wisdom were never questioned, but he was able to compromise when it was necessary.

It is easier to talk about these things than to actually do them. But we prayerfully hope to see the emergence of a new, vibrant, and stable Orthodox Church in America, and there is no doubt that it will require extraordinary effort on the part of Church leaders. The Metropolitan and Holy Synod, followed by the Metropolitan Council and the entire Church, all will be called upon to do their part. Prayer, moral and financial support, volunteer work, creativity, initiative, enthusiasm, and sacrifice – all of these things will be required in abundance. The legacy of Patriarch Aleksy is the knowledge that human beings can be strengthened by God to do superhuman things. The promise of Metropolitan Jonah is that, with the time and resources now available, the Orthodox Church in America has the opportunity to attain maturity "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," as the One Body of Christ, where each part works properly "and upbuilds itself in love" [Ephesians 4:13,16]. ■

A “watershed

Delegates to the 15th All-American Council arrived in Pittsburgh with uncertain expectations and a plethora of feelings ranging from confusion to downright anger. What they returned home with, however, was described as nothing less than “a manifestation of the Holy Spirit” and a “turning point” in the life of a Church in search of healing.

The Council opened on Monday, November 10, 2008, with a Service of Thanksgiving at which His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South, *Locum Tenens* of the Metropolitan See, presided. In his opening addresses, the OCA’s senior hierarch emphasized the need for every member of the Church – hierarchs, clergy, and laity alike – to rededicate themselves to the vision of the Orthodox Church in America “grounded in Christ’s Great Commission” and the fundamental principle all believers are “members of one another in Christ.”

The opening plenary session continued with the usual selection of chairs and committees. Among the appointees was Mr. John Kozey, lay co-chair, whose efforts to bring to light financial improprieties at the OCA Chancery had been recognized in the report of the Special Investigating Committee. His appointment was greeted with the delegate’s heartfelt applause.

A discussion of the series of town hall meetings conducted across the US and Canada in the months leading up to the AAC, during which the opinions, frustrations, hopes, and concerns of the faithful were heard, followed. His Grace, Bishop Nikon of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese, who chaired the preconciliar commission, spoke of the importance of the often tense gatherings as necessary to the healing process that was so urgently needed. In an unprecedented move, delegates



were asked to submit written questions to the hierarchs to answer in subsequent plenary sessions.

Later that evening, His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, offered a meditation during the celebration of Compline and the Canon of Repentance. He underscored the importance of understanding one’s own brokenness in the light of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection. “It is the reality of the Lord’s death and rising again,” he said, “that gives context and strength in the face of all suffering.”

Tuesday’s agenda opened with a stark reminder of life’s greatest joys and sorrows. After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, at which Archbishop Dmitri presided, the mood turned somber as delegates offered prayers for the repose

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moment”



of the Very Rev. Stephen Karaffa, rector of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Burr Ridge, IL, who had suffered a fatal heart attack upon returning to his room after receiving Holy Communion at the Liturgy.

The day’s plenary sessions were devoted to a review of the report and recommendations of the OCA’s Special Investigating Committee [SIC]. His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West, who chaired the SIC, and other committee members facilitated the session. In yet another unprecedented move, the other hierarchs descended from their places on the dais and sat among the delegates for the presentation. A frank dialogue ensued as the painful events surrounding serious financial mismanagement at the OCA Chancery were recounted and acknowledged.

On Tuesday evening, delegates heard detailed reports from three administrative team members – the Very Rev. Alexander Garklavs, chancellor; the Very Rev. Eric G. Tosi, secretary; and the Very Rev. Andrew Jarmus, director of ministries and communications. The hierarchs then offered responses to questions submitted by delegates the previous day. His Grace, Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth, who had just been consecrated to the episcopacy less than two weeks earlier, fielded questions on behalf of the Holy Synod. He firmly stated that the days of “leadership by intimidation” in the OCA were over. Christian leadership, he stressed, is rooted in love, while obedience is a matter of cooperation out of love and respect. “Authority is responsibility,” he said emphatically. “Authority is accountability. It’s not power.” He went on to call upon the faithful to put aside any feelings of bitterness, acknowledging that these emotions are harmful to oneself and to others. It was widely acknowledged that Bishop Jonah’s comments marked a significant “turning point” in the AAC’s mood and direction.

Anticipation ran high on Wednesday morning as AAC delegates gathered to elect a new Primate for the Orthodox Church in America. Bishop Jonah, who as one delegate observed had “electrified the assembly the night before with his answers and observations,” received the highest number of votes on the first round of voting, followed by His Eminence, Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest, highly regarded by many for his uncompromising calls for truth and transparency in recent years. Since neither hierarch garnered the necessary two-thirds majority required for election, a second ballot was taken. Again, Bishop Jonah received the highest number of votes, followed by Archbishop Job. Shortly after retiring to the altar to deliberate, the members of the Holy Synod emerged and announced that Bishop Jonah had been elected Metropolitan of All America and Canada as enthusiastic shouts of “Axios! He is worthy!” rang out. Their decision was especially joyous since, unlike the elections of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius in 1977 and His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman in 2002, the hierarchs elected the candidate who had received the highest number of delegate votes.

Few could have predicted Bishop Jonah’s election, especially in light of the fact that he had just been consecrated to the episcopacy eleven days earlier to serve as auxiliary to Archbishop Dmitri and chancellor of the geographically immense Diocese of the South. But, as countless delegates observed, the Holy Spirit truly had revealed His will for the Church, and Metropolitan Jonah, with no ties to the scandal-ridden previous administration, was recognized as the one best equipped to return stability and integrity to the OCA.

The AAC’s mood – and pace – rapidly changed in the wake of Metropolitan Jonah’s election. After the celebration of a Service of Thanksgiving, during which Archbishop Dmitri presented the archpastoral staff to Metropolitan Jonah and Archbishop Job and the other members of the Holy Synod vested him in the Primate’s blue mantiya, delegates listened with renewed interest to numerous reports on the OCA’s financial condition.

AAC to 18

AAC from 17

Chaired by Father Michael Tassos, OCA treasurer, the session opened with a report from Mr. John Barrone, a partner in the accounting firm of Weiser LLP that conducted the external audit of the OCA's 2007 financial statements. He explained that his firm would be issuing a qualified opinion letter on the 2007 financial statements due to a lack of clarity in restricted and unrestricted funds as a result of the previous administration's lack of adequate accounting records. He strongly recommended that a proper attitude toward the importance of sound accounting procedures and competent financial personnel were essential to ensure proper financial practices.

The Very Rev. Matthew Tate, who chairs the Metropolitan Council finance committee, joined Father Michael in reviewing steps taken by the Metropolitan Council over the past four years in the effort to address issues of financial mismanagement at the OCA Chancery. It was noted that one of the significant changes implemented by the Metropolitan Council was the decision to no longer pass deficit budgets. In the past, deficits had run as high as \$1.2 million.

After reviewing the OCA's 2008 financial situation, Father Michael listed a number of action items requiring attention, including expenses related to legal matters; assurances that financial reporting is undertaken in a regular, timely, and accurate manner; and the implementation of the Blackbaud accounting software. He concluded by emphasizing that, while finances must be cared for properly and responsibly, the life of the Church was not about money – although responsible financial practices naturally ensure that the Church can undertake its mission effectively – but about doing the work to which Christ has called His People.

The Very Rev. Paul Suda, chair of the OCA's internal audit committee, reported that with only a few minor exceptions, financial matters at the OCA Chancery were in good order due to the diligence of the Chancery's financial staff under Father Michael's supervision.

In a report on the OCA pension plan, the Very Rev. Michael Westerberg, group leader, stated that approximately 62% of eligible OCA clergy participated in the plan, adding that as of November 7, 2008, the plan was worth \$19,357,798.00. Although the worth of the plan had dropped due to volatile markets, the overall worth had increased since 2007. Father Michael, in response to concerns raised in light of pending legal actions against the Church, stated that the plan's assets are entirely separate from those of the Church, with all pension plan assets belonging to participants.

Wednesday's events concluded with a formal dinner. Guests included His Grace, Bishop Mark of Toledo and the Midwest of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, who also attended the day's plenary sessions. The Very Rev. Alexander Lebedev, who had conveyed fraternal greetings from His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia at the AAC's opening session, also attended.

The keynote dinner speaker, Father Alexander Garklavs, opened his remarks by stating that conflicts are not new to the Church. He called the scandal the OCA had been facing



SVS alumni congratulate Metropolitan Jonah.



Closing Divine Liturgy.



Bishop Benjamin reports on the Special Investigating Committee's findings.

“a sign of our coming of age.” Citing a variety of ongoing challenges and issues, he shared his hope that the faithful will persevere through the legacy of the Church’s living Tradition. Turning his attention to the clergy, he remarked how, while very difficult at times, the priestly ministry was the most noble of vocations. After expressing gratitude to the AAC local planning committee, he reflected on the election of Metropolitan Jonah, adding that while complaints that the bishops fail to speak out enough were not uncommon, they certainly had spoken out clearly – without uttering a word – in the manner in which the election was conducted.

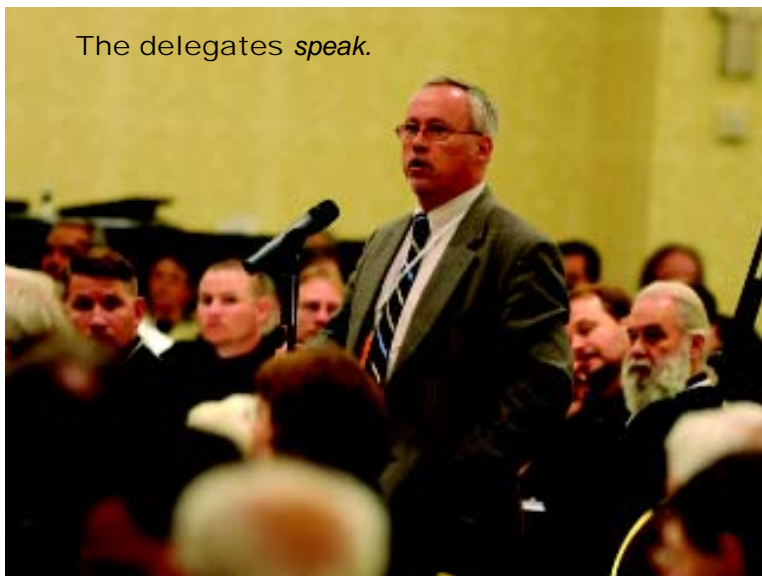
Following greetings by representatives of International Orthodox Christian Charities and the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, Metropolitan Jonah addressed the gathering. Stating that Christian leadership was grounded in service, not in power, he shared his vision of the work that lies ahead for the OCA. He stressed that ministries, especially those involving young adults and college students and evangelization, must be at the heart of the Church’s mission if it is to provide a safe haven and refuge for healing a society filled with pain and disillusionment. He also identified inter-Church relations as an important priority for the OCA. In order to be respected and affirmed by other Churches, he said, it is essential for the OCA to offer its respect and affirmation. Above all, he stressed, living the faith and renewing the commitment to spiritual discipline and the sacramental life is crucial to the life of every member of the Church. Doing so will bear much fruit in one’s personal life, filling the initiatives taken on by the Church with grace.



Metropolitan Council deliberates.

Metropolitan Jonah presided at the celebration of the Liturgy on the final day of the AAC. In his homily, he reflected on the words of the day’s Gospel reading, in which Jesus identified Himself as the Good Shepherd. He stressed that the only way to achieve abundant life, banish despair, and acquire hope is by placing Christ above all else. “Very few things cannot be worked out and resolved if we approach them with good will, if we approach them keeping Christ first and foremost as the criteria of our life and our judgment,” he said.

The final plenary session opened with a discussion on Church finances. A central issue was the approval of the per capita assessment for the next triennium. In response to the resolution presented by the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania – to reduce the assessment to \$50.00 per adult member – Metropolitan Jonah stated flatly that funding the central Church by means of a “head tax” must come to an end. The proper way to fund Church life, he stated, is through the biblical model of tithing – a target of 10% giving. He identified the goal of “scaling down” central administrative operations so that they can be funded by tithes received from the dioceses. However, he cautioned that it will take time for the Church as a whole to embrace this model of giving, and that in the meantime, the Church has legitimate financial needs that must be met. He stated that a radical reduction in assessments would prevent the Church from meeting its responsibilities and hinder the effective operations of the central Church, including the work that he would be able to accomplish as Primate.



The delegates speak.

Biography

Metropolitan Jonah

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, was born James Paffhausen in Chicago, IL, on October 20, 1959. He was baptized into the Episcopalian tradition. While still a child, his family moved to La Jolla, CA, near San Diego.

He was received into the Orthodox Faith at the Moscow Patriarchate's Church of Our Lady of Kazan, San Diego, while he was a student at the University of California San Diego in 1978. Later, he transferred to the University of California Santa Cruz, where he was instrumental in establishing an Orthodox Christian Fellowship.

After completing studies at UCSC, he began studies at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, which which he received a Master of Divinity degree in 1985 and a Master of Theology in Dogmatics in 1988. He pursued graduate studies towards a Ph.D. at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, but interrupted his studies to spend a year in Russia.

In Moscow, working for *Russkiy Palomnik* at the Publishing Department of the Moscow Patriarchate, he was introduced to life in the Russian Church in general and monastic life in particular. Subsequently, he entered the Valaam Monastery, having found a spiritual father in the monastery's abbot, Archimandrite Pankratiy. It was Archimandrite Pankratiy's spiritual father, the Elder Kyrill at the Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra, who gave him the blessing to become a priestmonk. He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1994. The following year, he was tonsured to monastic rank at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA, having been given the name Jonah.

After his return to the US, Father Jonah served a number of missions in California. In time, he was given the obedience to establish a monastery under the patronage of Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco in Point Reyes Station, CA.



The monastery eventually was relocated to Manton in northern California, near Redding. While building up the monastic community, he also worked to establish missions in Merced, Sonora, Chico, Eureka, Redding, Susanville, and other California communities, and in Kona, HI.

In the spring of 2008, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America elevated Father Jonah to the rank of Archimandrite and gave him the blessing to leave the monastery to take on the responsibilities of auxiliary bishop and chancellor of the Diocese of the South. On September 4, 2008, he was elected to the episcopacy at an extraordinary meeting of the Holy Synod. Earlier, his candidacy was endorsed by members of the Diocese of the South's Diocesan Council. He was consecrated Bishop of Forth Worth and Auxiliary of the Diocese of the South at Saint Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX, on Saturday, November 1, 2008. The consecrating hierarchs included His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South, Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan See; His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania; His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; and His Grace, Bishop Alejo of Mexico City and the Exarchate of Mexico.

On November 12, 2008, Bishop Jonah was elected Primate of the Orthodox Church in America with the title of Archbishop of Washington and New York, Metropolitan of All America and Canada. ■

AAC from 19

After considerable discussion, the delegates passed a per capita assessment of \$105.00 per adult member for the next triennium. With this decision, the delegates expressed the expectation that the OCA will move to a model of percentage giving for funding the work of the Church, ideally by the 16th All-American Council. A related motion stated that dioceses may pay their assessments by means of proportional giving during the next three years, instead of waiting for this issue to be discussed at the next AAC. Delegates also heard a brief presentation by OCA general counsel, Mr. Thaddeus Wojcik, who defined his role "as helping Church leadership comply with the law."

Delegates unanimously and enthusiastically resolved to recognize Protodeacon Eric Wheeler, the former OCA treasurer who first brought to light the financial mismanagement at the

Chancery, and offered an apology to him for the mistreatment he had endured as a result of his actions. Also passed was an amendment to the OCA Statute mandating that the Metropolitan Council appoint members to the internal audit committee and requiring all committee members possess appropriate financial experience and qualifications. A proposed amendment calling for the election of the Primate by lot was tabled.

The overwhelming majority of AAC participants spoke of the gathering as a "watershed moment" for the Church and shared the conviction that what took place clearly came about by the action of the Holy Spirit. In a spirit of open dialogue, "speaking the truth in love," and with the election of a new Metropolitan, participants felt that they could report to the members of their respective parishes that the OCA had turned a corner, and that there was great hope for the Church's future. AJ ■

BRIEFING

15th AAC elections

The **Very Rev. David Garretson** and **Dr. Faith Skordinski** were elected to six-year terms on the **Metropolitan Council**, while the **Very Rev. Theodore Bobosh** and **Protodeacon Peter Danilchik** were elected to three-year terms. The **Rev. Thomas Moore** and **Dr. Paul Meyendorff** were elected alternates. The **Very Rev. John Zdinak**, the **Rev. Gleb McFatter**, and **Mr. John Sedor** were elected to six-year terms on the **pension board**, while the **Rev. John Hopko** and **Mr. Gregory Shesko** were elected to three-year terms. The **Very Rev. John Adamcio** and **Mr. Martin Brown** were elected alternates.

Funds disbursed as 2008 ends

◆ **Approximately \$78,000.00** received in response to the **2008 Seminary Appeal** was divided equally between Saint Vladimir's, Saint Tikhon's, and Saint Herman's Seminaries. By resolution of the Metropolitan Council with the approval of the Holy Synod, the annual appeal will be discontinued in 2009, during which only **two appeals** – one to support the seminary **internship program**, a second to fund Church **planting grants** for upstart mission communities – will be taken.

◆ The **balance of the OCA's 9/11 Fund** – a priority for the current Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council – was **sent to the New York Disaster Interfaith Services**. Approximately \$285,000.00 had been collected by the OCA in the wake of the 9/11 tragedy. The payment came from the OCA's Unrestricted Endowment Fund, replacing portions of the 9/11 Fund not previously distributed.

◆ **Grants** administered by the **charity committee**, chaired by the **Very Rev. John Reeves**, also were distributed. **Receiving \$5,000.00 grants** were the **Loaves and Fishes Ministry, Atlanta, GA**, a pan-Orthodox outreach to that city's needy, and **Raphael House, San Francisco, CA**, the region's first shelter for homeless children and families. An **\$8,000.00 grant** was given to the **Saint George Food Pantry, Pharr, TX**, which assists needy families in Hidalgo County, statistically the second poorest county in the US.

Financial reports released

◆ The **report of the Rev. Michael Tassos**, treasurer, to the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council on the **first three quarters of 2008** is posted on the OCA web site at www.oca.org/news/1732.

◆ Supporting **financial data** is posted at www.oca.org/PDF/finances/2008-12-oca-financial-report.pdf.

Holy Synod issues statement on Sidebottom case

The following **statement was posted on the OCA web site** on December 10, 2008.

"The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, a New York religious corporation [the 'OCA'], has

concluded an investigation into the allegations made by Paul Sidebottom regarding actions by Archimandrite Isidore [Brittain] which took place in Kodiak, Alaska on May 16 – 17, 2007. While the OCA does not admit liability for any of the matters involved in Mr. Sidebottom's allegations of sexual harassment, those allegations have been found to be credible by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ['EEOC'] in its investigation of Mr. Sidebottom's allegations, and the Holy Synod recognizes that the consequences of the protracted investigation have been a source of much distress to Mr. Sidebottom. The Holy Synod regrets any adverse impact these circumstances have had on Mr. Sidebottom. The Holy Synod also regrets that Mr. Sidebottom was discharged from his position at St. Herman's Seminary by the now-retired Bishop of Alaska, Nikolai, in retaliation for filing the complaint with the OCA, as found by the EEOC in its investigation of Mr. Sidebottom's allegations. In bringing this unfortunate case to a conclusion, the Holy Synod prays that the parties hurt and affected will partake of the merciful love, healing and peace that Our Lord Jesus Christ grants to all. The Holy Synod willingly embraces its Christian duty to facilitate healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, and it prays that these and other steps taken will, by God's grace, lead to that end."

Holy Synod meets in DC

In conjunction with the enthronement of Metropolitan Jonah, the **Holy Synod of Bishops** met in Washington, DC, on December 29.

Topping the agenda was **preparation for the strategic plan** mandated at the 15th All-American Council. The hierarchs heard a presentation by Metropolitan Council members **Protodeacon Peter Danilchick**, **Deacon John Zarras**, and **Dr. Dmitri Solodow**, who outlined possible processes for developing the plan. **Metropolitan Jonah** stressed that strategic planning must be carried out **under the initiative and guidance of the Holy Synod**, but that it is critical that the planning process also involve the **Metropolitan Council and the Church at large**. The hierarchs will discuss development of the plan at their mid-January meeting in Mexico City, which coincides with the **enthronement of Bishop Alejo of Mexico City and the Exarchate of Mexico**, and also at their February 2009 retreat.

The hierarchs also heard a **progress report** on issues involving **Saint Tikhon's Monastery, Seminary, and bookstore**; appointed members of the **Lesser Synod**; and, having reviewed a number of episcopal candidates, decided to consider **possible episcopal elections** at their **spring 2009 session**, when such matters are normally considered.

In a related matter, the **Metropolitan Council** will meet at the OCA Chancery on February 18-20, 2009. Members of the Lesser Synod – **Metropolitan Jonah**, **Archbishop Nathaniel**, **Archbishop Job**, and **Bishop Benjamin** – will join them. Among the agenda items will be a discussion on developing a process for creating the strategic plan. ■

The transition begins

The enthronement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, at Washington, DC's Saint Nicholas Cathedral on Sunday, December 28, 2008, heralded the beginning of yet another period of transition for the Orthodox Church in America – the transition from discussing the future of the Church to making it happen.

Clergy and faithful from across North America filled the cathedral early in anticipation of Metropolitan Jonah's enthronement in the presence of the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops and numerous guest hierarchs from North America and abroad.

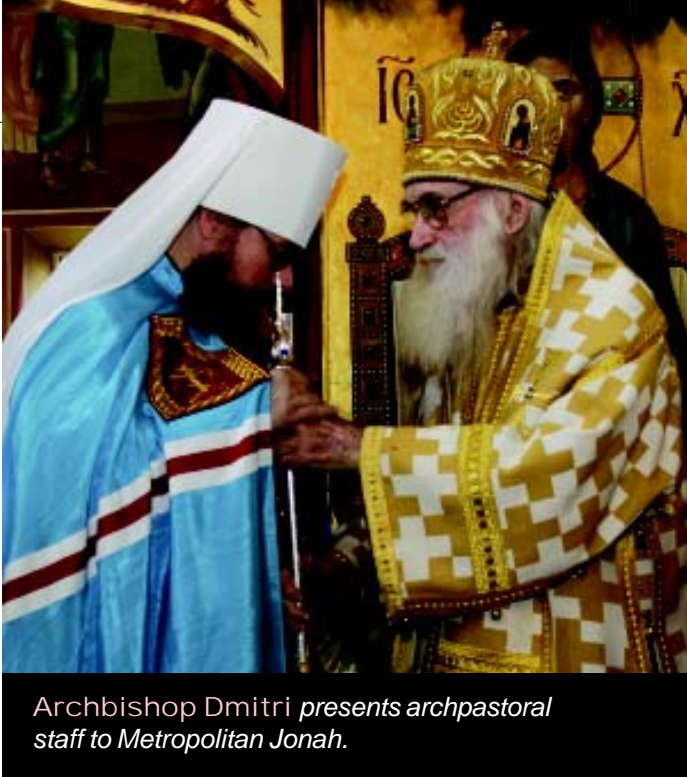
"Unfortunately, due to poor travel conditions in some regions, not all of those who were to have taken part were able to participate," said OCA director of ministries and communications, the Very Rev. Andrew Jarmus. "His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland, after sitting for the better part of a day in the Helsinki airport with no chance of getting on a flight, sent a message that was read at the enthronement banquet. [*The text may be found on page 23 of this issue.*] And staffers from Ancient Faith Radio, which broadcast the proceedings of the All-American Council, also were among the weather's casualties!"

Among the guest hierarchs and clergy representing Orthodox

sister Churches who were able to attend were His Grace, Bishop Mercurius, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA, who represented His Eminence, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Patriarchal Locum Tenens of the Church of Russia; His Grace, Bishop Ilia of Philomelion, who represented His Beatitude, Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana, Durres, and All Albania; and His Eminence, Archbishop Abel of Lublin and Kholm, who brought greetings from His Beatitude, Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland. North American hierarchs taking part in the Divine Liturgy and enthronement included His Eminence, Metropolitan Christopher of the Serbian Orthodox Midwestern Diocese; His Eminence, Archbishop Nicolae of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada; His Grace, Bishop Thomas of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America; and His Grace, Jerome of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Metropolitan Jonah with members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, guest hierarchs, and representatives of sister Orthodox Churches.





Archbishop Dmitri presents archpastoral staff to Metropolitan Jonah.

“In addition to the visiting hierarchs, numerous clergy representing other Churches were present, including the Rev. Mark Arey, ecumenical officer of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, who represented the Patriarchate of Constantinople; the Very Rev. Jan Polansky, who represented the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia; and Archimandrite Kirill [Hovorun], who represented the Church of Ukraine,” Father Andrew said. “The Russian Ambassador to the US, His Excellency, Mr. Sergei Kislyak, was also present.”

In his banquet address, Metropolitan Jonah said that the Church can keep the message of hope alive only if all of its members keep their eyes fixed on Jesus Christ alone. He stated that the vision of the Church had been very narrow in the past, and that it was time to broaden it to include the work of bringing all people into communion with the Father. This, however, will only be achieved as members of the Church become the living presence of Christ in the world, “going into highways and byways to bring in whoever may come.”

Turning his attention to Orthodox unity in North America, Metropolitan Jonah stressed that this is a goal to which all of the faithful must strive. Unity is not only a canonical or institutional imperative, he noted, but the will of God, Who calls His People to put aside the things that separate them from one another. However, he continued, the task of achieving unity in North America must be carried out with utmost respect and love for the other Orthodox churches of the world who have faithful here.

Metropolitan Jonah concluded his address by referring to the enthronement a celebration of new birth in the OCA. Making reference to the process of strategic planning mandated by delegates to the 15th All-American Council, he said that the time had come for the OCA to overcome “old ways of being Church” and to reevaluate every aspect of its life. This process of reevaluation, he added, must involve the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Metropolitan Council, the clergy, and the faithful from every corner of the Church. “Overcoming ourselves” for the sake of the Church, he concluded, “is a tremendous ascetic act.” ■

Archbishop Leo of Finland

“Children of the same tradition”

His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland was among those unable to attend the enthronement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, due to weather-related travel problems. His greeting, however, did arrive in time, and was one of many delivered at the enthronement banquet.

The Orthodox Church of Finland, an autonomous Church within the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the Orthodox Church in America share much in common, not the least of which is their connection to Valaam Monastery in Karelia, from which the first missionaries were sent to Alaska in 1794. In his greeting, the text of which follows, Archbishop Leo reflects on this unique relationship and bond.

“A thousand years ago monks from Valaam monastery set out to bring the Gospel to Finland. Two hundred years ago monks from Valaam monastery set out to bring the Gospel to North America. Our two Churches, children of the same tradition, now celebrate together as yet another spiritual child of Valaam, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, begins this same missionary task of bringing the Gospel to North America as the head of the Orthodox Church in America.

“And what is this Gospel? As His Beatitude wrote: “It is the Good News that the Kingdom of God is present, here and now, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and you can be baptized into it, commune of its grace, and be filled with new life. And what does this do for us? It heals our souls, raises us up from despair, and enables us to deal with any obstacles that come in our way.”

“Two thousand years of tradition in two sentences! Only an American could do this. Only an American would want to do this. The words are simple, direct, pragmatic. And yet, what hope is in these words – the Hope of the God Who became Man for our sake, the Hope of a suffering world, the hope of old words when spoken by a young, vital speaker.

“Hope, too, for the Orthodox Church. The OCA has a vocation not only to bring hope to the world, and to North America specifically, but to bring hope to the Orthodox world as well. Hope that things do not always have to be done in the same, old, no-longer productive ways; Hope that as things change, they *can* change for the better; Hope that the future can be as exciting as a glorious past. Among many Orthodox Churches such notions are almost unthinkable – and certainly not easy to do. But if the two hundred year history of the OCA shows anything, in its growth from a group of monks from Valaam, through missionary diocese, to diocese, archdiocese, independent Metropolia and finally autocephalous Church – it is that much that is not possible elsewhere *is* possible in North America. The Orthodox Church is a State Church – but not in America. The Orthodox

Finland to 24

Fraternal visits

In the days following his election, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah met with leaders of other Orthodox Christian Churches in North America.

On November 17, His Grace, Bishop Mercurius of Zarsk, Administrator of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchal Parishes in the USA, visited Metropolitan Jonah, who also hosted His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and His Grace, Bishop John of Caracas, at the OCA chancery two weeks later. His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, welcomed Metropolitan Jonah at his residence in Englewood, NJ on December 10. His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, hosted Metropolitan Jonah to the Archdiocesan Offices in New York City on December 21. ■



ROCOR Metropolitan Hilarion and Bishop John with Metropolitan Jonah in St. Sergius Chapel at the OCA Chancery.



Archbishop Mercurius with Metropolitan Jonah and Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky.



Archbishop Demetrios hosts Metropolitan Jonah at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

Finland from 23

Church is ethnically homogeneous – but not in America. The Orthodox Church worships in ancient languages few understand – but not in America. (And not in Finland, either!)

“But important as such changes are, it is equally important that the OCA’s vocation has been to keep safe vital Orthodox traditions from the past. It is in the OCA that the legacy of Saint Patriarch Tikhon’s conciliar approach to Church life endures – even if he himself could not keep it alive in Russia during the Communist era. It is in the OCA that Father Florovsky and Father Meyendorff continued to develop the highest traditions of Orthodox theological education – when so much of the Orthodox world was forced into silence. It was in the OCA that Father Schmemmann carried out his work – a legacy that is still helping a whole Church recover its Eucharistic identity and a deeper understanding of its liturgical traditions.

“Your Beatitude: This vocation of unique change and innovative continuity, this missionary vocation springing from Valaam, is important to the whole of North America, and

important to the whole Orthodox Church. We have seen what happens when this vocation is obscured by desires for recognition, power, position, money – all the temptations that so much of the Orthodox world suffers from. A conciliar, innovative, intellectually vibrant, missionary oriented, eucharistically centered, liturgically alive, diverse Church dedicated to witnessing and serving others can be the salt in the loaf, a loaf that in the hands of our Saviour, can feed a spiritually hungry world.

“What greater ministry is there than this?

“Your Beatitude: Guard this unique vocation of your Church, this ministry of the OCA, for it is not just yours, or North America’s, but in part, all of ours. This is why your brothers and sisters in Christ in the Orthodox Church of Finland send you their most heartfelt greetings and congratulations today. We know you shall add to this wonderful legacy of the OCA. May God keep you, your Synod, your councils, your priests, laity and monastics, your parishes and monasteries, and the three countries you serve, now and forever. Amen.” ■

Official from 2

Diaconate and his name is removed from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America/ September 4, 2008.

■ PARISHES

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA/ New status. St. Aidan of Lindisfarne Mission Station, Cranbrook, BC, Canada is granted mission status and is now known as St. Aidan of Lindisfarne Mission/ August 31, 2008.

DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK/ New mission. All Saints of North America Mission, Alexandria, VA. Mailing address: 5903 Mt. Eagle Dr. #115, Alexandria, VA 22303. Serviced by diocesan clergy/ September 1, 2008.

495 October 2008

■ EPISCOPAL CHANGES

[PACHECO-VERA], Bishop Alejo of Mexico City was elected ruling bishop of the Exarchate of Mexico by the Holy Synod of Bishops. His title remains Bishop of Mexico City/ October 16, 2008.

■ STATUS CHANGE

POLSON, The Rev. Robert John, who was deposed, has had his deposition lifted by the Holy Synod of Bishops on October 16, 2008 and was returned to active duty. He is placed under the omophorion of Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas, attached to the Diocese of Alaska, and attached to St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK/ October 16, 2008.

■ ORDINATIONS

JONES, John was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Job of Chicago at SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Milwaukee, WI. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Job and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest/ July 26, 2008.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

HUBIAK, Protopresbyter Daniel, who is retired, is released from attachment to Christ the Savior Mission, Dagsboro, DE and attached to St. Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC/ October 15, 2008.

JONES, Deacon John is attached to SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Milwaukee, WI/ July 26, 2008.

KONTOS, The Rev. Philip is released from duties at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and attached to the Diocese of the South; and appointed priest-in-charge of St. Peter the Apostle Mission, Jupiter, FL/ August 15, 2008.

MATHEWS, The Rev. Justin is released from duties at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and attached to the Diocese of the South; and appointed associate priest of St. Anne Mission, Knoxville/Oak Ridge, TN/ June 1, 2008.

MUELLER, The Rev. Elijah, in addition to duties at St. Clement of Ohrid Church, Merrillville, IN, is appointed priest-in-charge of the Hyde Park Orthodox Mission, Chicago, IL/ October 2, 2008.

[PAFFHAUSEN], Bishop-Elect Jonah is appointed Chancellor of the Diocese of the South/ September 11, 2008. He is attached to St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX until his consecration to the Episcopacy.

ROWE, The Rev. Christopher, who was attached, is appointed associate priest of Holy Trinity Church, Overland Park, KS/ March 7, 2008.

SHELLBACH, The Rev. Paul, who was on a leave of absence, is returned to active duty. He is released from the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South. October 16, 2008.

SMITH, Deacon Kevin Peter is released from duties at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Dmitri and attached to the Diocese of the South; and attached to St. John of the Ladder Mission, Greenville, SC/ July 1, 2008.

STORY, Deacon Mark is released from duties at Annunciation Church, Milwaukee,

OR, and attached to Holy Apostles Mission, Portland, OR/ September 17, 2008.

WILLIAMSON, The Rev. Christopher is released from duties at St. Mary of Egypt Church, Norcross, GA, and appointed priest-in-charge of St. Innocent Mission, Macon, GA/ October 1, 2008.

■ DEPOSED

[STOIAN], Hierodeacon Iustin, who was attached to Ascension of Our Lord Monastery, Detroit, MI, is deposed from all sacred functions of the Holy Priesthood and his name is removed from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America/ October 16, 2008.

SWIRES, The Rev. Daniel, who was priest-in-charge of Holy Cross Mission, Nashville, OH, is deposed from all sacred functions of the Holy Priesthood and his name is removed from the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America/ October 16, 2008.

■ PARISHES

DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST/ New status. The Hyde Park Orthodox Mission Community, Hyde Park (Chicago), IL, is granted mission status and is now known as Hyde Park Orthodox Mission/ October 2, 2008.

496 November 2008

■ EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION

[PAFFHAUSEN], Bishop-Elect Jonah was consecrated to the Holy Episcopacy at St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX and is now Bishop of Fort Worth, Auxiliary Bishop to His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South. The consecrating hierarchs were Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South; Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern PA; Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West; and Bishop Alejo of Mexico City and the Exarchate of Mexico/ November 1, 2008.

■ EPISCOPAL CHANGES

[ROYSTER], Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South is released from duties as Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan See of the Orthodox Church in America. He is also released from duties as Locum Tenens of the Diocese of Alaska, the Bulgarian Diocese, Military Chaplains, and the Exarchate of Mexico, and as President of the three Seminaries. He remains Archbishop of Dallas and the South/ November 12, 2008.

[STORHEIM], Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada is released from duties as Administrator of the Metropolitan See. He remains Archbishop of Ottawa and Canada/ November 12, 2008.

[PAFFHAUSEN], Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth was elected Metropolitan of All America and Canada and granted the title Archbishop of Washington and New York, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, at the Fifth Plenary Session of the 15th All American Council, Pittsburgh, PA, on November 12, 2008. He is also appointed Locum Tenens of Diocese of Alaska, the Bulgarian Diocese, and Military Chaplains, and serves as the President of the three Seminaries.

■ RECEPTIONS

JENSEN, The Rev. Gregory is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Herman from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. He is transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Job of Chicago and is attached to the Diocese of the Midwest/ June 30, 2008.

■ TONSURED

STRIKIS, The V. Rev. Stavros was tonsured a riasophore monk by Archimandrite Jonah [Paffhausen] at the Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Manton, CA. He is now known as Priestmonk Stavros/ August 29, 2008.

■ ORDINATIONS

[MAJKRZAK], Monk Philip was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Jonah of Fort Worth on behalf of Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco at St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Benjamin and attached to the Diocese of the West/ November 1, 2008.

MOISA, Dan Alexandru was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop

Official from 25

Seraphim of Ottawa at Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, ON, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ November 2, 2008.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

BOERIO, Deacon Daniel is released from duties at Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, ON, Canada and from the omophorion of Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa; transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Job of Chicago; and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest. He is assigned to St. Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH/ November 7, 2008.

DIEHL, The Rev. Andrew, who was on a leave of absence and suspended, has his suspension lifted and is returned to active duty. He is attached to St. John of the Ladder Mission, Greenville, SC/ September 1, 2008.

FOSTER, The Rev. Justin, who was awaiting assignment in the Diocese of the Midwest, is granted retirement/ November 7, 2008.

JENSEN, The Rev. Gregory is appointed priest-in-charge of Holy Assumption Church, Canton, OH and attached to St. John the Baptist Church, Campbell, OH/ July 14, 2008.

KUZARA, The Rev. Michael, who was attached, is appointed associate priest of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL/ November 7, 2008.

[MAJKRZAK], Hierodeacon Philip is attached to Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Mantion, CA/ November 1, 2008.

MOISA, Deacon Dan Alexandru is assigned to Annunciation Cathedral, Ottawa, ON, Canada/ November 2, 2008.

SHELLBACH, The Rev. Paul is attached to St. John of the Ladder Mission, Greenville, SC/ October 22, 2008.

SIMERICK, The V. Rev. Michael is released from duties at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Detroit, MI and granted retirement/ November 15, 2008.

■ RETIREMENTS

FOSTER, The Rev. Justin is granted retirement. He is attached to Holy Apostles Mission, Bloomington/Normal, IL/ November 7, 2008.

SIMERICK, The V. Rev. Michael is granted retirement. He awaits attachment/ November 15, 2008.

■ DEATHS

KARAFFA, The V. Rev. Stephen, rector of SS. Peter and Paul Church, Burr Ridge, IL, died on November 11, 2008. *May his memory be eternal!* ■

QUESTIONS? Write to info@oca.org

Classics from 10

Our common ministry

“for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” [Ephesians 4:12]. Therefore do you, with true love, grow up into Him Who is the Head, even Christ, “from Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” [Ephesians 4:15-16]. Again, Saint John Chrysostom says, “Do not lay all the burden upon us, the clergy. You yourselves can do much; you know one another better than we do....” Therefore, brethren, do you also edify one another: “warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all. See that none render evil for evil unto any man, but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men” [1 Thessalonians 5:15-16]. “But the God of all grace, Who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while make you perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” [1 Peter 5:10-11]. ■

Fasting from 12

On fasting

“Legally,” this indeed fulfills the “fasting laws,” but it completely misses the “spirit” of fasting, as does the yummy lenten chocolate cake or the tasty tofu Italian “sausage” or soy “chicken wings” guaranteed to “taste like the real thing.”

Approaching fasting in this manner – “this is permitted, that isn’t” – not only misses the mark of fasting, but can become a dangerous temptation – the same temptation to which the pharisees succumbed by adhering meticulously to the externals of the law while remaining clueless as to its internal spirit. It can easily lead to spiritual pride and delusion and the self-satisfaction that comes in assuring oneself that “while I’m delighting in this tasty cake, I’m secure in knowing that it meets all lenten ‘requirements’ since there’s not a drop of half-and-half in it.” This is neither fasting nor asceticism. It reflects the very opposite, as more time is spent figuring out how to make tofu taste like sausage than it would to mindlessly fry up a link of real sausage.

Taking things one step further, this approach to fasting is utterly detached from prayer and almsgiving. The time saved by not worrying about what we’ll eat or how to prepare our food, much less “adapt” it, would more wisely be spent in prayer, in worship, in meditation and the reading of Scripture or the Holy Fathers, in reflecting on the countless other things – our anger, our jealousy, our self-centeredness, our sloth, our despair, our lust of power, our idle talk – that are surely within our control, even though we so often allow to control us. Might not the money we save by purchasing simple food be “stewardly” more wisely by giving it to those who have less, or nothing? By quietly and anonymously giving it to an agency that assists those who are out of work or homeless or abused? And, to take all of this one step further, might we not devote a portion of our time to volunteering at one of those agencies, “feeding” those in need with the loving and personal human contact that reveals God’s presence in this world?

Again, fasting is not an option. Neither are repentance, prayer, almsgiving, preparation, asceticism, ministering to the least among us, wisely managing our time and talents and treasures, struggling to overcome our passions, and so on. They’re all related, interconnected, essential. So fast we must – to the extent that we can, without comparing ourselves to others, much less engaging in endless and spiritually dangerous public discussions on what we’ve “given up this Lent” or how “weary” we’ve become by fasting – from those things [including but hardly limited to food] that we’ve allowed to control us, those things of which, with God’s help, we need to take control. Fast we must, in the spirit of the Holy Spirit, rather than in the spirit of the pharisees, and in secret, without fanfare or discussion. And fast we must, not delighting in our ability to transform chocolate cake into a “lenten delight,” but in allowing Our Lord to transform us as we delight in tasting and seeing how good He, the “Bread which came down from heaven,” truly is. Such fasting not only prepares us for the celebration of His resurrection, but prepares us for the eternal heavenly banquet, to which one and all are invited, in His Kingdom. JM ■

Matushka Barbara Sokolov

HEALDSBURG, CA – On the afternoon of Sunday, October 12, 2008, Matushka Barbara Sokolov fell asleep in the Lord at home, surrounded by most of her children.

During the summer, she had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of lung cancer, against which she waged a valiant but brief battle. Throughout her untreatable illness, she was a model of faith in Our Lord, gratefully accepting the prayers and comfort of her children and countless faithful at home and elsewhere. In a letter she wrote about one week before her death, she said, “While it is difficult and sad to let go of this world and especially my dear ones, I truly feel the presence and love of God guiding and embracing me, and filling me with joy and expectation of His Kingdom.”

She was the wife of the late Very Rev. Victor Sokolov, dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA, who died of cancer at the age of 59 on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 12, 2006.

Born Barbara Wrahtz in Glendale, CA, on August 25, 1952, she had been working in Moscow in the mid-1970s when she met her husband, at that time a dissident writer and human rights activist in the USSR. His writings, published in the underground “samizdat,” were smuggled to the West and broadcast back into the USSR via Radio Liberty and Voice of America. In 1975, after he embraced Orthodox Christianity, the couple was married.

Because of his anti-Soviet activities, Mr. Sokolov was forced to immigrate to the US, where he was reunited with Barbara, who was his true friend, companion, and mother of their five children.

After Father Victor’s graduation from Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY, in 1985, he and Matushka Barbara served Holy Resurrection Church, Vancouver, BC, Canada; various missions; and Saints Peter and Paul Church, Buffalo, NY. In 1991, they relocated to San Francisco, where Father Victor served as dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral until his repose in 2006.

Barbara was a beloved and dedicated elementary school teacher. She most recently taught at San Francisco Waldorf School and Summerfield Waldorf School in Santa Rosa, CA.

Matushka Barbara is survived by two sons – Protodeacon Kirill and his wife, Sophia, with their children; Philip and his wife Marie; and three daughters — Tamara, Anna, and Maria.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Seraphim of Sarov Church, Santa Rosa, CA, by the Very Rev. Lawrence Margitich, numerous Bay Area clergy, and Protodeacon Kirill. The responses were sung by the Holy Trinity Cathedral choir along with Matushka’s other children. Interment was at Healdsburg Cemetery, where Father Victor is laid to rest as well.

His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of San Francisco reestablished the “Sokolov Family Fund” to assist the two youngest Sokolov daughters with college expenses. Gifts may be sent to Holy Trinity Cathedral, 1520 Green St, San Francisco, CA 94123.

May Matushka Barbara’s memory be eternal! ■



The V. Rev. Stephen Karaffa

BURR RIDGE, IL – The Very Rev. Stephen Karaffa, rector of Saints Peter and Paul Church here, unexpectedly fell asleep in the Lord on November 11, 2008, on the first morning of the Orthodox Church in America’s 15th All-American Council in Pittsburgh, PA.

After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, Father Stephen returned to his room at the Pittsburgh Hilton, where he suffered a massive heart attack. His death was immediately announced to the stunned AAC delegates, who offered prayers for repose of his soul.

Born April 1, 1943 in Bridgeport, CT, the son of the late Stephen and Helen Demchak Karaffa, Father Stephen was a graduate of Saint Tikhon’s Seminary, South Canaan, PA. He served as rector of Saint John the Baptist Church, Nanticoke, PA, before he was assigned to Saints Peter and Paul Church five years ago.

Father Stephen was known for his kind and gentle manner and pastoral leadership. During his tenure at Saints Peter and Paul, located in Chicago’s growing southwestern suburbs, he instituted a number of educational and outreach ministries and expanded the Church School program. Parish membership increased under his guidance. He was instrumental in “Quad Parish” programs and ministries undertaken by his parish and three neighboring OCA congregations. He actively participated in the work of the Chicago Deanery and, until the time of his repose, served as president of the Orthodox Christian Clergy Association of Greater Chicago, the first OCA priest to hold this position in decades. He was also active in the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America and its Midwest District.

His Eminence, Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest presided at funeral services at Saints Peter and Paul Church. Interment took place at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA.

Gifts in Father Stephen’s memory may be sent to Saint Tikhon’s Seminary Scholarship Fund, PO Box 130, South Canaan, PA 18459.

May Father Stephen’s memory be eternal! ■



Alfred Austin Wetmore

ANDOVER, NJ – As this issue went to press, word was received that Alfred Austin Wetmore, 82, who with his wife Carol was a key member of the OCA reorganizational task force, fell asleep in the Lord on January 9, 2009.

The task force had been established in December 2006 to oversee transition at the OCA Chancery.

A member of Holy Trinity Church, Randolph, NJ, Mr. Wetmore was a member of the parish council and choir.

Funeral services were held at Holy Trinity Church, Randolph, NJ, with interment in Arlington National Cemetery.

May Mr. Wetmore’s memory be eternal! ■

Alexis Liberovsky

Living witnesses

Remembering Saint Tikhon and Father Schmemmann

As we end an historic year for the Orthodox Church in America, highlighted by a momentous All-American Council and the election of a dynamic, young Primate, we mark the anniversaries of two visionary leaders who helped shape the Church's vision and history.

December 12, 2008 marked the 110th anniversary of the arrival in America of Saint Tikhon, Enlightener of North America, while the following day, December 13, the 25th anniversary of the repose of Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann was observed. Their eloquent words speak prophetically to the situation of the Orthodox Church in America today.

Strength in humility

The 33-year-old Bishop Tikhon [Bellavin] arrived in America on December 12, 1898, as the new ruling hierarch of the Diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska. Having just completed his first year as an auxiliary bishop, it was hard to imagine that

this humble, gentle, and kind yet seemingly unremarkable hierarch would eventually emerge as one of the key visionaries of 20th century Orthodoxy in Russia and North America.

Born in 1865 into a priestly family of many generations in the village of Klin in the Toropets district of Russia's Pskov province, he was an outstanding student at the Pskov Seminary. He pursued advanced studies at the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy, from which he graduated in 1888. In his youth, he was playfully called "patriarch" by his classmates, due to his piety. After graduation, he served the Church as a teacher and administrator in two seminaries. With his monastic tonsure and ordination in 1891, he was on a path that usually led well-educated monastics to the episcopacy. Indeed, in 1897, he was consecrated Bishop of Lublin, auxiliary of the Kholm Diocese in Poland, at that time a part of the Russian Empire. While he was much loved by his flock there, he had not yet distinguished himself in any way. It was after his arrival in America that his remarkable gifts of leadership and vision were revealed. Already, as he addressed his flock at the beginning of his archpastorate, he set the tone for his new diocese, calling for the help and cooperation of clergy and laity alike to assist him in his ministry. [The text of Saint Tikhon's address appears on page 10 of this issue.]

This synergetic approach to archpastoral ministry soon bore much fruit. Among the highlights of Saint Tikhon's episcopal service in North America were the opening of many new parishes, the construction of splendid cathedrals in key cities, the change in the title of the diocese from "Aleutians and Alaska" to "Aleutians and North America" to reflect its growing, continent-

"We acted and worked together..." St. Tikhon, surrounded by Bishops Innocent and Raphael and leading clergy and laymen, distinguished himself by ministering in a collaborative manner. He convened the First All-American Sobor, the model for the OCA's All-American Councils to this day, in 1907.

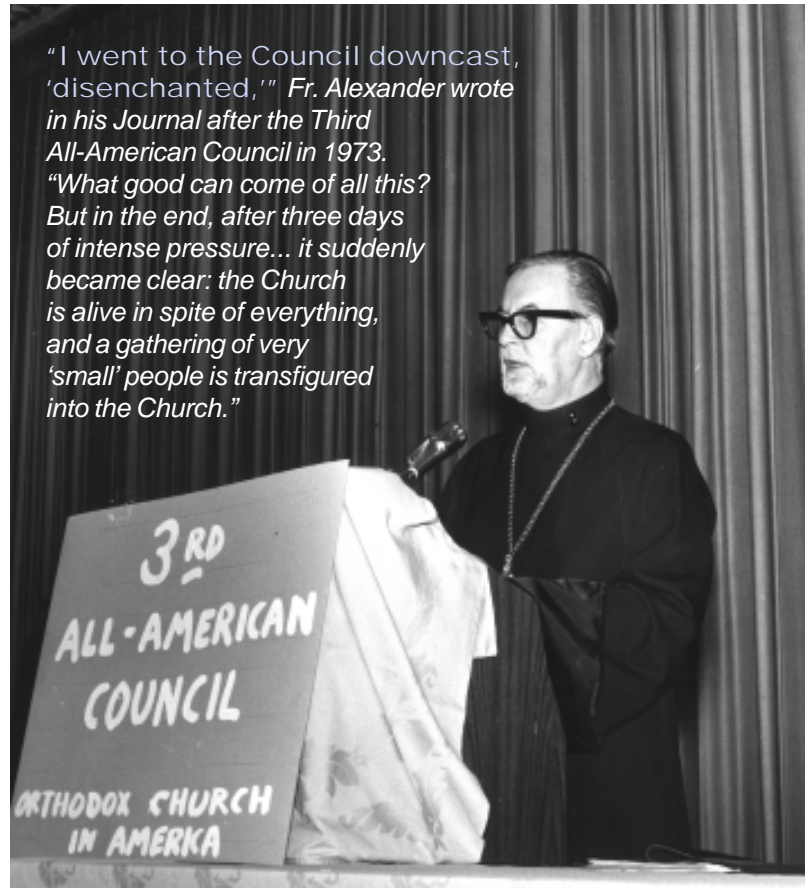


wide mission, and the transfer of the diocesan see from San Francisco to New York to reflect changing demographics. He was also responsible for many important firsts: the opening of North America's first seminary in Minneapolis, MN, and the first monastery, Saint Tikhon's, in South Canaan, PA; the first episcopal consecration in America, that of Saint Raphael [Hawaweeny] of Brooklyn; the first archpastoral visitations to Canada; and the publication of the first widely circulated service book in English, translated by Isabel Hapgood.

In 1905, all the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church were asked to write, in anticipation of an All-Russian Church Council, reflections on issues that in their estimation should be considered at such a gathering. In his contribution to *Responses of the Diocesan Hierarchs on Issues of Church Reform*, Saint Tikhon outlined, among other issues, his vision for the united organization of Orthodoxy in North America, advocating the possibility for eventual autocephaly for the North American Church. The spirit of his episcopacy was most clearly manifested in the final event of his North American archpastorate – the First All-American *Sobor* [Council], held in Mayfield, PA, in early 1907. In his many travels throughout his vast North American Diocese, Saint Tikhon held gatherings with clergy and lay leaders wherever he went to discuss Church life and to listen to their concerns in an effort to better his archpastoral ministry. By 1905, these gatherings turned into formal clergy conferences, which formulated the agenda for the proposed *Sobor*. Saint Tikhon's visionary wisdom carefully guided this preparation process towards the realization of the *Sobor* – an unprecedented gathering at that time. Logistical problems delayed the actual convocation of the *Sobor*, while startling news was received from Russia shortly before it was held. Saint Tikhon, whose labors in North America had been duly noticed in Russia, was to be transferred to the ancient, prestigious see of Yaroslavl. Therefore, Saint Tikhon was no longer the diocesan hierarch, but, as he had not yet left America, he was asked to chair the First All-American *Sobor*, which set the precedent for all future All-American Councils, still a key element of the governance of the Orthodox Church in America.

At a farewell meal immediately following the Mayfield *Sobor*, Saint Tikhon again verbalized his collaborative approach in his episcopal ministry: "Fathers and Brothers, I shall take advantage of this meeting to thank you for our common work," he began. "We acted and worked together. In some matters, I initiated things, inspired you, and you in turn went out to bring my ideas to life. In other matters, on the contrary, you suggested the thought to me – I am not ashamed to admit this – and I found the ways and means to implement your ideas. I appealed to you for common work from the very beginning, in my first address to you in the cathedral of San Francisco, and my appeal was not in vain. If something has been accomplished here, it was not I alone who accomplished it, but we together. It is self-evident that the Lord God helped us. Many times, I have told you that the more I study the history of the Orthodox Church in this land, the more convinced I become that our task here is God's task, that God Himself helps us. Precisely when it appears that everything is just about to collapse, our Orthodox... mission, instead of dying, rises up in new strength and brilliance."

"I went to the Council downcast, 'disenchanted,'" Fr. Alexander wrote in his *Journal* after the Third All-American Council in 1973. "What good can come of all this? But in the end, after three days of intense pressure... it suddenly became clear: the Church is alive in spite of everything, and a gathering of very 'small' people is transfigured into the Church."



Just weeks later, he departed to his new assignment in Russia. In 1914, he continued his archpastoral service in Lithuania, and in 1917, he was elected Metropolitan of Moscow. When the Patriarchate was restored in Russia just months later – in the wake of the Russian Revolution – Saint Tikhon was elected Patriarch of Moscow. He guided the work of the historic All-Russian Church Council in 1917-18, whose landmark decisions still remain largely unimplemented due to the severe persecution of the Church in Soviet Russia. Brutalized by this oppression of the Russian Church under his leadership, he perished at the age of 60 in 1925. Quietly venerated in Russia under Soviet rule and more openly abroad, he was finally canonized in Moscow in 1989. His relics were found, miraculously hidden away, in 1992.

On the 50th anniversary of Saint Tikhon's repose in 1975, Father Alexander Schmemmann wrote, "The more we look, with reverence and love, at Patriarch Tikhon, at his life and sufferings, the more we see in him one more icon of the Church, the one that today we need more than anything else."

Transfiguration and Revival

Father Alexander Schmemmann, who fell asleep in the Lord on December 13, 1983, has been hailed as one of the greatest Orthodox theologians of the 20th century.

Born in Estonia in 1921, he was raised and educated in France, where he was ordained to the priesthood and began his academic career at Saint Sergius Theological Institute in Paris.

Pages to 30

Living Witnesses:

St. Tikhon, Fr. Schmemmann

Having arrived in America in 1951, he spent the last three decades of his life teaching at Saint Vladimir's Seminary in New York and enhancing the school's stature worldwide as its dean from 1962 until his death. He also labored much to revive the Church's liturgical life, especially through a focus on sacramental participation and the centrality of the Eucharist.

Father Alexander's activities in other spheres of Church life are perhaps less well documented. His ecclesiological vision played a large role in obtaining autocephaly for the Orthodox Church in America. His leadership guided the work of the All-American Councils. On the heels of the recent 15th All-American Council in Pittsburgh, PA November 10-13, 2008, in the midst of much turmoil and doubt throughout the Church, his personal observations following the Third All-American Council, also held in Pittsburgh 35 years ago, reach us through time as a prophecy.

"All week – from Monday through Thursday night – in Pittsburgh at the All-American Council," Father Alexander wrote in his journal entry for November 17, 1973. "Great fatigue on the one hand, but on the other – an unexpected, almost miraculous ray of light. Contact again with the mystery of the Church, not rhetorical, not exaggerated. I went to the Council downcast, 'disenchanted': what good can come of all this? But in the end, after three days of intense pressure (I was chairing again), it suddenly became clear: the Church is alive in spite of everything, and a gathering of very 'small' people is transfigured into the Church. Wonderful services. Hundreds of communicants and most importantly of course, a kind of common inspiration.... An almost mystical paradox of our Church: she 'has a hold' on her bishops (through statute, structures, the impossibility for them of irresponsible highhandedness, as before, justified as 'archpastoral' authority), but she is also 'upheld' by them: impossible to exist without them.... I experienced all of this very acutely, and my mood is still uplifted by the Council. A miracle of the Holy Spirit in an American Hilton!" [New translation from the Russian edition of Father Alexander's *Journals*.]

As the Orthodox Church in America now seeks to rebuild and move forward after years of turmoil, may the prophetic wisdom of her visionary leaders of the past, including Saint Tikhon and Father Alexander Schmemmann, resound ever more strongly in the present, and long into the future! ■

Alexis Liberovsky, *the archivist of the Orthodox Church in America*, may be contacted at alex@oca.org.

THE OCA ARCHIVES

The Archives of the Orthodox Church in America, housed at the Chancery in Syosset, NY, is the **official repository** for the inactive records of the Church dating back to the **Alaskan mission in 1794**. The Archives also houses **some 90 collections of personal and institutional archives** of hierarchs, clergy, lay leaders, and Church-related entities, as well as **photographs, films and videos, media, periodicals, directories, and anniversary and historical publications and artifacts**.

Besides **collecting, organizing, cataloging, and preserving these collections**, the **Department of History and Archives** provides the Church's historical vision through **research and documentary support** to the Holy Synod of Bishops, chancery staff, and other administrative bodies of the Church. The department provides **resources for research** to scholars, dioceses, parishes, and institutions interested in the history and life of Orthodox Christianity in North America.

The department also provides **consultant services** to parishes and institutions in conjunction with the preservation of their own historical records. It also produces **occasional books** and **publishes regular articles** on historical topics in OCA periodicals, including *The Orthodox Church magazine*, and other publications. The archivist is available to deliver **lectures and other presentations**.

TODAY THE DEPARTMENT

◆ is involved in a **cooperative project** with the **Department of Christian Education** to produce a series of **videos on the Orthodox Saints of North America**.

◆ is **cooperating closely** with the **Canonization Commission** in an investigation into the lives of **Metropolitan Leonty and Archbishop Arseny** in the OCA Archives and through resources elsewhere.

◆ is showcasing at <http://www.oca.org/news/1719> the **historical exhibit**, displayed at the 15th All-American Council, highlighting the **First All-American Sobor** in 1907 and such visionary leaders as **St. Tikhon and Fr. Alexander Schmemmann**.

◆ is planning to **create its own departmental web site** to make its archival holdings more widely available to the public. ■



OCA archivist Alexis Liberovsky shows a bottle used by Bishop Innocent Pustynsky of Alaska to hold chrism in the early 1900s to Orthodox students.



Getting real

An alternative to the usual spring break hassles!

Spring break is synonymous with partying, partying, and, in case boredom sets in, more partying. As colleges and universities shut down for a break from hitting the books, students head south.

Not impressed? Looking for an alternative?

For several years, the Orthodox Christian Fellowship has offered students an alternative to “the usual” through *Real Break*, a chance to celebrate their faith by putting it into action in some rather exciting destinations.

This year, OCF offers several unique opportunities for teams of 10 to 15 college age young adults to experience the overwhelming presence of Christ, meeting students from around the world, and experiencing realities that will change their lives and hearts forever.

Accompanied by a priest or team leader, each team will undertake a ministry that challenges participants to live their faith – and to have a good time doing so.

Among this year’s top *Real Break* destinations are

◆ **March 8-14/ Los Angeles**, an intense and vast mission field with an abundance of needs, hurts, and pain, where participants will serve needy families and the homeless, visit ministry sites throughout the city – including the Midnight Mission, which has been serving the Skid Row community since 1914 with emergency shelter, food and clothing. Students also take in some of the region’s tourist attractions and diverse ethnic cuisines.

◆ **March 13-21/ Brasov, Romania**, a beautiful city in the heart of Transylvania will be the site of two projects. The first will involve ministry at a recently founded school for visually

impaired children, while the second involves working at the city’s Center for Social Integration, where 12 formerly orphaned boys over the age of 18 reside. Participants will also visit the magnificent Sambata Monastery and other local sites – including the castle of Vlad the Impaler, popularly known as Count Dracula! [Nothing to fear, trust us!]

◆ **March 14-21/ Constantinople/Istanbul, Turkey** is the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, where participants will work on construction and maintenance projects and help at a neighboring school. Of course, students will have an opportunity to meet His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, and visit renowned historic sites, including Hagia Sophia.

◆ **March 7-15/ Karditsa, Central Greece** is home to the 16th century Monastery of the Twelve Apostles, known to locals as the “Red Church.” Participants will help rebuild and rehab the long neglected facilities and properties. They will also enjoy excursions to neighboring sites, including Meteora, a region of monasteries built atop sky-high mountains.

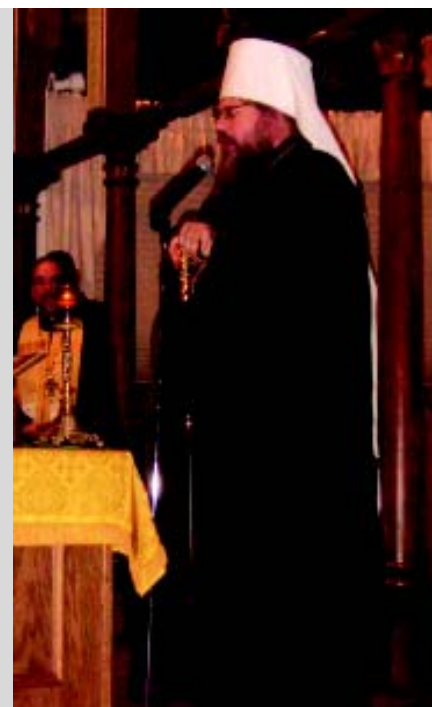
◆ **March 7-14 and March 21-28/ Guatemala City, Guatemala** is the home of Hogar Rafael Ayau, an Orthodox orphanage run by Orthodox nuns. Participants will do maintenance work on the facilities and interact daily with the orphanage’s children. They will also take in some of the unique local sites.

◆ **March 14-21/ Tijuana, Mexico** is far more than a touristy venue on the California-Mexico border. It is the site of Saint Innocent Orthodox Orphanage, which for years has offered boys a home – and future – instead of a life on the streets. Sponsored by the California-based Project Mexico, the orphanage provides an opportunity for participants to interact with the orphans and to undertake construction and maintenance projects.

For additional information, registration forms, nominal participation fees, and information on securing *Real Break* sponsors, log on to <http://www.ocf.net/programs/506.html>. ■

A first!

For the first time in history, a Primate of the Orthodox Church in America participated in the Orthodox Christian Fellowship’s annual Christmas conference at Antiochian Village, Ligonier, PA. Metropolitan Jonah addressed over 100 college aged young adults at the gathering. In his addresses at the 15th All-American Council, he emphasized the importance of campus ministry and his priority support for OCA’s ministry on campuses across North America. ■



Valerie Zahirsky

Telling stories

Ideas for making storytelling meaningful with young children

Stories are so central to our teaching in the Church that we take telling them for granted. We may assume that we are doing a good job of telling stories just because we do it so often. But a few pointers, such as the following ones adapted in part from Iris V. Cully's book, *Ways To Teach Children*, can help those who teach young children make stories more meaningful for their students.

◆ **A Bible story for young children should be told in a way that encourages them to identify with one of the characters who encounters Jesus Christ, rather than with the Lord Himself.**

In identifying with a character, a child relates the story to his or her own life situation, and can ponder the ways in which God meets us and helps us in our lives.

For example, a teacher might be telling the story of the tax collector Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree to see Jesus. Rather than ask, "What do you suppose Jesus thought when He saw Zacchaeus up in the sycamore tree?" the teacher would ask students to consider Zacchaeus' feelings, or his reasons for doing what he did. We all have things in common with Zacchaeus: we are eager to see someone or something exciting, or we want very much to make up for past sins, or we hope for kindness and mercy from one person when we have been rejected or scorned by others. Children can identify with one or more of these aspects of Zacchaeus' experience. In so doing, they can be heartened by Christ's compassionate response to this unpopular man who was

willing to risk making himself the object of others' laughter or derision. They can be guided by the teacher to think, in simple ways, about how much they will risk in their lives to be close to God. What is it, they can be encouraged to ask themselves, that drew and still draws people so strongly to this divine Person?

◆ **Teachers should not be afraid to tell stories, such as the lives of many saints, that do not have conventional "happy endings."** The storyteller can make clear that characters were loyal to their beliefs, to their companions in the faith, and to God. Then their persecution – or even their death – can have deep meaning for nine and ten-year-olds who are discovering the importance of personal loyalty.

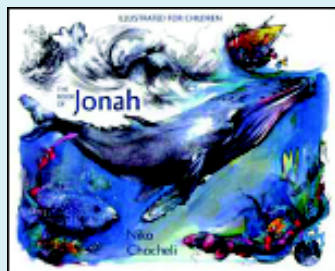
◆ **Storytellers should let a story deliver its own moral, and a good story will do just that.** We want students, even young ones, to think for themselves about the significance of a story. So a teacher should not feel compelled to add at the end of a story something like, "This story tells us that we should love everyone, even those who are not kind to us." Nor, with slightly older children, should the teacher ask, "What do you think is the moral of this story?" But it's useful to encourage young listeners to apply stories to their own lives by asking them to think about which character they feel most like, or which one they think does the best (or worst) job of following the teachings of Our Lord.

◆ **Stories about the saints should emphasize that they did not triumph by their own strength.** Only in faithfulness to God, and in the attempt to fulfill His purpose, does anything good come. This differentiates saints and biblical heroes from many superheroes that may be familiar to our young children. We as Christian teachers hope our children will identify with those who strive and struggle, and who recognize God as the only One Who can "make things happen" and Who will always support our efforts with His infinite strength and love. ■

Valerie Zahirsky is a member of the OCA Department of Christian Education.

greatstories

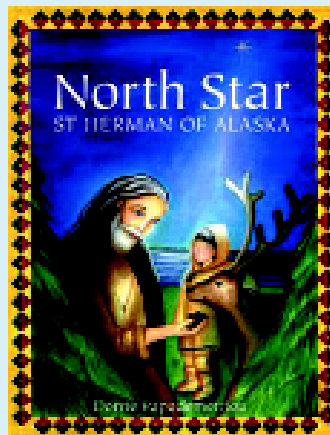
Available at svspress.com



■ **The Book of Jonah** by Niko Chocheli • *The prophecy of Jonah especially for children.*

■ **Silent as a Stone** by Jim Forest • *The amazing life of St. Maria Skobtsova, an*

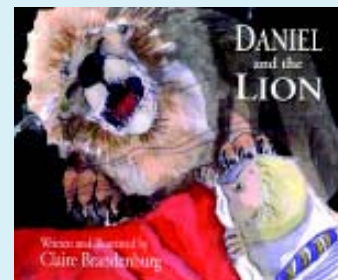
unconventional Orthodox nun who aided the persecuted Jewish people during WWII.



■ **North Star: St. Herman of Alaska** by Dorrie Papa-demetriou • *The world of Apa*

and the Aleuts comes alive in the life of St. Herman.

■ **Daniel and the Lion** by Claire Brandenburg • *The story of a boy who, with the help of the saints and friends, confronts a school bully.*





Church school students from St. John the Baptist parish, Nanticoke, PA, were among the many groups and individuals who raised funds for the 2009 Christmas Stocking Project.

availability of these gifts to poor families affected by the floods, while three parishes opened their doors as distribution centers. Some gifts were delivered by local clergy and parishioners to families still living in FEMA trailers who were unable to travel to the three churches.

“The OCA was connected to these families by International Orthodox Christian Charities, which expressed its gratitude to the OCA for its ongoing support with this project,” Mrs. Kallaur added.

“Sincere thanks to everyone who, during the last 15 years, offered donations large and small that made it possible for the OCA to distribute over 150,000 stockings and gifts to make Christmas for so many needy children a little brighter,” Mrs. Kallaur said in reflecting on her years of commitment to the project. “Though not present face to face, the children, their families, and their caregivers have been connected to us and our donors by a bond of active Orthodox Christian love. While the project ends this year on the national level, we hope to explore ways it can be continued on the diocesan or regional level.”

A special “thank you” to Mrs. Kallaur for faithfully overseeing the monumental project! May God grant her many years! ■

Helping St. Nick

Final Christmas Stocking Project provides 14,200 gifts to needy children

For some 15 years, the Orthodox Church in America’s annual Christmas Stocking Project provided gifts to needy children around the world. This year’s project – the last the OCA will sponsor on the national level – netted over \$71,000.00 in donations from some 400 parishes, FOCA chapters, youth groups, organizations, and individuals. As a result, 14,200 gifts were distributed in an effort to brighten the holidays for needy children at home and abroad.

“At the heart of the project were the countless bake sales, brunches, spaghetti dinners, and other fundraisers which gave parish youth a chance to share their blessings with others,” said Mrs. Arlene Kallaur, who has faithfully and selflessly overseen the project from the proverbial A to Z since its inception. “This year, Archangel Michael Church, Broadview Heights, OH, was once again the top donor, with Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, CT, coming in a close second.”

Clients at the Retarded Children’s Vocational Training Center, Freeport, NY, filled the stockings, which were then packed by Mr. John Korello of Bayone, NJ. Before the boxes of gifts were shipped, they were blessed by the Very Rev. Andrew Jarmus, OCA director of ministries and communications.

In addition to needy children and orphans in Albania, Belarus, the Republic of Georgia, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and at three orphanages in Mexico, gifts – 1000 of them – were sent to Cedar Rapids, IA, where they were distributed to families devastated by the Midwest floods this past summer,” Mrs. Kallaur said. “The Iowa Orthodox Clergy Association advertised the



Good neighbors

CLEVELAND, OH – In December, members of St. Theodosius Cathedral once again partnered with several branches of Cleveland’s social services to provide Christmas gifts to needy children in the neighborhood of the parish. Each year, local social workers provide parishioners with names and some personal information of children who otherwise might not receive Christmas gifts. “Many members of our parish community respond generously to this appeal each year,” said Reader Daniel Morris, who has coordinated the project since its inception. ■



IOCC seeks to help Gaza's residents, especially its highly vulnerable children.

Help wanted

IOCC responds to Gaza crisis

In response to the escalating conflict in Gaza that began at the end of December 2008 – the deadliest conflict in the region in four decades – International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC] has released emergency funds and is working in cooperation with other humanitarian aid organizations to deliver medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to Gaza hospitals that are stretched to capacity.

“Gaza was already in a desperate situation before this increased conflict with a significant lack of food, medicine, fuel and electricity. All commodities are in scarce supply,” said Dirk Lackovic-van Gorp, IOCC’s representative for the Palestinian Territories.

Although getting supplies into Gaza has been difficult, IOCC has been working with organizations that have significant operations inside the territory and who are in touch with government officials and UN personnel to gain access. The greatest reported need is life-saving drugs and medical supplies to equip hospitals forced to turn away the injured.

Shortly before the conflict began, IOCC had announced a new initiative to distribute food and hygiene supplies in Gaza and repair youth centers through an Action by Churches Together [ACT] appeal. IOCC has implemented a variety of educational and school repair programs in the Palestinian Territories since 1997 when it opened its first office in Jerusalem. ■

◆ **Help IOCC** speed relief to families caught in the Gaza conflict by **donating on-line** at www.iocc.org, by phone at **877/803-4622 toll free**, or by sending a check to **IOCC, PO Box 630225, Baltimore, MD 21263-0225**.

An eye-opener

Study reveals some “not-so-obvious” facts about Orthodox Christianity in America

The *Orthodox Church Today*, a study released by the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, Berkeley, CA, disproves many stereotypes and provides groundbreaking insights into the today’s life of America’s Orthodox Christian community.

With its historical roots dating back to the arrival of Orthodox missionaries in Kodiak, AK in 1794, today Orthodox Christianity in the US accounts for about 1,200,000 to 1,300,000 faithful worshipping in 2,200 to 2,300 local parishes spread all across the nation.

The *Orthodox Church Today* is the first national survey-based study of ordinary parishioners in the two largest Orthodox Churches in the USA: the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America [GOA] and the Orthodox Church in America [OCA]. Combined, the GOA and the OCA account for some 60 percent of all Orthodox Christians and parishes in the US. Therefore, to a significant degree, the study reflects the “profile” of the entire American Orthodox community.

“Respondents from more than 100 randomly selected Orthodox Christian parishes situated in various regions of the country participated in the study,” according to Mr. Alexei D. Krindatch, the institute’s research director. “The questionnaire focused on personal, social and religious attitudes of Orthodox parishioners and on the patterns of the everyday Church life in their local parishes.”

The study indicates some positive markers for the Church’s future, as well as some glaring differences between the experience of the GOA and the OCA. For example, while most parishes began as immigrant communities, the study found that nine out of every 10 parishioners are American-born. Thousands of members had converted to the faith as adults – 29 percent in the GOA, and a remarkable 51 percent in the OCA. Fifty-six percent of the OCA’s clergy are converts to the faith, compared to 14 percent in the GOA.

With regard to parish finances, while 41 percent of GOA respondents indicated that “more money” is a “very urgent” need in their parishes, only 27 percent of OCA respondents cited this as a priority. Fully half of the OCA respondents indicated that “very little has been done” with regard to Orthodox unity in America and that more consistent and intentional efforts to this end should be pursued, compared to only 34 percent of GOA respondents. And while 51% of GOA respondents felt that the issue of mixed marriages is a urgent issue, only 25 percent of OCA respondents agreed. ■

Breaking down the stereotypes

Surprising facts about Orthodox Christianity in America

1

Not all Orthodox are equally Orthodox.

Gaps between the “left” and the “right” wings in American Orthodoxy are wide when it comes to “micro-theologies.” Answering the question, “When you think about your theological position and approach to Church life, which word best describes where you stand?” the relative majority – 41% – of Church members preferred to be in the safe “middle,” describing their theological stance and approach to Church life as “traditional.” At the same time, quite sizeable factions identified themselves as being either “conservative” [28%] or “moderate-liberal” [31%].



2

Uniformity in belief and practice is central to parish life.

More than two-thirds of the respondents said that they want to belong to parishes that “require uniformity of belief and practice and in which people hold the same views.” That is, while American Orthodox Christians have very different personal approaches to Church life – “liberal-moderate,” “traditional,” “conservative” – they prefer homogenous, “like-minded” parishes. Only one in four respondents favored “big-tent” parishes that tolerate diversity of beliefs and practices, where people hold different views and openly discuss their disagreements.”

3

Orthodox Christians have a strong sense of their religious identity and a clear preference for the Orthodox Church.

Nine in ten parishioners said that they “cannot imagine being anything but Orthodox.” For an overwhelming majority of parishioners, “Christianity” is synonymous with “Orthodox Christianity.” Eight out of ten respondents feel that the Orthodox Church possesses the “one best and true interpretation of the meaning of the Christian faith.” In comparing the responses of Orthodox members with US Catholics, it was found that America’s Orthodox Christians adhere more strongly to their Church than do Catholics.

4

Strong Orthodox identity does not mean that parishioners view their religious obligations exactly the way it is expected by the institutional Church.

In reality, most parishioners make personal choices in Church life, holding firmly to what is central for their faith while considering the rest as desirable but not crucial. Belief in Christ’s resurrection and actual presence in the Eucharist are perceived as the most fundamental criteria of being a “good Orthodox Christian,” while regular attendance at services, following the advice of the parish priest, and observing Great Lent are not seen by the majority as essential.

5

Entering the priesthood is a positive thing.

While being a “professional clergyman” in 21st century America is hardly considered a “dream job” by many Americans today, over three quarters of the respondents said – remarkably – that they “would encourage their sons to become priests.”

The Orthodox Church Today highlights

Download the entire *Orthodox Church Today* report in PDF format at www.orthodoxinstitute.org/orthodoxchurchtoday.html.

6

Support for the ordination of women is minimal.

The vast majority of respondents did not favor the ordination of women. Only one in ten respondents favored the ordination of women to the priesthood, while just three in ten parishioners would support women being altar servers or deacons. Male and female respondents expressed the same opinions on this issue.

7

Orthodox Christians hold varying opinions on the compatibility of evolutionism and creationism.

With regard to public education, American Orthodox Christians are divided into three nearly equal groups – those who favor the teaching of creationism instead of evolution in the nation’s public schools [33%], those who reject this idea [35%], and those who could not take either position on this matter [32%]. Almost equal proportions either agreed [41%] or disagreed [38%] with the statement, “Evolutionary theory is compatible with the idea of God as Creator.” Twenty-one percent of the respondents said that they are “neutral or unsure” on this issue.

8

Nine out of ten parishioners in both the GOA and the OCA are American-born.

An astonishing 51% of OCA members and 29% of GOA members are converts to Orthodox Christianity – persons born and raised as Protestants or Catholics. ■

RUSSIA

End of an era

Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow enters eternal rest

His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy II of Moscow and All Rus, 79, fell asleep in the Lord at his residence on the morning of December 5, 2008.

Born Aleksy Mikhailovich Ridiger on February 23, 1929 in Tallinn, Estonia, his devout parents took him as a young child on pilgrimages to many monasteries, which made a deep impression on him. In his youth, he served the Church

under the guidance of his spiritual father, Archpriest Ioann Bogoyavlensky, who later became the Bishop of Tallinn and Estonia.

In 1949, he graduated with honors from the Leningrad Theological Seminary. The next year, he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood and appointed rector of the Church of the Epiphany in Johvi, Estonia. He received his graduate degree from the Leningrad Theological Academy in 1953.

In 1957, Father Aleksy was appointed rector of Tallinn's Assumption Cathedral. In 1961, he entered monastic orders at the Holy Trinity-St.Sergius Lavra near Moscow. In September of the

same year, he was consecrated to the episcopacy and named Bishop of Tallinn and Estonia and temporary administrator of the Diocese of Riga, Latvia. Three years later, he was elevated to the rank of archbishop.

In December 1964, Archbishop Aleksy was appointed chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate – a position he held until 1986 – and became a permanent member of the Holy Synod. In February 1968, he was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan. He was among the Russian hierarchs who signed the Tomos by which the Orthodox Church in America was granted the status of an autocephalous Church in 1970.

On June 7, 1990, he succeeded His Holiness, Patriarch Pimen as primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

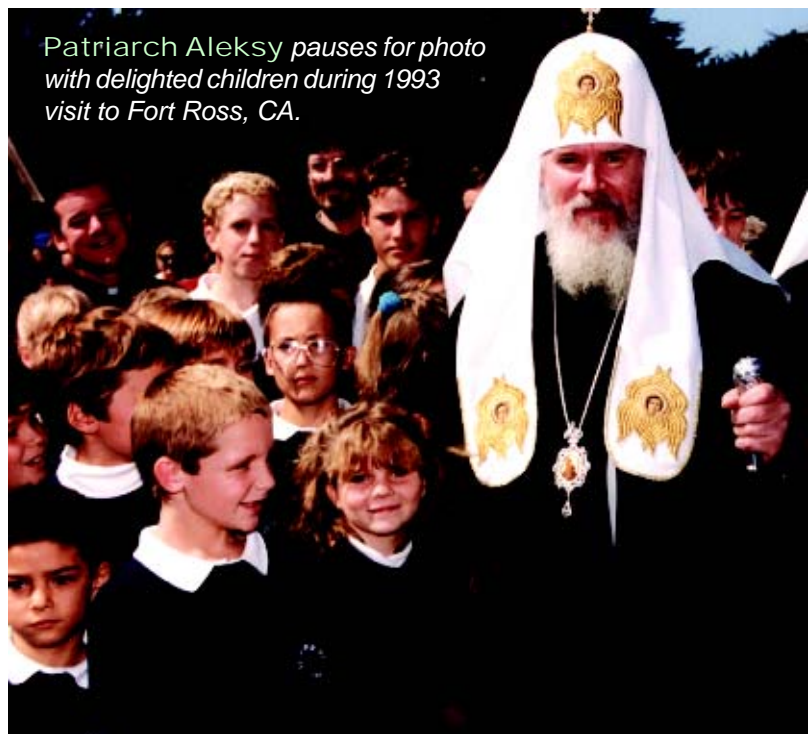
Prior to his election as Patriarch, Aleksy chaired the Patriarchate's commissions on education and Christian unity and interchurch relations. He was instrumental in planning the first Local Council of the Russian Church since the 1940s, which

convened in Moscow in 1971. As the Church gained more freedom in the mid-1980s, he served as deputy chairman of the planning commission for the celebration of the Millennium of the Baptism of Rus and oversaw the return to the Church and restoration of Moscow's Danilov Monastery. He also served as editor-in-chief of the *Orthodox Encyclopaedia*, a monumental work begun in the early 1990s.

On the international scene, Patriarch Aleksy represented the Moscow Patriarchate at numerous international ecumenical and interfaith gatherings. Most notably, he was a member of the World Council of Churches' central committee from 1961 to 1968 and a member of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission. For over 25 years, he was member of the Conference of European Churches, serving as president for several years.

Patriarch Aleksy maintained close ties with the Orthodox Church in America, making his first official visit to the US in 1991. Two years later, he participated in ceremonies in Alaska and the lower 48 states that opened the celebration of the Bicentennial of Orthodox Christianity in North America. On numerous occasions, he hosted OCA hierarchs and delegations at various major events associated with the Church of Russia, including the consecration of the OCA's Representation Church of the Great Martyr Catherine in Moscow and the historic return of the Tikhvin Mother of God, housed for years in Chicago. Most recently, he cosigned with His Eminence, Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, the Act of Canonical Communion effecting the reconciliation of the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR.

Years of Rebirth It was the vision and stability Patriarch Aleksy offered during the period of political, social, and economic reforms after the fall of the Soviet Union that he distinguished himself. He constantly emphasized the necessity of moral certitude in ministering for the good of society. He was



Patriarch Aleksy pauses for photo with delighted children during 1993 visit to Fort Ross, CA.



SCOBA hierarchs host Patriarch Aleksy in New York in 1991.

devoted to building and strengthening the Church's relationship with the state. While convinced that the Church and state must freely and mutually cooperate, he embraced the distinction between the mission of the Church and the functions of the state and championed noninterference in the affairs of each.

Of supreme importance, however, was the attention Patriarch Aleksy paid to the revival and rebuilding of Church life after seven decades of official state suppression and persecution. He inspired the resurrection of an estimated 30,000 churches and 700 monasteries and dozens of theological seminaries and academies, in addition to countless religious colleges and parish schools. Dozens of new dioceses were established during his tenure as he encouraged missionary outreach in traditional Church centers and regions with little or no spiritual presence. To accomplish this, he called upon every member of the Church without exception to participate in its ministry in a conciliar manner. The monumental task of reconstructing Moscow's massive Christ the Savior Cathedral – the original 19th century structure was blown up by Stalin in the 1930s – was a visible sign of the resurrection of the Church in Russia.

OCA represented at funeral His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada, who chairs the Department of External Affairs and Interchurch Affairs, led the delegation representing His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah and the OCA at Patriarch Aleksy's funeral at Christ the Savior Cathedral on December 9. Accompanying him were Archimandrite Zacchaeus, OCA representative to the Moscow Patriarchate, and the Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky. His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, attended the funeral, together with Primates, hierarchs, and representatives of the autocephalous sister Orthodox Churches. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who proclaimed the day of the funeral a national day of mourning, attended the funeral along with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the presidents of Belarus, Armenia, and Serbia, and numerous other state officials. Interment took place in the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany.

The election of Patriarch Aleksy's successor is slated to be conducted in January 2009, with the enthronement in early February.

May Patriarch Aleksy's memory be eternal! ■

Metropolitan Jonah's Message of Condolence on the Repose of Patriarch Aleksy II

Upon learning of His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy's repose, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah sent a message of condolence to His Eminence, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, Patriarchal Locum Tenens.

"It is with a heavy heart that I convey to you, and through you to the Holy Synod and all the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate, to the clergy, monastics and faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church, the sympathy and love of the Orthodox Church in America," wrote Metropolitan Jonah. "Together with you we grieve at the death of His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy II, praying that the Lord will give him rest 'where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but life everlasting.'"

Metropolitan Jonah referred to the late Patriarch as a "strong and steady spiritual leader" who "labored as a priest and a bishop during the long decades of the rule of state atheism."

"When His Holiness Aleksy was elected Patriarch of Moscow, the system of state atheism was collapsing," Metropolitan Jonah continued. "Russia and the other newly independent states entered into a period of complicated change. In this period the Orthodox Church acquired the freedom to perform its mission in society openly. Liberty came through processes which brought change to society by dismantling the old patterns. These processes also brought new trials and dangers."

"In the midst of this time of opportunity and danger, the late Patriarch Aleksy gave himself to the task of building the Church from the rubble of the decades of destruction," Metropolitan Jonah wrote. "As he often said, the challenge of restoring and healing the souls of people is a more urgent and more difficult task than rebuilding churches. Carrying on his shoulders the immense burden of governing the Church of Russia, Patriarch Aleksy was a constant celebrant of the liturgical services, both gaining strength for his service as Patriarch, and giving strength and encouragement to all."

Metropolitan Jonah closed by reflecting on Patriarch Aleksy's final message to the OCA – "a wise, moving, and heart-felt letter to the 15th All-American Council." Recalling

Patriarch to 38



Archbishop Seraphim [right] with Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop Demetrios at Patriarch Aleksy's funeral.

CONSTANTINOPLE

Remembering St. Paul

Ecumenical Patriarchate celebrates 2000th anniversary of St. Paul's birth

At the invitation of His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, primates and representatives of 14 of the world's 15 autocephalous Churches gathered in Istanbul, Turkey October 9-12, 2008, to mark the 2000th anniversary of the birth of the Apostle Paul.

The Orthodox Church in America, whose autocephaly is disputed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, did not participate.

During the celebration, the hierarchs discussed a wide range of issues, including the environment, overcoming intra-Orthodox conflicts, ongoing theological dialogues with other Christians, and the convocation of the Great and Holy Council.

"Overcoming the internal conflicts of the Orthodox Church through the surrendering of nationalistic, ethnic and ideological extremes of the past" is a requisite for "Orthodoxy [to] have a necessary impact on the contemporary world," the hierarchs said in a statement issued at the end of the meeting. It also called for a continuation, "despite any difficulties," of theological dialogues with other Christians, Judaism, and Islam.

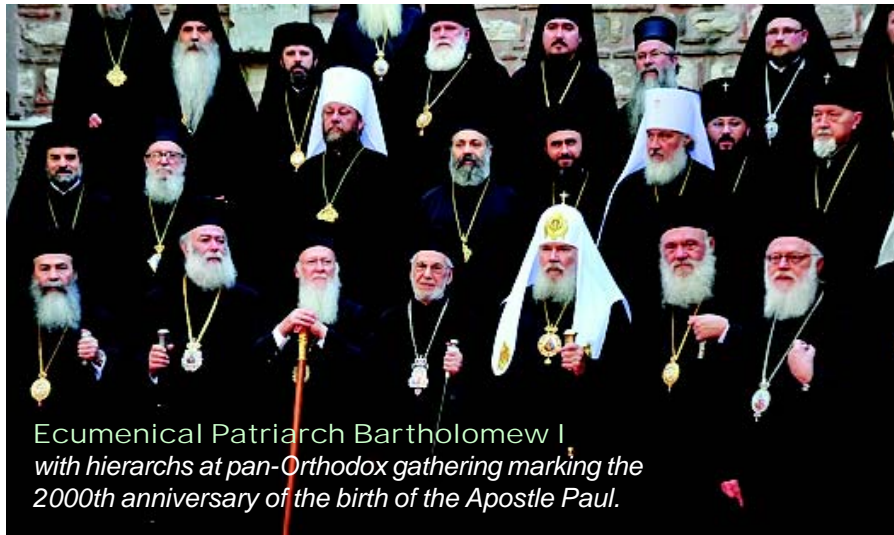
Turning to current events, the hierarchs linked the world's financial crisis to "manic profiteering" and "corrupt financial activity" and called for a "viable economy" able to combine "efficacy with justice and social solidarity."

The hierarchs commended the Russian and Georgian

Churches for "their fraternal cooperation" in the conflict in breakaway South Ossetia and expressed hope that their "efforts will contribute to overcoming the tragic consequences of military operations and [to] the swift reconciliation of the peoples."

The hierarchs condemned the "unjust inequality" in the sharing of "the goods of Creation [by] individuals, or even peoples" as a result of "nationalistic, ethnic, ideological and religious" divisions that have deprived billions of people of basic goods.

The statement called for "the swift healing of every canonical anomaly that has arisen from historical circumstances



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I with hierarchs at pan-Orthodox gathering marking the 2000th anniversary of the birth of the Apostle Paul.

and pastoral requirements, such as in the so-called Orthodox Diaspora, with a view to overcoming every possible influence that is foreign to Orthodox ecclesiology. In this respect we welcome the proposal by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to convene Pan-Orthodox Consultations within the coming year 2009 on this

subject, as well as for the continuation of preparations for the Holy and Great Council. In accordance with the standing order and practice of the Pan-Orthodox Consultations in Rhodes, it will invite all Autocephalous Churches." Preparations for the gathering began nearly 50 years ago, but have been stalled due to changes in Eastern Europe that created new pastoral needs and other challenges within the Orthodox world.

In addition to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the message was signed by eight other primates – Patriarch Theodore of Alexandria, Patriarch Ignatius of Antioch, Patriarch Theophilus of Jerusalem, Patriarch Aleksy of Moscow, Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece, Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania, and Metropolitan Christopher of the Czech Lands and Slovakia – and representatives of the primates of the Churches of Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Poland. ■

Patriarch from 37

Condolences

his election as OCA primate, he wrote that, "as a young bishop and young primate, I looked forward to Patriarch Aleksy's wise counsel. It is a matter of personal grief and regret for me that I will not have access to this counsel. Yet I will reflect on his service as Patriarch, seeking wisdom for my own service in his example of steadfast adherence to prayer, to liturgical celebration, and to spiritual intercession for the people of God." ■

READ MORE



◆ www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=267
The entire text of the Primates' Message

◆ www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=2662
The entire text of Patriarch Bartholomew's address to the Primates

Communities

Parish takes a stand!

DETROIT, MI – Located in the heart of a city that has suffered more than its share of population decline and economic woes, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral is a shadow of its venerable past. At a meeting in November, parishioners took a stand to recommit themselves to inject new life into their parish by reaching out to the needs of their inner-city neighborhood.

One of the recommitment ministry's first tasks was to collect and distribute food and clothing to 20 homeless families before Christmas. The parish hosted a community-wide "Cookies with Santa" which attracted many neighborhood families. While the ministry's attention is focused equally on building up the parish's internal life and worship, its emphasis on neighborhood outreach and evangelization is seen as critical in its recommitment to Christ and His Church. ■

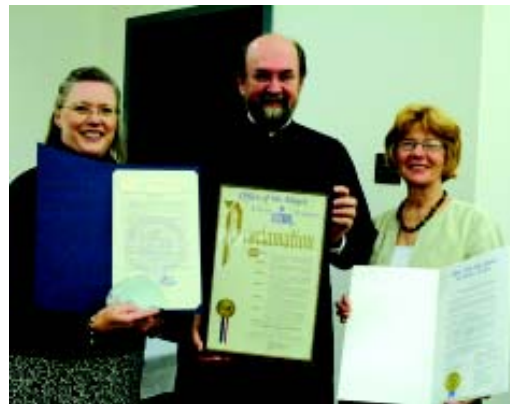


St. Vladimir Seminary honored for community involvement

YONKERS, NY – St. Vladimir's Seminary was recently honored by the Crestwood Historical Society, along with city, county and state representatives, for its contributions to the surrounding community.

In remarks offered by Historical Society vice-president Marcella McGovern, pictured with president Elizabeth McFadden and Fr. Chad Hatfield, SVS chancellor, at a gathering on the seminary campus, the many ways in which the school "takes particular pride in reaching out to the Yonkers community" were cited. Among them is the seminary's participation in the city's community emergency response teams engaged in disaster preparedness, fire safety, emergency health operations, and the recognition and handling of terrorist incidents. She also noted that the seminary's professor of history, Fr. John Erickson, actively participates in the society's work.

The seminary received two additional citations for community involvement and outreach. The first was issued on behalf of the New York State Assembly in recognition of the school's achievements. The second, signed by Yonkers mayor Philip A. Amicone, acknowledged the seminary as a "true community leader." ■



COMMUNITY NEWS YOU CAN USE

Web site enhances use of congregational singing

The growing use of congregational singing, especially in newer communities, was given a boost recently with the appearance of a new web site called **Orthodox Two-Part Music** – www.orthodoxtwopartmusic.org – that offers a wealth of simple music that easily can be incorporated into any parish's liturgical worship.

Developed by Fr. Sergius of St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary, all of the resources on the site – sheet music in PDF format, audio files in mp3, and Midi files – are free of charge. Every attempt has been made to blend various elements common to several Orthodox Christian chant traditions. The site's ever-expanding number of



arrangements, which include traditional chants as well as a wide assortment of classic and contemporary compositions, are designed to be relatively simple and easy to learn, as each printed hymn is accompanied by a corresponding audio file. The arrangements may be sung by all male or all female groups, or a mixed congregation.

The site also contains information on two-part music workshops, the next of which will be held at St. John the Baptist Church, Edwarsville, PA, in May 2009. A corresponding CD – *The Divine Liturgy, Vol. 1* – is also available from St. Tikhon's Bookstore at bookstore@stspress.com.

An interview about this much-needed resource may be found on Ancient Faith Radio at http://audio.ancientfaith.com/interviews/afp_2008-09-23.mp3. ■



All-American Council delegates cast their votes.

The election of Metropolitan Jonah

After his election by the members of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Jonah was led out of the altar by Archbishops Job and Nathaniel and vested in the midst of the assembly.



Archbishops Dmitri and Nathaniel read the results of the first round of balloting.

