



Archpastoral Message of Metropolitan Herman on the Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year

To the Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of The Orthodox Church in America

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

September is associated with "new beginnings." The vacation season has come to an end. Children return to their classrooms. In the workplace, the pace intensifies after the summer slowdown. As the days grow shorter, life returns to "normal."



For the Church, the first day of September, the initiation of a new ecclesiastical year, also marks "new beginnings." The annual cycle of feasts and fasts begins anew. Church school classes and other opportunities for spiritual formation are offered. Parish ministries and activities are intensified. Parish life also returns to "normal."

Exciting as new beginnings are, we should never be content with a mere return to "normal." During the 14th All-American Council, it was made clear that when the Church limits itself to maintaining the status quo – the "norm" – it cannot and will not grow spiritually, numerically, or in any other way. The essence of the Gospel challenges us to "repent," to "begin anew," to "change" our minds and our hearts, our attitudes and our direction, in pursuit of things that transcend the "norm" and enable us to experience that which the world sees as anything but "normal" – the Kingdom of God and its righteousness.

There was nothing "normal" about Our Savior's ministry. "No man has ever spoken as this man speaks," we read in Scripture. In His words and actions, in His teaching and preaching and healing, Jesus Christ revealed that mankind's "norm" is not found in this world, but in the life of the world to come – that while we live "in the world," we are not "of the world." Pursuing that which the world considers "abnormal" – virtue, wisdom, vision, repentance, and a life lived in an intimate union with God and His People – is at the very center of His ministry, and that of His Body, the Church. It is a "new beginning" that beckons to us, not only at the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, but every day of our lives.

However, without vision, without faith, without a commitment to proclaim the wonderful things God indeed does for us, it is impossible to transcend the "norm," to approach the new ecclesiastical year renewed and refreshed by the very Spirit Who makes all things new, or to grow "from glory to glory." Pursuing the familiar may bring with it comfort, control, and predictability, but the Gospel is not about these things. Rather, it challenges us continually to take a leap of faith and to pursue those things built upon a vision of the Church that focuses on how things could be, rather than how things always have been.

As we begin this new ecclesiastical year, let us together take the leap of faith into the future, approaching our personal lives and the vision of our parish communities with renewed zeal. Let us intensify our pursuit of the Kingdom of God which, while yet to be fully revealed, is already fully present in the life of the Church. At the Divine Liturgy we sing, "We have seen the true light! We have received the heavenly Spirit! We have found the true faith, worshipping the undivided Trinity, Who has saved us." What better time than now to transform these words into action – action that is hardly "normal" in the world's eyes, yet fully expected in the Lord's.

Invoking God's blessing upon you and assuring you of my prayers, I remain

With love in Christ,

+ *Herman*
+ HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Council delegates focus on mission, clergy formation, unity; approve increased funding

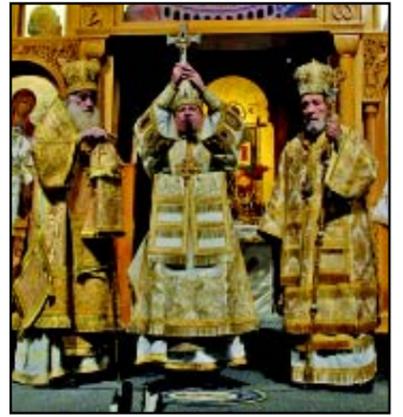
TORONTO, ON, CANADA [OCA Communications] – Nearly 1200 hierarchs, clergy and lay delegates, observers, and guests gathered at the Sheraton Centre hotel here July 17-22, 2005 for the 14th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America.

In a series of plenary sessions, delegates considered five essential "pillars" of Church life – vision and identity as the Orthodox Church in America; relations with Orthodox and non-Orthodox; clergy formation and education; parish health; and evangelization – each of which was associated with the overall Council theme, "Our Church and the Future."

Delegates also approved a resolution to increase income for the Church's administration and ministries through the "fair share" funding provided by the OCA's dioceses and their parishes.

The Council opened on Monday morning, July 18, with a Service of

Prayer, the singing of "The Grace of the Holy Spirit has assembled us today," and the singing of the national anthems of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. After welcoming the delegates and observers, Metropolitan Herman introduced His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada, who



Metropolitan Herman presides at the Council's opening Liturgy.

shared his enthusiasm and that of the Canadian faithful for hosting the second to be held within the Archdiocese of Canada.

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At the closing plenary session, nearly 300 youth offered a moving presentation to the hierarchs and delegates.



Metropolitan Herman presides at celebration of 35th anniversary of glorification of St. Herman

KODIAK, AK [OCA Communications] – Spanning three important historic and spiritual sites of Orthodoxy in Alaska, Sitka, Anchorage, and Kodiak welcomed hundreds of pilgrims who gathered to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the glorification of Saint Herman August 2-9, 2005.

While the logistics of hosting such an event were formidable, His Grace, Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska, together with his staff and an army of volunteers, offered the pilgrims who traveled to Alaska from every corner of North America with a deeply moving spiritual experience and gracious hospitality.

Throughout the week-long pilgrimage, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman and His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland, presided at services in all three cities and at the Chapel of Saints Sergius and Herman

of Valaam on Spruce Island, where Saint Herman spent much of his life. Archbishop Leo, accompanied by a delegation representing the autonomous Finnish Orthodox Church, brought the wonderworking Valaam Icon of the Mother of God to the pilgrimage, marking the first time the icon has been venerated outside of Finland's New Valamo Monastery. The icon originally was enshrined in the Valaam Monastery in northern Russia before it was moved to Finland after World War II. Saint Herman and his companions had lived at the Valaam Monastery before initiating their missionary labors in Alaska in 1794.

In addition to Bishop Nikolai, other hierarchs participating in the celebration included His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; His

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The Orthodox Church

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EDITORIAL

Seeking healing, not disharmony

In his “state of the Church” address at the 14th All American Council in Toronto, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, described his efforts as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America to advance Orthodox unity, reiterating the commitment of our Church to the vision of an Orthodox Church in North America united in common mission. Metropolitan Herman deepened his reflections on unity and mission in his eloquent speech at the council banquet.

It has been the consistent approach of the Orthodox Church in America that Orthodox unity in North America should not be separated from Orthodox unity globally. Indeed, the Orthodox Church in America has acted on its calling and opportunity to affirm the unity of Orthodoxy globally by maintaining good relations with the Orthodox patriarchates and autocephalous churches in the Middle East and Europe. In this, the Orthodox Church in America is unique among the Orthodox churches in North America, which must limit their official contacts and exchanges abroad to their respective “mother churches.”

One week after the All-American Council in Toronto, the Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America held its convention in Dearborn, Michigan. At this meeting, the theme of Orthodox unity was also articulated clearly and unmistakably in speeches and resolutions.

Articles issued by Orthodox Christian Laity [OCL], an organization that has taken upon itself the cause of Orthodox unity in North America, reflected on the significance of the meetings in Toronto and Dearborn. Representatives of OCL, in pursuit of their stated goal of a united and self-governing Orthodox Church in North America, met several months ago with Metropolitan Philip of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese and, more recently, with Metropolitan Herman of the Orthodox Church in America.

It is fair to say that Orthodoxy in America is experiencing the best of times and the worst of times. There are many dynamic parishes, missions, and monastic communities; theological education is provided at seminaries; publishing houses offer many books on Orthodox theology, history, spirituality; there are many converts to the Orthodox faith.

At the same time, there is a growing awareness that Orthodoxy is not living up to its potential and is not making full use of the many opportunities for witness and mission in America. It is clear that the “Orthodox ethos” globally has experienced a resurgence of ethnic and national priorities. In America, this is relevant in light of the renewed streams of immigration from Eastern Europe. There is evidence that the presence of the Orthodox faith in the public arena has declined. For example, ten or fifteen years ago, the American media, when seeking the “pluralistic profile” of religion in America, would invariably find a way to mention Orthodoxy after references to Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. Today, the “pluralistic profile” inevitably gives major attention to Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims. The demographic realities are ambiguous. The old centers of Orthodox population in America, in most cases, are declining, while Orthodox communities are being planted in regions in which Orthodox were virtually unknown 25 years ago. What the actual numbers are is uncertain. In all likelihood the total number of active Orthodox Christians in the US remains approximately one percent of the country’s population.

The assertion by an OCL headline – “the Orthodox Christian Church in North America at a Crossroad” – is fair and accurate. Yet, there are elements in the content of the OCL articles which should be assessed carefully and critically. It is accurately stated that the desire for unity in order to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission was evident in the Orthodox Church in America and Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese assemblies in July 2005. But it is then “discerned” that “the majority of the members of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese are also ready to be part of one Orthodox Christian Church in America, governed by all the canonical bishops presiding in North America and an elected lay Church Council.”

It is this last assertion that raises more questions than it answers. One notes the curious definition of Church governance. On the one hand, there is mention of governance by “all the canonical bishops presiding in America.” No one in the Orthodox Church would contradict this statement. When all the canonical bishops of a region “govern” the Orthodox communities in their region, this constitutes an assembly or synod of bishops. This is the obvious goal in building a united Orthodox Church in North America.

But what is the “elected lay Church Council?” The one context in which we find an elected lay church council is the parish context. In many – perhaps most – cases, this elected lay church council works in harmony with the parish priest. This is an Orthodox ecclesial model. When clergy and laity work in harmony and respect, the extreme and opposing tendencies towards “clericalism” or “lay control” are overcome.

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Office of Protopresbyter Robert S. Kondratik/ Chancellor, Orthodox Church in America

No. 454/455/456 ■ May/June/July 2005

■ EPISCOPAL CHANGES

[SWAIKO], Metropolitan Herman is released from duties as locum tenens of the Diocese of Eastern PA by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America. All his other archpastoral duties remain the same/ May 27, 2005.

[MOLLARD], Bishop Tikhon, former Bishop of South Canaan, is elected Bishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern PA by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America/ May 27, 2005.

■ EPISCOPAL CONSECRATION

[PACHECO-VERA], Archimandrite Alejo was consecrated to the episcopacy at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA, and is now the Bishop of Mexico City and Auxiliary to Metropolitan Herman. He was consecrated by Metropolitan Herman, Archbishop of Washington and New York, Metropolitan of All America and Canada; Metropolitan Onufrey of Chernovtsy and Bukovina [Ukrainian Orthodox Church]; Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western PA; Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South; Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West; Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada; Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska; Bishop Nikon of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese; Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern PA; Bishop Thomas of Oakland and the East [Antiochian Archdiocese]; and Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley/ May 28, 2005.

■ RECEPTIONS

[BASHKO], The V. Rev. Dimitri is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Herman from the Belarusian Council of Orthodox Parishes in North America. He is transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Job of Chicago and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest/ June 21, 2005.

[TAKAHASHI], The V. Rev. John is canonically received into the ranks of clergy of the Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Herman from the Orthodox Church of Japan. He is transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West, and attached to the Diocese of the West/ July 14, 2004.

■ ORDINATIONS

[BOISVERT], Andrew was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Peter of New York and New Jersey at St. Basil Church, Watervliet, NY. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Peter and attached to the Diocese of New York-New Jersey/ July 13, 2003.

[FOLEY], Christopher was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ April 3, 2005.

[JACKSON], Matthew was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ May 22, 2005.

[JACOBS], Andrew was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ April 23, 2005.

[KNAGIN], Alexei was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikolai and attached to the Diocese of Alaska/ February 13, 2005.

[KNAGIN], Deacon Alexei was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikolai and attached to the Diocese of Alaska/ February 15, 2005.

[LARSON], Alexander was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage and Alaska at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikolai and attached to the Diocese of Alaska/ June 3, 2005.

[LARSON], Elia was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska at Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikolai and attached to the Diocese of Alaska/ June 5, 2005.

[LASHBROOK], Deacon Philip was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest at St. John the Forerunner Church, Indianapolis, IN. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Job and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest/ July 9, 2005.

[MEZYNSKI], Deacon David was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Metropolitan Herman at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ July 10, 2005.

[NAGI], Dennis was ordained to the Holy Diaconate

by Bishop Nikon of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese at Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church, Worcester, MA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikon and attached to the Albanian Archdiocese/ June 5, 2005.

[PATTERSON], Deacon Justin was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada on behalf of Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ April 3, 2005.

[PIASTA], Protodeacon Andrew was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada at St. Mark the Evangelist Church, Yorkton, SK, Canada. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Seraphim and attached to the Archdiocese of Canada/ June 18, 2005.

[POWELL], Deacon Barnabas was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Metropolitan Herman at Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY. He is under the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ May 21, 2005.

[TRENT], Deacon Zachariah was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest at St. John the Forerunner Church, Indianapolis, IN. He is under the omophorion of Archbishop Job and attached to the Diocese of the Midwest/ July 10, 2005.

[VANSUCH], Jason was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Nikon of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese at St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA. He is under the omophorion of Bishop Nikon and attached to the Albanian Archdiocese/ April 23, 2005.

■ ASSIGNMENTS

[ANDREW], The V. Rev. Jonah is released from duties at St. Nicholas Church, Juneau, AK and assigned rector of Holy Ascension of Our Lord Cathedral, Unalaska, AK/ June 1, 2005.

[BASHKO], The V. Rev. Dimitri awaits assignment in the Diocese of the Midwest/ June 21, 2005.

[BIBERDORF], The Rev. Basil 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, where he awaits assignment/ August 1, 2005.

[BOCK], Rev. Mikel is released from duties as dean of the Anchorage Deanery. He remains second priest at St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK/ June 1, 2005.

[BOISVERT], Deacon Andrew is attached to Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church, Binghamton, NY/ July 13, 2003.

[BRITTAIN], Archimandrite Isidore is appointed dean of the Anchorage Deanery. All his other duties remain the same/ June 1, 2005.

[BURHOLT], The Rev. Paul is released from duties at Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, NH, and from the Diocese of New England; transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas; and attached to the Diocese of the South, where he awaits assignment/ August 1, 2005.

[CARRIGAN], The V. Rev. Neal is released from duties as priest-in-charge of Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA. He remains attached to Christ the Savior Church, Harrisburg, PA/ June 14, 2005.

[EVANINA], The Rev. Stephen is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown, PA and from the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern PA, transferred to the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman, and attached to the Diocese of Washington and New York. He is assigned acting rector of Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church, Clifton, NJ/ August 1, 2005.

[FETSKO], The Rev. Paul is released from duties at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman, transferred to the Diocese of Eastern PA, and assigned acting rector of All Saints Church, Olyphant, PA/ May 23, 2005.

[FOLEY], Deacon Christopher is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir’s Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ April 3, 2005.

[GEEZA], The V. Rev. Daniel is released from duties as dean of St. Stephen Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA, granted retirement, and transferred from Diocese of Eastern PA to the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ June 1, 2005.

[GORODENCHUK], The Rev. Victor is released from duties at Holy Apostles Church, Saddlebrook, NJ and from the Diocese of Washington and New York, transferred to the Diocese of Eastern PA, and assigned acting dean of St. Stephen Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA/ July 1, 2005.

[HAAN], Deacon Kevin, who was awaiting assignment in the Diocese of the West, is assigned to St. Nicholas Church, Portland, OR/ January 1, 2005.

[HAMMETT], The Rev. Ian is released from duties at

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But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

From glory to glory

To understand what Saint Paul means by “unveiled face,” we must recall Moses descending from Mount Sinai, where he had been speaking with the Lord [Exodus 34:33]. Moses’ face shone with light, and it frightened Aaron and the people. So he wore a veil when talking with them, but he removed the veil when speaking with God. Saint Paul takes it to mean that the glow of glory eventually faded from Moses’ face, but the Holy Spirit is transforming Christians into a fuller awareness of God’s glory. Rather than fading away, Christ’s glory transforms true believers into ever-brighter icons of His image in us.

Another meaning is that while in the Old Testament God’s glory was seen through a veil, with Christ there is no need for a veil, since what was opaque and obscure is not clear and brilliant. Once baptized and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, those who continue to open their hearts to all the implications of being in Christ polish His image and progress from one stage of glory to another. There is no end to the possibilities of becoming like Christ and growing in grace. We are dust and earth, invited to become like God in all ways except in sharing the essence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even after this life on earth has ended, we have the potential to continue growing in glory.

As for us, when we look at ourselves in a mirror, do we recognize the image of Christ staring back at us? We are called to be living icons, with God’s likeness shining from our faces. But there are veils.

- Dreadful to admit, our communities harbor those with prejudice against people who are unlike them in some way. Maybe our parishes would grow if all of us were more accepting of what makes humanity different in various ways.

- Some pick and choose what they like about the Orthodox Church and ignore the rest. They may like the music and ritual, but not the personal confessions, fasting rules, or tithing. “Cafeteria Christianity” is part of the American scene, but it hardly fits the discipline of true believers.

- Others are simply unteachable. They are determined to follow their own stubborn rules, set by themselves, and will be buried with the same blind, irrational opinions that not even the Holy Spirit can soften.

The critical challenge is to wage a spiritual war against our sinful nature and the demonic thoughts that impair our good intentions. The priest Elias, who lived about eight centuries ago, wrote that our task is to make our hearts fertile and pure, so that the virtues and fruit of the Holy Spirit will multiply there. But we have two basic categories of spiritual foes to deal with: *passions* of the body, such as sexuality, anger, depression, hatred, prejudice, and other so-called “natural emotions,” and our *thoughts*, which are even harder to suppress, because we think of them as somehow part of who we are.

Just when we feel that we have surrounded the garden of our heart with a fence that has no openings for the wild animals of lust, greed, laziness, overeating – after all the passions that afflict us have been kept out – the birds of the air alight on our hearts and invade us with ideas that are meant to confuse and bewilder us with all sorts of contradictory proposals.

From a human point of view, such a vision of glory seems out of reach. But when we make the effort and prove our desire to grow into the fullness of grace, God comes to us in the Holy Spirit, pointing us to Jesus Christ, Who leads us to the Father. ■

Father Vladimir Berzonsky

In successive weeks in July, I attended the 14th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America and the 47th Convention of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. I was an observer at the OCA Council in Toronto, the theme of which was “Our Church and the Future,” and I also served as guardian for two of our grandchildren, who participated in the Council youth program, “Becoming What You Are.” At the AOCA Convention in Detroit, I gave two talks on the convention theme, “Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind” [Romans 12:2]. I also delivered the main address at the grand banquet. A main point in my presentations was that Orthodox unity in North America will happen when our churches prove that they are “not conformed to this world” by sacrificing their pride, power, prestige, possessions, and pleasures for the sake of being united in one Church.

As official Church assemblies, the two gatherings were the same in substance and spirit. Clergy and lay delegates heard reports, discussed issues, and made decisions about their Church’s life and work. Other participants observed the proceedings. And still others, including many young people, engaged in educational and recreational activities and events. The AOCA Convention was longer, larger, and more multifaceted than the OCA Council. It also had an ethnic dimension (Arabic, of course) that was wholly absent from the OCA Council (though the Romanian, Albanian, and Bulgarian dioceses in the OCA have assemblies dealing with ethnic interests similar to the “ethnic aspect” of the Antiochian Convention). The AOCA Convention also had events with music and dancing, which the OCA Council did not have.

Matins and Vespers were served daily at each assembly. The AOCA Convention also had Bible study in the morning and Compline at night. Priests served the Divine Liturgies at the AOCA Convention, except for the final Lord’s Day Liturgy, served by Metropolitan Philip and his brother bishops. Metropolitan Herman and his fellow hierarchs celebrated the three Divine Liturgies at the OCA Council. Many participants took advantage of opportunities for sacramental confession at both assemblies. Some Arabic was used at the liturgical services in Detroit, though most of each service and all of the sermons were in English. The preaching and singing at both gatherings were superb.

Both assemblies had programs for young people. The AOCA Convention witnessed the last rounds of a Bible bowl for young people on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, and an oratorical contest on themes related to Romans 12:2. Metropolitan Philip and the bishops attended these events as an integral part of the convention proceedings. The teenage teams and orators in these events were the winners of regional competitions in the seven AOCA dioceses. There were no contests for young people at the OCA Council, but representatives from each age group in the youth program made moving presentations at the assembly’s final session. Over 80 volunteers came to Toronto at their own expense to care for the youth. Many who attended the two assemblies felt that the presence and participation of the young Church members were their most inspiring and encouraging feature.

An amazing thing, certainly planned by God, happened at the final Divine Liturgies at both assemblies. It was exactly the same thing, and was completely spontaneous. During Holy Communion, while the hundreds of priests and lay people were partaking of Christ’s Body and Blood, choirs of young people at both liturgies led the communicants in singing the entire Polyeleon [Psalm 136] in the lively Greek melody, sometimes called “Athonite.” And at both liturgies, immediately after the festive psalm, the same youngsters led the faithful in singing the Carpathian folk hymn, consisting of Christ’s words, “A new commandment I give to you, that you should love each other, even as I have loved you” [John 13:34-35]. This remarkable coincidence was clearly orchestrated by the Lord Himself. It was His message, delivered through His children, that His Churches should act at all times and in every way to “become what they are” when they partake of Holy Communion.

A high point of the OCA Council was a taped video message by Bishop Basil of Wichita of the AOCA. The popular hierarch spoke about the common history of the two Churches in North America. He emphasized the need for the OCA to

continue to serve as a catalyst for the unity of all Orthodox Churches in the new world. And he stressed the necessity of strengthening relations between the two Churches that would result in their eventual unification, and that of Orthodoxy as a whole in North America. Bishop Basil’s message, like the forceful words on Orthodox unity by Metropolitan Herman and Philip, were received with enthusiastic applause.

The two assemblies in July demonstrated beyond any doubt that “the hour has come” for the Orthodox Church in America and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America to glorify God, and to have God glorified in them, by dying to themselves as distinct ecclesiastical entities in order to be raised into one Church body. [See John 13.31-32.]

The two Churches share a common history in North America from the time of Saint Tikhon and Saint Raphael. Changing the changeable in ethnic traditions and interests, their committed members are exactly the same kind of people. And both Churches have a significant number of converts to Orthodoxy among their clergy and laity. The seven Antiochian bishops include four born in America, one of whom is a convert to Orthodoxy, the only one not of Arabic origin. The Orthodox Church in America hierarchy includes nine bishops born in the US, one born in Canada, one in Mexico, one in Bulgaria, and one in Romania. Eight of the 13 OCA bishops are converts to Orthodoxy. Two OCA hierarchs, one being the Metropolitan and the other a convert, are of Slav/Russian heritage. Two are of Romanian nationality, one being a convert. And one each are of Bulgarian, Albanian, and Serbian blood. What an impressive synod these bishops could form to govern a unified Orthodox Church in North America!

We can imagine a first assembly of this new Church body. The Primate would be chosen by lot from two candidates, one presented by each of the Churches. A suitable person (for example, someone like the elder Archimandrite Roman Braga) would pick his name from a chalice after an All-night Vigil, Divine Liturgy, and Service of Prayer. If deemed necessary and permitted by the Patriarchate of Antioch, an Arabic-speaking archbishop from North America could continue to sit on the Patriarchal Synod in Damascus, as long as this was required and desired. The bishops of the Church’s regional dioceses would have different cities for their titles and cathedrals. They would continue at first to govern their flocks mostly as they now do, especially when ethnic considerations must be honored for pastoral reasons. They would implement plans for working in harmony with each other, and with the Orthodox hierarchs and Churches still governed from abroad. Little by little, with prudence, patience, and many sacrifices, the Church’s various ministries would be unified as conditions demanded and allowed. Funding of Church activities and projects would slowly and gradually be combined. Church properties would remain in control of their present owners until common ownership could be achieved. Their use by all Orthodox Christians would be governed by the bishops in the respective dioceses, and by all the governing bishops in the Church’s common synod.

The Orthodox Church in North America would, of course, continue to support Orthodox Churches, institutions, and missions around the world, especially those closest to its members. North American support for Orthodox work abroad would grow greater and more effective as the Churches in the new world became more deeply unified and united. All Orthodox Churches in the US, Canada, and Mexico would be invited to join in the common work of the new Church according to their convictions and circumstances. No Orthodox would be excluded. All Orthodox would be welcome.

In his report to the AOCA Convention, and in his printed message in the convention book, Metropolitan Philip declared that “nothing will happen unless we make it happen.” Thousands of Orthodox believers in North America agree with him. Certainly those who participated in the assemblies in Toronto and Detroit demonstrated that they do. And they also demonstrated in word and deed that the time has finally come for the Orthodox Church in America and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America to make unity happen between them for God’s glory and the good of God’s People. May the Lord, with Whom all things are possible, grant that this unity be actualized at their next assembly convened in common in 2008. ■

Making unity happen



The OCA Council and the AOCA Convention

Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

The Icons of

The Mother of God

The Sitka Icon

Venerated for some 150 years in the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael in Sitka, AK, the Sitka Icon of the Mother of God is one of the most revered icons in North America.

Tradition holds that the icon was commissioned by Saint Innocent Veniaminov for the cathedral, which was completed in 1948. Enshrined in the cathedral two years later, the icon was the gift of laborers of the Russian-American Company working in Alaska, at that time a part of the Russian Empire.

The icon follows the prototype known as the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God and is painted on canvas in the naturalistic style, which was very popular in the 19th century. Measuring 36 x 17.5 inches, the icon is adorned with an exceptionally beautiful and detailed silver "riza" cover.

It has been attributed to the hand of a famous iconographer, Vladimir Borovikovsky [1758-1826], a protégé of the Empress Catherine II and graduate of the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg, Russia. In addition to being a great portrait painter, Borovikovsky also painted many of the icons for the Cathedral of the Kazan Icon in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Over the years, a number of miracles have been attributed to the Sitka Icon of the Mother of God. It is believed that the gaze of the eyes of the Theotokos have led to the restored health of those who prayed before the icon. It also survived the tragic fire that engulfed the cathedral in 1966.

Because of the peaceful gaze evident on the face of the Mother of God, the icon has been described as "a pearl of Russian ecclesiastical art of ineffable gentleness, purity, and harmony." Another source describes how "the most beautiful face of the Mother of God with the Divine Child in her arms is so delicately and artistically done that, the more one looks at it, the more difficult it is to tear one's gaze away."

Originally part of the cathedral's iconostasis, the icon is now permanently enshrined on the far left side of the iconostasis in a special place of honor. ■



The Valaam Icon

One of the greatest treasures in the possession of the New Valamo Monastery in Heinävesi, Finland, is the wonderworking Valaam Icon of the Mother of God. Painted on lime wood, the icon depicts the Virgin Mary as a full-length figure standing on a cloud with lowered gaze, clothed in a bright red cloak and a dark turquoise undergarment. She is holding the Christ child, Who is dressed in a pale yellow smock, on her left arm. With her right hand, she points to Christ, Who blesses with His right hand and holds an orb, surmounted by a cross, in His left hand.

According to the inscription, the icon was painted in 1878, "the work of the monks of Valaam." It is customarily attributed, however, to Father Alipy, one of the leading iconographers at the original Valaam Monastery in Lake Ladoga in Russian Karelia. Father Alipy painted the icon only a few years after he arrived at the monastery, before he had become a novice there. Following the style of the late 19th century, the icon was painted with tempera and oils in a naturalistic style.

Originally, the icon was to have been enshrined in the monastery's Church of the Dormition. However, the icon was subsequently placed in storage and forgotten. In 1897, the icon was rediscovered and gained its miracle-working reputation on the strength of a series of visions of the Mother of God experienced by an elderly woman, Natalia Andreyeva, who had been cured of serious rheumatoid arthritis. Despite the monastery's long history, it had never had an icon of the Mother of God of its own design, although Father Alipy's icon came to occupy such a position in subsequent years.

In the turmoil of World War II, the icon was transported to safety in Finland, along with many other treasures from Valaam and the majority of the monastery's monks. It now occupies a prominent place in the Church of the Transfiguration at the New Valaam Monastery.

In 1987, the hierarchs of the autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland established an annual feast in the Valaam Icon's honor on August 7. The festal troparion and kontakion were composed by the late Archbishop Paul of Finland. ■



IN MEMORIAM

Editorial request: Please inform the TOC editorial office by phone [630/668-3071] or e-mail [jjm@oca.org] when a clergy or clergy wife death occurs so announcements may be made on the OCA web site and in TOC in a timely manner.

The V. Rev. Vladimir Soroka

MCKEES ROCKS, PA – The Very Rev. Vladimir Soroka, 83, pastor emeritus of Saint Nicholas Church here, fell asleep in the Lord at Ohio Valley Hospital on Thursday morning, August 4, 2005, after a lengthy illness.

Born in Scranton, PA, the son of the Very Rev. Mitred Gregory and Anastasia [Panchison] Soroka, Father Vladimir entered Duquesne University in 1939. His education was interrupted in 1942 when he entered the US army. After his discharge in 1946, he married the former Olga Konik and resumed studies at Duquesne, from which he received a bachelor's degree in music. While there, he was a member of the Duquesne University Tamburitans. He also received a Master of Arts degree in music education from Columbia Teachers College, New York, NY.

In 1957, he began theological studies at Saint Vladimir's Seminary. In 1959 he was ordained to the diaconate by the late Metropolitan Leonty. In 1960, he graduated from the seminary and was ordained to the holy priesthood by the late Archbishop Benjamin of Pittsburgh at Holy Trinity Church, Charleroi, PA, which he served for many years. In 1964, he was instrumental in planting Holy Resurrection Church in Belle Vernon, PA. He also served as rector of Holy Ghost Church, Ambridge, PA, until his retirement from active ministry in 1987.

In 1991, Father Vladimir returned to active ministry and was assigned rector of Saint Nicholas Church, McKees Rocks, PA, which he served until 2000. Through his tireless efforts, the parish was revitalized.

Besides his pastoral duties, Father Vladimir offered his musical talents and knowledge to Church and its faithful. The Divine Liturgy and Vesper music books he published in the early 1970s rapidly became "standards" in many parishes. He was also a frequent lecturer at choir conferences and other gatherings. Prior to his ordination, he served as choir director at parishes in Perth Amboy and Jersey City, NJ; Coaldale and Ambridge, PA; and elsewhere.

During his pastorate, Father Vladimir received numerous awards. In 2004, he and his wife Olga were awarded the Order of Saint Innocent, Silver Class, by the Holy Synod of Bishops. He also served the Church in various capacities on the diocesan and national levels.

Besides his beloved wife, Olga, Father Vladimir is survived by one daughter, Donya Yewisiak; three sons, the Rev. Thomas, Michael, and Leonard Soroka; seven grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. He is also survived by two sisters, Zena Pecuch and Sylvia Elnitsky, and a brother, the Very Rev. Igor Soroka. He was preceded in death by two brothers, the Very Rev. Leonid and Sergei Soroka, and a sister, Alexandra Bazil.

Funeral services were celebrated by His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania on August 7 and 8, with interment at Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA.

May Father Vladimir's memory be eternal! ■

Schema Nun Benedicta

RIVES JUNCTION, MI – The Schema Nun Benedicta [Braga], former abbess of the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery here, fell asleep in the Lord after a long illness on August 8, 2005.

Mother Benedicta was born in 1919, in Besarabia. She entered Varatec Monastery in northern Romania at the age of ten, taking monastic vows at the age of 38. She graduated from Iasi University with a degree in natural sciences and education and served as a teacher for the sisters and nuns of Varatec. She also taught music at the monastery and served as a guide in the monastery's museum for many years.

In 1978, she entered Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Ellwood City, PA. Six years later she was named abbess of the monastery.

Mother Benedicta strongly desired to establish another monastery in the US. In 1987, with the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate, she, together with Mothers Gabriella and

Apolinaria, established what was to become the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery in Terre Haute, IN. After a tedious search for a permanent location, the nuns relocated to the monastery's current property in Rives Junction in January 1988.

In the spring of 1989, she was named abbess of the monastery. After her retirement in 1992, Mother Benedicta took the stricter vows of a great schema nun. Her final years were spent in prayer, reading, and the contemplative life.

She is survived by her brother, Archimandrite Roman.

Funeral services and interment were held at the monastery on August 9.

May Mother Benedicta's memory be eternal! ■

Mrs. Alexandra Garklavs

CHICAGO, IL – Mrs. Alexandra Garklavs, 77, wife of the Very Rev. Sergei Garklavs, dean emeritus of Holy Trinity Cathedral here, fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday, July 9, 2005.

Born Alexandra Iowina in Belarus in 1927, she came to the US in 1949 and was employed as a nurse. The following year she married Sergei Garklavs, who was subsequently ordained to the diaconate and priesthood. For years she served devotedly alongside her husband at Holy Virgin Protection Church, Gary, IN; Saint Panteleimon Church, Argo, IL; and Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago. She also accompanied her husband and members of the Garklavs family to Russia in 2004 for the return of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God, for which Father Garklavs had served as guardian after the repose of Archbishop John of Chicago.

Besides her husband, Mrs. Garklavs is survived by three sons, the Very Rev. Alexander Garklavs, rector of Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY, and George and Paul Garklavs; two daughters, Mary Smith and Olga Prevas; and eleven grandchildren.

His Eminence, Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest presided at funeral services at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, on July 13, 2005, with interment at Elmwood Cemetery, River Grove, IL.

Donations in Mrs. Garklavs' memory may be made to the Tikhvin Monastery Fund, 369 Green Ave., East Meadow, NY 11554.

May Mrs. Garklavs' memory be eternal! ■

Archimandrite Hilary

PECKVILLE, PA – Archimandrite Hilary [Madison], 76, a member of the brotherhood of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA, fell asleep in the Lord on August 14, 2005, at Mid-Valley Hospital here.

Born in South Bend, IN, in 1929, he entered Saint Benedict Roman Catholic Abbey, Benet Lake, WI, in 1948. After his conversion to Orthodoxy in June 1954, he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood by the late Bishop Bogdan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America. In 1958, he was received into the Metropolia and assigned to Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, where he was tonsured to monastic orders by the late Metropolitan Leonty in March 1959.

Father Hilary served a number of parishes, including Saint John the Baptist Church, Mayfield, PA; Holy Trinity Church, Springfield, VT; Saint John the Baptist Church, Dallas, TX; Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA; Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago; and Holy Trinity Church, Kansas City, KS. For a brief period he served at Saint John the Theologian Retreat Center, Hiram, OH.

In 1981, he was attached to the Midwest Diocesan Center and named priest-in-charge of Saint Matthew Mission, Green Bay, WI. In 1988, he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite. He also served as diocesan chancellor from 1992 until 1993, when he was named priest-in-charge at Holy Assumption Monastery, Calistoga, CA. Upon his retirement in 1996, he returned to Saint Tikhon's Monastery.

Funeral services and interment were held at the Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery August 16 and 17

May Father Hilary's memory be eternal! ■

OCA NEWSNOTESNOTICES

Note: As this issue of TOC went to press, the US was witnessing the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which hit the Gulf Coast during the last week of August. Updates may be found on the OCA web site at www.oca.org.

Archpastoral Message of Metropolitan Herman on the Hurricane Katrina Tragedy

August 31, 2005

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Several days ago, as we awaited the arrival of Hurricane Katrina, we called upon the faithful to pray that those in the direct line of the storm would be spared. Initial reports indicated that the hurricane's devastation had perhaps been less than anticipated, especially as the eye of the storm bypassed the city of New Orleans. Within 48 hours, however, it became evident that the Mississippi and Alabama coasts had borne the brunt of the storm, that New Orleans had experienced massive damage as a result of broken levees and rising water levels, and that severe – and in some cases total – destruction of property had become widespread throughout the region.

Of utmost concern, however, is the well-being of those who have suffered, and continue to suffer, in ways hard to imagine. Hundreds of thousands of people, many of them among the nation's poorest, have lost everything – their homes, their possessions, their access to food and water and life's basic essentials, and in a growing number of instances, their loved ones. Countless others still wait to be rescued, hoping to avoid the fate of those who perished because they lacked the means to evacuate their homes or because they simply had nowhere to go. The most recent reports project that hundreds, if not thousands, have lost their lives, even as the hopes of those who escaped the worst rapidly diminishes.

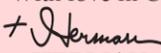
While Hurricane Katrina itself was nothing less than catastrophic, its aftermath and its effect on the lives of so many is nothing short of horrible. How, many ask, are those most affected by the storm and its aftermath to find the comfort of God? To whom can they turn in their hour of need?

My dear brothers and sisters: We are now being called upon to provide the hope, comfort, and love of God. As God's People, we are being challenged to offer our prayers and to share our treasures with those who have lost everything. To the extent that we render thanks to God for sparing us from this tragedy – and for sparing our parishes in the region from serious damage – we also are being called upon to share with those who must rely on our generosity, and the generosity of all people of faith, in an effort to rebuild not only their homes, but most importantly, their lives.

In response to the challenge to serve others, especially the least of the brethren, I call upon our faithful, our parishes, our deaneries, and our dioceses to make yet another sacrifice for others by contributing to the Hurricane Disaster Response Fund that has been established by International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC]. It is hoped that all parish communities will take a special collection in the immediate future. Your generous expressions of concern and hope will be channeled through IOCC, which has already dispatched teams to the most affected areas and has the means to maximize your donations and expressions of concern. Your gifts may be sent to IOCC "Hurricane Relief," PO Box 630225, Baltimore, Maryland, 21263-0225, or by calling IOCC's toll-free donation hotline [877/803-4622]. On the memo line of your checks, please make the notation "Hurricane Relief/OCA."

I pray that you will join me in offering a ray of hope to those who have experienced unimaginable suffering and loss, and who are likely to continue to experience personally the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina for months and years to come. Anticipating your generous response, I thank you, and I ask that God bless you abundantly, to the extent that you share your blessings with those in need.

With love in Christ,


+ HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Metropolitan Herman decries imprisonment of Archbishop Jovan of Ochrid

SYOSSET, NY [OCA Communications] – In a letter addressed to His Holiness, Patriarch Pavle of Serbia, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, expressed shock over the arrest and imprisonment of His Eminence, Archbishop Jovan of Ochrid in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [FYROM].

The Orthodox Church in FYROM, which unilaterally declared itself autocephalous in 1967, is not in communion with the world's Orthodox Churches and has disputed the Serbian Church's presence in the republic. Archbishop Jovan, who returned to the patriarchate after breaking ties with the Macedonian Church a few years ago, has been the target of anti-patriarchate parties. Arrested in July 2005, he was sentenced to 18 months for allegedly "inciting national, racial, and religious hatred, schism, and intolerance."

"The recent sentencing and imprisonment of His Eminence, Archbishop Jovan of Ochrid by the government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia causes me to write this letter of solidarity with Your Holiness and with Archbishop Jovan," Metropolitan Herman wrote. "That a hierarch is judged and imprisoned for speaking and acting in accordance with his conscience is a blatant and shocking assault on freedom of conscience and on freedom of religious faith and practice.

"We are publicly announcing our dismay at the action of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," Metropolitan Herman concluded. "Although the disputes and disagreements with regard to the canonical status of most of the Orthodox hierarchy, clergy, and laity in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are painful and real, the intervention of civil authorities into the dispute does not and cannot lead to reconciliation. We take our stand alongside the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church in asking that all moral and legal actions be undertaken to secure the freedom of Archbishop Jovan."

The hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops [SCOBA] issued a similar statement, which is posted on the SCOBA web site at www.scoba.us. ■

Ukrainian Church honors Archbishop Gregory

JACKSON, NJ [OCA Communications] – His Eminence, Archbishop Gregory [Afonsky], retired Archbishop of Sitka and Alaska, was awarded the Order of Saint Nester the Chronicler, First Class, by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Volodymyr of Kyiv and All Ukraine on May 10, 2005, for "his fruitful labors on behalf of the Orthodox Church."

The award was presented to Archbishop Gregory on Sunday, August 14, 2005 by the Very Rev. John Prokopiuk, on behalf of Metropolitan Volodymyr, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy at the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Jackson, NJ.

A native of Kyiv, Archbishop Gregory served the Diocese of Alaska from 1973 until his retirement in 1995. He is well known for his many writings, especially in the area of Church history. In April 2005, he celebrated his 80th birthday, at which time he was awarded the Order of Saint Innocent by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman.

The Order of Saint Nestor is the highest honor bestowed by the autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church. ■



Archbishop Gregory with Fr. Prokopiuk and Protodeacon John Morvay.

New England Diocese asks Holy Synod to fill episcopal vacancy

HARTFORD, CT [OCA Communications] – Fifty-eight clergy and lay delegates representing parishes of the Diocese of New England gathered at All Saints Church here June 23, 2005 to nominate a candidate for the diocese's vacant episcopal see. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, locum tenens of the diocese, chaired the assembly.

The diocese has been without a ruling bishop since the transfer of Bishop [now Archbishop] Job to the Diocese of the Midwest in the early 1990s.

Protopresbyter Robert Kondratik, OCA chancellor, explained that the Holy Synod of Bishops, in response to a resolution passed by the 2004 diocesan assembly, declared the see of Hartford and New England vacant at its spring 2005 session. Subsequently, the diocesan council petitioned Metropolitan Herman to convene an extraordinary assembly to move forward on filling the vacancy.

Each of the delegates placed his or her ballot in a chalice. Twenty-five delegates abstained, while the remainder of the ballots were cast for five different candidates. Two ballots were deemed invalid. No candidate received the required two-thirds of the vote required for nomination. In response, the Very Rev Michael Westerberg, diocesan chancellor, moved that "the diocesan assembly of the Diocese of New England petition the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America to elect a ruling hierarch for the see of Hartford and New England and to prayerfully act in the best interests of the diocese and the whole Church." The resolution passed by a wide majority.

Metropolitan Herman announced that the resolution will be presented for consideration to the Holy Synod of Bishops during its session at the 14th All-American Council in Toronto, Ontario in July 2005. ■

OCA representation church hosts exhibit of Beslan children's artwork

MOSCOW, RUSSIA – "Tragedy Through the Eyes of Children," an exhibition of drawings by children who survived the September 1, 2004 terrorist attack in Beslan, Russia, opened at the Orthodox Church in America Representation Church of Saint Catherine the Great Martyr here recently.

"The children drew the works of art as a means of therapy to work through the emotional stress of witnessing such a horrendous act of terrorism at the school in Beslan," said Archimandrite Zacchaeus, the church's dean and the exhibit's organizer. "Psychologists from a Moscow hospital closely monitored and analyzed the children as they were drawing their pictures, and as a result were better equipped to offer the necessary treatment.

"In studying these drawings, we see many different emotions ranging from fear and despair to hope and even joy, all incorporated in paintings by innocent children who suffered in ways that for us are nearly unimaginable," Father Zacchaeus added.

Archimandrite Zacchaeus, parishioners view Beslan survivors' artwork.



A number of distinguished guests, including representatives of the Russian Federation and the US Embassy, attended the opening of the exhibition, at which several psychologists who had worked with the children during their rehabilitation offered analyses of their artwork. ■

Four monasteries hold annual pilgrimages

ELLWOOD CITY, PA [OCA Communications] – Four Orthodox Church in America monasteries opened their doors to hundreds of faithful during their August 2005 pilgrimages.

Mother Christophora and the nuns of the Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA, welcomed hundreds of faithful to the community's patronal feastday pilgrimage on the first weekend of August. Among those who attended the pilgrimage were His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania, and His Grace, Bishop Mark of the Antiochian Orthodox Diocese of Oakland, PA. Many clergy from neighboring parishes also concelebrated at the pilgrimage services.



Archbishop Kyrill and Bishop Mark with concelebrants and the sisterhood of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Ellwood City, PA.

Concurrently, the monastics of New Skete, Cambridge, NY, celebrated for the first time a pilgrimage in conjunction with their patronal feast of the Transfiguration. His Grace, Bishop Seraphim [Sigrist], retired Bishop of Sendai, Japan, concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with clergy



Retired Bishop Seraphim of Sendai, Japan [right], presided at New Skete pilgrimage.

from upstate New York and New England. Over 200 pilgrims also enjoyed a talk by Priestmonk Christopher on monasticism and a panel discussion featuring the Rev. Michael Plekan, Teva Regule, William Samsonoff, and Sister Katrina of New Skete. Presentations were also given on iconography and liturgical music.

The annual pilgrimage to the Monastery of All Saints of North America, Dewdney, BC, Canada, was held on Sunday, August 14. Nearly 200 faithful from neighboring parishes participated in the pilgrimage Divine Liturgy, concelebrated by His Eminence, Archbishop Lazar, former Archbishop of Ottawa; His Grace, Bishop Varlaam, former Bishop of Vancouver; and many area clergy. They also chanted the Akathistos Hymn honoring the Icon of the Mother of God, the "Joy of Canada."

Hundreds of faithful also gathered at Holy Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction, MI, for the celebration of the community's annual pilgrimage. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman and His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate concelebrated the pilgrimage Liturgy with His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Detroit and His Grace, Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights, auxiliary to the Romanian Episcopate. The outdoor pavilion was filled to capacity for the festal Liturgy. On the eve of the feast, the lamentations were chanted before the Holy Shroud of the Mother of God during the Vigil, after which a procession with the shroud made its way through the monastery. The faithful also were anointed with Holy Unction before the closing rites. ■

Great Feast of the Dormition was celebrated by [from left] Bishop Irineu, Metropolitan Nicholas, Metropolitan Herman, and Archbishop Nathaniel at Holy Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction, MI.



EDITORIAL from 2

Seeking healing, not disharmony

Beyond the parish boundaries, the positive experience of Orthodoxy in America has been the collaboration of bishops, priests, and lay people. Thus, the All American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, the Convention of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, the Clergy-Laity Congress of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and similar bodies in the other Orthodox "jurisdictions" constitute assemblies of hierarchs and clergy and lay delegates convened for the purpose of open discussion and decision-making. At their best, such assemblies offer an "icon" of the Church as the Body of Christ, with hierarchs, priests (and other ordained ministers), and lay people collaborating in the mission of the Church.

Another question arises in connection with the OCL statement's implication that the Orthodox Church in America and the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, as well as the majority of the members of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, concur with the notion that an elected lay Church Council should "govern" a united Church in conjunction with an assembly of bishops. I am convinced that implying such agreement is false and misleading.

If the term "elected lay Church Council" is the result of imprecision on the part of OCL, then I suggest greater precision in the future. If this word usage expresses a conviction of OCL, then I challenge their conviction. At a time when Orthodoxy is at a crossroads, and indeed is afflicted with the disease of disunity, the prescriptions for healing and unity must offer cooperation and harmony, rather than deeper division and disharmony.

Father Leonid Kishkovsky

Wonderworking Sitka Icon begins cross-country pilgrimage

SEATTLE, WA [OCA Communications] – Saint Spyridon Cathedral here will be the first parish in the "lower 48" to host the wonderworking Sitka Icon of the Mother of God September 7-8, 2005.

From Seattle, the icon will visit some 60 parishes from coast to coast before it returns to Alaska on November 7.

While the icon has visited numerous parishes in past years, the two-month pilgrimage marks the first time in history that the icon will be available for veneration in so many communities.

His Grace, Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska, presented plans for the pilgrimage to members of the Holy Synod of Bishops at their fall 2004 session. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman and the hierarchs enthusiastically endorsed the pilgrimage plans.

Special services, including the Akathistos Hymn in the icon's honor, will be celebrated in every parish along the pilgrimage's "coast-to-coast" route. Bishop Nikolai will join the OCA's diocesan bishops for services in the icon's presence in a number of locations.

The icon, a 19th-century variation of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, is adorned with a magnificent gold and silver covering. It was commissioned Saint Innocent Veniaminov in the early 1800s for Sitka's Archangel Michael Cathedral, where it has been enshrined for some 150 years. The icon is attributed to the hand of Vladimir Borovikovskiy, a leading artist of the time and one of Russia's most revered painters. Miraculously, the icon survived a fire that destroyed the original cathedral in 1966. Over the years, many healings and miracles have been credited through the intercession of the Holy Virgin in response to prayers offered by countless faithful before the icon.

As a prelude to the pilgrimage, the Sitka Icon visited numerous parishes and communities across the Diocese of Alaska in the summer of 2005.

For a complete schedule of the icon's pilgrimage visits, log on to www.oca.org/news.asp?ID=829&SID=19 on the OCA web site. ■



Monastics hold convocation at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery

SOUTH CANAAN, PA [OCA Communications] – As part of the centennial of the founding of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery here, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman invited monastics to assemble for a celebration of the growth of monasticism in the Orthodox Church in America and to share the concerns and challenges faced by those who take up this life in today's culture.

The two-day convocation began on Friday, July 29, 2005. Thirty representatives from several monasteries spent the days in liturgical prayer, interspersed with a series of talks offered by Abbot Jonah of the Monastery of Saint John of San Francisco, Abbess Christophora of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, and Abbot Gregory of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos Monastery. Each presentation was followed by a discussion that enabled the monks and nuns share their concerns and circumstances. These sessions provided a welcomed forum for the brothers and sisters to get to know one another and to offer mutual support in the daily struggle to live by the words of the Gospel's preeminent "obedience" – to love one another.

The deputy abbot of Saint Tikhon's Monastery, His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, welcomed the monastics in the name of Metropolitan Herman and the Saint Tikhon brotherhood. He also participated in the discussions and served the Vigil on Friday evening and the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning. That afternoon, the monastics joyously welcomed the wonderworking Valaam Icon of the Mother of God of Valamo, which was escorted by Metropolitan Herman; His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada; and the delegation from the Orthodox Church of Finland headed by His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of Karalia and All Finland; Archimandrite Sergei of New Valamo Monastery; and Mother Maria, Abbess of Finland's Lintula Monastery. After the Service of Thanksgiving before the icon, all retired for lunch, at which the hierarchs, members of the Finnish delegation, convocation participants, and local clergy and faithful experienced a great bond of fellowship and gratitude for a time blessed by God and His all-holy Mother. ■

Archimandrite Sergei of New Valamo visits with OCA monastics.



Journey to Spruce Island/ Metropolitan Herman, Archbishop Leo, and Bishop Nikolai accompany Valaam Icon to pilgrimage site.



PILGRIMAGE from 1

Anniversary of St. Herman's glorification

Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada; His Grace, Bishop Nikon of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese; and His Grace, Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley. Many clergy also participated in the services – thirty-seven in Kodiak alone, according to Archimandrite Isidore, chancellor of the Diocese of Alaska. He estimated that there were approximately 1,000 pilgrims in Anchorage and another 600 in Kodiak, over 300 of whom made the trip by boat to Monk's Lagoon on Spruce Island.

Chicago's pan-Orthodox Saint Romanos Choir, under the direction of Dr. Peter Jermihov, sang the responses at the Vigil and Divine Liturgy at Saint Innocent Cathedral in Anchorage, the Liturgy at Saints Sergius and Herman of Valaam Chapel on Spruce Island, and the Vigil and Liturgy for the Feast of Saint Herman at Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Kodiak. After hearing the choir at the annual pilgrimage to Saint Tikhon's Monastery in 2003, Bishop Nikolai extended an invitation to sing at the celebration, an offer choir members gratefully and enthusiastically accepted.

"The highlight of the pilgrimage was the voyage to Spruce Island," said Ms. Joan Stroner, a pilgrim from Chicago. "Early on the morning of August 8, pilgrims boarded boats captained by fishermen, who gave up a day's livelihood to ferry the hierarchs, clergy, and pilgrims. A long, up hill walk followed, leading to a breathtaking spruce forest harboring trees laden with rich coats of moss found nowhere else in the world."

At Saints Sergius and Herman Chapel, the Liturgy was celebrated. Metropolitan Herman concluded his homily with Saint Herman's famous quotation, "From this day forth, from this hour, from this minute, let

us love God above all."

"After the Liturgy, pilgrims drew healing water from Saint Herman's spring and took dirt from his original gravesite under the chapel," Ms. Stroner related. "Their physical hunger was also satisfied by a delectable lunch prepared by the women of Ouzinki and served on the beach."

Later that evening, the hierarchs, clergy, and pilgrims returned to Kodiak for the celebration of the festal Vigil. Tuesday morning's hierarchical Divine Liturgy in the presence of the relics of Saint Herman was followed by a banquet featuring halibut and salmon, caught the day before.

Bishop Nikolai observed that this year's pilgrimage was physically larger and spiritually deeper than the others. "You can feel Saint Herman softening the hearts of the people," he said. When asked about planning an event of this scale, he smiled philosophically. "If you're confident that what you're doing is right, you have to let go of your anxiety and let God do His work."

In his banquet remarks, Bishop Nikolai spoke with unabashed pride of his beloved flock. "It's a different world up here," he said, thankful for the sacrificial generosity shown by the dozens of volunteers who gave cheerfully of their time and talent for "the glory of God and in honor of Saint Herman."

"There were a number of highlights which made this pilgrimage especially significant," Ms. Stroner added. "But the loving kindness of the Alaskan faithful, so obvious to the pilgrims, proved that the legacy of Saint Herman lives in the hearts of the faithful in the birthplace of Orthodoxy in North America."

Pilgrimage photo galleries are available on the OCA web site at www.oca.org. ■



Hundreds of pilgrims surrounded Spruce Island's SS. Sergius and Herman Chapel for the Liturgy [above]. The chapel marks the site of St. Herman's original grave.



Bishop Nikolai offers Archbishop Leo a warm welcome to Alaska [left].

Metropolitan Herman, flanked by Archbishop Leo and Bishop Nikolai, blesses faithful after pilgrimage Liturgy [below].



Archbishop Leo concludes visit

SYOSSET, NY [OCA Communications] – Besides participating in the 35th anniversary of the glorification of Saint Herman, His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland and a delegation from the Orthodox Church of Finland



Metropolitan Herman and Bishops Seraphim and Nikon welcome Archbishop Leo at New York's JFK Airport.

visited a number of other sites after their arrival in New York on July 29, 2005. Archbishop Leo and the Finnish delegation were formally welcomed by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, at Saint Sergius Chapel at the OCA Chancery, where a Service of Thanksgiving before the Valaam Icon was celebrated.

On Saturday morning, July 30, Prof. John Erickson, dean of Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY, welcomed Archbishop Leo to the seminary and hosted a breakfast for him and the faculty members. Later the same day, Archbishop Leo and the Valaam Icon were welcomed at Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South

FINLAND to 20



Finnish delegation with Metropolitan Herman and OCA hierarchs [above].

Alaskan faithful, many of whom trace their faith to the missionary efforts of St. Herman and his companions, pray fervently during the pilgrimage Liturgy [left].

COUNCIL from 1

Delegates explore five "pillars" of Council theme

After the election of the Very Rev. Gregory Safchuk and Dr. Alice Woog as vice-chairs and the adoption of the agenda, Protospesbyter Robert Kondratik, chancellor, welcomed a number of special guests. Among them were His Grace, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, who extended greetings on behalf of His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

Metropolitan Herman, chancellor, address delegates. In his opening address, Metropolitan Herman emphasized that the OCA's future course begs the "responsible and right-ordered participation of the entire People of God in the Church's life and work."

Metropolitan Herman underscored the OCA's unique position, as an autocephalous Church, to address its needs and future direction within the context of the All-American Council. He also reported on his ministry since his election as Primate in 2002, focusing on his archpastoral visits across North America, his efforts to maintain and strengthen relationships with the sister Orthodox Churches around the world, and his concern for ecumenical relations, youth, the internet, theological education, parish life, and other issues.

In addressing the funding of the Church, Metropolitan Herman challenged Council the delegates to embrace generosity "in sharing the blessings we have been given by God." While recognizing that "every diocese, parish, and Church member must strive to help in the fulfillment and realization of our Church's mission," he lamented "those who are indifferent to the needs of our parishes, dioceses, and Church."

In his concluding remarks, Metropolitan Herman encouraged the delegates to embrace a "greater appreciation of our identity and a stronger affirmation of who we are and who we are called to be" by recognizing that the OCA "has been greatly blessed by the lives, labors, and holy examples of many saints."

The complete text of Metropolitan Herman's address is found elsewhere in this issue.

In his address, Father Kondratik offered the example of numerous hierarchs, clergy, and lay persons who had rendered outstanding service to the Church in North America as a challenge for renewed enthusiasm for the work and life of the Church. He also reported on the work of the chancery and its staff and commended the nearly 300 individuals who, on a voluntary basis, serve the OCA's departments, boards, and commissions. In the area of finances, he noted that the decrease in contributions is not unique to the OCA, adding that virtually every faith community and non-profit organization are experiencing similar declines. He also addressed issues related to the OCA's financial transparency, inter-Orthodox and ecumenical relations, parish and mission development, clergy pensions, the internet, and sexual misconduct issues.

Father Kondratik concluded by reflecting on the witness and example of the North American saints and challenged the delegates to embrace their zeal and enthusiasm, even in the face of cynical criticism or worse.

The complete text of Father Kondratik's address is found elsewhere in this issue.

Delegates scrutinize five "pillars" of Church life. In the remaining plenary sessions, delegates explored five "pillars" upon which the Council theme was built. Formal presentations were followed by small group workshops, during which delegates offered a wide range of ideas for strengthening the life of the Church. A summary team synthesized these ideas and offered reports at the beginning of each session.

- **Vision and identity.** Consistent with references in the addresses of Metropolitan Herman and Father Kondratik to the OCA's "missionary legacy," delegates underscored the missionary nature of the Church. They recognized that the fullness of the Gospel was brought to North America to be *proclaimed*, rather than *preserved*. The OCA's autocephalous status, which reflects an understanding of the Church as serving all who would receive the Gospel rather than a "diaspora" sharing the same ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background, was affirmed by clergy and lay delegates alike during workshop sessions.

- **Clergy formation and development.** Delegates expressed strong, yet positive, opinions on a variety of issues related to clergy formation. The importance of seminary training was affirmed, with many delegates opining that ideally, theological students should be fully funded in their studies. Delegates offered numerous proposals for continuing education, distance

learning and satellite programs, and other forms of ongoing clergy education and formation. It was interesting to note that many delegates stressed the importance of building pastoral, rather than theoretical, skills, resource sharing, mentoring, and seminarian internship programs. Serious concern also was expressed for the reestablishment of the summer internship program, suspended in 2005 due to diminished freewill offerings.

- **Parish health, evangelization.** Delegates stressed the importance of education of and formation of clergy and laity alike as foundational for successful evangelization efforts and the ongoing health of parish communities. Strong feelings were expressed with regard to the need for skill-based education for every member of the Church. A number of delegates suggested that the talents of retired clergy should be used in educational and mentorship programs.

Numerous delegates noted the need for sensitivity with regard to multi-cultural ministry and evangelization, not only to traditionally Orthodox immigrant groups, but also to Hispanic, Asian-American and African-Americans. It was interesting to hear numerous delegates relate their experiences in successfully opening their parishes to neighborhood groups rather than abandoning the "old neighborhoods" altogether. Similar experiences were shared in a luncheon forum, one of several conducted during the week, on ministering to the needs of immigrants and minorities.

- **Relations with Orthodox and non-Orthodox.** Delegates stressed the need for Orthodox unity in North America. While the importance of inter-Orthodox cooperation in the quest for administrative unity surfaced as a central concern, the reality – that such unity is not likely in the immediate future – should not hinder the work of the local parishes in developing and strengthening cooperative ministries in witnessing to the Gospel.

In his remarks at the closing plenary session, Metropolitan Herman, while noting that "sooner or later, in God's time, unity will take place," reminded the delegates that "nothing comes about unless we all work together to make it happen." Using the dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia as an example of how God guides the Church in ways that just a few years ago would have been unthinkable, he assured clergy and laity alike that the Holy Synod of Bishops "supports all of your good intentions and works, regardless of what they are."

In the area of ecumenical relations, concerns over the Church's participation in agencies such as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches were expressed. It was noted that such matters remain within the competency of the Holy Synod of Bishops. In his presentation, the Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, assistant to the chancellor for external affairs and inter-Church relations, echoed the sentiment expressed in Metropolitan Herman's opening address, in which he recognized the tensions that exist as a result of the Church's participation in ecumenical organizations while sharing even greater concern for the Church's responsibility to proclaim the fullness of the Gospel. He also described the connections between the ecumenical participation of most of the Orthodox Churches, both in North America and globally, and the Orthodox Churches' common witness and common theological voice in ecumenical organizations and events. He noted that ecumenical participation certainly requires careful consideration and discernment. As further proof of our historic commitment to this task, it was reported that the Holy Synod of Bishops had blessed the OCA's participation as a founding member of Christian Churches Together, thereby providing yet another opportunity to proclaim the Gospel on this continent. It was noted that in the *Tomos of Autocephaly*, the OCA is charged to "maintain direct relations with all other churches and confessions, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike."

Summary team findings. A number of serious proposals surfaced in a final presentation offered by the summary team. While lack of sufficient funding surfaced as the main obstacle to accomplishing many of the Church's goals, delegates did offer specific long and short-range proposals in three broad areas.

- **Mission.** While delegates felt the long-range goal of establishing 50 new missions and 50 revitalized parishes within the next five to ten years, the establishment of a national evangelization program topped the

COUNCIL to 12

Delegates pass "fair share" increase

TORONTO, ON, CANADA [OCA Communications] – An entire All-American Council plenary session was devoted to funding the vision and mission of the Orthodox Church in America.

The Very Rev. John Dresko, chairman of the Department of Stewardship, offered a presentation on the Church's financial needs and the proposed 2006 budget of \$2,600,000.00. He stressed that insufficient funding limits the implementation of the Church's vision and mission and generates deficits. In line with the report of the Very Rev. Dimitri Oselinsky, OCA treasurer, he reported that deficit reduction and repayment of borrowed funds are important issues.

In reviewing implementation of the fair share resolution passed at the 13th All-American Council in 2002, Father Dresko stated that delegates to that Council felt assured that adequate funds would be generated to meet the Church's budget.

"After discussions at the 13th Council concerning the total amount of budgeted income, we agreed upon a per capita equivalent, de facto retaining the very system that contributed to our current difficulties," Father Dresko observed. "We immediately budgeted up to the maximum allowed by our income, instead of gradually building to it, limiting budget spending and allowing for an annual increase. When we apportioned by fair share the maximum amount to the dioceses, the reported financial supporting membership again declined; we actually are receiving less in budgeted income in 2005 than was received in 2002."

This, Father Dresko added, has been aggravated by the fact that annual, voluntary, and development giving has fallen far short of yearly projections. He added that, in order to meet diocesan budgetary needs, virtually every diocese has at some point increased its annual assessment by at least the rate of inflation.

While Father Dresko reported that annual and voluntary giving and thoughtful budgeting are high priorities, he emphasized that without increased funding – equal to \$20.00 per year per adult member – ongoing deficits are inevitable.

"We have heard comments and even arguments about spending – percentages of this and percentages of that," Father Dresko stated. "We can argue all we want about spending.... But this measure is not about spending; it's about giving. And God simply commands us to give."

Before presenting the fair share proposal, Father Dresko reported that several proposals had been presented to the Metropolitan Council, at the request of the Holy Synod of Bishops.

"The annual support needed from the dioceses for the day-to-day operation of the OCA's central Church administration is \$2,710,000.00," Father Dresko stated. "All the proposals hoped that increased annual and voluntary giving will lead to reduced fair share amounts in the future."

Father Dresko then presented the fair share proposal adopted by the Metropolitan Council on April 15, 2005, and subsequently reviewed by the Holy Synod.

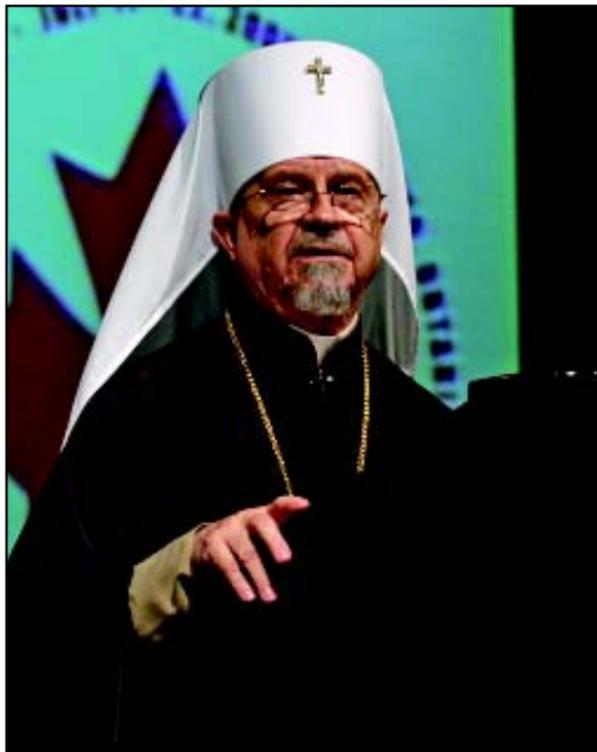
The text of the proposal reads as follows.

"Resolved, that the amount of income support each year (2006, 2007, and 2008) be \$2,600,000.00. This amount will be apportioned out to the territorial dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America using a formula of OCA membership percentage (i.e., if your diocese is 15% of the supporting diocesan membership of the OCA, it will be asked to support 15% of the fair share income amount). Parishes shall forward to their diocesan treasurer the reported financially supporting membership number no later than September 30 of each year. The diocesan treasurer shall forward to the OCA treasurer the diocesan reported financially supporting membership no later than October 15 of each year. That figure shall be used to recalculate the fair share for the following January 1. These amounts to be apportioned will not be raised. If membership changes, the amount will be a different proportion for each diocese. Each diocese shall forward one-twelfth of its respective fair share amount to the OCA chancery no later than the 15th of each month.

FAIR SHARE to 20

Clergy and lay delegates vote on "fair share" proposal that increased funding for OCA program ministries.





I am pleased to welcome all of you to Toronto as the Orthodox Church in America gathers for the 14th All-American Council. For the second time in the history of our Church, we have assembled in the Archdiocese of Canada. The archdiocese encompasses the entire Dominion of Canada, a nation rich in history, tradition, and culture. Canada is a large country, spread across the expansive plains, mountains, and prairies of North America. It is a land of vast breadth that is blessed with great agricultural, marine, and other natural resources. We have gathered in Canada's largest city, Toronto, located within the country's largest metropolitan area. Most of you have already had some experience of Toronto's cosmopolitan character and ethnic diversity. People representing over 100 ethnic groups have made their homes here, bringing with them their languages, cultures, and traditions, evident at almost every turn. These varied peoples and ethnic groups, with their unique characteristics, add to the rich fabric of Canadian society.

It is fitting that we have gathered in this country and city for, in a sense, the diversity of both Canada and Toronto reflects the diverse nature of the Orthodox Church in America. We are a Church comprised of peoples from all over the world, made up of many ethnic groups with their own languages and traditions, their unique histories and cultures, and their own personal experience of Christ and the Gospel of salvation. From this diversity, we have been formed out of many peoples into the one Body of Christ in North America. Gathered from many nations, we are "no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" [Ephesians 2:19-20].

The All-American Council in the life of the Church.

We have gathered here as the Orthodox Church in America, the local territorial Church on this continent, the Body of Christ in this time and place. The All-American Council is a clear expression of what in Russian is called *sobornost*. Sometimes translated as "conciliarity," *sobornost* may be understood as the responsible and right-ordered participation of the entire People of God in the Church's life and work. This shared involvement in the Church's life – by hierarchs, clergy, and laity alike – means that every Orthodox Christian, having received the Holy Spirit, may properly express concern for the Church, discuss the Church's challenges and needs, and suggest insights and answers to the challenges faced by the Church, as long as this is in keeping with the Church's Faith and Tradition. However, such participation and involvement in the life of the Church is not based on some form of "democracy" which would make clergy and laity co-administrators of the Church, for the responsibility to assure that we remain in agreement with Orthodox Faith and Tradition remains the role and responsibility of the bishops.

In reflecting on the role of the All-American Council in the life of the Church, the ever-memorable Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann wrote, "The [All-American Council] is thus the expression of the common concern for the Church of all her members and the expression also of her hierarchal structure, and this is what *sobornost* and *sobornal* mean in Orthodoxy. It is a cooperation, in which each member of the Church is given full possibility to express his views, to enrich others with his experience, to teach and to be taught, to give and to receive. The hierarchy can profit immensely from this cooperation with the laity, just as the laity can be enlightened on the various dimensions of the Church's life. But all this does not mean 'egalitarianism,' a transformation of hierarchy into laity and vice-versa. It is a sad fact, a tragedy indeed, that under the influence of secularism and legalism, the whole emphasis in our understanding of the [Council] activities has shifted to 'decisions' and 'motions' which are being considered as the main task of the [Council], whereas its real value is in the wonderful opportunity to clarify the mind of the Church by a common discussion, by sharing the concern for the Church, by deepening the unity of all members of the Church."

The All-American Council is a sacred moment, a blessed opportunity for the Orthodox Church in America to manifest itself as a communion of faith, of hope, and of love; as such, it can be seen as a true blessing for our Church and the icon and model of who we are and what we are called to be. Gathered in council, the hierarchs of our Church, entrusted with the apostolic ministry of guiding and shepherding the flock, surrounded by those who

have been called to serve as ordained ministers and the faithful in Christ, are the One Body that shares the One Bread and One Cup.

We gather every three years to reflect on the life and mission of the Church in North America. As we gather for the 14th All-American Council, we do so with common hopes and concerns, and with a sense of common purpose. We reflect upon our shared vocation and mission: to proclaim the Gospel and live the Orthodox Faith as the Church in North America at the beginning of the 21st century. As we gather in Toronto, we recognize the richness of the experiences represented here, in the lives of all who are present. We recall the words of the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Church in Corinth: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all" [1 Corinthians 12:4-6].

The experience of the Orthodox Church in America and its vision of Church life, as expressed through the All-American Council, are unique among the world's local Orthodox Churches. We have an understanding of the Church which is not a narrow understanding. This broader, more involved, and more engaged understanding of the Church is reflected in the All-American Council. Convened every three years, the All-American Council is a microcosm of the diversity and unity of the Orthodox Church in America and of its unique role within the larger community of Orthodox Churches throughout the world. As I stated in my first words to the Church, immediately after my election as Primate, "The Council is, indeed, an icon of the Church. The Church's bishops, together with the clergy and laity, are gathered around Christ. This is seen with special clarity and in its highest expression when we gather for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is also seen in the deliberations and decisions of the Council. It is evident that the Church is neither the hierarchy alone, nor the clergy alone, nor the laity alone. Rather, the Church is the Body of Christ, composed of bishops and clergy and laity acting together."

Three years ago, we gathered in Orlando, FL, for the 13th All-American Council. Our last Council was unique in that it not only represented the gathering of the Church from across North America, but it also prayerfully expressed its gratitude to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, as he retired from active archpastoral service after serving as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America for 25 years. We remain grateful to Metropolitan Theodosius who, in retirement, continues to serve the Church as his health allows. As preparations were made for the election of Metropolitan Theodosius' successor, and as that process actually took place, our Church showed that it is, indeed, mature, stable, and capable of directing its own life.

Upon the retirement of Metropolitan Theodosius, I was elected to the office of Primate, and accepted the awesome responsibility given to me, looking for hope and support in the lives and examples of archpastoral service in the long line of those ever-memorable servants of God who carried the burdens of this office before me. In my first words spoken as Metropolitan of All America and Canada, I admitted the overwhelming sense of humility with which I accepted my election as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. Throughout these past three years, I have come to know that to be the first among the bishops of our Church means to be the servant of all. I have also come to know that to be the servant of all I must depend in all things on Christ's presence in our midst and on Christ's ongoing ministry in and through His Church.

Our historical and spiritual roots. My first official act as Metropolitan of All America and Canada was to travel on pilgrimage to Alaska, to the mother diocese of our Church, in order to walk the ground hallowed by the lives and apostolic labors of Saint Herman of Alaska, Saint Innocent, Saint Juvenal, Saint Jacob of Alaska, Saint Peter the Aleut, and the missionaries who first traveled from Karelia in the north of the Russian Empire to Alaska to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and indicate to the peoples of Alaska the way into the Kingdom of Heaven.

During my pilgrimage to Alaska, I visited Spruce Island, that small island in the Gulf of Alaska sanctified by the life and labors of Saint Herman, the first saint to be glorified by the Orthodox Church in America. I prayed before his relics, now enshrined in Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Kodiak, and asked his heavenly intercession on behalf of the bishops, priests, deacon, monastics, and faithful of our Church, as well as for all Orthodox Christians in North America. This trip to Alaska was, in a sense, a pilgrimage to our spiritual and historical roots, to the place where the Cross of Christ was first planted in North America, and where the Gospel of Jesus Christ was first proclaimed by Orthodox Christian missionaries to native North Americans over 200 years ago.

This year, as we mark the 35th anniversary of the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America by the Russian Orthodox Church, we also celebrate the 35th anniversary of the glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska. And so, as we gather in Council, it is appropriate that our thoughts turn to Alaska, to Saint Herman, and to those missionaries and the peoples who first received the Gospel from them. The native peoples of Alaska who first received the Gospel were not – and are not – a single, homogenous people. Rather, they are several peoples, each with its own culture and language and understanding and appreciation of life.

Address of Metropolitan Herman

A sacred moment, a blessed opportunity

Nonetheless, the Gospel of Christ and the Orthodox Faith have formed them into the one Body of Christ in Alaska. This is what we are called to be throughout this continent. Whatever our diocese or parish, whatever our ethnic or linguistic heritage, we are called to form one people, one body, one Church.

The life of our Church today. Over 200 years ago, a small group of missionary monks began to evangelize the native peoples of Alaska. This inaugurated the Orthodox Church's apostolic labors in North America. Because of our Church's missionary heritage and evangelistic legacy, we remain committed to the mission of evangelization. Today, we are a diverse community of native peoples and immigrants, of those born to Orthodox families and those converted to the Orthodox faith. Though we are a diverse community, we are united in one faith and one vision, and we are eager to share Christ's love and the depth and riches of the Orthodox Faith with the many communities that exist in North America. We are committed to the preaching of the Gospel and to the growth of the Church.

During these past three years, I have had the opportunity to visit many of our Church's dioceses, parishes, monasteries, seminaries, and Church institutions. In visiting communities of the faithful throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico, I have been touched by their highly visible witness to the Orthodox Faith. Our clergy and our faithful are zealous in their love for Christ and His Church. I have been touched by the tenacity and dedication of those members of our older parishes who, due to the reality of demographic trends, often struggle to maintain the rich and historic traditions of parish life and community, particularly in inner-city areas. I have also visited many new, younger parish and mission communities. I am grateful for those clergy and faithful, many of whom are converts to the Orthodox Faith, who enthusiastically look for the ways and means to share the Orthodox Faith in the face of the multi-religious context, as well as the anti-religious sentiments, of contemporary North American society.

As I travel, I often hear our clergy and laity alike express concern for the growth of the Orthodox Church in America. These concerns are voiced primarily because of the limitations placed on our smaller communities in the areas of human and financial resources. We are acutely aware of a decline in the number of financially supporting members of the Orthodox Church in America. At the same time, we know that new missions continue to be established, while some of our older, established parishes also continue to grow and welcome new members. Clearly, the Lord has blessed us and established His Holy Church here in North America to reach out and proclaim the Good News of salvation to all who live on this continent. As the local Church in North America, we are able to provide resources for those communities willing to evangelize in order to bring others into the one flock of Christ. It is my hope that everyone at this Council will recommit himself or herself to the work of evangelization and will continue to support and encourage those who dedicate their time and energies to the important work begun by Saint Herman of Alaska and those who accompanied him to this continent.

Clearly, one of the most difficult challenges faced by the parishes and dioceses of the Orthodox Church is found in the area of finances. Small communities often find it difficult to support full-time priests; yet, without the services of a full-time priest, the community finds itself struggling to grow. At the same time, many of our older parishes have memberships that are advanced in age, living on limited incomes. Despite their desire to be generous, they also must face the reality of paying for increasingly costly health care. This is true as well on a Church-wide level. The work of the Orthodox Church in America – the services provided to dioceses, parishes, clergy, and faithful by its various departments – is increasingly constrained by financial realities. It is crucial for us, as members of parish communities, as members of dioceses, and as the Orthodox Church in America, to exercise stewardship in a manner rooted in the Gospel, taking into consideration the Lord's call to "give as a gift that which we have been given as a gift."

From its earliest days in Alaska, our Church's mission has been one of evangelization, outreach, and the engagement of and interaction with society at large. This remains true in the present day. I am increasingly edified by the social commitment of so many of our parish communities and by their outreach to the wider community and to society as a whole. Works of charity – opening soup kitchens or pantries, distributing clothing, caring for the elderly, and other forms of social ministry – are effective and faithful ways by which the clergy and laity of our Church are reaching out to serve Christ in our neighbors. Such Church programs and other forms of outreach are in the tradition of our Church from its first days, when Saint Herman and his monastic companions preached the Gospel by word and by deed.

Proclaiming the Gospel in the modern world.

Saint Herman and his monastic companions traveled to Alaska during a different period of history, in a different age. However, they made use of everything available to them to preach the Gospel and serve God's people. Their missionary outreach took place within the context of their time and with whatever means were at their disposal. Saint Innocent traveled the Pacific coast by boat and *bidarka* and communicated through letters that often took months to arrive at their destinations. Since then, the Church has

METROPOLITAN from 9

used new means of transportation and communication for the same purpose and mission: to make known the fullness of the Christian Faith found in the Orthodox Church. I am pleased to note that our Church continues to develop the methods to reach out to the world around us, providing instruction to Orthodox Christians throughout North America, preaching the Gospel to those who are seeking the true faith, and touching the lives of the unchurched.

Our Church, through its seminaries and publishers, is the leader in the work of offering English-language Orthodox scripture studies, theological works, spiritual writings and instructions, religious education resources, Church history texts, etc. This is one important means of making known the "Good News" of the Orthodox Faith. Our Church newspaper, *The Orthodox Church*, also provides the clergy and faithful of our Church and a large number of other subscribers with comprehensive coverage of the life and mission of the Orthodox Church in America and its dioceses, parishes, and institutions, as well as coverage of significant events in the life of the Orthodox Church throughout the world. It also provides articles and reflections concerning the issues faced by Orthodox Christians in contemporary society.

We live in the electronic age, a period in history which depends largely upon electronic media as the principal means to disseminate news and information. While the Truth we proclaim is ageless, the manner in which we proclaim it continues to develop with the times in which we live. Our Church's web site – www.oca.org – has developed into an invaluable tool for promoting the Orthodox Faith. In addition to reporting on the life of the Church, a directory of clergy, parishes, and other contact information, the website is an invaluable source of educational materials, including the daily scripture readings, information on feasts and iconography, and musical resources. Through our website, we are able to communicate to our clergy, our faithful, and others the various special and ongoing activities in the life of the Church. Our Church newspaper and web site are to be seen as appropriate and effective tools given to the Church for the work of proclaiming the Gospel in our own time and place.

I am increasingly convinced that the electronic media is a source of many blessings for the work of the Church. At the same time, I am concerned that one of the most troubling influences upon the lives of our clergy, and thus upon their service to the Church, and upon all the members of the Church, is the electronic media, most especially the internet. I would like to suggest that the various clergy and other "Orthodox discussion lists" be used more responsibly by all the members of our Church. There are those who will state that the use of such lists is helpful, providing mutual support among the clergy and faithful. However, from what I have been able to observe, most exchanges that take place are neither constructive nor helpful and, in some cases, are even detrimental and harmful to those who participate in them. It is regrettable that something that can serve as a useful tool for building up the Church all too often works against it, most often against the clergy themselves and, just as often, against the hierarchy of the Church. Those who have used the internet as a means to discourage and disparage, both clergy and laity alike, would do well to recall the words of Saint Paul to the Philippians: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things" [Philippians 4:7-9].

The local community and clergy. The mission of preaching the Gospel and teaching the Orthodox Faith takes place, first and foremost, within the local parish community. It is in our parishes and missions that the faithful most directly take part in the life of the Church, participate in the divine services, hear the Gospel, are nourished with the Holy Mysteries, receive spiritual guidance, are instructed in the Orthodox Faith, live the liturgical cycle of fasts and feasts, and share in the Church's community life.

Regrettably, however, there are those who do not see beyond their experience of Church life within the parish. Members of parish communities must be invited to an awareness of being part of more than the local community. Writing almost 50 years ago, Prof. Serge Verhovskoy noted, "The parish must have a consciousness of being an organic part of the Church, to be the Church as it exists in a given locality. A truly Orthodox community will never oppose its diocese or the rest of the Church. It will freely and

gladly accept the authority of the Church and Orthodox tradition in its entirety.... A truly Orthodox parish will not be pervaded by the spirit of indifference and selfishness, but will wholeheartedly participate in the life of the Church and support it." These words, written almost five decades ago, remain just as applicable today. The presence at this Council of so many clergy and lay delegates from our Church's parish and mission communities provides the opportunity to share the good news of what our Church is accomplishing on so many different levels and to provide your faithful flocks and fellow parishioners with a greater vision of the Church in America and the mission to which we have all been called.

Because the Gospel is proclaimed and the life of the Church is experienced first and foremost on the local parish or mission level, it is the parish priest who is on the front line of the Church's evangelizing and missionary activity. This is just as true within our long-established parishes as it is within our new, fledgling mission communities. And we are pleased to note that the clergy of our Church are well-prepared for the important, essential task of serving Christ's faithful people within the local parish and mission communities.

Our Church is blessed with three seminaries, schools of theological education and priestly and pastoral formation. Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary provide theological education and formation for those who will serve the Church as clergy and through other forms of ministry. Saint Herman's Orthodox Theological Seminary has been entrusted with providing theological education and pastoral formation for those called to serve in the Diocese of Alaska. While experience has shown that there are exceptions to the established requirements for ordination to the priesthood, we are committed to seeing that established procedures must be followed concerning the theological education required of those who are to be ordained to the diaconate and priesthood. The established norm for the theological education and pastoral formation of candidates for ordination in the Orthodox Church in America is attendance at an Orthodox theological seminary. To dispense with this requirement, except in extremely rare situations, is to deprive not only those who are called to serve the Church but, more importantly, those whom they will serve.

We cannot adequately express our gratitude to our priests and deacons – and to their wives and families – for their commitment to Christ and their zeal for the work of proclaiming the Good News of salvation. God alone knows the sacrifices so many of them have made. Yet these sacrifices are made willingly and in a spirit of trust in God and a desire for building up the Orthodox Church in America. I call upon the faithful of our Church to encourage, support, and love our clergy, just as they are called to encourage, support, and love those they have been called to serve. Our imperfect expressions of gratitude can never adequately convey our deep appreciation for our clergy and their families and all they do in service to Christ and His Church. The Lord Himself, as light and joy and faithful companion, is the recompense of the dedication and commitment to the life and mission of the Church on the part of our clergy and their families.

Esteemed clergy, dearly beloved servants of Christ: I exhort you to love one another as brothers and coworkers in the Lord's vineyard. Do not allow the spirit of competition and disagreement or the tendency to criticize and demean to enter your lives and your relationships with one another. Challenge one another to greater accomplishments for the sake of the Gospel. Forgive one another, and bear one another's burdens. Do not allow yourselves to be discouraged or distracted from the work to which the Lord has called you. Continue to serve faithfully so that, when you are called from this life, you may hear the voice of the Lord saying to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your Lord" [Matthew 25:21].

Youth. As we gather in Toronto, we are joined by a large number of youth and young adults. Everyone present at the 13th All-American Council rejoiced in the enthusiasm exhibited by our youth and young adults at that gathering. Their presence with us at this Council should serve as a reminder of our commitment, not only to the life of the Church here and now, but also to its future. Just as we have been blessed by the faith, vision, and commitment of those who have gone before us, it is our responsibility to guide the youth and young adults of our Church into the future, so that following in our footsteps and blessed by our vision and commitment to Christ and His Church, they may one day assume the mantle of leadership, ministry, outreach, and missionary activity,

thus continuing in the tradition of Saint Herman and the first missionaries who arrived in North America over 200 years ago.

Finances. I have already briefly mentioned that the Orthodox Church in America faces financial challenges at every level of Church life. While the Church operates well within its approved budget, the difficulty being faced is primarily due to a notable decrease in free-will giving to the Church. The reasons for this can be attributed to the current state of world affairs, the international economy, and our own domestic economy. This decrease of offerings is true, not only on every level of the Orthodox Church in America, but for all Orthodox Churches in North America, as well as for other religious and not-for-profit organizations. While we face this challenge and seek to remedy the decrease in income, we must do everything within our power to maintain the many services our Church and its departments offer to our dioceses, parishes, and institutions, and to the population at large. It is within the arena of Church finances that the challenge to fund the work of the Church directly encounters the call to responsible Christian stewardship.

Christians are called to generosity. We are called to be generous in sharing the blessings we have been given by God and to give of ourselves, our time and talents, and our financial resources for the sake of building up the Body of Christ. Every diocese, parish, and Church member must strive to help in the fulfillment and realization of our Church's mission. Regrettably, there are those who are indifferent to the needs of our parishes, dioceses, and Church. This indifference often develops first on the parish level when clergy and faithful, while often of good will, fail to rise to the occasion and respond to the Church's ever-growing needs. Instead of denying the reality of the increasing cost of living and acting as the Church, we should rejoice that our needs are increasing, as this clearly shows that the Church's mission is also growing and expanding. And this should lead us to the generous stewardship to which the Lord calls us. Our discussion later this week of the Fair Share initiative as a means of not only adequately, but generously, supporting the Church will reveal how well we desire to respond to Christ's call to share in His mission of salvation. It also will provide yet another opportunity for us to respond generously to God, Who has been so generous to us.

Inter-Orthodox relations. As Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, one of my principal obligations is to maintain and promote our relationships with our sister Churches throughout the world. As part of this responsibility of assuring our presence and participation within the communion of Orthodox Churches, and in fulfillment of my duty to give expression to and to nurture our relationships with our sister Churches, I have made official visits to the Ecumenical Patriarch, to the Church of Russia, the Church of Georgia, the Church of Poland, the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, the autonomous Church of Ukraine, and the autonomous Church of Finland. Such visits further strengthen the ties of faith that unite the Orthodox Church in America with its sister Churches.

I have visited these Churches with the full knowledge that there are those within our own Church who do not understand the purpose of such visits, nor their value for the life of our Church. Indeed, it seems that this unfounded criticism of such visits and other forms of exchange with sister Churches, which are the prerogative of the Primate, arises even among clergy, some of whom express criticism in ways that not only demean the office of the Primate and my own leadership abilities, but also the authority of the Holy Synod, in whose name the trips are made, and the place of the Orthodox Church in America in relationship to the other local autocephalous Churches. In accepting autocephaly, the Orthodox Church in America also accepted the responsibility of nurturing unity among the Churches, both here in North America and abroad.

• **The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America.** The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America [SCOBA] remains a unique means of working for Orthodox unity, even though relationships among some of the SCOBA hierarchs remain less positive than might be hoped. As a result of what may be seen as weakened relationships, the work of SCOBA may seem to be losing ground. However, despite SCOBA's present challenges, I believe it is important for us to remain involved in its work, always looking ahead for future possibilities and greater cooperation. It is in settings such as SCOBA that our autocephaly can be observed as benefiting not only our own life and mission, but also the future unity of the Church in America. The benefits of our participation in SCOBA are most apparent in the work of the SCOBA commissions. International Orthodox Christian Charities, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, and the Orthodox Christian Fellowship are well known and respected agencies that benefit not only SCOBA, but also the Orthodox Church in America and all those whom they serve. The various SCOBA commissions also make valuable contributions to Orthodox cooperation and common mission. The work of these agencies and commissions alone makes our participation in SCOBA a worthwhile endeavor.

I am pleased to offer a sincere welcome to His Grace, Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos, the general secretary of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas. His Grace's heartfelt commitment and dedication to the work of SCOBA is deeply appreciated by all the SCOBA hierarchs. Our prayer is that the Lord will grant him strength in the work that has been entrusted to him.

• **The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.** As we work to foster our relationships with our sister Orthodox Churches around the world and in North America, among our concerns and interests are the ongoing developments in the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia [ROCOR]. The discussions concerning the reconciliation of ROCOR with the Russian Orthodox Church, long

Delegates participated in individual workshops after each plenary presentation.



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desired by all of us, are moving forward in a process without an apparent or, at least, an acknowledged time frame. Nonetheless, we continue to monitor all developments in this matter. We continue to promote our own relationship with ROCOR, primarily through my personal contact with His Eminence, Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, and through personal contacts with members of his administration. Several of our hierarchs also are involved, most often in informal and personal ways, in promoting harmonious relationships with other ROCOR hierarchs and clergy. This eventual reconciliation will clearly affect the Orthodox Church in America, as most of ROCOR's parishes and the offices of its First Hierarch and Council of Bishops are located in North America. It is my hope that the eventual reunion will enhance the work of Orthodox unity in North America, rather than create further fragmentation.

• **Ecumenical Relations.** The Orthodox Church in America continues to bear witness to the fullness of the Gospel through its presence at various ecumenical events and by its participation in ecumenical dialogue. We are grateful that the Orthodox Church in America can be the well-reasoned voice that needs to be heard within the various inter-Christian forums, most especially by those ecclesial bodies that, by nature, are traditional in their orientation and value the example that the Orthodox Church can give. As the result of a movement to create a new ecumenical organization comprising a wide spectrum of American Christian bodies, Christian Churches Together [CCT] was recently formed. Among the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches that have joined CCT are the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Armenian Church, and the Syrian Orthodox Church. Other members include the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches (both liberal and conservative), African-American churches, and ethnic churches (such as Korean Presbyterian). With the support of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Orthodox Church in America has taken its place among CCT's founding members. I am well aware of and concerned about the tensions which exist as a result of our Church's participation in such ecumenical organizations. However, I am more concerned that our Church fulfills its mission, as it is our responsibility to reach out to others and to witness to the Orthodox Faith and our vision and experience of the fullness of the Gospel of Christ. Indeed, in the *Tomos of Autocephaly*, granted to our Church 35 years ago, we were called upon to "maintain direct relations with all other churches and confessions, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike." Our participation in CCT and in similar organizations is yet another way by which we can better fulfill the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel on this continent and maintaining and nurturing relationships with "all other churches and confessions, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike."

Our Church and the future. As we gather this week, we are invited to reflect on the theme of this 14th All-American Council, "Our Church and the Future." In considering our present challenges and the future of the Orthodox Church in America, I am pleased to note that I am hopeful, confident, and optimistic. However, this hope and optimism are somewhat guarded. My hopefulness is tempered by the many difficult and painful realities faced by the members of our Church – clergy and faithful alike – not specifically as members of the Church, but as members of modern society who are naturally affected by the cynicism, mistrust, paranoia, and suspicion that plague every area and level of contemporary life, including the Church. This, of course, is nothing new to the Church, for throughout its history, the Church has faced its opponents, even from within. However, a lack of unity and shared vision stifles, restrains, and limits the many possibilities for positive work and growth which lie before us.

I will again recall words written by Prof. Serge Verhovskoy almost a half-century ago: "Unity and order are badly needed in our Church. Every layman, priest, and bishop, every parish and diocese, must have a clear consciousness that they are living members of the whole Orthodox Church in America, and they must do their best to make Orthodoxy on this continent united, spiritually strong, and influential." Unity. Order. Oneness of mind and heart. Respect for the responsibility which, by virtue of Baptism and Chrismation, each person – clergy and laity alike – has in the life of the Church. Parish communities whose lives are rooted in the Gospel. An understanding of our history and an acceptance of the mandate we received to evangelize the peoples of this continent. Continued growth. This is my hope for the future. And it is a hope that is being realized – and will be realized – with God's help and through our willingness to cooperate with Him in the work of salvation.

As we look to the future, I think we all too often spend an inordinate and inappropriate amount of time and energy debating among ourselves the nature of our autocephaly, lamenting that there are those who do not recognize it, and looking for bold efforts to achieve recognition. What is most important for us, however, is that we remain true to who we are and what we are called to be as the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America. This means that we are called to live our life as the local autocephalous Church. We are called to take full advantage of and making full use of that which is unique to us – from our missionary heritage, to the legacy of sanctity handed on to us by the saints who have lived and worked out their salvation on this continent, beginning with Saint Herman himself, to the unique multi-ethnic character of our parish communities, to our commitment to missionary work within the diverse society in which we live.

The legacy of the Orthodox Church in America was summed up in the mission statement promulgated by the Holy Synod in 1990: "The Mission of the Orthodox Church in America, the local autocephalous Orthodox Church, is to be faithful in fulfilling the commandment of Christ to 'Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all [things that He has] commanded,' so that all people may be saved



Delegates and observers joined voices to sing the responses at the Council's daily liturgical services.

and come to the knowledge of the truth: To preach, in accordance with God's will, the fullness of the Gospel of the Kingdom to the peoples of North America and to invite them to become members of the Orthodox Church. To utilize for her mission the various languages of the peoples of this continent. To be the Body of Christ in North America and to be faithful to the tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church. To witness to the truth, and by God's grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to reveal Christ's way of sanctification and eternal salvation to all."

Conclusion. I wish to refer again to the Apostle's first letter to the Corinthians. Saint Paul reminds us, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit.... But one and the same Spirit works all these things...."

We have been given different roles within the Church, the One Body of Christ. Those who are called to serve as bishops accept their place within the life of the Church and function accordingly. So do the clergy. So do the lay faithful. But, ultimately, it is all the same work, the same mission, the same proclamation of the same Gospel, all guided by the same Spirit. Lamentably, we all too often encounter a sense of disaffection – one group against another. This must not be, and it cannot be! Bishops must love the flocks entrusted to them. They must care for their clergy and the families of the clergy. They must lovingly instruct and guide the faithful given to their care. Clergy are to honor those who have been set over them as fathers and guides, to serve the Church with love, to guide the faithful by word and example. And the faithful of the Church are to exercise their baptismal vocation by proclaiming the Gospel and reaching out in love to those around them.

As we look ahead to the future of our Church, and its mission and role among the other Orthodox Churches, we gratefully note that the Orthodox Church in America is in a unique, privileged position, a position unlike that of any of the other Orthodox Churches with a presence in North America. We have marked 35 years as an autocephalous Church, 35 years of new experiences and continued growth. Although, in comparison to the histories of Orthodox Churches in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, the Orthodox Church in America is relatively young, we are also a Church of great enthusiasm and energy. We are a Church that, despite its youth, has been greatly blessed by the lives, labors, and holy examples of many saints. And this fact should encourage us spiritually and call us to a greater appreciation of our identity and a stronger affirmation of who we are and who we are called to be. We are autocephalous, yet we are also well-experienced in living in relationship with the many jurisdictions also present in North America. We know what it means to live in diversity, in circumstances without precedent, and we possess the creativity to address situations that can often be very complicated. We bring to this our commitment to good Church order and our reputation for adhering to the Orthodox Church's ecclesiological and canonical principles. This is a gift we must share – and which we must share with boldness.

There are many among us who remain preoccupied with the recognition or non-recognition of our autocephaly, that great gift granted us 35 years ago. In speaking of the granting of autocephaly at the First All-American Council at Saint Tikhon's Monastery October 20-22, 1970, Metropolitan Iriney, the first Primate of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, noted: "This is an act of freedom and creativity, an act of faith and trust, a sign that the Church of God 'never grows older, but forever younger,' and that new channels of life can flow through her ancient arteries. This is an act which blesses the young Orthodoxy in America, calling it to grow to the measure of grace bestowed upon it, and to bring its fruit also to the one treasury of Universal Orthodoxy. Undoubtedly, years shall pass before the waves of small human passions and misunderstandings raised by it finally subside. But we, witnesses of this act, can even now – with the eyes of faith, hope, and love – foresee the magnitude and joy of one Holy Orthodox Church in America, inheritor of all the gifts, all the riches, all the traditions of Universal Orthodoxy, glorifying God with one mouth and one heart. May this be! May this be!"

As we gather this week in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to guide and enlighten us, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the members of the Holy Synod and the episcopate of our Church. As I exercise the ministry of primacy with which they

entrusted me three years ago, I am increasingly aware of and ever more grateful for the archpastoral ministry each of them exercises within his own diocese.

Since my election as Primate, the Orthodox Church in America has witnessed several changes in the episcopate. In March 2005, His Eminence, Archbishop Peter of New York and New Jersey, retired after more than 20 years of service as ruling hierarch of that diocese. At that time, the Holy Synod determined that the former Diocese of Washington and the former Diocese of New York and New Jersey should be formed into one diocese, of which I am now the ruling bishop. The Holy Synod made this decision, always keeping in mind the best interests of the Church and its faithful. The process of structuring the administration of the new Diocese of Washington and New York is presently underway. Also, since the last All-American Council, His Grace, Bishop Nikon, was elected Bishop of Boston and ruling hierarch of the Albanian Archdiocese.

In the past three years, our Church has been blessed with the election and consecration of four new bishops. His Grace, Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights, serves as an auxiliary bishop for the Romanian Episcopate. His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, who had been elected and consecrated Bishop of South Canaan, has been elected Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania. His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, was elected and consecrated to serve as Bishop of Berkeley and auxiliary to Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West. His Grace, Bishop Alejo of Mexico City, the most recently consecrated of our hierarchs, serves as my auxiliary and assists His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri in his capacity as Exarch of Mexico. May Our Lord Jesus Christ, the One True Shepherd, grant all our hierarchs continued strength and health in caring for the flocks the Lord has given them.

I also wish to express my special gratitude to His Grace, Bishop Seraphim, our host bishop and chairman of the Preconciliar Commission, as well as to everyone who has dedicated much time and effort to plan and prepare for this Council. May the Lord bless them for their willingness to serve the Church by assuming the added responsibilities required in preparing for the Council.

Although I continue to reside at Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, PA, I am present at the chancery office in Syosset, NY, on a regular basis. I am pleased to note that the chancery office continues to run efficiently under the attentive direction of the chancellor, Protopresbyter Robert Kondratik. I am kept constantly informed of the work of the chancery through reports and daily consultation. The chancery staff labors faithfully to support the Church's life and mission in many ways and on many levels. The work of the chancery affects all areas and aspects of Church life, assisting the work of the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan, diocesan bishops, dioceses, parishes, monasteries, seminaries, and the work of the All-American Council, as well as clergy, both active and retired, clergy families, and clergy widows. I am profoundly grateful to Father Kondratik, who has served as chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America for 16 years, as well as to everyone who works at the chancery office and serves the Church with professional and churchly diligence and dedication. Working on behalf of our Church, and thus being made subject to unfair and often unkind critiques and criticism, can be a heavy burden. However, each individual who works for the Church on the Church-wide level does so with integrity, dignity, and a spirit of commitment to Christ and His Church. I assure each of them of my personal gratitude and my continued prayers and support.

As we begin this All-American Council, the 14th of the Orthodox Church in America, I wish to thank all of you for your presence here and your commitment to the life and future of our Church. Through the prayers of Saint Herman of Alaska and all the saints who have labored on this continent, may the work we accomplish this week be for the glory of God and the building up of the Body of Christ in America.

I wish to close by exhorting you with the words addressed by the Apostle Paul to the Church in Ephesus. May these words be lived and made manifest each day of this week and throughout the days and years to come: "I... beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" [Ephesians 4:1-6]. ■

COUNCIL from 8

Delegates consider goals, priorities

list of proposals delegates felt could be reasonably implemented. Other proposals included the introduction of seminary courses on mission, the appointment of diocesan mission directors, and an increased visibility and profile for the annual mission appeal. It was also recommended that the Department of Evangelization develop specific long and short-range goals before the fall 2005 session of the Holy Synod.

- **Education and formation.** With funding an ongoing obstacle for many wishing to pursue theological studies, delegates recommended that within five to ten years, full funding for seminarians studying for the priesthood be made available. Delegates shared strong feelings for the development of skill-based educational resources and mentoring and internship programs, adding that within ten years such programs should be a normal part of clergy formation. Delegates also offered two recommendations that could be implemented within the next three years: the creation of national "Orthodox Life" conferences, and the establishment of an ongoing pastoral education and care program directed by seasoned clergy. The revitalization of the summer internship program was seen as an immediate priority.

- **Orthodox unity.** Four general recommendations emerged within the area of Orthodox unity. Delegates reaffirmed the role of the Orthodox Church in America as a leading voice for Orthodox unity. They also recommitted themselves to the prayerful support of Metropolitan Herman and the members of the Holy Synod in their efforts to promote unity. The strengthening of inter-Orthodox collaboration, especially on the local level, was affirmed as a principle of action. Delegates also recommended that the bilateral commission between the Orthodox Church in America and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America be reestablished.

Other Council highlights. The celebration of daily Vespers, Matins, and the Divine Liturgy provided the essential context in which the Council's deliberations and sessions took place and served as a tangible reminder that, above all else, God's people are a worshipping people. Daily sermons challenged delegates and observers to deepen their commitment to Christ and His Body, the Church, while scripture readings set the tone for each plenary session. Council participants also sang the Akathistos Hymn in honor of the North American saints in celebrating the memory of those who, as Metropolitan Herman stated, "established the vision and path to which we continue to commit ourselves."

The Very Rev. Michael Westerberg and Mrs. Elizabeth Kondratich, group leader and administrative secretary of the OCA pension board, reported that the pension plan is not only financially stable, but growing.

Throughout the week, Council participants took advantage of nearly two dozen luncheon forums exploring a wide variety of topics, including Christian education, outreach to the homeless and needy, ministering to new immigrants, the use of technology in the Church, evangelization and parish development, and the Christian family. The lively presentations and discussions were extremely well attended and afforded participants an opportunity to share ideas and common concerns.

A full schedule of activities and outings organized by the Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry was organized for the Council's 250 youth observers. Assisting the Rev. Michael Anderson, department director, were dozens of volunteers and chaperones. Religious discussions and programs for all ages and outings to Niagara Falls and other attractions provided a wealth of opportunities for inspiration and fellowship. Young adults also enjoyed a cruise and participated in an afternoon of ministry at one of Toronto's soup kitchens. Delegates enjoyed a presentation by the youth and young adult observers at the closing plenary session.

His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania and the Bulgarian Diocese, the Holy Synod's senior member, delivered the keynote speech at the grand banquet on Thursday evening, during which Metropolitan Herman also delivered a stirring address on his hopes for the Church's future.

Elections for representatives to the metropolitan council, pension board, and audit committee were also conducted. Elected to serve six year metropolitan council terms were the Very Rev. Theodore Boback and Prof. John Erickson. The Very Rev. Constantine White and Dr. Faith Skordinski were elected to three year terms, while the Rev. John Maxwell and Ms. Eleana Silk were elected as alternates. The Very Rev. Dimitri Oselinsky and Mr. David Drillock were elected to serve six year terms on the pension board. Elected to three year terms were the Very Rev. John Steffaro and Mr. Gregory Sheshko, while the Very Rev. John Zdinak and Mr. Nicholas Lezinsky were elected as alternates. Elected to the audit committee were the Very Rev. Paul Suda and Mr. David Donlick, with Mr. Frank Tkacz serving as alternate.

Prior to the celebration of the closing Service of Thanksgiving on Friday, July 22, delegates passed resolutions thanking His Grace, Bishop Seraphim, host hierarch, and the local planning committee for their tireless efforts in organizing the Council and the members of the summary team.

Additional information and photo galleries are posted on the OCA web site at www.oca.org. ■



Luncheon forums provided a relaxed atmosphere in which to discuss various topics, share experiences, and learn. Above, Fr. Michael Westerberg discusses the OCA's pension program with interested delegates and observers.

The closing banquet was attended by delegates, observers, and guests from Toronto-area parishes. Among those who attended were OCA clergy serving as military chaplains [right].



Each plenary session opened with a panel discussion on one of the five "pillars" on which the Council theme was based. Pictured at left are Prof. John Erickson, dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary; Fr. Michael Dahulich, dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary; Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff; and Fr. Chad Hatfield, dean of St. Herman's Seminary, who offered a presentation on theological education and clergy formation. At the end of each panel presentation, delegates participated in table discussions on the theme [below].





Hierarchs concelebrating the Council's final Liturgy included [from left] Bishop Alejo of Mexico City; Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights; Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern PA; Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska; Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West; Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Eastern PA; Metropolitan Herman; Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South; Archbishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest; Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa and Canada; Bishop Nikon of Boston and the Albanian Archdiocese; Bishop Mark, retired; and Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley.

14th All-American Council highlights

Delegates vote to accept the "fair share" proposal to provide increased funding for maintenance and expansion of the Church's ministries [below].



The Eucharistic Liturgy stood at the heart of the Council [left, top].

Metropolitan Herman greets some of the Council's youngest observers [left].

Members of the Department of Christian Education were introduced at one of the plenary sessions [left, below]. The department is one of the OCA's most active.

Clergy wives were honored at a breakfast with Metropolitan Herman and members of the Holy Synod of Bishops [left, bottom].



Daily summary team reports were presented by Mr. David Wagschal and Mrs. Valerie Zahirsky [above].



Fr. David Rucker shares his experiences as a mission priest during plenary session on evangelization [left].

Youth observers enjoy presentations at closing plenary session [below].



Carolinas deanery choir performs at annual festival



CHARLESTON, SC – On Saturday, June 4, 2005, the Carolinas Deanery Choir presented a concert at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival of Churches Music Series.

Organized five years ago, the choir has been a regular participant in the festival and at other cultural and arts venues. The festival annually attracts thousands of people from all over the US and the world, most of whom would not have been exposed to Orthodox hymnography if not for the choir's efforts.

Members of the choir represent Holy Apostles Church, West Columbia, SC; Holy Ascension Church, Mt. Pleasant, SC, and St. John of the Ladder Church, Greenville, SC. The choir is under the direction of Michael Breck and Bill Wamboldt. ■

San Francisco cathedral dean, scouts receive awards



SAN FRANCISCO, CA – After a recent Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Cathedral here, Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West awarded a jeweled cross to Fr. Victor Sokolov, dean, in recognition of his faithful service to the Church.

During his visit, Bishop Tikhon also presented Alpha-Omega "Religion in Life" awards to Sea Scouts Masha Sokoloff, daughter of Fr. Victor and Barbara Sokoloff, and Samuel Strelkoff, son of Dr. Katherine Strelkoff, the cathedral's Church school administrator.

Pictured above with Bishop Tikhon are [from left] are Subdeacon Johann Morse, Dr. Strelkoff, Samuel Strelkoff, Barbara Sokolov, Fr. Sokolov, Masha Sokolov, Deacon Kirill Sokolov, and Reader Andre Paez. ■

Las Vegas parish celebrates 10th anniversary

LAS VEGAS, NV – Metropolitan Theodosius, retired OCA primate, and Bishop Benjamin of Berkeley, presided at the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the consecration of St. Paul the Apostle Church here on Pentecost Sunday.

Metropolitan Theodosius presided at church's consecration in 1995.

The rapidly growing, multicultural parish embraces a "mosaic of people and traditions" that includes American-born faithful, numerous converts, and recent immigrants from Russia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and elsewhere.

Metropolitan Theodosius presented relics of Saints Tikhon, Innocent, the new-martyr Elizabeth, and Paraskeva to the parish to mark the occasion.



Bishop Benjamin, Metropolitan Theodosius, and Fr. Eric Tosi.

"Lost parish" receives new convert!

BRAMBLE, MN – On June 25, 2005, Tina Sorokie became the first person to be received into the Orthodox faith at SS. Peter and Paul Church here in some 80 years!

Established in the early 20th century in what was to have been a major stop along a train route connecting Minneapolis and Winnipeg – the route took a different turn and the town and parish were all but abandoned – the church had been literally "lost" for many years. In the early 1960s, members of an area Protestant church group "discovered" the abandoned church. When they contacted the office of the late Archbishop John of Chicago, they learned that there was no record of the parish's existence. It is assumed that the parish was one of a number of "mission outposts" across Minnesota and Manitoba



Tina Sorokie, Fr. Grivna after chrismation.

served by clergy from Minneapolis in the early 20th century.

The discovery of the church generated much interest, and the property subsequently was refurbished. Until the early 1980s, faithful from Minneapolis and Minnesota's northern Iron Range would gather at the church every July for the celebration of the feast of SS. Peter and Paul. For a number of years, Archbishop John presided at the annual celebration, bringing with him the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God.

Raised in the Lutheran tradition, Tina's grandparents had been active in the Bramble parish and had donated the land on which the parish cemetery still stands.

Her reception into the Orthodox faith – the first service conducted in the "lost church" in over a decade – was celebrated by Fr. Gregory Grivna of St. Nicholas Church, Chisholm, MN. ■

Palatine, IL faithful celebrate consecration of new church

PALATINE, IL – After nearly two years of construction, the new Holy Resurrection Church here was consecrated on May 21-22, 2005 by Bishop Job of Chicago and the Midwest.

Fr. Alexander Kuchta, rector, welcomed visiting clergy and hundreds of parishioners and friends who attended the consecration Divine Liturgy. As the parish's altar table had been consecrated in 1982, the service focused on the consecration of a new antimimension and the blessing of the church's exterior and interior.

After the Liturgy, a banquet was served on the church grounds.

On the eve of the consecration, Great Vespers was celebrated, followed by a reception in the parish social area.

Established as a mission in 1970, the parish initially held services in a school cafeteria. Five years later, the current site was purchased. A house located on the property was subsequently converted into a chapel in 1979, while a larger, temporary church was erected in 1983.

Construction of the new church began in July 2003 after groundbreaking ceremonies on land adjacent to the temporary church. Built in the shape of a cross with a large central dome, the church follows classic Byzantine lines. The new church's cherry wood iconostasis was carved in Canada, while a stained glass window above the main entrance, depicting the "Harrowing of Hades," was fashioned by Mellini Art



Archbishop Job presides at consecration of Holy Resurrection Church.

Glass of Florence, Italy.

The building was designed by architect George Mangan of Sister Bay, WI, a member of St. Matthew Church, Green Bay, WI. ■

PA parish hosts Moscow little leaguers



WILLIAMSPORT, PA – Fr. Dan Kovalak and members of Holy Cross Church here recently "adopted" a baseball team from Moscow during the Little League Baseball World Series.

"The boys are thousands of miles away from home," said Fr. Kovalak, "and since their families cannot cheer them on, we decided to adopt them, attend their games, and host them at our parish picnic." ■

Share your good news!

Send photos and news about your parish, deanery, or diocese to TOC Communities, One Wheaton Center #912, Wheaton, IL 60187, or by e-mail to jjm@oca.org.

Address of Protopresbyter Robert Kondratick



Mission: Living our legacy

and consecrated churches from one coast to the other. They established institutions, blessed organizations, and provided direction and resources to meet the challenges of the Orthodox mission. It was a remarkable time. They traveled by train, horseback, carriage, and automobile over an under-developed highway system. They communicated through letters and telegraph and, as the possibility presented itself, by telephone. They accomplished this pastoral and evangelical work in a land whose language most of them did not speak fluently. Although they were burdened with obstacles and difficulties, they persevered – even at great personal cost. And yet, what great works they accomplished! Building upon the heritage received from the first missionaries to North America, they laid the foundation for our Orthodox Church in America – the Church we serve and entrusted to our care at the beginning of yet another century. May their extraordinary dedication serve as an inspiration to all of us and stir up in us a greater zeal in our own times for the Gospel, for the Kingdom of Heaven, and for the Orthodox Church in America.

This year, at the spring session of the Holy Synod, we commemorated the 35th anniversary of the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America. We prayerfully remembered those whose vision and commitment made the granting of our autocephaly a reality. We recalled those who have gone before us: Metropolitan Iriney, Metropolitan Nikodim, Archbishop Kiprian, Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, Protopresbyter John Meyendorff, Archpriest John Skvir, Archpriest John Turkevich, and Mr. Stephen Kopestonsky. And we gratefully remembered those who are still among us – Metropolitan Theodosius, Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak, Archpriest John Nehrebecki, and Dr. Constantine Kallaur – who were present when the Tomos of Autocephaly was formally presented to the Orthodox Church in America. While this 35th anniversary reminded us that we are still a young Church, it also reminded us that the gift of autocephaly calls us to greater things.

Within a few short weeks, we will celebrate another profoundly significant anniversary – the 35th anniversary of the glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska. Saint Herman was the first saint glorified by our Church. The celebration of this anniversary is an invitation to all of us to renew the zeal and enthusiasm present in Alaska and throughout our newborn Church at the time. By the prayers of our Father among the saints Herman, may we take up the cross of his apostolic labors!

And so, although we are a young Church, we are also a Church with a rich history and heritage – a legacy. It is a legacy that compels us to be energetic in the work of proclaiming the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this land. As we recall our great spiritual and missionary legacy, I wish to note that this fall, with the concurrence of the Holy Synod of Bishops and the blessing of His Grace, Bishop Nikolai, the wonderworking Sitka Icon of the Mother of God will begin a two-month pilgrimage throughout the “lower 48.” This pilgrimage will include visits to over 60 parishes, monasteries, and institutions. Although unknown to some of the clergy and faithful in North America, the Sitka Icon of the Mother of God is far more than an historic or artistic treasure. It is one of our Church’s great spiritual treasures. It is our prayer that this unique pilgrimage will be a blessing for all Orthodox Christians in America and that, through the intercessions of the Mother of God, prayerful seekers will find healing, consolation and mercy. Let us all recognize and honor those holy things that are part of our unique legacy as the local Church on this continent.

I have mentioned the 100th anniversary of Saint Tikhon’s Monastery, the 35th anniversary of autocephaly, and the 35th anniversary of the glorification of Saint Herman. I can note only in passing the many parish anniversary celebrations during these past three years, including the 100th anniversaries of Chicago’s Holy Trinity Cathedral and Saints Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ. Our past is a living and present reality in the historic continuity of so many of our communities. And we continue to expand and extend the mission of the Church as new temples are consecrated in such places as Southbury, CT; Colorado Springs, CO; and Palatine, IL. New missions have been established in Kona, HI; Tulsa, OK; Pella, IA; Stafford, VA; and elsewhere. And here in Canada, new communities have been established in Toronto and in neighboring Hamilton.

Our three seminaries have witnessed the graduation of larger-than-ever classes. We are thankful that it has been possible to ordain many young men eager to answer the call to serve Christ’s Church. Our parishes are filled with wonderful volunteers engaging in various ministries and programs. A modest – but important – snapshot of the recent activities and accomplishments of our Church institutions, departments, and programs can be found in the reports distributed for this Council. There is so very much for which to give thanks!

I cannot help but think that the spiritual and missionary legacy that has come down to us is indeed being fulfilled in our Church life today. Although those concerned for the well-being of our Church are often tempted to think in terms of crises and problems, the truth of the matter is that, even if we are weak vessels, we are striving with God’s help to realize our vocation as the local Church on this continent. Our Council is dedicated to renewing and reenergizing our sense of this vocation. It is my hope that as we gather here, through the prayers of all the saints who have shone forth in North America, each one of us will be encouraged to return to our respective dioceses and parishes with a rekindled enthusiasm for the active support of the apostolic work of the Ortho-

dox Church in America!

Church life since the 13th All-American Council.

Several extraordinary events have shaped the life of the Orthodox Church in America since my report to the 13th All-American Council three years ago.

In April 2002, the Holy Synod of Bishops announced the retirement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius. In July, the Council was convened in Orlando, FL. The retirement of Metropolitan Theodosius became effective at the conclusion of the first plenary session. With His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania presiding at the following plenary session, His Eminence Herman, Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, was elected Primate of the Orthodox Church in America.

The Orlando Council was an extraordinary one, in that it was the occasion of the retirement of one Metropolitan and the election of his successor. Undoubtedly, because of the great interest generated by this, the number of people who participated in the Council exceeded every expectation. There was a sense that the Council expressed and generated a remarkable enthusiasm and commitment on the part of the clergy and faithful of our Church.

The enthronement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America took place less than two months later, on the Great Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Twenty-five bishops, numerous priests and deacons, hundreds of Orthodox Christian faithful, and many special guests were present at Saint Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC, to witness the event. Joining the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church in America were over a dozen hierarchs representing many of our sister Orthodox Churches throughout the world. In greeting the numerous well-wishers, Metropolitan Herman noted that, while honoring him at the beginning of his ministry as Primate, they also were honoring the entire Orthodox Church in America. Among the Orthodox Churches represented at His Beatitude’s enthronement were the Ecumenical Patriarchate; the patriarchates Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Moscow; the Churches of Romania, Poland, the Czech Lands and Slovakia; and the Autonomous Churches of Finland, Japan, and Ukraine.

The election and the enthronement of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman were accomplished in a manner that demonstrated the maturity of the Orthodox Church in America. Our place and role in North America and throughout the Orthodox world were afforded a high profile. The sincere love and respect in our Church for Metropolitan Theodosius at his retirement and Metropolitan Herman at his election and enthronement, and their shared commitment to an orderly, canonical process in the administrative transition, offered important witness in the midst of the changes and challenges facing the various Orthodox jurisdictions present in North America today, as well as those facing Orthodoxy throughout the world.

The hierarchs and dioceses of our Church. There have been several significant changes and developments in the episcopate of our Church in the past three years. On November 1-2, 2002, His Beatitude presided at the episcopal consecration of His Grace, Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights, Auxiliary Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. Bishop Irineu had earlier been nominated to the episcopacy by delegates to the Episcopate’s Church Congress. His canonical election by the Holy Synod took place during the Council in Orlando.

At the fall 2003 session of the Holy Synod, His Grace, Bishop Nikon, formerly Bishop of Baltimore and auxiliary to the Metropolitan, was elected ruling bishop of the Albanian Archdiocese. He was enthroned at Saint George Cathedral, Boston, on November 22, 2003, to the great joy of the archdiocese’s faithful, who had been for many years without their own ruling hierarch. Since his election, Bishop Nikon also has continued to serve as administrator of the Diocese of New England.

The Holy Synod recently decided that steps should be taken for the nomination and election of a ruling diocesan hierarch for the Diocese of Hartford and New England. To this end, His Beatitude, as locum tenens of the diocese, recently convened a special diocesan assembly for the purpose of nominating a candidate for the office of ruling bishop, whose name would then be presented to the Holy Synod for its decision and possible canonical election. This special assembly was held in Hartford, CT, on Thursday, June 23, 2005. Because the nomination process was inconclusive, His Beatitude will present this matter to the Holy Synod for final determination.

Archimandrite Tikhon [Mollard], deputy abbot of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, was elected to the episcopacy at the fall 2003 session of the Holy Synod. He served as Bishop of South Canaan and auxiliary to the Metropolitan until his election to the See of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania on May 27, 2005. His installation will take place on Saturday, September 10, 2005, at Philadelphia’s Saint Stephen Cathedral.

Archimandrite Benjamin [Peterson] was elected to the episcopacy at the spring 2004 session of the Holy Synod. He was consecrated in our historic Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, on May 1, 2004. As Bishop of Berkeley and auxiliary to His Grace Tikhon, Bishop of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West, Bishop Benjamin also serves as diocesan chancellor.

At its spring 2005 session, the Holy Synod elected Archiman-

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratitude in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” [Colossians 3:12-17].

Recalling the Apostle Paul’s words of admonition and encouragement to the Colossians, with an awareness of my own weaknesses and need for forgiveness, and with the hope that everything we do be done for the sake of Christ and His Church, it is once again my honor to come before you as chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America to present this report on the life and work of our Church and the work of the chancery since we last met in Orlando, FL, for the 13th All-American Council.

Preparatory documents were distributed in the weeks leading up to this Council. These will assist us as we reflect on our theme – “Our Church and the Future.” We have identified five “pillars” that will support and inform our common reflection:

1. Our vision and identity as the Orthodox Church in America.
2. Our relations with others, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox.
3. Clergy formation and development.
4. Parish health.
5. Evangelization in North America.

As we consider the Council’s overall theme and draw upon discussions built on these five pillars, it will become clear that serious thinking about the future of our Church requires honest reflection on our past, our history, and our roots. And we cannot look to the future of the Church without a sense of our current life and mission. It is within the context of this past/present/future dynamic that I offer my report as chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America.

Recalling our past. This year has provided us with a number of opportunities to consider our history in North America. We have received many blessings in the course of our history. And we are also challenged by it.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, the members of the Holy Synod, and the entire episcopate of our Church gathered in South Canaan with thousands of clergy and faithful to mark this significant milestone in the life and history of the Orthodox Church in America. The monastery was founded in 1905 by Archbishop Tikhon, who was later elected Patriarch of Moscow and became a grace-bearing confessor of the Faith. As archpastor in America, he recognized the important role that the monastic life could play in the life of the very young Church. He established the monastery in the heart of Pennsylvania’s Pocono mountains so that the blessings of ascetic prayer and witness would be easily accessible to the greatest concentration of Orthodox believers at that time. For 100 years, the monastic brotherhood has faithfully maintained the cycle of divine services, implored the Lord to bestow His blessings upon the Church in America, provided a spiritual haven and place of comfort for generations of Orthodox Christians, and borne faithful witness to the life of the world to come.

The heart of Archbishop Tikhon’s pastoral ministry was his desire to establish a full and stable Orthodox Church life in North America. This full and stable life would be the foundation upon which the young Church in America could grow and flourish. The monastery was an important part of this vision, as was the establishment and building up of parish communities. The great leaders of this period of our Church life – before, during, and following the years under Saint Tikhon – shared his vision and purpose. Early photographs and documents point to the tireless building activity of Archbishop Tikhon, as well as Bishop Nicholas (later Metropolitan of Warsaw), Saint Raphael of Brooklyn, Saint Alexis Toth, Saint Alexander Hotovitsky, Saint John Kochurov, Archimandrite and later Archbishop Arseny, Father Leonid Turkevich (who later became our beloved Metropolitan Leonty), and so very many others. They established communities

CHANCELLOR from 15

drite Alejo [Pacheco Vera] as Bishop of Mexico City and vicar of the Metropolitan. His consecration to the episcopacy took place during the centennial celebration at Saint Tikhon's Monastery May 27-28, 2005. With the blessing of the Metropolitan and under the direct guidance of His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri, Exarch of Mexico, Bishop Alejo had served the Mexican Church for many years as dean of Mexico City's Holy Ascension Cathedral and as the exarchate's administrator. His election and consecration promise a bright future for the ongoing growth of the Orthodox Church in our neighbor to the south.

On June 8, 2003, hundreds of faithful from the Diocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania gathered to honor the senior member of the Holy Synod, His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of his consecration to the episcopacy. A Service of Thanksgiving was celebrated by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman; His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius; His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and numerous clergy. Later in the month, the Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo honored His Eminence on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the holy priesthood. His Eminence, who celebrated his 85th birthday earlier this year, continues to serve Christ and His Church with zeal and enthusiasm.

In November 2003, His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri celebrated his 80th birthday. He continues to serve the Diocese of the South with dedication and devotion. His Eminence, Archbishop Job celebrated the 20th anniversary of his consecration to the episcopate in January 2003, and was elevated to the rank of archbishop on March 17, 2004. His Eminence first served as hierarch of the Diocese of New England and, for the past 13 years has served as ruling hierarch of the Diocese of the Midwest. This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the episcopal consecration of His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel. His Eminence's service as ruling hierarch of the Romanian Episcopate is deeply appreciated by all those to whom he ministers, as is his outspoken defense of Orthodox unity in North America. His Grace, Bishop Mark, former Bishop of Boston, also celebrated the 25th anniversary of his episcopal consecration last November. We are pleased that His Grace continues to make his presence known and to participate, whenever possible, in the life of our Church.

At the October 2004 session of the Holy Synod, His Eminence, Archbishop Peter of New York and New Jersey indicated his intention to retire sometime before the spring 2005 session. At the spring session, the Holy Synod granted the Archbishop's request, which became effective on April 31, 2005. In keeping with its canonical prerogatives concerning the creation of dioceses, the Holy Synod also determined to create a new Diocese of Washington and New York, merging the territories of the former Diocese of Washington and the former Diocese of New York and New Jersey. Metropolitan Herman is the ruling hierarch of the new diocese, with the title "Archbishop of Washington and New York, Metropolitan of All America and Canada." His Beatitude has initiated the steps to begin making arrangements for the transition in the administration of the new diocese.

Last October, hundreds of clergy and faithful gathered in South Canaan, Pennsylvania, and joined the members of the Holy Synod, the entire episcopate of our Church, as well as many invited guests, to honor His Beatitude on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the holy priesthood. This celebration honored His Beatitude's life of service to the Church as an example of the dedication and love by which those who follow Christ are known.

My selection of just a few visible highlights in the life of the episcopate of the Orthodox Church in America clearly reveals that the Lord continues to bless our Church with dedicated and caring archpastors. They are absolutely committed to nurturing the ongoing life and future growth of Christ's Holy Orthodox Church in these lands. We are truly blessed by the dedication of our hierarchy. Their common ministry represents literally hundreds of years of combined service to Christ. By their example, through their prayers, and with their blessing, may we all continue to serve the Lord in accordance with the unique call given to each one of us.

Interchurch and ecumenical relations. We are a self-governing Church. While we are canonically self-reliant [autocephalous], we maintain the bonds of unity with all the local Orthodox Churches. As an autocephalous Church, it is incumbent upon us to nurture our relationships with these sister Churches. These relationships strengthen our witness to the Orthodox Faith, not only here in North America, but throughout the world.

As Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, His Beatitude bears the responsibility of representing the Orthodox Church in America in its relations, both public and private, with all the autocephalous and autonomous Orthodox Churches. It is his role to be the focal point and sign of unity between our Church and the rest of the Orthodox world. Following the time-honored custom for newly elected Primates to visit the heads of the other Orthodox Churches, His Beatitude has initiated an ongoing series of visits to our sister Churches.

- **The Church of Russia.** In June 2003, at the invitation of His Holiness Aleksy II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, His Beatitude made his first official visit, as Primate, to the Orthodox Church of Russia. The Orthodox Church in America continues to maintain a strong bond of faith and love, of shared history and common practice, with the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Church, having brought the Orthodox faith to North America, is both our mother Church and our sister. During this visit to Russia, His Beatitude concelebrated with His Holiness and visited the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra, where he venerated the relics of Saint Sergius of Radonezh and Saint Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow and Apostle to America. His Beatitude also addressed the students of the Moscow Theological Academy and visited a number of other monasteries and holy sites in and around Moscow, including the Donskoi Monastery, where he venerated the holy relics of Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and Enlight-

ener of North America. His Beatitude served the Divine Liturgy at Saint Catherine the Great Martyr Church, representation church of the Orthodox Church in America in Moscow.

His Beatitude visited Russia a second time in July-August 2003, as a guest of the Russian Church, for the celebration of the centennial of the glorification of Saint Seraphim of Sarov. At the invitation of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine, His Beatitude then traveled to Ukraine and participated in the annual pilgrimage to the Pochayiv Monastery. During this visit, he was also welcomed to western Ukraine, the native land of the forebears of many members of the Orthodox Church in America, by His Eminence, Metropolitan Onufrey of Chernovtsy and Bukovina. The visit included visits to many monasteries and Church-sponsored social service institutions. His Beatitude's travels throughout Ukraine were highly publicized as a means of supporting the canonical Church in Ukraine, which suffers from large-scale schismatic and sectarian opposition. The presence of His Beatitude afforded very visible support to Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, bearing witness to the unity of the Church through adherence to proper canonical order.

In February 2004, His Beatitude participated in the celebration of the 75th birthday of His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy. His Beatitude expressed not only his personal best wishes, but those of our entire Church, and honored His Holiness for the instrumental role he has played in the Church's growth in Russia since the fall of the communist regime. I would like to stress that Patriarch Aleksy, from the first days of our autocephaly and well before his election as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, has been a very dear friend of the Orthodox Church in America and a strong supporter of our role within the communion of Orthodox Churches.

In June and July, 2004, His Beatitude participated in the long awaited return of the Tikhvin Icon of the Mother of God to the Russian Orthodox Church. This beloved icon, so widely venerated in Russia before the 1917 revolution and throughout her long sojourn abroad, including a 55 year stay in America, was welcomed by literally hundreds of thousands of clergy and faithful. The return of the icon began at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Chicago. His Eminence, Archbishop Job, hosted His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman and His Eminence, Metropolitan Vladimir of Saint Petersburg, who traveled to the United States to accompany the icon on its return journey. From Chicago, the icon traveled first to Riga, Latvia, accompanied by Metropolitan Vladimir and His Grace, Bishop Seraphim. Metropolitan Herman and our OCA delegation welcomed the icon in Moscow and formally returned the icon to His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy, and the Russian Orthodox Church. Among those present on this historic occasion were Archbishop Job and Bishops Seraphim, Nikolai and Nikon. Archpriest Sergei and Alexander Garklavs were instrumental in arranging the return of the icon. Father Sergei, the guardian of the icon since he first received it from his adoptive father, the ever-memorable Archbishop John of Chicago, led the Garklavs family and a number of OCA pilgrims in the festive events, culminating in the icon's return to its original home, the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery in Tikhvin, a city within the Diocese of Saint Petersburg.

In December 2004, Saint Catherine the Great Martyr Church celebrated its 10th anniversary as the Orthodox Church in America's representation church in Moscow. Archimandrite Zacchaeus [Wood] organized the celebration, at which His Beatitude, Archbishop Nathaniel, Bishop Seraphim, and Bishop Nikon were present. His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy concelebrated the Divine Liturgy and was present at the banquet which followed. His Holiness expressed gratitude for His Beatitude's support of the work of our representation church in Moscow, as well as his appreciation for the presence of the other hierarchs representing our Church at the anniversary celebration. In light of this 20th anniversary celebration we must commend Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak, the first representative of the Orthodox Church in America to the Moscow Patriarchate; Archimandrite Nicholas [Juhos], who succeeded him; Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky, who served as temporary representative for a brief period; and Archimandrite Zacchaeus [Wood], the current representative, for their work in Moscow on behalf of the Orthodox Church in America.

- **The Church of Constantinople.** At the beginning of July 2003, His Beatitude was warmly received by His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, at the patriarchal complex at the Phanar. While there, His Beatitude made a pilgrimage to Nicea, site of the first and seventh ecumenical councils, and to Ephesus, site of the third ecumenical council. Many other shrines and historic sites were also visited. His Beatitude was able to tour the theological academy at Halki, closed since the 1970s by the Turkish government. During his visit to Constantinople, His Beatitude was received by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, His Beatitude, Mesrob II. His Beatitude also made courtesy calls to the Ambassador of the United States to Turkey, the Honorable W. Robert Pearson; Dr. David Arnett, United States Consul General; and various Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim leaders. The following year, His Beatitude joined in welcoming His All-Holiness on his visit to the United States at a reception at the Chancery of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

- **The Church of Poland.** At the invitation of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland, His Beatitude visited the Polish Orthodox Church in September 2004. The Polish Church numbers over one-half million Orthodox faithful. Many of the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America can trace their ancestry to Poland, including the late Metropolitan Iriney and Archbishop Kiprian. Saint Tikhon also served the Church in Poland. Metropolitan Herman's visit highlighted the warm and close relationship that has developed between our Churches in recent years. As is customary for most official visits abroad, His Beatitude was also welcomed at the United States Embassy and the Canadian Embassy.

- **The Church of Georgia.** Metropolitan Herman paid a nine-day visit to the ancient Church of Georgia in April, 2004, at the invitation of His Holiness and Beatitude, Patriarch-Catholicos Iia

of All Georgia. His Beatitude visited many shrines, parishes, and monasteries, and met with numerous Church, religious, and political leaders, including Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili. Patriarch Iia will be the guest of the Orthodox Church in America in October of this year. During his visit, he will meet with the members of our Holy Synod, as well as with other Orthodox hierarchs, religious leaders, and leaders of civil society and government. We anticipate that the visit of the Patriarch-Catholicos will further strengthen our ties with the Church of Georgia and encourage the large number of Georgian faithful participating in the life of our parish communities, most notably in New York City and Washington, DC.

- **The Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.** In September 2004, His Beatitude made an official visit to the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, where he was welcomed by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Nikolaj, and visited many parishes and monasteries. Metropolitan Herman addressed students at the Presov Orthodox Theological Seminary, and met with a number of civic and religious leaders. Throughout the visit, His Beatitude distributed humanitarian aid to Church-sponsored institutions providing various forms of social service. The generosity of our clergy and faithful in their humanitarian support for such projects is always deeply appreciated and strengthens our ties of faith and love with our sister Churches.

- **The Church of Finland.** In December 2004, after the celebration of the 10th anniversary of Saint Catherine the Great Martyr Church, His Beatitude visited the autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland. His Beatitude was accompanied by Archbishop Nathaniel, Bishop Seraphim, and Bishop Nikon. Graciously hosted by His Eminence, Archbishop Leo, this visit served to further strengthen the warm ties of friendship between the Orthodox Church in America and the Finnish Church, dating from the days of the ever-memorable Archbishop Paul. Archbishop Leo will return this visit at the end of July 2005 to participate in the 35th anniversary celebration of the glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska. He will be present at the monastic gathering to be held at Saint Tikhon's Monastery in conjunction with the centennial of its founding. As a special blessing, His Eminence will bring with him the wonderworking Valaam Icon of the Mother of God. This wonderworking icon, originally from Valaam in Russia, has not left Finland since it was first brought to New Valamo Monastery by the monks during the Winter War of 1940. We are extremely grateful to Archbishop Leo and the Finnish Orthodox Church for this special blessing, as well as for the continuing good relationship we enjoy with them.

In addition to visiting our sister Orthodox Churches, His Beatitude has also received several primates and hierarchs from abroad. In February 2003, he welcomed His Beatitude, Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania to Saint Vladimir's Seminary and bestowed on him an honorary doctorate. His Beatitude has also welcomed other guest hierarchs from the Churches of Russia, Romania, Serbia, Georgia, and Jerusalem.

- **The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.** We are all grateful that talks have begun between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia [ROCOR]. As relations have improved between the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR, so have relations improved between the Orthodox Church in America and ROCOR. His Beatitude has met with Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of ROCOR, and representatives of Metropolitan Laurus were present at the celebration of the 40th anniversary of His Beatitude's ordination to the holy priesthood and the centennial celebration of Saint Tikhon's Monastery. Good relations and mutual cooperation between our respective seminaries – and parishes and clergy in many parts of the country – are encouraging signs of a normalizing of relations and the possibility of common witness. We anticipate a fruitful resolution of canonical issues in a manner that will be beneficial to Orthodoxy in America.

His Beatitude is often invited to represent the Orthodox Church in America at various significant celebrations in the life of the other Orthodox Churches. Given his responsibilities, His Beatitude is not always able to accept these invitations personally. In his place, he has often asked members of the Holy Synod to represent him and our Church. Bishop Seraphim, vice-chairman of the Department of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, and Archpriest David Brum, secretary to the Metropolitan, represented our Church at the consecration of the new Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi, Georgia. Bishop Seraphim and I were present for the enthronement of His Holiness, Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria. His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill, and Father David Brum represented His Beatitude at the celebration of the 90th birthday of His Holiness, Patriarch Maxim of Bulgaria. Bishop Seraphim and Priest Alexander Rentel were also present in Rome for the funeral of Pope John Paul II. His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Eastern Pennsylvania and Father David Brum represented the Orthodox Church in America at the installation of Pope Benedict XVI.

Our need to maintain and foster our relationships with our Sister Churches is often unappreciated, and even disparaged, by some in our Church. They see the nurturing of such relationships as an unnecessary exercise. Some are critical because they are afraid of "foreign" influences upon our Church. Others are concerned about the expenses related to fostering and preserving these relationships. Although we are sensitive to these voices, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, and the Holy Synod of Bishops are firmly committed to maintaining and developing effective relationships with our Sister Churches throughout the world, even those – most especially those – that do not recognize our status as an autocephalous Church. This is not a time to become isolated. With so many real and potential factors working against the unity of the Church in America and abroad, the Orthodox Churches are in greater need than ever of supporting one another. Our official presence and participation in the wider Orthodox world continues to allow the Orthodox Church in America to make significant contributions to the ongoing conversation about critical issues affect-

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ing the Orthodox world today. These are matters with real impact on the life and witness of our Church.

We recognize, of course, that while maintaining and fostering our relationships with the Orthodox Churches around the world, we must remain true to our fundamental pastoral and evangelical vocation in North America. I pray that our celebration of the 35th anniversary of the granting of our autocephaly and the 35th anniversary of the glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska, our Church's first saint and fervent intercessor, will refresh our shared memory and allow us to reclaim and renew our common commitment to who we are as the Orthodox Church in America and our unique place among the Orthodox Churches.

Dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America.

Within weeks of his election, Metropolitan Herman traveled to the Diocese of Alaska, the mother diocese of the Orthodox Church in America and the guardian of the relics of our Venerable Father Herman, wonderworker of Alaska and All America. At the invitation of His Grace, Bishop Nikolai, he participated in the annual pilgrimage to Kodiak and Spruce Island, leading the clergy and faithful in venerating the relics of Saint Herman and challenging them to reclaim the spiritual and missionary heritage brought to North America in 1794.

In January 2003, His Beatitude made his first official visit to the Mexican Exarchate, accompanied by His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South and Exarch of Mexico. His Beatitude presided at the Divine Liturgy and the Blessing of Water at Holy Ascension Cathedral in Mexico City. His Beatitude also met with Metropolitan Anthony [Chedraoui-Tannous] of the Antiochian Orthodox Church and with representatives of the Mexican government, including Dr. Javier Montezuma Barraga, Cabinet Officer of the Mexican Government, and Dr. Alvaro Castro Estrada, General Director of Religious Associations. Throughout his visit, Metropolitan Herman praised the tireless efforts of the clergy and laity alike in their work to build up the Body of Christ in the capital city and beyond, and he encouraged them to bring the Light of Christ to other regions of this large nation.

During the past three years, His Beatitude has been present at many diocesan assemblies and celebrations, including the assemblies of the Diocese of the South, the Diocese of the Midwest, the Diocese of New England, the Archdiocese of Canada, the then-Diocese of New York and New Jersey, and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. His Beatitude will also be present for the assembly of the Diocese of the West in Colorado Springs, CO, in October.

During his visits to the dioceses and parishes of our Church, His Beatitude has been able to witness firsthand the growth in the number of our missions and new parishes. We are pleased to note today that the Orthodox Church in America has established or received 35 new missions and other institutions since the last All-American Council. For several years, a new surge of church construction and renovation has been seen in such diverse places as Santa Rosa, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Wheaton, Palatine, and Burr Ridge, IL; Colorado Springs, CO; Dallas, TX; Campbell, Cleveland, Dayton, and Rossford, OH; Bethlehem and Harrisburg, PA; and elsewhere. The construction and renovation of churches is a sign of our Church's health, a sign that growth is continuing, and that the commitment to the Church's life and mission remains strong. As a sign of mutual love and our unity as the Orthodox Church in America, His Beatitude participated in the consecration of a number of new church temples, including Saint George Cathedral, Rossford, Ohio; Saint Alexis Church, Clinton, Connecticut; Holy Transfiguration Church, Livonia, Michigan; and Christ the Savior Church, South-bury, Connecticut. Holy Resurrection Church, Palatine, Illinois, was also recently consecrated.

Ecumenical witness. The Orthodox Church in America continues to bear witness to the Orthodox Faith and Tradition in various ecumenical forums. While we are clearly aware of the tensions that arise in connection with Orthodox participation in ecumenical events, we must stress that our own Church is always represented in a manner consistent with Orthodox teaching and governed by the Holy Synod's *Encyclical on Christian Unity and Ecumenism*. Archbishop Leonid Kishkovsky continues to serve as our principal representative to both the World Council of Churches [WCC], the National Council of Churches [NCC], and the newly-formed Christian Churches Together [CTT]. CTT is the result of a movement to create a new ecumenical organization, composed not only of the Orthodox Churches and the mainline Protestant churches, but also including the Roman Catholic Church and the conservative evangelical Protestant churches and bodies. Among the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches that have also joined CTT are the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the Armenian Church, and the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Father Kishkovsky, a senior priest of the Orthodox Church in America, is a respected Orthodox voice at conferences and seminars hosted by our sister Orthodox churches, in our relations with government and diplomatic officers and non-governmental organizations, and in inter-faith dialogues and multi-faith organizations. He is vice-moderator of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, and Moderator of Religions for Peace USA and a trustee of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation.

Prof. Richard Schneider, a member of our Archdiocese of Canada, is currently serving as president of the Canadian Council of Churches and, together with Mr. David Wagschal, strives to make the presence of the Orthodox Church in America known within that forum. Other representatives of our Church at certain ecumenical events are the Archpriests David Brum and Joseph Fester, the Priest Alexander Rentel, Dr. Paul Meyendorff and Dr. Peter Bouteneff, as well as many other clergy and laity on national, diocesan, and parish levels.

Government and societal relations. Metropolitan Herman represented the Orthodox Church in America at the second inauguration of President George W. Bush in January 2005.

He also was present for the national prayer service in the National Cathedral, attended by the President and the leadership of the Senate, the House of Representatives, and other government bodies and agencies, as well as members of the diplomatic corps. In October 2002, His Beatitude met Canada's incumbent Prime Minister, Jean Chretien. As I have already noted, His Beatitude met with government officials in Mexico in 2003. Such meetings are usual in the course of his official visits to the local Orthodox Churches. We also maintain relations with foreign embassies and embassy staff in America, and our own American embassies abroad. Our presence at government events and meetings with representatives of governments enable us to make Orthodoxy in general – and our Church in particular – better known. This is a time-consuming ministry that demands flexibility and creativity. We are very grateful for the extraordinary dedication of our Chancery staff in developing and maintaining these important contacts in the interests of the Orthodox Church in America.

His Beatitude continues to be a leader in the pro-life movement. Every January, he participates in the March for Life in Washington, DC. His Eminence, Archbishop Job, was also present this year. Our hierarchs have consistently made the march an occasion for Orthodox witness, and many of our clergy, seminarians, and faithful are regular participants. Orthodox support of the dignity of human life is widely recognized, primarily due to His Beatitude's many years of personal commitment to the cause. By means of this witness, as well as by public statements on biomedical and bioethical issues, in discussions of ethics in our publications and on our web-site, and in our pastoral practice, we remain perhaps the most prominent Orthodox voice in the United States to speak out in defense of the unborn and for respect for human life at all stages, from conception to natural death. Under the guidance of the Holy Synod, Archpriest John Breck, chairperson of our Medical Ethics Commission, and the commission's other members, provide appropriate Orthodox counsel on developments in medical science and bioethics, as well as the various moral and ethical issues faced by Orthodox Christians today.

The Standing Conference. Shortly after his election, Metropolitan Herman hosted a meeting of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA] at the OCA Chancery. This was the first of several SCOBA meetings that have taken place in the past three years.

The work of SCOBA continues, mostly through its Study and Planning Commission, in which the Orthodox Church in America continues to play a key role. On behalf of the SCOBA hierarchs and with their blessing, the commission oversees the work of the various commissions and organizations endorsed by SCOBA. The commission also supports various ecumenical dialogues, such as the Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue and the Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue, and maintains relations with the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches [SCOOC]. Most visible among the SCOBA-sponsored agencies are the Orthodox Christian Mission Center [OCMC], International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC], and the college-based Orthodox Christian Fellowship [OCF]. We participate directly in these agencies.

Our Church is often asked to act as a bridge between the various jurisdictions present in North America. It is our hope that the relationship between its member hierarchs will allow SCOBA to reclaim the positive influence on Church life in America that it once had. Regrettably, apart from the work I have noted, SCOBA activities have diminished to the point where the original goals of cooperation and unity are generally experienced only on a liturgical level, such as annual sponsorship of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, and shared sponsorship with SCOOC of the annual United Nations Prayer Service. This latter event was hosted by Metropolitan Herman in October 2003, in the form of the celebration of Vespers at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral in New York City, with responses sung by a combined choir from Saint Tikhon's and Saint Vladimir's seminaries.

The ongoing task of evangelization. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave us the Great Commission to evangelize when He told His apostles, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you" [Matthew 28:19-20].

This mandate has been taken to heart by Orthodox Christians in North America throughout the past 200 years. It is a mandate we take seriously as the Lord's disciples in this place, at this time. We believe that the Orthodox Church in America is uniquely committed to the task of evangelization, following the spirit and tradition directly handed down to us by the first Orthodox missionaries in Alaska, who brought the Orthodox Faith to these lands, proclaimed the Gospel, made disciples, baptized, and taught.

As part of this missionary task, we continue to teach and evangelize within our established parishes, as well as in places across this continent in which people have yet to hear the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed and the new life in Christ made tangible in the worship and mutual care of the Church. A review of parish statistics for the past triennium demonstrates a trend toward growth, and testifies that our missionary efforts have continued to bear fruit. Many new missions and parishes have been established. Older parishes are being revitalized. As already noted, 35 new missions have been opened. Two which had previously been closed were reopened. It is true that six missions and monastic institutions were closed during this period. We truly regret that things can come to the point that closure is necessary, and we trust that we may learn important lessons from such circumstances. Indeed we take seriously, as a mark of maturity, learning from mistakes or miscalculation, adapting to change, and integrating lessons learned into our future plans. With God's help, such wisdom will support the overall growth of evangelization and the mission of our Church.

Conferences. In order to enhance, encourage, and support

the work of evangelization and other ministries, the Orthodox Church in America sponsored three special conferences in 2004.

The third OCA Pastoral Life Conference took place at Saint Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary June 2-4, 2004. Attended by nearly 125 clergy, it focused on the unique challenges encountered in the priestly ministry. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for our clergy to pray, study, reflect, and engage in fellowship.

Nearly 100 clergy and laity participated in the parish ministry "Faith in Action" conference sponsored by the Department of Christian Witness and Service at Saint Vladimir's Seminary July 28-31, 2004. This conference featured 25 workshops over a three-day period. Those who participated returned to their home parishes revitalized and enthusiastic for the work with which the Church has entrusted them.

A conference addressing the needs of older parishes and parishes with declining membership was sponsored by the Department of Evangelization at Saint Vladimir's Seminary August 30-September 1, 2004. Almost 40 clergy and lay participants discussed various aspects of parish renewal and growth. This was the second conference hosted by this department, the first having taken place in 2003.

We are grateful for the presence at this Council of so many of our youth and young adults. The Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry continues its strong program of educational, service, and fellowship activities, encouraging youth to be actively involved in the life of the Orthodox Church in America. A highlight of the past three years has been the participation of so many of our young people in helping with "hands-on" work in the Diocese of Alaska and with Project Mexico. The Priest Michael Anderson, who has served as youth director for the past 11 years, will complete this phase of his ministry later this year, as he takes on a parish assignment in the Diocese of the West. We are grateful for the commitment and enthusiasm he has brought to this key area of Church life and ministry. Cheryl Morris, department chairperson, aided by Joseph Matusiak, will oversee the department's work until a full-time director is appointed sometime next year.

Theological education and pastoral formation.

The great importance of sound theological education and appropriate pastoral formation for our clergy cannot be stressed enough. This is true in some measure for all of those who will be engaged in church leadership. This All-American Council calls us to reflect upon the manner in which our clergy are educated and prepared for parish ministry. From the time of the establishment of our first seminary in Minneapolis 100 years ago, our Church has consistently made theological education a priority. Our institutions have been blessed with visionary leadership, excellent faculties, and sound scholarship. Theological education and pastoral formation remain the basic work of the three seminaries serving the Orthodox Church in America. Last year, Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary was granted full accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools ATS. Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary also has had its accreditation reaffirmed. Saint Vladimir's Seminary also continues its capital campaign and is the process of constructing new housing for married students. Saint Herman's Orthodox Theological Seminary continues to expand and develop a unique program that prepares clergy and Church workers in and for the Diocese of Alaska. A total of 52 students graduated from our seminaries in 2005 – a record number! Saint Herman's Seminary graduated four students, while Saint Tikhon's Seminary graduated 19 students and Saint Vladimir's Seminary graduated 29 students. Although not all graduates are or will be ordained, we believe that the general increase in the size of incoming classes is a positive sign of the health of our seminary programs and bodes well for the Church.

Church ministry departments. The reports of the Church ministry departments were distributed well before the Council. These reports provide an update on the work being accomplished in the many and varied aspects of our Church life. Our Church has 21 departments, boards, and commissions, served by over 200 clergy and laity, for the most part on a volunteer basis. Our departments are committed to serving the needs of our dioceses, parishes, clergy, and faithful. They are constantly seeking to improve communications among departmental members, with those they serve directly, and with the broader Church membership. The minutes of department meetings and all reports are forwarded for review to the members of the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, and the diocesan chancellors. We are grateful to Michelle Jannakos, Church ministries coordinating secretary, and David Lucs, assistant to the chancellor, for the attention and care they give to coordinating and distributing these materials on a regular basis. As you review these reports, we hope you will be impressed by the many things we have been able to accomplish on a very small budget and with a limited number of staff. Taken together with news and articles published in *The Orthodox Church* newspaper, and the extensive, growing amount of information on our website, these reports point to an active church supported by dedicated volunteers. These volunteers are to be thanked for their laudable and consistent dedication to our mission.

• **The Department of Communications.** The missionary effort of Saint Herman and his monastic brethren inspires us. The apostolic zeal of Saint Innocent, Saint Tikhon, Saint Raphael, and Saint Alexis, and many others, known and unknown, challenges us. In their dedication, we see the most sublime example of commitment to Christ and His Church as they utilized every means at their disposal to advance the Church's mission. Following their example, we are always trying to find the best possible means to "get the message out."

Our Department of Communications has grown substantially since the last All-American Council. Over 32,000 families now receive *The Orthodox Church* newspaper. Thanks to the Archpriests Leonid Kishkovsky and John Matusiak, editor and

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managing editor respectively, the paper continues to serve as the most important of our Church's printed communications.

Our Church's web site [www.o.ca.org] continues to be the most widely utilized of all English-language websites providing information on the Orthodox Faith. It is a fundamental resource for the history, life, mission, and message of the Orthodox Church in America. We currently receive an average of 105,000 visitors, or 1.2 million "hits," every month. A new design was introduced earlier this year with a more effective and user-friendly format. We constantly receive favorable comments on the website. We are grateful to John J. Mindala II, assistant to the chancellor for communications and graphic design and our webmaster, for his dedication to this important form of outreach and education.

In addition to providing Orthodox educational materials and information about the Orthodox Church in America, and our dioceses, parishes, and institutions, the web site provides coverage of a wide range of events in the life of our Church. Photo documentation of events taking place on the diocesan and parish levels, as well as coverage of the international activities of the Metropolitan, are extremely popular. We attempt to post photos and commentary on these events in a timely manner, but we are sometimes limited by the small size of our staff, which consists of Father Matusiak, John Mindala, and David Lucs, and the demands of multi-tasking at the Chancery.

The fact of the matter is that the work of the Department of Communications is growing. It continues to expand the services it provides to members of the Orthodox Church in America, as well as to countless others who utilize our web site. The Department publishes the annual *Sourcebook and Church Directory* and the annual *Church Desk Calendar*. I wish to note that it is our intention to post the 2006 *Sourcebook* on our web site. It will be printed in only a limited number to meet our foreign distribution needs and the needs of those who may require desk copies.

The Holy Synod of Bishops is keenly aware of the importance of communications in this day and age. They support the work of this department and anticipate its continued growth and development. As we look ahead to future expansion and improvement, we are naturally concerned that our budget will reflect communications as a priority.

Electronic mail will soon become the most usual and primary means of regular communication between the Central Church Administration and the parishes and clergy of the Orthodox Church in America. We have yet to use e-mail for any significant mailing because we are concerned that someone may inadvertently not receive important information. It is still the case that maintaining an up-to-date database of e-mail addresses is a challenging task. Nonetheless, as the general population becomes accustomed to e-mail, we will be exploiting the cost reduction and time-saving features of electronic communication. We currently have a list of 680 clergy e-mail addresses, representing 69% of our clergy. In the meantime, those who do not have e-mail services will continue to receive mailings in the customary manner.

The use of internet forums by some of our clergy and faithful is of ongoing concern to us. We have witnessed several instances in which the wonderful potential of electronic communication has been used to destructive and malicious ends. The fact of the matter is that ease of communication has not improved the *quality* of our communications; at times, sadly, it has given miscommunication, false information and provocation an even wider circulation. Instantaneous communication, without the nuances of personal encounter or space for reflection, can easily arouse fallen passions. I feel I must comment on this because, as clergy who have been ordained to preach the Word of God and to set an example to the faithful, we are all too often found speaking against one another and undermining the dignity of the priestly office. We must reflect on the sins of bearing false witness, argumentativeness, and disputation. I respectfully ask my brother priests to use the internet for the cause of the Gospel and not in any manner that would subvert the mission entrusted to us.

• **The Office of Humanitarian Aid.** The Office of Humanitarian Aid has continued to call upon parish communities, chapters of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, Church organizations, Church schools, and individuals to raise funds for holiday gifts for children around the world through our Christmas Stocking Project. Funds collected are used to purchase filled stockings or similar gifts for needy children in eastern and central Europe, Albania, Alaska, and elsewhere. The office also continues to distribute substantial amounts of medical and other aid to those in need around the world. The past three years have seen a growing number of parishes participating in this meaningful form of outreach. It is through this department that the Orthodox Church in America reaches out with loving support to those in need. Our charitable endeavors over the past three years have been quite significant, and have included assistance to survivors of the terrorist attack in Beslan, those whose lives were affected by the hurricanes in Florida and the heavy storms in central Pennsylvania, and those whose lives were changed forever by the tsunami in Southeast Asia.

• **The military chaplaincy.** The entire world was affected by the events in New York City on September 11, 2001. Chief among these effects has been the resulting military conflicts, first in Afghanistan, and now in Iraq. In two separate statements, the Holy Synod of Bishops called upon the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America to pray and fast for a speedy conclusion of the war in Iraq. Although the hope for a speedy resolution of this war has yet to be realized, we continue to pray for peace in Iraq and the Middle East. In the words of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, "we continue to pray... that by Our Lord's supreme goodness, that which is evil might be transformed into that which is not only good, but godly... for our nation's leaders and the leaders of other nations, that they will be moved to bring about an end to the conflict in a speedy manner, focusing their attention on producing a just and lasting peace... and for the countless innocent people, Christians and Muslims alike, whose lives are, and will continue

to be, torn apart by untold suffering."

As the war in Iraq continues, and as the armed forces of the United States and its allies continue to work for peace throughout the world, the Orthodox Christian men and women in the armed forces and their families are ministered to by the Orthodox Church in America's military chaplains. With His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman and the Holy Synod of Bishops, we offer our gratitude to and commend the efforts of our military chaplains. Like the military personnel they serve, they leave their families and communities to perform their duties. They faithfully and courageously provide pastoral care and guidance to our brothers and sisters serving in the military.

• **The Orthodox Church in America's Benefits Office.** The Orthodox Church in America's Benefits Office continues to serve the needs of those clergy and lay employees who participate in the Orthodox Church in America's pension plan. As indicated in the department reports, the pension plan remains strong, and it effectively serves those who participate in it. The benefits office also watches over the services provided through the Personal Assistance Program, a program that has seen increased participation in recent months. We are grateful for Elizabeth Kondratik's dedication to the pension plan and benefits office and her attentive care for the clergy and employees who seek her assistance. All newly ordained clergy receive information concerning the benefits available to them.

I am also pleased to inform you that this past October, the Loyal Christian Benefit Association honored His Beatitude on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the holy priesthood by providing life insurance coverage to all our Church's seminarians and, if married, to their spouses and children, during the time of their enrollment in the seminary. We are deeply appreciative of this gift which represents approximately two million dollars in insurance coverage.

• **Sexual misconduct issues.** There is an understandable growing public concern over cases of sexual misconduct by clergy and other Church workers associated with various denominations across the United States and Canada. The Orthodox Church in America is vigilant in these matters and fully committed to prevention, due process, and pastoral care as appropriate. The Holy Synod of Bishops, at its March 2003 meeting, issued a comprehensive set of *Policies, Standards, and Procedures of the Orthodox Church in America on Sexual Misconduct* and directed that this policy be implemented in all parishes, missions, and institutions of our Church. The Holy Synod also created an Office for the Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations. This office is under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan. We are thankful that we have had only a few instances requiring action. Nonetheless, the standard of vigilance inherent in our policies cannot be relaxed. It must be maintained for the spiritual and physical well being of the faithful and for the safety and stability of our communities. It must be maintained for the good reputation of the Church, so that our proclamation of the Gospel will not be compromised or suffer from distractions. In addressing allegations of sexual misconduct, the hierarchs of our Church are guided by a true pastoral concern for their flock.

The Orthodox Church in America requires background checks of clergy and lay workers. This is a policy that is implemented in each parish at the direction of the local bishop. Background checks have also been made on every member of the Holy Synod and all of the chancery staff, beginning with me. We are arranging to have in place a mechanism to ensure background checks on all candidates for ordination, as well as on the clergy of other Orthodox Churches petitioning to be received into our ranks. It has been proposed that at some point in the admissions, matriculation, or graduation process, our seminarians will undergo confidential background checks.

• **The challenge of finances.** Finance continues to be a challenge on all levels of our Church life. This is true in many parishes and dioceses. It is especially true for the Central Church Administration, where we have witnessed a decrease in voluntary free-will gifts through bequests and special donations. It must be noted that, although there has been an annual increase in gifts received, the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards has been unable to meet its budgeted income for the past several years. The chancery has managed to meet its payroll expenses and is current in payment to the various benefits programs, including hospitalization insurance, the Personal Assistance Program, and the Orthodox Church in America pension plan.

We adhere strictly to the budget approved by the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod of Bishops. Prior to its approval, and while still in draft form, the budget is subject to a line-by-line review by His Beatitude, the Holy Synod, the Church Administration Committee, the Metropolitan Council, the Office of the Treasurer (which includes the comptroller and auditors), and the chairpersons of the Church ministries departments. The membership of each of these bodies is encouraged to ask questions and offer suggestions for changes, all of which are taken seriously. Having been reviewed, the budget then receives approval from the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council.

We have often heard the claim that the administration of the Orthodox Church in America – the various bodies I have just mentioned, comprised of almost 200 people representing dioceses and Church institutions – is not fully accountable or transparent in its management of the Church's finances. However, the members of these bodies, particularly the diocesan representatives on the Metropolitan Council, are encouraged to keep their respective diocesan councils informed regarding the Church's budget and finances. It is our hope that this is taking place regularly, so that the people who are interested in this aspect of the Church's life may be kept fully informed.

Parish priests regularly make announcements from the amvon. However, on any given Sunday, there will be persons who either do not listen to the announcements, or who fail to understand them fully, and who, as a result, leave church on Sunday with no infor-

mation or misinformation that can then be relayed to others. This happens in many areas of Church life, including the area of finances, even though reports are provided regularly.

However, to maintain the budget it is also necessary to receive the income that is budgeted! Because of current income limitations, we cannot implement everything that is provided for in the budget, and we are thus faced with the challenge of prioritizing the services the administration is able to provide to the dioceses, parishes, and institutions. This challenge is not unique on the Church-wide level, but is also experienced on the level of the dioceses and parishes. Indeed, dioceses often find it necessary to increase assessment levels in order to meet their growing needs.

The decrease in free-will gifts is not unique to the chancery and departments of the Orthodox Church in America. This also has had an impact on the diocesan and parish levels, and is not unique to the Orthodox Church in America. All Orthodox jurisdictions in North America have reported a drop in income, as have most religious and not-for-profit organizations. This decrease in voluntary contributions must also be seen in the context of the proliferation of so many appeals from so many different church institutions and areas of Church life.

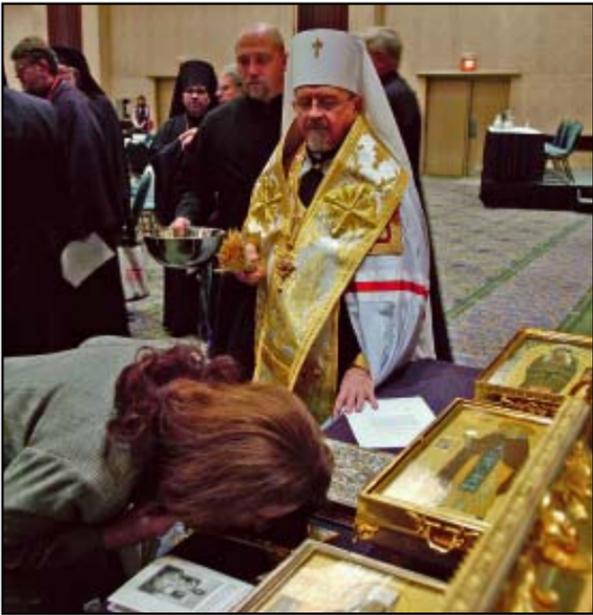
As we think about the future of our Church, it is important to connect our enthusiasm and commitment with our responsibility to support the programs we need and want. The Fair Share resolution is offered in good faith as a step forward in our search for appropriate and equitable ways for everyone within the Church to share in supporting its work.

• **FOS, development, and special appeals.** Upon the resignation of the Archpriest Joseph Fester from his position as executive director of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards [FOS], Metropolitan Herman appointed Archpriest Eugene Vansuch as the new FOS executive director. We are grateful to Father Joseph for his dedication to the work of FOS and continuing the tradition of his predecessors, the Archpriests Sergei Glagolev and Basil Summer. Father Eugene has the urgent task of increasing membership and revenues. We must remember that the work of our Church ministries departments, based on the resolution passed at the 11th All-American Council in 1995, depends exclusively on FOS and other voluntary contributions. We also look forward to the appointment of a full-time development director in the near future. The reality is that the funds needed to support the work of the Church on all levels are available "out there." We need to identify sources for these funds and make our case in the context of competing appeals. We know that a full-time, committed development director would be able to do this, and that the benefits of having such a director would be felt at all levels of Church life.

• **Our Church and the future.** In concluding this brief overview of the life of our Church and the activities of the chancery since the last All-American Council, I wish reflect for a moment on our theme, "Our Church and the Future." I am optimistic as we look ahead. Just as we have a rich history and legacy of mission and evangelization, so too we have a future which promises continued blessings for us in our work of preaching the Gospel. These blessings may take on unexpected forms. Our cultural assumptions may be shaken to the very foundations. But if we are faithful to the Gospel, we will find that the Lord will provide for us and present us with new opportunities for living our life in Christ and sharing our faith with others. This is the experience of our past. The early missionaries of Orthodoxy in North America were presented with enormous challenges, great changes, and even reversals in the circumstances of their ministry. They remained faithful to the Lord, and the Lord was faithful to them, always guiding, consoling, and renewing them in doing His will.

I view everything our Church does within the context of our past history – what we have been and what we have accomplished; of our present – who and what we are as the local autocephalous Church in North America; and of our future – what we are called to be and do in the future. As we commemorate the 35th anniversary of the glorification of Saint Herman of Alaska, we recall that he was a man of his times. He lived out the very real difficulties of life in a distant outpost in a foreign land. But he accepted the challenges of the mission, and even the contemptuous manner in which his fellow Russians treated him and the isolation in which he lived, by God's grace he refused to allow circumstances to overwhelm him. His zeal and enthusiasm did not wane. To read through his existing letters is to have this zeal and enthusiasm kindled in our own hearts. In our reading of the letters, diaries, articles and other accounts of the missionary laborers in North America, we find ourselves spiritually refreshed and deeply moved. Are we not moved? Is our heart not warmed? Do we not yearn to follow in their steps? Their common witness over the centuries constitutes a legacy for us – the legacy of Saints Herman and Innocent, Saints Jacob and Alexis, Saints Tikhon and Raphael of Brooklyn, the holy martyred priests John Kochurov and Alexander Hotovitzky, Archbishop Arseny and Metropolitan Leonty, Metropolitan Theophan Noli and Bishop Policarp Morusca, and of so many others, known and unknown – a legacy we believe comes down to us through them from our Lord Himself and His apostles. By their prayers and through their example, may our Orthodox Church in America live the faith we have received in a God-pleasing and fruitful manner!

• **Words of gratitude.** I have now served as chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America for 16 years. I count each of these years as a special gift from God. With the support and blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, I strive to do all within my ability to serve our Church. I view my labors as chancellor as being in service to the Primate, to the Holy Synod of Bishops, and to all the clergy and faithful of our Church. While the role of chancellor is not without its own unique challenges – sometimes disheartening – and responsibilities that are often difficult to implement, the day does not pass that I do not thank God for being en-



Metropolitan Herman blessed the faithful as they venerated the relics of the North American saints.

CHANCELLOR from 18

trusted with this ministry. All of us will face unwarranted and cynical criticism; nonetheless, we are open to honest, constructive criticism and any advice that will help us in our ministry of service to Christ's Holy Church. Above all, I wish to express my gratitude for the many ways in which I am supported and assisted in the work I am called to do as chancellor.

First of all, I thank God for the profound commitment to Christ and His Church of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, and the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops. They provide us with a generous measure of spiritual guidance and archpastoral leadership. As our fathers in Christ, they assure that we remain faithful to the mission entrusted to us. May their fidelity to the Orthodox Faith and their love for their flock continue to inspire us in our own service to Christ.

I also wish to express my thanks to all those who have labored to make this Council possible: His Grace, Bishop Seraphim, episcopal moderator of the Preconciliar Commission, and our host; Archpriest Myron Manzuk, Council manager; Dr. Alice Woog, project manager; Joseph Kormos, commission facilitator; the members of the Preconciliar Commission; Archpriest Dennis Pihach, chancellor of the Diocese of Canada and clergy co-chair; Dmitry Chernomorsky, lay co-chair; Sophia Kolaroff, secretary; Alexis Troubetzkoy, treasurer; and all the members of the local committee. Special thanks, as well, to the members of the chancery Staff in Syosset for the long hours of additional work assigned to them.

I would also like to thank the Church officers – Archpriest Dimitri Oselinsky, treasurer, who is about to retire from this office as he takes up a new parish assignment in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and Archpriest Paul Kucynda, secretary, for their devoted service and their friendship. I am grateful to Archpriest David Brum, secretary to the Metropolitan, and to every clergy and lay member of the chancery staff. Once again, I would like to express my personal gratitude for their commitment. They work long hours – far beyond the hours for which they are compensated. And these long hours of work are offered in the spirit of loving service to the Orthodox Church in America. I wish to note that all the members of the chancery staff have a loving and positive approach to the work they do for the Church. This is a source of great encouragement for me, and an example to us all. We are all aware that those who work on behalf of Christ and His Church are inevitably subject to negative comments and criticism, very often from the very people they strive most faithfully to serve. I am very pleased that the members of the chancery staff manage to rise above such pettiness and remain focused on the work entrusted to them by His Beatitude and the Holy Synod.

Throughout my many years of service to the Church, first as a parish priest, then as a member of the chancery Staff, and now for 16 years as chancellor, I have been supported and encouraged by my wife Bette. She is a living example of an Orthodox Christian who knows what it means to give of oneself and to sacrifice for the sake of the Church. Without her patience and understanding, her great love and deep faith, and her own personal commitment to Christ and the Orthodox Church in America, I would never be able to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to me as chancellor. I give thanks to God daily that He has blessed me through her and through our children Robert, James, Lisa, and their families. In expressing my appreciation to my wife and family, I would also like to express my sincere gratitude, and the gratitude of us all, to all clergy wives and families. May the Lord bless and reward them for their own commitment to Christ and for the sacrifices they make on behalf of the Church.

Finally, I must take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my brother clergy for their compassion and love, for their support, and for all they accomplish on behalf of the Church, often in the hidden and unheralded struggles of pastoral ministry. Priesthood cannot be exercised without the presence of the Cross – and so many of you carry the Cross of Christ with faith, with love, with dedication, and without complaint, always aware that the One we serve has called us into His own wonderful Light, for “through the Cross joy has come into all the world.” I also wish to thank all of you gathered here, who are dearly beloved in Christ. The work we accomplish on behalf of the Church does not belong to any one individual – it is not mine, it is not yours – it belongs to Christ, Who has called us to serve Him. In accepting this call, may we always remember the words of the Apostle Paul to the Church in Ephesus, and pray that we may grow “into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom [we] also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” [Ephesians 2:21-22]. ■

A great cloud of witnesses

Reflections on the past – and future – of St. Tikhon's Monastery

Father John Kowalczyk

In 1905, immediately before the blessing of the grounds of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, Father Arseny wrote, “Whatever is the will of God the future will show, but the present is so beautiful, we cannot help but be joyful.... The lot fell to me to become the founder of the holy monastery.... At the present time I am not afraid of any difficulties.”

The founding of the monastery belongs to Father Arseny and Archbishop Tikhon, the future saint and patriarch. Father Arseny conceived the monastery's establishment, found the land on which it rose, and oversaw much of the on-site work, while Saint Tikhon provided the essential moral and spiritual leadership, and vision. Thus, the zeal and cooperation of these two men – aided by divine grace at every step – turned a dream into reality for the Orthodox Church in North America.

“I am afraid of one thing: To Shrink back from the Divine Providence, which has set the course for these holy acts,” Father Arseny wrote on the eve of the first pilgrimage to the monastery a century ago, revealing extraordinary faith and spiritual insight, crystal clear vision and undaunted faith in the risen Christ. His words have set the tone for us today.

During the past years 40 years, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, has been surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses: Saint Nikolai of Zicha, Metropolitans Leonty and Ireney, Archbishop Kiprian, Fathers Vasily and Naum and over 60 monks, and countless other hierarchs, clergy, and faithful buried in the hallowed grounds of Saint Tikhon's cemetery. These saintly individuals have strengthened our Metropolitan to look at the greater picture of God's will and desire that all men should be saved and enter into an everlasting and eternal relationship with Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

A few days ago, one pilgrim to the monastery told me, “at every pilgrimage I notice progress, improvement, expansion, and growth. I see the hand print of Metropolitan Herman, surrounded by the ‘cloud of witnesses’ who planted before him, with each improvement. The Spirit of God is a work at our beloved St. Tikhon's.”

And now, on May 25, the baton of faith was passed from Metropolitan Herman to His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, the newly elected Bishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania and rector of Saint Tikhon's Seminary. Bishop Tikhon too was nurtured within the monastery's bosom; he now walks the same path of divine providence taken by those who came before him, ever mindful of Father Arseny's words: “I am afraid of one thing: to shrink back from the divine providence which has set the course for these holy acts.”

It takes spiritual courage to press on, to grow in Christ, to “decrease, so that Christ may increase.” It takes faith to love God, to take on a big mortgage, to purchase more land, to build more buildings. It takes deep commitment and a vision of “the greater picture,” ever mindful of God's divine providential care and oversight.

The celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Saint Tikhon's Monastery this weekend, and the consecration of Bishop Alejo of Mexico City, are deeply connected by divine providence. Bishop Alejo stands in the unbroken chain of apostolic succession of the monastery's founders, Saint Tikhon and Father, later Archbishop, Arseny, together with Metropolitan Herman, Bishop Tikhon, and our Holy Synod of Bishops.

On the day before the first pilgrimage, Father Arseny strolled the grounds of the future monastery. “It was a wonderful day,” he wrote. “I took a walk through the woods, listening to the many birds singing.... Under my feet a rabbit jumped out, made several hops, then stood still.... At the slope of the hill, I found a life-giving spring, pouring out wondrous, cool water from under a rock where, undoubtedly, in the future, industrious monks will build a small chapel....” Today, the well dedicated to the Samaritan Woman marks the site, visited by thousands of pilgrims who, over the years, have been renewed by the spring's refreshing and blessed waters.

In recalling the first pilgrimage to the monastery – trains leaving Wilkes-Barre at 6:00 a.m., stopping en route to pick up pilgrims; the voices of children and their parents singing hymns before icons of Saint Panteleimon and the Mother of God; the half-mile long procession from the train station to the monastery site – Father Arseny also saw the hand of God: “Children who were raised in America and not accustomed to making such a journey by foot became very tired and began to ask, ‘How much further is the holy monastery?’ In response, everyone soon saw, in the middle of the deep forest, a blue cupola with a three-barred Cross.”

And at the monastery gate, they were greeted by Archbishop Tikhon, Bishop Raphael, Fathers Alexander Hotovitsky and Arseny, and the monastic brotherhood. After Saint Tikhon consecrated the monastery church, Saint Raphael served the Divine Liturgy with Father Alexis Toth. A second outdoor Liturgy was celebrated by Saint Tikhon, after which he spoke of the importance of monasticism in America.

“Is it not a vain dream, a waste of effort and funds, to organize a monastery, with its contemplative and eastern way of life, in a land whose inhabitants are known throughout the world for their practical needs, external efficiency, and a lifestyle of worldly comforts?” Saint Tikhon asked, rhetorically. “Let us hope that our monastery, presently small, will become like the mustard seed, ‘which is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of all shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches’ [Matthew 13:32]. The hopes and desires of my heart go further: I would like our monastery to become, according to the words of the Savior, ‘like a leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened’ [Matthew 13:33]. Therefore, look down from Heaven, O God, upon the monastery now established, and behold and visit this vine which Thou hast planted with Thy right hand, and establish it.”

Newspaper accounts at the time estimated that with 2,000 pilgrims present, the Liturgy was celebrated outdoors, initiating a tradition that continues to this day.

Today, as at the first pilgrimage, Saint Tikhon's Monastery continues to be surrounded by “a great cloud of witnesses.” And today, Father Arseny's words – “Whatever is the will of God, the future will show, but the present is so beautiful, we cannot help but be joyful,” ring in our hearts and souls as we thank God for the blessings He has imparted upon our beloved monastery in the past, and the blessings we anticipate in the future. ■

Fr. Kowalczyk is chancellor of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern PA. This reflection was adapted from his address at the banquet marking the 100th anniversary of St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Faithful welcome the Valaam Icon of the Mother of God at the entrance to St. Tikhon's Monastery on July 30, 2005. Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland brought the icon on his recent visit to the US. For a century, the monastery has been the site of many important events in the life of the Church in America.



OFFICIAL from 2

St. Demetrius Mission, Naples, FL and granted retirement/ May 15, 2005.

HASENECZ, The Rev. Timothy, who was attached, is assigned acting rector of Holy Trinity Church, Catasauqua, PA/ May 29, 2005.

HOJNICKI, The Rev. Timothy is released from duties at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA, and from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman, transferred to the Diocese of Eastern PA, and assigned acting rector of Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA/ May 23, 2005.

IONESCU, The Rev. Dumitru is released from duties at Holy Resurrection Church, Hayward, CA. He is on special assignment and attached to the Atlantic Deanery/ August 1, 2005.

IZBASA, The Rev. Nicolae, who was attached, is appointed second priest at Holy Nativity Church, Chicago, IL/ March 1, 2005.

JACKSON, Deacon Matthew is attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ May 22, 2005.

JACOBS, Deacon Andrew is attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ April 23, 2005.

JACOBS, Deacon Andrew 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 Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West, and attached to the Diocese of the West, where he awaits assignment/ June 16, 2005.

JANOWSKI, The V. Rev. Alexander is released from duties at SS. Peter and Paul Sobor, Montreal, QC, and granted retirement/ August 1, 2005.

KLARR, The Rev. Josef von is released from duties at St. Michael the Archangel Church, St. Louis, MO. He remains acting rector of Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church, Desloge, MO/ effective July 31, 2005.

KNAGIN, Deacon Alexei is attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK/ February 13, 2005.

KNAGIN, The Rev. Alexei is attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK/ February 15, 2005.

KOWALCZYK, The V. Rev. John, in addition to duties as rector of St. Michael Church, Jermyn, PA and secretary/treasurer of the Diocese of Eastern PA, is appointed chancellor of the Diocese of Eastern PA/ June 6, 2005.

KULIK, The Rev. Miroslaw is released from duties at St. Michael Church, Portage, PA and SS. Peter and Paul Church, Vintondale, PA, and from the Diocese of Diocese of Western PA/ June 30, 2005. He is transferred to the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia, attached to the Diocese of Eastern PA, and assigned acting rector of St. John the Baptist Church, Edwardsville, PA/ July 1, 2005.

LARSON, Deacon Alexander is attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK/ June 3, 2005.

LARSON, Deacon Elia is attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK/ June 5, 2005.

LASHBROOK, Deacon Philip is released from duties at St. John the Forerunner Church, Indianapolis, IN, and assigned to St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Kokomo, IN/ June 2, 2005.

LASHBROOK, The Rev. Philip is appointed acting rector of St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Kokomo, IN/ July 9, 2005.

LOWE, The V. Rev. Timothy is released from duties at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT, and from the Diocese of New England; transferred to the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; and granted a leave of absence for three years/ July 31, 2005.

LUKASHONOK, The Rev. Alexander 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 Bishop Tikhon, and attached to the Diocese of the West/ June 20, 2005.

MAEV, The Rev. Yuri is released from duties at St. Christina of Tyre Mission, Fremont, CA/ June 18, 2005. He is appointed sacristan of Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA/ June 19, 2005.

MELNYK, The V. Rev. Anatoliy is released from duties at Holy Trinity Sobor, Winnipeg, MB, Canada/ July 31, 2005. He is assigned acting rector of SS. Peter and Paul Sobor, Montreal, QC, Canada/ August 1, 2005.

MEZYNSKI, The Rev. David is attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ July 10, 2005.

MIHALICK, The V. Rev. Michael, who is retired, is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY and from the Diocese of Washington and New York/ June 13, 2005. He is transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh and to the Diocese of Western PA and attached to St. Basil Diocesan Chapel, Cranberry Township, PA/ June 24, 2005.

NAGI, Deacon Dennis is attached to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church, Worcester, MA/ June 5, 2005.

[NICOLAI], Priestmonk Yakov is released from duties at Three Saints Church, Old Harbor, AK, and attached to St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK/ June 1, 2005.

ORLOV, The V. Rev. Michael, who was suspended, has his suspension lifted, is returned to active duty, and is attached to Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA/ April 30, 2005. He is released from this attachment and transferred from the omophorion of Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West and the Diocese of the West to the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman/ May 1, 2005. He is suspended from all priestly functions/ May 3, 2005.

OSELINSKY, The V. Rev. Dimitri is released from duties at Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church, Clifton, NJ and from the Diocese of Washington and New York; transferred to the Diocese of Eastern PA; and assigned rector of St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA/ July 1, 2005.

PATTERSON, The Rev. Justin is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ April 3, 2005.

PIASTA, The Rev. Andrew is assigned second priest at St. Mark the Evangelist Church, Yorkton, SK, Canada/ June 18, 2005.

POWELL, The Rev. Barnabas is attached to Three Hierarchs Chapel, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY/ May 21, 2005.

POWELL, The Rev. Barnabas 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 Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles and the West, and attached to the Diocese of the West, where he awaits assignment/ June 16, 2005.

ROWE, The Rev. Christopher is released from duties at Holy Trinity Church, Catasauqua, PA and from the Diocese of Eastern PA, transferred to the Diocese of the Midwest, and attached to Holy Trinity Church, Overland Park, KS/ May 23, 2005.

SEARFOORCE, The V. Rev. Matthew is released from duties at Nativity of the Holy Virgin Mary Church, Waterbury, CT, and from the Diocese of New England, and transferred to the Albanian Archdiocese, where he awaits assignment/ August 1, 2005.

SENYO, The V. Rev. Michael, who was sacristan, is appointed dean of Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA/ May 1, 2005.

STRICKLAND, The Rev. John 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 Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West, attached to the Diocese of the West, and assigned acting rector of St. Catherine Mission, Kirkland, WA/ February 1, 2005.

SUCCAROTTE, The V. Rev. Thomas is released from duties as dean of the St. Louis Deanery. He remains rector of Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL/ June 1, 2005.

*** SUDOSA, The Rev. Nicholas** is assigned acting rector of Holy Trinity Sobor, Winnipeg, MB/ August 1, 2005.

TAKAHASHI, The V. Rev. John awaits assignment/ July 14, 2005.

TRENT, The Rev. Zachariah is appointed associate priest at St. John the Forerunner Church, Indianapolis, IN/ July 10, 2005.

TSJOURMAN, The V. Rev. Gregory is released from the Diocese of Washington and New York, transferred to the omophorion of Archbishop Kyrill of Pittsburgh, and attached to the Diocese of Western PA, where he awaits assignment/ July 1, 2005.

VANSUCH, The V. Rev. Eugene is released from duties at St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA, and from the Diocese of Eastern PA, transferred to the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman, and attached to St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY/ May 31, 2005. He is appointed executive director of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards/ June 1, 2005.

VANSUCH, Deacon Jason is attached to SS. Peter and Paul Church, Philadelphia, PA/ April 23, 2005.

■ RETIRED

GEEZA, The V. Rev. Daniel is granted retirement and attached to St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA/ June 1, 2005.

HAMMETT, The Rev. Ian is granted retirement and attached to St. James Church, Port St. Lucie, FL/ May 15, 2005.

JANOWSKI, The V. Rev. Alexander is granted retirement. He is attached to the Bishop's Chapel of St. Silouan the Athonite, Johnstown, ON, Canada/ August 1, 2005.

■ LEAVES OF ABSENCE

LOWE, The V. Rev. Timothy is granted a leave of absence for three years. He is attached to St. Sergius Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY/ July 31, 2005.

■ RELEASED

[FALSARELLA], Priestmonk Anthony is released from duties at St. John the Baptist Church, Spring Valley, NY; from the omophorion of Metropolitan Herman; and from the Diocese of Washington and New York. He is canonically released to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America/ July 13, 2005.

*** O'LEARY, The Rev. Gregory**, who is "on loan" from the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, is released from duties at St. John Chrysostom Church, Philadelphia, PA, by Metropolitan Herman with the concurrence of Bishop Nikon of Boston, to the Antiochian Archdiocese/ July 31, 2005.

■ SUSPENDED

GUST, Deacon James, who was attached to Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Kodiak, AK, is suspended from all diaconal functions/ July 26, 2005.

ORLOV, The V. Rev. Michael is suspended from all priestly functions/ May 3, 2005.

■ REMOVED

WILLIAMS, Deacon Anthony, who was attached to St. Mary [Holy Dormition] Church, Calhan, CO, 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/ May 27, 2005.

■ DEPOSED

ABRAHAM, Deacon Philip A., who was attached to St. Paul the Apostle Church, Las Vegas, NV, is deposed from all sacred functions of the Holy Diaconate. 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/ May 27, 2005.

■ PARISHES

DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST/ New deanery, deanery changes. The St. Louis Deanery is now known as the Kansas City Deanery. Besides parishes that had belonged to the deanery, the Kansas City Deanery will also include St. Raphael of Brooklyn Mission, Quincy, IL; St. John of Kronstadt Church, Lincoln, NE; and Archangels Michael and Gabriel Mission, South Omaha, NE. The Protection of the Holy Virgin Church, Royalton, IL, is transferred to the Chicago Deanery/ June 1, 2005.

DIOCESE OF NEW ENGLAND/ New status. Christ the Savior Mission, Southbury, CT, is granted parish status and is now known as Christ the Savior Church/ June 4, 2005.

DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK/ Mission closed. St. Sergius Mission, Bay Ridge [Brooklyn], NY is closed/ May 31, 2005. ■

* Indicates non-OCA clergy.

NORTH AMERICA**SCOBA hierarchs issue statement decrying sexual misconduct**

NEW YORK, NY – His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman, was among the hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA] who recently adopted a statement titled "Dealing With Sexual Misconduct in the Church".

The text addresses the seriousness with which the Church treats the issue of sexual misconduct and offers pastoral guidelines concerning sexual misconduct by members of the clergy and those who work in the Church. The statement, however, does not supersede specific guidelines issued by the OCA or the jurisdictions represented in SCOBA.

The complete text of the statement may be found on the SCOBA web site at <http://www.scoba.us/news/newsdetail.asp?id=143>. ■

SCOBA establishes new commissions

NEW YORK, NY [SCOBA] – The hierarchs of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA] recently established two new commissions: the Orthodox Research Commission [ORC] and the Orthodox Information Technologies Commission [OITC].

ORC which will work with each SCOBA jurisdiction in evaluating current data collection systems and offer assistance in enhancing and facilitating the process. It will also oversee SCOBA's ongoing participation in national surveys of religious life and participation. ORC will seek to meet the tremendous need for accurate data to assist in the proper planning, initiation, and evaluation of Orthodox life and work in America.

OITC will be responsible for the management of information technology and the web sites of each SCOBA jurisdiction. OITC will also maintain the SCOBA web site, create an on-line directory of SCOBA parishes and an on-line Orthodox job database, and assist parishes in creating web sites and parish bulletins.

Information on these commissions may be found on SCOBA's web site at www.scoba.us, under the heading "Agencies." ■

FINLAND from 7**Archbishop Leo concludes visit to OCA**

Canaan, PA, by His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, clergy and members of the monastic brotherhood, and numerous faithful. The icon was carried in procession to the monastery church, where Metropolitan Herman presided at the celebration of a Service of Thanksgiving. That evening, Archbishop Leo and Bishop Tikhon attended Great Vespers at Archangel Michael Church, Jermyn, PA, where they were welcomed by the rector, the Very Rev. John Kowalczyk.

On Tuesday, August 2, Metropolitan Herman, Archbishop Leo, and the Finnish delegation traveled to Alaska, where as guests of His Grace, Bishop Nikolai of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska they participated in the anniversary celebrations.

Before their return flight to Finland, Archbishop Leo visited "Ground Zero" and was feted at a farewell reception in New York.

Accompanying Archbishop Leo were Archimandrite Sergey of New Valaam Monastery, Mother Marina of Finland's Lintula Monastery, Protodeacon Kimmo Kallinen, and Mrs. Sirpa Anttonen of the New Valaam Lay Academy, and others.

The Orthodox Church of Finland is an autonomous Church within the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. For many years it has enjoyed a close relationship with the Orthodox Church in America, in part due to the fact that Saint Herman and his missionary companions came from the Valaam Monastery in Russian Karelia. During World War II, the monastery was evacuated, with many monks relocating to Finnish Karelia, where they established the New Valaam Monastery. ■

FAIR SHARE from 8**Delegates pass "fair share" increase**

"The Primate of the Church will request dioceses that do not participate in the fair share support of the Orthodox Church in America to raise the support they do send (\$74,000.00 actual in 2004) to \$110,000.00 in 2006, \$120,000.00 in 2007, and \$130,000.00 in 2008.

"In order to reduce the dependency of the Orthodox Church in America on the mandatory, imposed fair share on dioceses and members of the Church for budgetary funding, a concentrated effort shall be made to build the annual, planned, and development giving to the Church. A full-time director of development will work with the director of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards [FOS] to strive to meet the following income goals: In 2006, \$400,000.00 from FOS and \$450,000.00 from development; in 2007, \$430,000.00 from FOS and \$550,000.00 from development; and in 2008, \$450,000.00 from FOS and \$650,000.00 from development. In the event that annual and development giving exceed these annual goals, the fair share amount for the supporting dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America shall be reduced in the following year by an amount equivalent to the excess raised. For example, if annual/development giving in 2006 totals \$900,000.00 (+\$50,000.00), the fair share amount for 2007 will be reduced by \$50,000.000 (making it \$2,550,000.00)."

After discussion, delegates voted on the proposal as presented by Father Dresko. Using voting cards, a first vote was taken, but results were inconclusive due to problems with the verification of credentials. A second vote was taken, which resulted in 237 votes in favor of the motion and 175 against the motion. ■

Dealing with the less than obvious

Sensitivity key to ministering to "invisibly challenged" children

Wendy Cwiklinski

More and more children, for one reason or another, are being diagnosed with brain disorders, such as ADHD, autism, depression, or bipolar disorder. Unlike cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, these physical challenges are only visible through their symptoms, usually manifested in a child's behavior. It is easy to stand by and think or say, "If only that parent would get better control of his kid," or "what that kid needs is a good spanking," or "what a bratty kid!" And while some pop psychologists with newspaper columns and talk shows just might agree, such reactions have little to do with the very real diagnoses many children and their parents face every day.

"Invisible disorders" are genetic. They are recognized within the medical community by commitment to treatment and research. Parents don't *want* their child to have a brain disorder, any more than they *want* him or her to have any other disease. Unfortunately, the symptoms of these disorders often appear to be willful or condoned behavior. Rather than helping families of children with these disorders, we too often exclude them from our communities by being judgmental of the parent and/or child. These families need spiritual support to face the overwhelming challenges that these disorders bring to their households.

Children with mood disorders can rage for hours, making it difficult to calm them down. They can be physically aggressive, as well as verbally abusive. It's not always a question of parenting. A brain disorder can be compared to a stomach ache; while the parent is hardly responsible for the condition, he or she is incapable of preventing a sick child from vomiting.

Parents are usually busy shuttling the child from one appointment or activity to another. School can be an issue, especially if a child is not stable enough to stay in a regular classroom. Such children may find it hard to make and keep friends. Neighbors tend to become less than "neighborly," and they may even treat the family as if they have leprosy.

How can we help such parents and children? The first step is to maintain an attitude of love, compassion, and acceptance for the family. The stigma of having a child diagnosed with one of these disorders can be so overwhelming that some parents do not disclose their child's diagnosis, even to close friends. If they do disclose this to you, honor their trust by keeping it to yourself – unless you have their permission to share.

Offer to help in some way, even if you are turned down. Just the act of offering help shows that you are supportive.

Help with the children. If there is more than one child in the affected family, be a mentor or "big brother/big sister" to the affected child's siblings. When one child in the family is ill, the norm for family dynamics is to focus more on the child who is ill. Extra attention is usually helpful for the other siblings. Volunteer to take them for a while so their parents can go out for a cup of coffee – alone.

Help out at church. It can be very stressful for parents who are trying to help their child "keep it together" during church. Disapproving glances or rude comments only add to the stress. While it is understandable that some order must be maintained during liturgy, it is unfair to place the

The invisibly challenged child

The name "invisible child" is both a descriptor of and a dedication to our children, who are invisible in the sense that their disabilities, though often severe, are hidden from view. Brain disorders, though biologically based, often are not obvious physically, so the invisible child looks like any other child. In addition, children with these disorders usually have normal intelligence. In fact, many are gifted, sometimes to a high degree, and because of this they are able to develop coping skills that further hide their differences, the result being that they may either not be identified or their struggles will be misunderstood. Because it typically takes such a long time for children to be diagnosed and receive appropriate treatment, they are particularly susceptible to falling through the cracks, dropping out of school, becoming suicidal, or entering the juvenile justice system.

– www.invisiblechild.org/About.htm

burden entirely on the parents of a special needs child – and doing so could cause the family to leave the service, and eventually the parish and/or Church, altogether. Approach the parent during a non-liturgical moment, perhaps before a service begins, and offer to help with his or her child.

Children with behavior issues need to be involved with other children at church as much as possible in order to observe and learn appropriate behavior. If a child is in Church school, the teachers should be made aware of his or her situation and offered suggestions for dealing with him or her without highlighting any disabilities. Children *can* and *do* learn even when they are not perfectly still. It is also crucial to focus on a child's *positive*, rather than negative, behaviors. Sometimes the most important thing to realize is that they are in church. Just getting them there can be quite an accomplishment.

If a child is hospitalized for emotional or related disorder,

offer the family the same support that would be forthcoming if, for instance, a child was hospitalized with a heart problem. Offer to make a meal for the family or to take other siblings on an outing. Parents often are exhausted from dealing with the day-to-day issues a special needs child can present; coping with a hospitalized child is infinitely more trying. Giving such parents "a break" can be a welcome contribution.

There are a number of informative web sites that offer a wealth of information on "invisibly challenged children." Among them:

- ◆ www.bpkids.org offers a variety of information and resources from the Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation.
- ◆ www.bpinfo.net offers a wealth of on-line parent-to-parent resources.
- ◆ www.truenorthedu.us also offers educational and parent-to-parent resources.
- ◆ <http://chadd.org> offers resources and information on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- ◆ www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger offers on-line info on Asperger syndrome, or high-functioning autism.
- ◆ www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer provides a number of services and resources offered by the National Autism Society.
- ◆ www.ldanatl.org is an excellent resource provided by the Learning Disabilities Association of America.
- ◆ www.invisiblechild.org/About.htm offers invaluable resources from the Invisible Child Organization.
- ◆ <http://specialchildren.about.com/od/inthecommunity/a/worship.htm> features an article on worshipping with a special needs child.
- ◆ <http://www.epeconline.com/ChurchSEClass.html> presents an excellent article on developing special education Church school classes. ■

Wendy Cwiklinski and her husband, Chaplain Jerome Cwiklinski, are the parents of five children, four of whom have been diagnosed with mood disorders and/or autism. She works with parents with children with brain disorders. She holds a diploma in religious education from St. Vladimir's Seminary and is an MA candidate at Fordham University.

"I was hungry..."

Parish helps feed the multitude on the Tex-Mex border

Hidalgo County on the Texas-Mexican border is one of the US's most financially challenged counties. And for the past few years, Father Antonio Perdomo and the faithful of Saint George Church in McAllen, TX, have been making a difference in the lives of the needy by putting Our Lord's words in Matthew 25:35-36 – "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" – into action.

Father Perdomo began his pastorate at Saint George's in January 2002. Immediately, he began to receive requests for food and other forms of assistance from some of the county's neediest. Many of those who turned to the parish for help were recent immigrants from Mexico, often with large families. In response, he and the members of his parish decided to establish a food pantry.

Within a few months, word of the food pantry began to spread, primarily by word of mouth. Today, it serves over 50 families.

"Unlike many food ministries elsewhere, which primarily serve the needs of the homeless population, we primarily serve needy families," said Father Perdomo. "Usually they are very recent immigrants, unemployed or underemployed, who need some help making ends meet and starting their new lives in this country."

Food boxes, along with warm clothing, blankets, bedding, mattresses, school supplies, toiletries, and other essential items are distributed by the parish twice each month. And during the Christmas season, the parish's youth group gets together to prepare gift bags for the many young children served by the ministry.

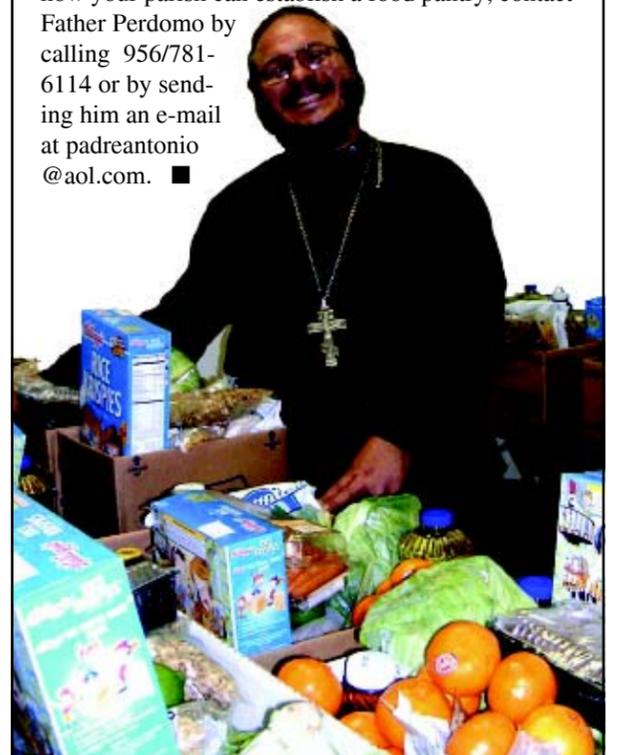
"Most of the food we distributed is purchased from the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley at a cost of only 14 cents per pound," Father Perdomo said. "In addition, at our parish's annual international bake sale, we set up a special 'Give A Can – Get A Cookie' booth, through which the entire community helps us to collect canned foods. Cash donations are always welcome, too."

A number of area businesses and residential retiree communities also have served as collection sites for canned goods, which are then distributed by the parish.

"We long to make this a truly pan-Orthodox effort, but we're the only Orthodox parish in the entire Rio Grande Valley," Father Perdomo chuckled. "That being the case, we see ourselves as serving Our Lord 'on behalf of all and for all' Orthodox Christians."

To find out how you can help the faithful of Saint George's expand their ministry, or to obtain ideas on how your parish can establish a food pantry, contact

Father Perdomo by calling 956/781-6114 or by sending him an e-mail at padreantonio@aol.com. ■



Don't "talk" stewardship! "Do" stewardship!

Your generous gifts to the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards make the work of our departments possible! Visit the FOS link at www.o.ca.org to learn how you and your parish can help expand the Church's ministries and programs!



Life in the vineyard



Father Jonathan Ivanoff

Functional structures

What to do when “delivery systems” stop delivering!

Sometimes, things exist simply for their own sake, for reasons of age and antiquity, or because “that’s the way we’ve always done it.” This is especially true for governing structures, organizations, or bureaucracies that, when created, often tend to perpetuate themselves in ways that no longer serve the very purposes for which they were created. When this formula is applied to a parish, it can be a recipe for disaster.

Now, talking about parish structures, organizational methods, theory, and the like can be extremely boring, so let’s cut to the core of the issue. The only question that ever needs to be applied to the ministry and committee forms and structures of the Church is this: is it serving the purpose for which it was created? In other words, are educational structures teaching the people they were set up to teach? Are youth programs serving our youth? Are outreach and evangelization programs actually reaching out and evangelizing the intended or desired group[s]? Are parish councils leading, deciding, serving, and promoting good Church order? Are all of these things being done for the reasons they were established, or for personal glory or gain of the people involved with them?

Unfortunately, we sometimes fail to ask these questions because we automatically assume that the various forms and structures of the Church are, in fact, working the way they are supposed to work and accomplishing the things they are supposed to accomplish, often without checking to see if our assumptions are correct. In some parishes, people involved in ministries may or may not find their ministry represented at the parish council level; if it is not, then they tend to find that the ministry is not allocated proper resources and that its work is not being communicated effectively to the parishioners. The interdependence between ministries is never – or hardly ever – explored, so that the sharing of resources and other common efforts cannot be maximized. Long-term (i.e., “strategic”) planning is rare; consequently, the efforts of the ministry are never really seen as part of the long-term development of parish life. Many ministries do not exist as line items in parish budgets, if such a budget exists at all. The ministry may be working off a model more appropriate to parish work 20, 30, even 50 years ago or more. And many ministries end up having to go through the ultimate ministry killer: “You’ll have to present this to the parish council and get their approval,” which may find many good ministry ideas dying an early death.

In examining these questions, we take our lead from Scripture. “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” [Ephesians 4:15-16]. Each part of the Body of Christ is “joined together” and “does its work” specifically so that the Body of Christ may “grow” and “build itself up in love.” There is no question that a healthy parish is a growing parish; but for this to take place, the parish must fulfill its obligations to deliver to those whom Christ would have the parish reach the requisite ministries that will result in their acceptance of the Gospel, ultimately, salvation. Church structures must therefore create opportunities for ministry, assist in removing barriers to ministry, and ensure that such efforts are not lost in unnecessary “red tape.”

In today’s parlance, it is popular to talk about “delivery systems,” a euphemism that refers to the ability to produce and get a result, a prod-

Take note!!

Structures are functional if...

- ◆ There is effective, well-designed, intentional communication mechanisms between ministries.
- ◆ It is clear among parishioners “who is doing what” and who is leading the effort.
- ◆ Ministry and committee work is well-organized and reflects good planning.
- ◆ More time is spent *doing* ministry than *talking about doing* ministry in committee.
- ◆ Both decision making and conflict resolution methods are clear and unambiguous among parish leaders.
- ◆ Decisions, when made, are not constantly revisited – and never put off until “the next meeting” unless absolutely necessary.
- ◆ Review and accountability of ministry work is clear and undertaken regularly. Ministry leaders and team members strive for excellence and always ask, “How can we do this better the next time?”
- ◆ The appropriate resources – time, people, supplies, finances, etc.) are always available.
- ◆ Ministries, committees, and programs actually get things done!

uct, or a service, to the “customers.” In the parish, ministries are the “delivery systems” for the service and for the salvation of others. It is our privilege, our responsibility, and our obligation to see to it that the very things our Lord has entrusted to us – bringing Christian preaching, teaching, worship, serving, healing, etc. into the world – are accomplished not only in an efficient manner, but in an effective manner, and are not hindrances to the Gospel. Sometimes, this requires an examination of the way things currently are being done in order to develop better ways to do them. Sometimes, this very process finds us facing the unpleasant suggestion that perhaps some of our “delivery systems” – some of the ways we have been doing ministry – are no longer effective and no longer serve the very people they were designed to serve. If this is true, perhaps a ministry no longer serves any useful service and needs to be discontinued.

At the same time, it is often the case that the very structure of ministry impedes its effectiveness. Things do break down. People, communication, and organizational structures can get stale and no longer serve useful purposes, but we keep them on because, after all, “that’s the way we’ve always done it” or “he/she has always overseen that program or project.” Things in parish life do not happen in a vacuum, and this is certainly true of the way in which parishes are structured and carry out their work. In examining whether or not our parish structures are functional, we are merely assuring that our organization is in line with the goals laid out in Ephesians 4:15-16, and in doing so we are paying attention to the seemingly unimportant details that often get overlooked but which, in the end, judge whether or not our ministry efforts have indeed been successful or not. ■

Fr. Ivanoff is rector of St. John the Theologian Church, Shirley, NY, and a member of the OCA Department of Evangelization.

Department of Christian Education

Coming to terms

More words our teens should know

Valerie G. Zahirsky

This article is the second of two that define terms our teens should know as they mature in their faith. This knowledge can also be helpful as they encounter people with various beliefs at college or in the workplace.

✓ **Dispensation.** Many of our prayers and hymns refer to “God’s *dispensation*” or “the divine *dispensation*.” The word means “God’s plan of salvation,” or “God’s way of relating to His people.” The teaching of early Christianity – and today’s Church – is that the Church is the “new Israel” that inherits the promises God made in the Old Testament to the people of Israel. This Church, this “new Israel,” is for all human beings.

It’s important for students to know this because there is a popular teaching called “dispensationalism” that sees God’s action in the world as a series of “dispensations,” or periods of time, marked by certain actions taken by Him. It also holds that the Church and Israel are two separate peoples with two different destinies. Dispensationalists – Jerry Falwell among them – see the *nation* of Israel as having a special place in God’s plan, separate from that of the Church.

So, though Orthodox Christians use the word “dispensation,” we are not dispensationalists. God’s plan is the same for *all* His human beings, *all* of whom are called to be part of the Church, as Saint Paul writes in Galatians 6:15-16: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”

✓ **Sabbath.** Many people consider Sunday as “the sabbath.” But, as with the word “dispensation,” the Church carries on the teaching of early New Testament Christianity, holding that the sabbath is Saturday, the day on which the Lord rested from His work of creation. Sunday is not the sabbath; it is the *day of resurrection*, and every Sunday is a “little Pascha.”

The difference is made clear in the verses we sing during Holy Week and Pascha. On Holy Saturday, we sing, “The King of the ages keeps the sabbath in the tomb,” and “This is the blessed Sabbath; this is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works.”

On Pascha, we sing, “Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ, but today I arise with Thee in Thy Resurrection.” The unique, special quality of this day of resurrection – Sunday – is sometimes emphasized by calling it “the eighth day.” Pascha is the inauguration of a new age, revealing to us the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God, the fulfillment of which we anticipate.

✓ **Confession of faith/ Confession.** The term “confession of faith” means “a statement of faith in God and in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.” John 11:27 records Martha’s confession of faith, for example, while that of the apostle Peter is found in Luke 9:20. Sometimes the term “confession of faith” is applied to the Creed, or to the statement of belief of a faith community. These terms should not be confused with the sacrament of “confession.”

✓ **Joseph/ Joseph/ Joseph.** We should make sure our students know that Joseph of Arimathea is a different person from Joseph, the spouse of the Mother of God who took care of her and of the child Jesus. It is not likely that students will confuse either of these persons with the Old Testament Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers, prospered in Egypt, and ultimately forgave his brothers’ treachery. But since the knowledge of the two New Testament Josephs might be fuzzy, teachers could review the scripture references to Mary’s spouse [Matthew 1-2] and to Joseph of Arimathea [Luke 23: 50-53 and John 19: 38-40] to ensure that students know who’s who.

The more our teens know about these terms, the more they will be able to put together a sturdy “whole” that will support them wherever they are. ■



Department of Chaplaincies

Fr. Webster deployed to Iraq

ABU GHRAIB, IRAQ – Chaplain Alexander Webster, a colonel in the US Army Reserve and rector of the Protection of the Holy Mother of God Church, Falls Church, VA, was deployed to Iraq in mid-August, according to the Very Rev. Theodore Boback, dean of chaplains.

Father Webster, pictured here administering Communion to a Romanian soldier at Abu Ghraib detention facility, has conducted services and made contact with Orthodox military personnel at Baghdad’s Camp Victory and Camp Anaconda, north of the Iraqi capital.

Orthodox Christian military personnel in the region and/or their families may make contact with Father Boback at tboback@aol.com. ■



Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry



Metropolitan Herman takes a break from his hectic Council schedule for a group picture with children and teens. Nearly 300 youth and young adults enjoyed the week of worship, fellowship, and stewardship.

All-American Council celebrates youth!

Nearly 300 children, teens, and young adults from across the US and Canada joined the hierarchs and clergy and lay delegates at the 14th All-American Council for a week of worship and learning, reconnecting with old friends and making new ones, and spending some serious time reflecting on the importance of their faith in their lives.

Eighty volunteers from as far away as California and British Columbia joined the Rev. Michael Anderson, OCA youth director, and his staff – at their own expense – to facilitate the youth and young adult programs.

Age-appropriate activities focusing on the theme “Become What You Are,” included religious discussions, outings, and service projects. A highlight for young adults was an afternoon of outreach at a local soup kitchen, while younger participants led the faithful in singing liturgical hymns at several Council services.

Over the past two decades, youth and young adults

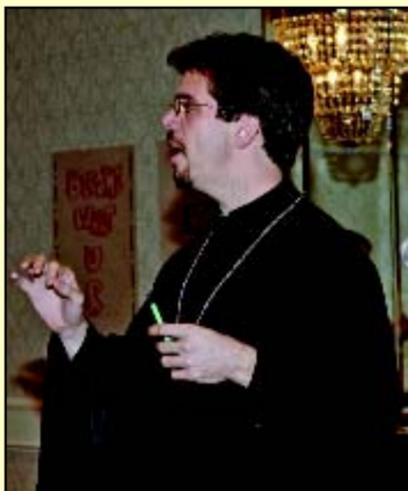
have played an increasingly important and visible role at All-American Councils. And this year, as in years past, the final plenary session featured excellent presentations highlighting what they gained and experienced during what turned out to be a very busy week. Council delegates and observers have always been reminded of the words of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in Matthew 19:14 – “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” – as the youngest participants challenge their elders discern God’s will for the ongoing life of His Church. The Council youth programs also provide a “training ground” for informed future delegates.

“I wouldn’t miss the AAC for the world,” said an enthusiastic Greg Wilson, 16, of West Chicago, IL who, together with his sister Kyra, is a “veteran” of two earlier Councils. “The friendships I’ve formed will last for years to come, even as future AAC delegates.” ■

Fr. Michael Anderson begins parish ministry

SYOSSET, NY [OCA Youth] – After 11 years of faithful service, the Rev. K. Michael Anderson stepped down as director of the Orthodox Church in America’s Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry to assume the pastorate of Saint Christina of Tyre Mission, Fremont, CA on September 1, 2005.

As OCA youth director, Father Anderson developed *The Hub*, an invaluable source of youth ministry resource for Orthodox youth workers; organized the youth and young adult activities at several All-American Councils, which offered youth and young adults the means to express their vision of and views within the Church; cultivated cooperation among existing youth ministry efforts; worked closely with the OCA’s numerous summer camping programs



Fr. Anderson served as OCA youth director for 11 years.

and the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America junior department; and developed a wealth of educational and retreat resources. He also was among those who helped to revive the Orthodox Christian Fellowship, the official campus ministry program sponsored by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, in 2001.

While the department will miss Father Anderson’s presence and the many talents and gifts he brought to countless youth and young adults over the past decade, the members of the department invite the OCA’s clergy and

faithful to join them in wishing him and his family many, many years as they begin this new chapter in their lives. ■

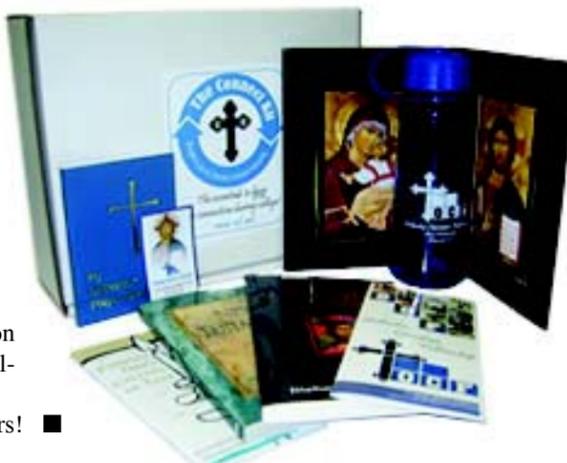
Don’t leave for campus without “The Connect Kit”

Keeping in contact with the Church while away at college – especially when there is no Orthodox parish near campus – can be tricky, at best. That’s why the Orthodox Christian Fellowship [OCF] has developed a groundbreaking resource, *The Connect Kit*, filled with a variety of “Orthodox Christian essentials” for college students.

Included in the kit are icons of Christ and the Mother of God, a copy of the New Testament, Bishop Kallistos Ware’s *The Orthodox Way*, a prayer book, an OCF water bottle, OCF program information, and much more. Whether heading to campus for the first time or returning, *The Connect Kit* offers a welcome reminder from a student’s parish or home that someone is thinking of them.

The Connect Kit can be ordered individually or in volume on the OCF’s web site at www.ocf.net. Don’t let your parish’s college students leave home without it!

While you’re on-line, check out the other resources OCF offers! ■



Council participants aged seven-through-nine presented the following poem to the hierarchs, delegates, and observers at the closing plenary session.

Become what you are!

The life of the Church was our theme this week,
Of God’s love daily did we talk.
The life of the Church shields us from sin,
To help us in our walk.

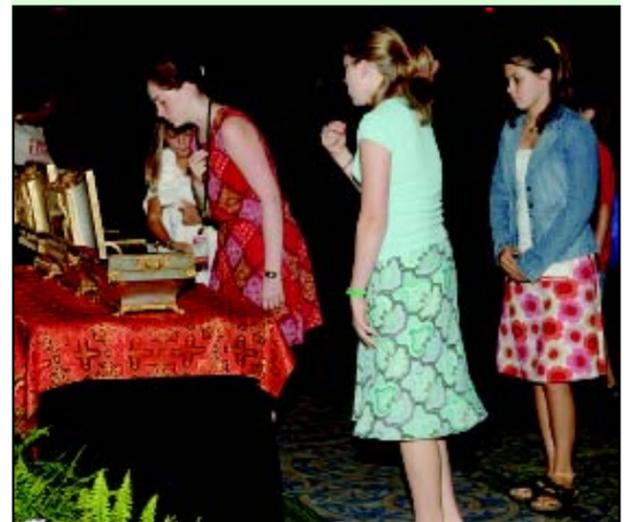
Saint Tikhon’s father was a priest,
Just like some of us.
He encourages us to be a lighthouse of our Faith,
And be in unity in the Americas.

When you are a healthy Orthodox Christian,
In five areas you must grow.
You need to pray, to talk to God,
And to Confession you must go.

You come to Liturgy, the people’s work,
And of His Body and Blood partake.
You bind yourself to all of God.
A healthy body this will make.

You study God’s word, the Bible,
And how the saints have lived.
Serve others and deny yourself,
To keep your soul well fed.

Too much fellowship will make you fat,
But do not let it be,
For we have learned a lot this week,
Together at the AAC! ■



Faithful witnesses/ Council teens venerate relics of North American saints – living examples of “becoming what you are.”

Meanwhile, the teen group explored the same theme by defining beauty and looking at the ways we are inwardly and outwardly beautiful.

Beauty: Inside out!

We become what we are by

- ◆ striving to be inwardly and outwardly beautiful to God.
- ◆ being good stewards of God’s Creation.
- ◆ witnessing to our faith.

We define beauty as

- ◆ how we show that God is inside of us.
- ◆ the ability to see Christ in every person.
- ◆ the true presentation of ourselves without any outer influences and being in tune with God.
- ◆ everything God originally created us to be.
- ◆ a selfless, Christ-like state of being in which we have acquired the Spirit of peace, love, and purity.

We realized that beauty can be achieved by

- ◆ Striving to attain God’s perfection and beauty in our souls.
- ◆ Having compassion, kindness, and understanding.
- ◆ Helping people in need and reaching out to others.
- ◆ Being selfless and giving of ourselves.
- ◆ Becoming obedient and humble.

In Conclusion...

- ◆ Despite our differences, we are all one in the Church.
- ◆ Here, at the AAC, we come together as one body in Christ, where all boundaries are transcended.
- ◆ We become who we are in communion with our fellow believers as members of the Body of Christ. ■



Fanning the flame
of commitment!

A commitment...

It is with great pleasure that I address you for the first time as the executive director of the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards!

Since my appointment this past summer, I have spent many hours praying and reflecting on the task before me – and before all of us as stewards of God's varied gifts. I have also considered the many ministries, programs, and other efforts of the

Orthodox Church in America to fulfill the mandate all of us share: to proclaim the Gospel on this continent.

Having spent many years in parish ministry, I know the impact such ministries have made, and continue to make, in our communities. I am also well aware of the many ministries our Church could pursue if additional funding through free-will gifts was available. FOS not only attempts to provide funding to maintain the OCA's current Church-wide ministries, but also hopes to expand them.

Working together, and through your ongoing generosity, we can achieve this goal and vision. I invite you to join me, and the hundreds of hierarchs, clergy, lay men and women, and parishes who have already made the commitment to expand the ministries of our Church through FOS membership. If you are not already a member of FOS, I invite you to give prayerful consideration to joining those who have already accepted their commitment to the Church. If you are a FOS member, please consider increasing your commitment today. By working together as wise and faithful stewards, we will be able to "fan the flame" of commitment to the Gospel and to the growth of the Orthodox Church in America.



Fr. Eugene Vansuch, FOS executive director, shares his vision during the 14th All-American Council.

In Christ,
Father Eugene Vansuch

Make your commitment...

Please consider making a commitment to the work of the Orthodox Church in America by offering an annual, free-will gift to FOS according to one of the following levels of **individual support**.

- ✓ Steward Benefactor \$1000.00+
- ✓ Steward Principal \$ 500.00+
- ✓ Steward Patron \$ 250.00+
- ✓ Steward Donor \$ 100.00+
- ✓ Steward Supporter up to \$ 99.00+
- ✓ Steward Student level \$ 25.00

Since the 10th All-American Council in 1992, parishes have also been encouraged to make a commitment to FOS, according to the following levels of **parish support**.

- ✓ Level 1: \$1000.00 or 1% of parish income
- ✓ Level 2: \$2500.00 or 2% of parish income
- ✓ Level 3: \$5000.00 or 3% of parish income

Join FOS today!

Mail your gift to Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards, PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791 or use the envelope enclosed in this issue. Gifts may also be made on-line by logging on to the OCA web site at www.oca.org.

Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards

FOS embraces hundreds of parishes and faithful who have made the commitment to maintain and expand the program ministries of the Orthodox Church in America through free-will giving.

A commitment to the Gospel

The Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards – FOS – was established in 1980 in an effort to create an awareness of stewardship of time, talents, and treasures and to ensure sufficient funding for the ministries, departments, and other programs of the Orthodox Church in America.

Under the leadership of FOS' past executive directors – Fathers Sergei Glagolev, Basil Summer, and Joseph Fester – FOS developed into an ever-growing network of parish and individual members committed to the proclamation of the Gospel and the free-will financial support of the Church. In July 2005, Father Eugene Vansuch was named FOS' executive director, continuing the work of his predecessors by expanding the ministry of FOS and increasing its membership.

A commitment to God's People

Without the generosity of FOS' individual and parish members, many of the ministries and programs we have come to expect would not be available. Free-will offerings provided by FOS members help to fund

- ✓ the publication of hundreds of articles over the past 21 years in the popular *Resource Handbook for Lay Ministries* and other ministries provided by the Department of Christian Witness and Service, including the annual Christmas Stocking Project, the Adoption Referral Service, the Office of Humanitarian Aid, and resources for numerous outreach ministries.

- ✓ the essential work of the Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry in providing retreats, youth ministers' training workshops, community service projects, summer camps, the OCA youth web site, internet forums and resources, and many other services and programs.

- ✓ the vital work of the Department of Christian Education, the web-based FOCUS curriculum, the publication of educational resources and study units, and consultative services and training seminars for religious education programs on every level.

- ✓ the ever-expanding work of the Department of Communications, which publishes *The Orthodox Church* newspaper and the annual *Sourcebook and Church Directory*, *Desk Calendar*, and special commemorative albums and publications. The department produces and distributes regular press releases and official statements and maintains relations with domestic and foreign media outlets. The department also oversees the world's most frequently visited English-language Orthodox web site – www.oca.org – which offers news, educational and liturgical resources, volumes of information on the Orthodox faith, lives of the saints, resources for youth and youth ministry, daily scripture readings, photo galleries, the popular question and answer service, and much more.

- ✓ the Department of Evangelization, which coordinates and provides the resources for new communities receiving Church planting grants and provides a wealth of resources for evangelization, Church growth, and parish revitalization.

- ✓ the work of the Department of History and Archives in documenting the history of the Church in America and preserving historic documents, photographs, videos and recordings, and other important holdings.

- ✓ the publication of over 900 pages of liturgical music



Metropolitan Herman presents an award from the Holy Synod to Fr. Joseph Fester, former FOS executive director, during the 14th All-American Council.

and downloads for various services and feast days by the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, readily available on the OCA web site.

- ✓ *Stewardship Orientation Workshops* and other services offered by the Department of Stewardship to assist parishes, dioceses, and deaneries in increasing their commitment to stewardship.

- ✓ the administration of the Personal Assistance Program for clergy, full-time Church workers, and their families.

- ✓ the work of the Departments of External Affairs and Inter-Church Relations, History and Archives, and Pastoral Life and Ministry, and other boards and offices.

A commitment to the future.

The work of the OCA's departments and ministries continues to expand. Additional financial resources are needed to maintain – and expand – the work of the Church.

The budget adopted at the 14th All-American Council in July 2005 looks to FOS to provide \$400,000.00 in 2006 to fund existing and future ministries. An annual increase of \$50,000.00 per year in free-will offerings is built into the budget through 2008. This is a great challenge for FOS, but working together, these goals can be reached or exceeded.

Today, total gifts to FOS and other free-will giving efforts provide 70 percent of the funds needed by the OCA's program ministries. The goal is to provide 100 percent of these necessary funds through FOS.

A commitment to one another.

We are members of one another, writes Saint Paul. Together, we are called to manage God's gifts of time, talent, and treasure, for the building up of the Body of Christ, the Church. And, as members of one another, FOS members are committed to this vision.

FOS members include our hierarchs, priests and deacons, choir directors, and men and women of all ages. Parishes also may become members of FOS.

FOS members are committed to more than financial stewardship. Above all, FOS members are committed to praying for our hierarchs, clergy, seminarians, monastics, and laity, who labor to strengthen the Orthodox Church in America through the proclamation of the Gospel and for the many volunteers who help the Church to grow on so many levels. They are also called upon to share their commitment with others by encouraging them to join FOS. And they volunteer their time and talents for the building up of the Church on many levels, especially within their own communities.

Since its inception, the Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards has been open to all members and friends of the Orthodox Church in America.

FOS members with Metropolitan Herman at the 14th All-American Council.

