

**17<sup>th</sup> All-American Council**  
**November 13, 2012**  
**Holy Trinity Orthodox Church**  
**Parma, Ohio**



***OFFICIAL MINUTES***

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This report contains the official minutes of the Seventeenth All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America held at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Parma, Ohio on Tuesday, November 13, 2012.

The report contains the official minutes including the tallies of the two rounds of voting for the new Metropolitan. It also contains the opening address by the Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan See, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate. It also includes a transcript of the acceptance speech of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon. In addition there are the transcripts of the sermons by Archpriest Alexander Garklavs at Great Vespers on Monday, November 12, 2012 and Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko at the opening Divine Liturgy on Tuesday, November 13, 2012.

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**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
OF THE SEVENTEENTH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL  
OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
November 13, 2012  
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH  
Parma, OH**

**PLENARY SESSION**

1. Following the celebration of a Service of Thanksgiving and the singing of "The Grace of the Holy Spirit," His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan's See, declared the Seventeenth All-American Council open at 12:41 PM.
2. His Eminence then announced the appointment by the Holy Synod of the clergy and lay vice-chairmen of the Council: Archpriest John Jillions and Judge E.R. Lanier.
3. Archpriest Eric G. Tosi asked for the Council's consensus for the appointment of the Council committees, as follows (*dioceses listed in parentheses*):
  - a. **Council Secretariat**  
Mr. Alexis Liberovsky (*Stavropegial*),  
*Chairman*  
Priest David Cowan (*NY/NJ*)  
Ms. Cheryl Wilson (*West*)
  - b. **Parliamentarian**  
Mr. James Williams,  
*Certified Parliamentarian*  
Mr. Thaddeus Wojcik, Esq.,  
*OCA General Counsel (consultant)*  
Mr. Gregory Nescott, Esq., (*consultant*)
  - c. **Sergeants at Arms**  
Archpriest Vladimir Aleandro  
*(New England)*  
Hieromonk Christopher (Savage)  
*(Stavropegial)*
  - d. **Credentials**  
Archpriest David Shewczyk (*E. PA*),  
*Chairman*  
Archpriest Paul Gassios (*Bulgarian*)  
Priest Joshua Mosher (*New England*)  
Priest Elijah Mueller (*Midwest*)  
Mr. David Grier (*Canada*)  
Mr. Johann Morse (*West*)  
Mr. Samuel Williamson (*South*)
  - e. **Tellers**  
Archpriest Peter Baktis (*Military*),  
*Chairman*  
Archpriest Dennis Buck (*Washington*)  
Archpriest Vasyl Kolega (*Canada*)  
Archpriest David Koles (*New England*)  
Archpriest Thomas Moore (*South*)  
Archpriest Stephen Soot (*West*)  
Priest Mikel Bock (*Alaska*)  
Priest Raymond Browne (*E. PA*)  
Priest James Dank (*Midwest*)  
Priest Martin Kraus (*NY/NJ*)  
Priest Nathan Preston (*Albanian*)  
Archdeacon Michael (Suvak) (*NY/NJ*)  
Protodeacon Michael Myers (*Bulgarian*)  
Brother Anthony (Harmon)  
*(Stavropegial)*  
Ms. Robin Freeman (*Stavropegial*)  
Mr. Mykel Jacobs (*Romanian*)  
Ms. Faith Johnson (*W. PA*)  
Mr. John Kruchok (*New England*)  
Mr. Peter McLeod (*South*)  
Mr. Justin Mitchell (*Canada*)  
Ms. Rebecca Tesar (*Midwest*)  
Mr. Jeremy Pletnikoff (*Alaska*)  
Ms. Katherine Vitko (*Washington*)  
Mr. David Yeosock (*E. PA*)

**f. Press and Information**

Archpriest Eric G. Tosi (*Stavropegial*), *Chairman*

Archpriest John Matusiak (*Midwest*)

Ms. Caroline Kruse (*Midwest*)

The nomination of each committee was accepted unanimously by the Council.

4. Judge Lanier reviewed the purpose and context of this All-American Council. Regarding the Council's agenda, he explained that typically a Council would collectively consider and vote to adopt an agenda. However, as this is an extraordinary electoral Council, a predetermined agenda had been developed by the Preconciliar Commission, approved in advance by the Holy Synod, and distributed to Council participants in final form. The agenda has only one item: the election of a Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. Because that "call" has been distributed in accordance with the OCA Statute, it cannot be amended, added to, nor detracted from. Our parliamentarian has concurred that only a very small range of matters could come before us, so long as they bear directly on the question of the election of a Primate. Anything else not addressing that subject would be out of order.

Parliamentarian Williams added that it is a fundamental principle of parliamentary law that the only business that can be transacted at a special meeting such as this one is that which is stated in the Call of the Meeting. He told delegates that by their attendance they had consented to that agenda and no deviation from it.

Judge Lanier also noted that, in terms of the practice of our Church, at least back to 1965 - when a special All-American Sobor was called to elect a successor to Metropolitan Leonty, resulting in the election of Metropolitan Ireney - essentially the same electoral procedure has been used. He observed that the language of the Statute, Article IV, Sections 3-4, which empowers the Holy Synod to summon a special Council for the election of the Primate, states that this will be the purpose of the present Council summoned by them to nominate then elect a new Primate of the Church. Historical context also supports this procedure. Judge Lanier invited questions from delegates on this matter.

5. Archbishop Nathaniel delivered his address as Locum Tenens to the Council (attached).
6. Archbishop Nathaniel then read the Holy Synod's decisions declaring the vacancy in the office of Metropolitan of All America and Canada and the convocation of the 17<sup>th</sup> All-American Council.

*"Whereas canonically and juridically, His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH has resigned and the vacancy of the office was officially declared by the Holy Synod according to the Orthodox Church in America Statute: Article IV, Section 3; and*

*Whereas the Holy Synod at its session on July 7, 2012 has already accepted such resignation and declared it to be effective on July 7, 2012; and*

*Whereas, following the resignation of His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH, the Holy Synod has met and declared formally the office of the Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All-America and Canada vacant, and elected a Locum Tenens in the person of Archbishop NATHANIEL to preside at the election of the new Primate; and*

*Whereas, the Holy Synod resolved that the nomination and election of the Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada will take place on November 13, 2012, during a special 17th All-American Council; and*

*In addition, whereas this election is to take place at an extraordinary All-American Council, the Holy Synod of Bishops has resolved that the election of a new Metropolitan be the sole item on the agenda;*

*In addition, the Holy Synod of Bishops has resolved to appoint Archpriest John J. Jillions and Judge E.R. Lanier, Esq. as chairmen for this election.”*

7. Father Jillions read the instructions for the election and directed that the doors to the church be sealed. He announced that only accredited delegates were permitted on the floor at this time and that all observers must remain in designated areas. The tellers were asked to report to the podium. He reminded the gathering that retired clergy do not vote. He asked for prayerful and respectful discernment throughout the voting process.
8. Judge Lanier noted that the next item on the Agenda was review of the OCA Statute provisions on the election - Article IV, Section 4. He stated his belief that there is no requirement to read these provisions of the Statute at this time, but that this had always been done. The parliamentarian had advised him that if the body wills, the reading can be waived. Judge Lanier then asked whether anyone wished to make a motion to waive the reading of the Statute.

**MOTION** – Priest Timothy Cremeens, *Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church, Worcester, MA* (second by Archpriest Ernesto Rios, *St. James Mission, Port Saint Lucie, FL*) – To dispense with the reading of Article IV, Section 4 of the OCA Statute.  
**CARRIED.**

9. Father Jillions read the report of the Credentials Committee:

Hierarchs:	11
Clergy Delegates:	295
Lay Delegates:	284
Retired Clergy:	7
Observers:	66
Total:	663
Eligible to Vote:	590

It was noted that the number of votes needed for a 2/3 majority was 394.

10. The tellers then distributed ballots to all delegates for the first round of voting. Archpriest Michael Meerson asked to be recognized in order to make a motion. This was ruled out of order. Fr. Meerson then asked if it would be appropriate to make a suggestion. This was also ruled out of order.
11. After the voting was completed and the tellers had retired to count the votes, the Akathist to All Saints of North America was sung.

12. Prior to the announcement of the results of the first round, Fr. Tosi requested that respect for the integrity of the voting process be observed and that no posting or other electronic communication of the results from the floor take place.
13. Before announcing the results of the first round, Archbishop Nathaniel made the following declaration:

*“Since no candidate has received the number of ballots required for nomination to the Office of Metropolitan of All America and Canada, this All-American Council, in compliance with the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, shall proceed with the second vote.”*

His Eminence then announced the results of the first round of voting:

Bishop Michael	205
Archbishop Tikhon	118
Bishop Melchisedek	94
Archbishop Nathaniel	49
Archbishop Benjamin	23
Metropolitan Jonah	17
Bishop Basil (Essey)	17
Archbishop Nikon	13
Bishop Mark (Maymon)	10
Bishop Alexander	8
Bishop Irene (Rochon)	5
Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral)	3
Bishop Matthias	3
Archimandrite Alexander (Pihach)	3
Hieromonk David (Mahaffey)	3
Archbishop Alejo	2
Igumen Gerasim (Eliel)	2
Metropolitan Philip	1
Bishop Irineu (Duvlea)	1
Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist)	1
Archimandrite Vladimir (Wendling)	1
Igumen Sergius (Bowyer)	1
Igumen Patrick (Carpenter)	1
Archpriest Paul Gassios	1
Hierodeacon Herman (Majkrzak)	1
Invalid/blank	7
<b>Total:</b>	<b>590</b>

14. Fr. Tosi reminded the assembly that in the second round, each delegate must vote for two persons and that on the ballots, candidates, especially those with the same first names, must be clearly identified.
15. The second round of voting then took place. While the tellers counted the votes, the church doors were opened and the session was recessed briefly. The Akathist to SS. Joachim and Anna was sung followed by reading of the Psalter until completion of vote counting.

16. Archbishop Nathaniel announced the results of the second round of voting:

Bishop Michael	355
Archbishop Tikhon	317
Bishop Melchisedek	161
Archbishop Nathaniel	81
Bishop Mark (Maymon)	28
Bishop Basil (Essey)	25
Archbishop Benjamin	23
Archbishop Nikon	23
Bishop Alexander	20
Bishop Irene (Rochon)	15
Metropolitan Jonah	14
Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral)	13
Archbishop Alejo	11
Bishop Matthias	9
Igumen Gerasim (Eliel)	6
Bishop Irineu (Duvlea)	5
Priest David Mezynski	5
Archimandrite Alexander (Pihach)	4
Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist)	3
Archimandrite Christopher (Calin)	3
Patriarch Kirill	2
Archimandrite Meletios (Webber)	2
Igumen Sergius (Bowyer)	2
Archpriest Paul Gassios	2
Hieromonk David (Mahaffey)	2
Monk Stavros (Lever)	2
Metropolitan Herman	1
Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev)	1
Bishop Thomas (Joseph)	1
Archimandrite Juvenaly (Repass)	1
Archimandrite Pitirim (Stehnach)	1
Igumen Joseph (Hoffman)	1
Igumen Patrick (Carpenter)	1
Archpriest David Brum	1
Archpriest Theodore Heckman	1
Archpriest Basil Summer	1
Priest John Chudik	1
Hierodeacon Herman (Majkrzak)	1
Brother Luke (Dorr)	1
Invalid/blank	11 ballots = 22 votes
Not submitted	6 ballots = 12 votes
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1180</b>

Archbishop Nathaniel then made the following declaration:

*“This All-American Council, acting in full compliance with the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, prayerfully submits the names of His Grace, Bishop Michael of New York and New Jersey and His Eminence, Archbishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania to the Holy Synod for approval, canonical election, and appointment of him whom God has chosen to be the Metropolitan of All America and Canada.”*

17. The members of the Holy Synod of Bishops then entered the sanctuary to elect the new Metropolitan and after they emerged some 20 minutes later, Archbishop Nathaniel read the following announcement:

*“In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and undivided. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to this Sacred Council of the Holy Orthodox Church in America to elect, on this 13th day of November, two thousand and twelve, to the office of Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada the Most Reverend Archbishop Tikhon. Axios!”*

18. The service of installation of the Metropolitan took place with the vesting of the Primate into the signs of his office. Upon presentation of the archpastoral staff to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop Nathaniel delivered words of exhortation to the new Primate. In response, Metropolitan Tikhon delivered a brief acceptance address (attached).
19. After concluding prayers for the closing of the Council, Metropolitan Tikhon declared the 17<sup>th</sup> All-American adjourned at 4:41 PM. All clergy and faithful in attendance individually congratulated Metropolitan Tikhon and received his blessing.

Respectfully submitted:

Alexis Liberovsky, *Chairman*  
Council Secretariat  
Seventeenth All-American Council



## **Address of the Locum Tenens**

***His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate, Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan's See, delivered the Address of the Locum Tenens to the 17th All-American Council  
Holy Trinity Church, Parma, Ohio, Tuesday, November 13, 2012***

Your Eminences, Your Graces, Reverend Fathers, Pious Monastics and faithful Delegates, and Observers.

*Slava Isusu Hristu! Slava na vechi! Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!*

Indeed, glory to Jesus the Christ who has come from the heights to dwell among us and lead us to the Father, who “gives us knowledge of the truth and everlasting life!”

Glory to him who has sent the Paraclete on his Church to indwell in her and grace her to be the loving Bride of the Bridegroom, Him who comes in the middle of the night!

Glory to him who has shown us the light, the true light by whom we have received the heavenly Spirit and the true faith in worshipping the undivided Trinity who has saved us.

Our gathering today has one purpose: to glorify our Father in heaven as members of His Christ who is the head of this Body, the Church, the assembly of those called out from the world to bear witness in the unity in the All-Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God!

In my letter to you ,which is in the Council Handbook, I quoted these pastoral words of His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of Thrice-blessed memory: “*All of us come together, ... with a deep and abiding love for Christ and the vine He planted with His Right Hand from His holy dwelling place, here in this land.*”

Who can doubt our “deep and abiding love for Christ” and that of all the faithful of our holy autocephalous Church and that of our brothers and sisters on the North and Central America Continent. Certainly, we are one in that love even as we have just heard in the Holy Gospel of Saint John the Evangelist in the Lord’s “Priestly Prayer.”

For more that two and a half centuries, we Orthodox Christians in this new vineyard have been building cathedrals and churches and seminaries and monasteries and organizations to the glory of God. We publish liturgical and theological books for our needs and these are used and greatly appreciated by others worldwide. Our hierarchs’ and professors’ teachings of the true faith are renowned and we rejoice in their gifts from God, which have benefited Orthodox throughout the world. We have established our homes and businesses, labor among our neighbors and serve our nations when we are called on, struggling to live a life acceptable and pleasing to God.

The new planting of the true faith, the “vine He planted with His right Hand”, this vine in North and Central America, has been pursued with great effort and suffering, even martyrdom. From humble beginnings, the vine has accomplished growth and sprouted new branches. The Bride of

Christ is ever suffering in union with the sacrifice of her Bridegroom. She is in the world but not of the world.

It is good for us today, even necessary, to reflect on and to deepen our appreciation of the love of our forefathers for Christ and this new vineyard and to reflect on the lives of these servants of God whose prayers and sacrifices shaped the vineyard Christ Himself “planted with His right Hand from His holy dwelling place, here in this land,” so that we might be encouraged to emulate their mighty deeds and their great patience:

Saint Herman of Alaska, the Wonder Worker of All America;  
Saint Tikhon of Moscow, Patriarch of Moscow and Apostle to America;  
Saint Innocent of Alaska, Equal to the Apostles and Enlightener of North America;  
Saint Raphael Bishop of Brooklyn;  
Saint Alexis Toth, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America;  
Saint John Kochurov, Missionary to America and First Hieromartyr under the Bolshevik Yoke;  
Saint Alexander Hotovitzky, New Martyr and Missionary to America;  
Saint Juvenaly of Alaska, Martyr for the Faith;  
Saint Peter the Aleut of Alaska and San Francisco;  
Saint Jacob the Enlightener to the People of Alaska.

These are our own holy fathers and teachers, but they are also venerated throughout the Orthodox world. They are loved because they loved Christ much; they are asked for their intercessions because they have been tested in their day and found worthy of unending life. What great love for Christ they have and what a firm foundation for this Council here assembled! We are not some disjointed gathering of individuals; we today are heirs to their labors and co-workers in the vineyard of Christ here, comforted by the Comforter, the Heavenly King who fulfills all.

There is another innumerable crowd of other faithful witnesses of this new vine gone before us whose lives are pleasing to God, who are known yet to God alone and who also intercede for us: our forefathers, grandparents, parents, monastics, clergy and hierarchy. Some were uneducated in book-learning but wise in their trust in God; others struggling in the monastic life transplanted into new, hard and even hostile land; and others who exhausted themselves to train the new vine in the traditional order of the universal Church, the hierarchs and dedicated, long-suffering clergy.

Our Church in America is this vine which Christ himself has planted with his right hand, long ago in this part of his world. Let us rejoice in these multiple and profound blessings which God has showered upon our Church! Let us enter more fervently into the labors of those who have broken the ground before us and laid out the path of salvation for their time and ours!

This vine, of which branches are you and I, is a living vine comprising the first believers on this continent and even to those alive at the awesome coming of our Lord. While there remains discussion as to which Orthodox first landed here, we are not now here concerned with this, but we are glad to give thanks to the Great Church of Russia for her initial activities here when Alaska was part of the Russian Empire; for her intense missionary activities which continued

after it became the “Alaska Territory” of the United States ; through the transition into a settled ecclesiastical entity with a permanent hierarchy and good order; and up to this Electoral Council today.

In 1970, the Mother Church of Russia recognized this permanent ecclesiastical entity, the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Metropolia in North America, as a Sister Church, with all the prerogatives and obligations of an autocephalous Church. Among those prerogatives are the election of the First Hierarch, the presiding officer of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America and the Blessing of Holy Chrism; and these prerogatives we have fulfilled through the four plus decades of our autocephalous existence, electing primates of our Church and blessing the Holy Chrism. Even before that blessed recognition, our primates were elected here, and the Holy Synod prepared the Holy Chrism.

It is our calling to continue to walk on this path of autocephaly as we have and as we are, working with all Orthodox Christians in our nations.

Although an universal position of our Church in world Orthodoxy is still in flux; nevertheless, we continue to faithfully bear witness in North America to, as Archbishop Dmitri stated, “Christ’s holy dwelling place here in this land” according to the holy canons, traditions of the Church and our particular Statute. We shall, each of us, the People of God, lay and ordained, answer to God for our life in Christ in his Bride, the Church in our respective nations, Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Understanding that free will is a gift from God and also acknowledging that ours is a fallen nature, we must realize that the election of a primate is not exclusively by divine will but involves our own choosing. Yes, God knows all things, but he gives us the gift to express our preferences and to nominate in this Council body, comprised of clergy and faithful from across North and Central America, and then to elect the Primate by the Holy Synod.

The prayer offered at the ordination of a deacon, priest and bishop is the same; there is no special prayer for the election of a primate. The office of the Primate is an office of service, a symbol of unity among the hierarchs, and through and with the hierarchs; it affirms the unity of the whole body of Christ. The Metropolitan is not a shepherd of shepherds, nor a super-shepherd over the entire Church. His role is that of a symbol of unity and one who has the support of his fellow hierarchs. “He enjoys primacy, being the first among equals; he is ex officio Chairman of the Synod.” (Statutes)

As I stated in that same letter to the Council to which I earlier referred, the Orthodox Church in America consists of fourteen dioceses, each one with a bishop chief-shepherd. Each diocese has clergy, faithful, monastics, parishes, institutions and a pastoral and financial life of its own. The bishops together comprise the Holy Synod. The Orthodox Church in America then, is a composite of dioceses whose hierarchs represent them in the Holy Synod, a single body united in Christ. Just as any autonomous and autocephalous church, so too, the Church in America is a unity out of a plurality existing on a territorial basis.

There must exist a harmony among all members of the Body of Christ as called for by Holy Scripture, the Holy Fathers, and the Holy Canons. The Statute reminds us all of the oneness which must exist between the Metropolitan as Chairman of the Holy Synod, as first among equals, as Primate, and the Brother Hierarchs of the Holy Synod; for it is the Holy Synod as a united body which acts in the name of all the clergy, laity and monastics, in other words, in the name of the Holy Church of Christ.

Saint Cyprian of Carthage exhorts us: “My desire as well as my exhortation and entreaty to you, therefore most beloved brothers, is that if it can possibly be, none of the brothers may perish , and that our Mother might embrace joyfully within her bosom of the one body of a people in agreement.” (23) “God is one and Christ is one, and his Church and faith are one, and the people joined together with the glue of concord into the unbroken unity of a body.” And further he reminds us: “Among his divine instructions and saving teachings, already near his passion, the Lord said in addition: ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I grant to you’ [John 14:27]. He gives us this inheritance, he promises all the gifts that he has pledged, and his rewards, on condition of the preservation of his peace. If we are heirs of Christ, let us abide in Christ’s peace. If we are the sons of God, we ought to be those who make peace. ‘Blessed,’ he says, ‘are the peacemakers since they themselves shall be called the sons of God’ [Mt.5:9]. The sons of God ought to be peacemakers, gentle in heart, guileless in their speech, agreeing in purpose, holding together amongst themselves faithfully in the bonds of one mind.” (24) *On the Unity of the Universal Church.*

From my letter to this Body, I conclude: “The 17<sup>th</sup> All American Council will act as a single body with a unique purpose for the Church in North America; to elect the next Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America. What a great privilege has been bestowed on us by Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, our Chief and Good Shepherd.”

Our gathering today has one purpose; to glorify our Father in heaven as members of His Christ who is the head of this Body, the Church, the assembly of those called out from the world to bear witness in the unity in the All-Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God! Amen.

+Nathaniel, Archbishop of Detroit  
and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate  
Locum Tenens of the Primatial See

## **Acceptance Address**

***His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington,  
Metropolitan of  
All-America and Canada, addressed the 17th All-American  
Council to accept his election as Primate of the Orthodox Church  
in America  
Holy Trinity Church, Parma, Ohio, Tuesday, November 13, 2012***

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

Your Eminences, Your Graces, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers,  
Venerable Monastics, Faithful Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

Let us give thanks to Almighty God who gives us life and allows us to worship Him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and offer our gratefulness to the Mother of God who guards us and protects us by her intercessions and her love for each and every one of us.

When I was a young and zealous novice, I traveled to Mount Athos and visited a couple of monasteries there including the Monastery of Simonos Petras, which is accessible by a very steep path. I was bearing my very large American luggage and started on the path and came across an elderly monk also carrying a bag. So being a zealous monastic, I offered to carry his bag for him but he refused. He said to me: “A monk must always carry something.” So I learned at that point that I should carry my own bag and that I should allow others to carry their bags as well. I have tried throughout my life to bear the burdens that are placed upon me, and I humbly accept the burden that is placed on me today, by the will of God and by the election of the Holy Synod and by your prayers.

Nevertheless, I ask you to help me bear this burden. I ask for your prayers, your support. I pray that, indeed, the Lord, our Lord, our loving Lord, Jesus Christ, whose Gospel we are all called not only to carry, but to raise high, will illumine the world that lies in darkness with the teachings of life contained in that Gospel. Not just to proclaim, to show forth that light, but to live our lives with repentance, with prayer, with humility, and with love for one another. May this be given to us by the prayers of all the saints, especially those saints who have shone forth in North America, who so inspire us to continue on that path to salvation.

May this be granted to us by the mercy and love of our most blessed Lady, the Theotokos, who comforts us and encourages us in our distress and in our sorrows. May this be, above all, granted to us by the mercy and love, the grace and life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May we worship him, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## Homily

*Delivered by Archpriest Alexander Garklavs on November 12, 2012  
following Great Vespers at Holy Trinity Church, Parma, Ohio on the eve of  
the 17th All-American Council*

We have gathered on this eve of the 17th All American Council, beginning with this prayer service, appealing to our Lord and Savior for guidance, peace, inspiration. And it falls on the eve of the Feast of St. John Chrysostom. Just why the Church celebrates the Feast of St. John Chrysostom on November 13th is a bit of a mystery.

You probably know that he died on the 14th of September, while on his exile, and that being the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Church did not think it would be proper to give recognition to somebody so important as John on the 14th of September. But just why the Church in that 4th or 5th Century decided to commemorate John on the 13th of November, after his relics were returned, a Feast, which we celebrate on the 27th of January, is a mystery.

There are some theories that November 13th may have been the date on which he was exiled and left Constantinople. Another theory is that it may be the date that he was summoned to Constantinople to become the bishop of Constantinople. Or perhaps, it was ordained from eternity to be the Feast on which our Church holds the 17th All American Council.

There is a wonderful, short essay about John Chrysostom by Fr. Georges Florovsky. It's called John Chrysostom: The Prophet of Charity. This is the concluding paragraph:

*"[John Chrysostom's] life was stormy and hard, it was a life of endurance and martyrdom. He was persecuted and rejected ... and died homeless as a prisoner in exile. All he was given to endure he accepted in the spirit of joy, as from the hand of Christ, Who was Himself rejected and executed. The Church gratefully recognized that witness and solemnly acclaimed Chrysostom as one the 'ecumenical teachers' for all ages to come.*

*There is some unusual flavor of modernity in the writings of Chrysostom. His world was like ours, a world of tensions, a world of unresolved problems in all walks of life. His advice may appeal to our age no less than it did to his own. But his main advice is a call to integral Christianity, in which faith and charity, belief and practice, are organically linked in an unconditional surrender of man to God's overwhelming love, in an unconditional trust in His mercy, in an unconditional commitment to His service, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."*

Indeed, we too are in a time of tension and unresolved problems. St. John was a prophet of charity and a teacher of suffering. His life was very much involved in a political turmoil that was taking place in the imperial capital. But that turmoil penetrated deep into the life of the Church, and so he understood, as we understand, how the life in the Church can be indeed full of turmoil and chaos and confusion. How did St. John respond to such troubles? Listen to what he wrote in this letter to his friend, a woman, the Deaconess Olympias. This is what he wrote:

*“Come now let me relieve the wound of your despondency and disperse the thoughts that gather this cloud around you. What is it that upsets your mind, and why are you sorrowful and dejected? Is it because of the fierce black storm which has overtaken the Church, enveloping all things in darkness as of a night without a moon, and is growing to a head every day, traving to bring forth disastrous shipwrecks and increasing the ruin of the world? I know all this as well as you ...*

*Nevertheless even when I look at these calamities I do not abandon hope of better things, considering as I do who is the pilot in all this ... the [One] who can calm the raging waters ...*

*Do not be cast down. For there is one thing, Olympias, which is really terrible, only one real trial, and that is sin: and I have never ceased continually harping on this theme; but as for all other things, plots, enmities, frauds, calumnies, insults, accusations, confiscation, exile, the keen sword of the enemy, the peril of the deep, warfare of the whole world, or anything else you like to name, they are but idle tales.”*

Isn't that amazing! His fortitude, his patience, his ability to be so strict with himself and so kind and merciful with others. He truly is a model for us in our time. Because for us suffering is something that we are not very good at. We all suffer, certainly, but we don't grow wise from our suffering, and all too often, we suffer for the wrong things.

We live in a time and a culture and a place where we are preoccupied with the wrong things, the pursuit of pleasure, salary, stability, status, comfort, all those things that blind us to each other, blind us to the needs of the world, and blind us to what our true needs are. We are incapable of knowing true joy, because we are incapable and somehow unable to endure real suffering and learn from suffering.

There is of course hope, because the Church continues in spite of our failures and sins, and there are good people doing good things all the time. And often the good things that are being done are by people who may not be very well known or work that is being done quietly and unassumingly. It's interesting that two witness of outreach and charitable work that was done in the last century were women, two extraordinary saints – St. Elizabeth the New Martyr and recently canonized St. Maria Skobtsova.

St. Maria was canonized recently by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, but her name has not yet been entered in all the diptychs of the Orthodox churches. She certainly was a saint. She was a Russian aristocrat, very worldly, intellectual, poet caught up in that kind of milieu of radical thinking of the Revolution which took place. She was married twice. She found herself in exile in France eventually and became a very unusual type of monastic.

She saw her monastic calling and duty as a calling to serve and help poor people, those who were destitute and outcasts, and in some ways was almost a fool for Christ. She is depicted on one of

the walls of our church. You'll have to find her, in the vestibule. John Chrysostom would have certainly loved Maria Skobtsova and endorsed and supported her.

Her writings are available, translated in English. This is from her short essay *On the Imitation of the Mother of God*, who she reminds us is also an archetype. Just as we are to follow Christ, the Mother of God provides us an example of how to endure and how to learn from suffering. She writes:

*“Let the cross lie on human shoulders, along the path of human God-likeness. The human heart should also be pierced by the two-edged swords, the soul-cutting weapons, of other people’s crosses. Our neighbor’s cross should be a sword that pierces our soul. Our soul should participate in its neighbor’s destiny, co-fell, co-suffer. And it is not the soul that chooses these swords; they are chosen by those who took them up like a cross on their shoulders. After the likeness of its archetype, the Mother of God, the human soul is drawn to Golgotha in the footsteps of her son, and cannot help being drawn there, cannot help bleeding.*

*To my mind, it is here that the authentic mystical bases of human community lie.”*

“The authentic mystical basis of human community.” Is that not what the Holy Church is about? The human community as the integration of humanity into the Body of Christ. The manifestation of the Kingdom of God in this world. And yet, brothers and sisters, how far we fall from it. How much we are filled with self-love. How difficult it is to truly love God and love each other as we are commanded and called to do and called to be examples of throughout this world.

We Orthodox are particularly affected by the sin of blindness; by this hard-heartedness; thinking somehow that we are better, more pure, more correct than those around us. We Orthodox, who exist in a world, in a place, in a society that has not been historically and traditionally Orthodox, are particularly challenged by this. And I know that we try, but all too often, we fail.

And we fail each other. We sadly fail each other. We take pride in our rituals and our icons, but we fail in the basic needful things. We are unable to look each other in the eye; to talk honestly; to listen. We are filled with mistrust. We are threatened by each other. The one thing we are good at is taking offense, and we certainly know how to hold a grudge.

We're disconnected. And of course, it gets down to the basics. It's an inadequate prayer life. It's taking the Sacraments lightly. It's not loving the Church. It's not coming to know the Church. It's not taking seriously the gift that the Church has been to us. We stand on the shoulders of great men and women. The reason that we can come together as we do is because there have been true heroes of faith in our time, in our recent past – a recent past that we have not sufficiently come to appreciate.

We stand and we remember those people. And as we remember those great bishops, our teachers from our seminaries, the great pastors who worked in our churches during the last century, if you can remember some of your favorite of these teachers and bishops, I think you will remember



them with a smile on their face. Most of these people were truly filled with a love of God, a love of life, and filled with joy. And they were precisely the people that suffered a great deal, and they turned around that suffering and made it something positive and wise and noble.

I would like to conclude by quoting from a speech from one of these incredible forefathers, a wise person, whom some of you knew, and who certainly was a person filled with great love and joy. He was an Archbishop, but he became Metropolitan Leonty. He became the Metropolitan of our church in 1950.

He had come to North America at the turn of the last century as a young priest, as many of the Russian missionaries came. He worked in the seminary in Minneapolis; then came to New York. He was the editor of the official church publication. He was the right-hand to Patriarch St. Tikhon, when Tikhon was Bishop in New York. He was a participant in Russia at the 1917 Council, which elected Tikhon to be Patriarch. He returned to North America. His wife died in the 1930s, and he was the father of several children, whom he raised and who all became distinguished in their own right.

He then became Bishop of Chicago. In 1950, upon the death of Metropolitan Theophilus, at the 8th All American Sobor in New York, he as the senior bishop opened the Council with this speech. Incidentally, he also is depicted in this church. There are many marvelous icons here that surround us, truly beautiful icons. Fr. Berzonsky, who was the pastor here when these icons were painted, took a very bold move and had Metropolitan Leonty painted, for which perhaps he may have been somehow criticized by his bishop. I don't know. But the end result is that of all the beautiful icons here, perhaps the most unique is the iconographic depiction of Metropolitan Leonty.

Metropolitan Leonty's time, not unlike ours, was a time of confusion for the Church. At that time, it was a Church that was ten times the size of the present OCA. It was called the Metropolia and had some 300,000 members.

There was canonical confusion and instability, the Metropolia wasn't recognized by other churches; people weren't sure whether to turn to Constantinople or Moscow or what. And this may sound rather familiar. We again are facing those questions, worried that maybe we won't be recognized, and what should our canonical future be? So this is how Archbishop Leonty spoke at that Sobor on these themes:

*"[He declared that] the historical growth of North American Orthodox self-understanding has gone through agonizing sufferings and strivings [with a constant strengthening of] our conviction of the absolute necessity of our administrative independence. There can be no return to the past!*

*We have not forgotten and are unable not to remember that in our gradual development and flourishing we are deeply bound in our relations to those outside of us. We did not give birth to ourselves, and we are not without relatives. Our Mother is the Russian Church from which we were formed in human history as a mission among the unenlightened [peoples of Alaska], as a diocese on a new*

*continent, as a collection of dioceses among heterodox peoples, and as a church into which people who left Asia and Europe, from Russian countries and non-Russian governments, have entered and flowed in, and become integrated and rooted, in which they live and act with all rights and privileges as citizens of the Great Atlantic Republic, the genuinely free Democracy -- the United States of America.*

*We love our old homeland, but we also – in our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren – love our new homeland. We love, honor and respect our Mother-Russian Church, but as a grown up Daughter-Church, we are essentially bound to, and love, and are dedicated to the children that the Lord God has given us, just as we love, honor and respect our Eastern Greek-Grandmother Church, always raising our petitions in prayer to the Lord God for the Most Holy Eastern Patriarchs together with the episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church and her faithful people. We are their branches, but by the mercy of God we are already an adult Daughter Church, and a Granddaughter Church, and we have serious obligations before God and the people given to us by our destiny – temporally and eternally – to be our children, the many thousand members of our flock already given to us by the Lord God.”*

And so, brothers and sisters; all of who have gathered on this momentous, important, and holy occasion, in spite of our weaknesses, in spite of the canonical anomaly that is the Orthodox Church in America, we nevertheless are here because of a great historical legacy. We pray that we will be recognized, but more important is how we recognize the world, our Orthodox world, and each other, and how seriously we take our task to work together. As the future St. Leonty said:

How serious we take our “obligations before God and the people given to us by our destiny,” how seriously we take our obligation to build up this Body of Christ to which we have all been called to and to manifest the Kingdom of God, which is in our midst.

## Homily

*Delivered by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko on November 13, 2012  
during the Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Church, Parma, Ohio preceding  
the 17th All-American Council*

Every time we gather as Church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Eucharist, it is always essentially the same. It is always the same – whatever the occasion, whatever the time, whatever the place. St. John Chrysostom speaks about this very particularly in his 5<sup>th</sup> homily on First Timothy. He then goes on in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> homilies to elaborate, and he says that “no Liturgy is less holy or more holy than any other.”

The Liturgy is always the same. It is always the celebration, the proclamation, the experience and the entrance into the victory of God Almighty in the person of His Son and Word Jesus Christ, Israel’s Messiah and the Savior of the world.

At the Divine Liturgy, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we celebrate the victory of God over all His enemies – as we sing on Pascha night: “Let God arise! Let His enemies be scattered! Let those who hate Him flee from before His Face!” (Psalm 68) The Divine Liturgy is always “the day that the Lord has made;” and we are always graced to “rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118)

At every Divine Liturgy Christ, the messianic teacher sent by God, being Himself God’s Word in human flesh proclaims God’s Gospel from His glorious throne on high at the Father’s right hand. He is also the Door through which we enter God’s kingdom. He is the Good Shepherd who sacrifices Himself as the victim to God the Father so that we could be purified and illumined and healed and saved. He is the great High Priest who offers the once and for all sacrifice to God His Father on the Cross, outside the city of Jerusalem, hanging between two thieves, rejected, ridiculed, mocked, spit upon, beaten – being Himself the very offering, the Lamb that is slain and the Bread that is broken and consumed.. And all of this is solely for us human beings and for our salvation.

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We also know that every time we gather as Church for the Divine Liturgy it is always different. It is never the same, never. Whatever the occasion on which we are going to have a celebration, a proclamation, a holy communion with God -- with the experience of being boundlessly and endlessly loved by God -- it is always new and different – fuller, wider, deeper, more splendid than ever before.

St. Gregory of Nyssa even dared to say that as we live in this world and pass through all the experiences and tests of human life we enter more fully into the Mystery of Christ. But for this to happen, we must be continually tested. So the Holy Liturgy is always new and different, for we are new and different. And there are always the temptations, trials and the tests that we must patiently endure to have this happen.

In the Holy Scriptures, the righteous Job says that the life of a person on earth is nothing but a trial and a test. It is nothing but a temptation. We have to face these trials and temptations and, by the grace of God in Christ and the Spirit, be victorious over them all.

And so it is the God saw this day from before the foundation of the world. The Lord God knew that we would be in this church building today in Parma. He knew that we would be gathered all together here for this celebration, and that it would be totally new for us. It would be different today than it was last Sunday. And next Sunday it will be different from today. And even – as St. Gregory also said -- God Almighty will appear new and different and deeper to us every time. We grow in this way. And this growth is what we are created for -- for all eternity.

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We know as well that there is a tragic side to all of this...the tragic side that has existed from the very beginning of humanity on earth.

The Apostle Paul in the first chapter of his letter to the Romans says that we are all created to know the invisible things of God just by being human, made in God's image. We are created to share fully and completely in all the gifts of God. And not only are we to share in God's gifts, but to share in His very life. God in Christ and the Holy Spirit gives us not only His gifts; He gives us Himself.

By grace, by faith, by Christ's cross, by Christ's victory, by the Holy Spirit in us, we literally can become everything that God is by nature, forever and ever and ever. It never ends. And it is always new and it is always different. And this difference includes our sins, our betrayals, our failures, our wounds, our surrender to darkness, our surrender to our own vanity, our own pride, our own understanding of things, which puts us directly in the hands of the devil.

So the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians, "I hear that when you gather as Church, there are factions and divisions among you." In Greek, it says schisms and heresies. And he said, "I partly believe that it must be so, so that those who are approved" – i.e. those who are tested and stand the test and don't give in and remain on the cross with Christ – would be revealed and manifested.

St. John Chrysostom, whose day it is today and whose Liturgy we celebrate, commenting on these apostolic words in his commentary on Corinthians says "Let's notice that the terms schisms and heresies, factions and divisions, were not in this instance about the content of the faith. They were not about doctrine (as, for example, was the case in the Galatian community)". He said that the Corinthian failure -- these factions and divisions -- existed among those who, more or less, believed the same Gospel and kept the same faith. In this instance, therefore, it was not a doctrinal failure. It was a moral failure. It was a spiritual failure. And so the very broken Body and shed Blood of Christ was blasphemed at the Mystical Supper.

The Holy Spirit is poured out on us when we gather as Church. But this Holy Spirit, as St. Paul testifies in his first letter to the Thessalonians, can be "quenched." In the letter to the Hebrews, it says that the Holy Spirit can be "outraged." In the letter to the Ephesians, it says that the Holy

Spirit can be “grieved.” And our Lord said that the Holy Spirit can be “blasphemed”, and that there is no salvation for that.

We believe in the God Who is Love. And we believe in Christ, whom St. Paul in his letter to the Colossians calls “the Son of His love”. And we believe in the Holy Spirit through Whom, as the same apostle writes in his letter to the Romans, God’s love is poured into our hearts. There is nothing magical here. Nothing mechanical. Nothing fantastic. As a priest friend of mine once put it, “We believe in the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We do not believe in the magician, the mechanic and the fairy godmother.”

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So the trial is real, and we have to endure it. And, as the saints teach us, when God’s grace is there, God is with us, and He never ever, abandons us. Never. We may at times think that He does, but it’s not true. It’s a lie of the Devil who is a liar from the beginning.

All is grace. And by this grace of God, we can stand upon the wreckage of our lives in order to enter paradise. We can stand upon the wreckage to enter into Wisdom, and come to understand what the truth is, and what a gracious God we have.

In fact, we endure all of this to realize that it all exists for just one reason: that we would know the marvelous, majestic and magnificent mercy of God...and the pitiful, wretched, misery of our fallen humanity.

So when we do the Divine Liturgy we say that this great salvation has come, and the victory of God is won, for the sake of us sinners -- “of whom I am the first.” There is no judgment by comparison between people. No. Everyone is judged uniquely by her or his own life; by how we live, by how we pass through all these things, which are temptations and trials to our very last breath.

Some people think that it’s a Russian saying: “Without temptation, there is no salvation.” (Bez iskushenia net spasenia) Actually, this is a saying of St. Anthony the Great in the 4<sup>th</sup> century who when asked how a person can be saved gave the following answer:

*“Say your prayers and do your work. Have God always before your eyes. Whatever you do, do according to the Scriptures. And in whatever place you are, do not leave it easily. Cling with all your might to what is good and true and beautiful and right. And expect – and know for sure – that you will be tempted and tested to your very last breath. For without temptation, there is no salvation.”*

There is a saying about St. Macarius of Egypt, that when his earthly life was over he was stepping into paradise and heard a voice saying, “Macarius, you have conquered!” And he looked and saw that it was the devil speaking. And Macarius said to him, “Not yet!” He had only one foot in. And we all know the painting (which is on the back wall of this church building) of the monks falling off the top of the ladder.

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So here we are today at this Divine Liturgy, to proclaim the marvelous mercy of God and our own pathetic misery. It is always that way. But, yet, each time it is different. And life goes on.

Today, on this unique day in Parma, we are gathered to elect a Metropolitan, the first archpastor among all of our church's archpastors and pastors. We've done this before, haven't we? And we're here to do it again.

Last night, Father Alexander (Garklavs) told us how Metropolitan Leonty, in 1950, was unanimously elected the Metropolitan of our church. And he reminded us that it was this Leonty (whose iconographic form is on the wall in the back of this church where someday, we hope, a halo will be painted around his head) – that it was the same Leonty who as an archpriest was one of the representatives of our North American church to the All-Russian Church Council in 1917-18. The Metropolitan used to boast that he was among those who put forward the name of Metropolitan Tikhon of Moscow, who had earlier been our bishop in America for nine years, as a candidate for Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, for that historic council was reinstating the office of Patriarch which had been vacant for 217 years during which time the Russian Church was controlled in every detail by the imperial government.

The All-Russian Council elected the new Patriarch of Moscow by lot. The names of three men were put forward. Their names were put in a chalice on the altar table. They prayed all night, celebrated the Divine Liturgy and had a special Prayer Service, after which a holy elder came and picked out the name. A Moscow protopresbyter wrote an article in a newspaper describing the event. This is what he said:

*“The council put three names into the chalice: Arseny, the Archbishop of Novgorod, the “strictest (samii strogi) of all the Russian hierarchs.” And Antony (Khrapovitskii), Metropolitan of Kiev, (whom we all know became the first “first hierarch” of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia (ROCOR) after the Bolshevik revolution) “the most learned (samii uchenii) of the Russian hierarchs.” But God decided that the Patriarch would be Tikhon, the Metropolitan of Moscow, “the kindest, meekest, most gentle and ‘goodest’ (samii dobrii) of the Russian hierarchs.”*

That's the way God did it.

Because of the Communist revolution, the future Metropolitan Leonty had to make his way back home to America by way of China. In 1950, being a widower who served for 15 years as bishop (and archbishop) of Chicago, he became the head of the Church in 1950. He fell asleep in the Lord in 1965. I was fortunate enough to have seen him on his deathbed.

We should know that Metropolitan Leonty, perhaps more than any other in our history, was the spokesperson for the special calling of the ” mission” here in North America. It was to be an

Orthodox Church for everyone who wants to be in it to be saved. It was the be the Church in this place and time, faithful to its calling to be what God calls it to be.

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All of the leaders of the North American missionary diocese went through terrible trials and temptations. They endured the unbelievable and indescribable sufferings that we heard about last night from Fr. Alexander. Leonty, then Archpriest Leonid Turkevich, was expelled from his St. Nicholas Cathedral on E 97<sup>th</sup> Street (built in the time of St. Tikhon) by New York City police when the Bolsheviks produced documents proving that (with many other church properties in America) the cathedral was theirs since it now belonged to the Soviet government.

The entire situation was a horrible mess; impossible to describe. And we – our church with its righteous leaders – went through it all. It is a miracle that we have survived, and are still being called and graced to face up to our trials!

St. Tikhon was known to be humble and kind even before becoming archbishop in North America, and Metropolitan of Moscow and Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. He was so humble, meek and kind that a priest in Volhynia where he served as bishop before coming to America wrote in his parish diary that in Tikhon “it was the first time in [his] life that he met a bishop who was a human being!”

So here we are now. We know that Patriarch Tikhon said that the night would be dark and long. And it still is. And it most likely will be so until the end of the world, darker and darker as the clock ticks. And we must stand for what we have been given, that to which we are called, to the very end.

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The reading for this day in the continuing readings for each day after Pentecost contains terrifying words from St. Luke’s Gospel. In Matthew and Mark, the Lord says that anyone who loves father, mother, children, lands.... more than Him is not worthy of Him. But the Lord’s words were even more powerful in Luke where He says that “unless you hate father, mother, children, lands....and even your own life (or soul) in this world you cannot be my disciple”. And He tells us that we have to “count the cost.” For who builds a tower without knowing how many bricks are needed? Or what warrior engages in war without knowing the troops that he must have? Then, if you are not prepared, you are put to shame. You have to count the cost!

The cost was, and still is, very great.

When the Bolsheviks took Russia, there was a famine. They wanted to show how kind they were by feeding the hungry people. They went to the Church and demanded the icons, vestments and sacred vessels. “It’s over for you guys,” they gloated, “we’re here now.”

Patriarch Tikhon gave the order to his faithful people: “You are to give whatever money you have. You are also to give the precious stones from crosses, icons, vestments and mitres. But

you are not to give chalices or diskoses or icons. You can give the silver covering the icons, but not the icons themselves.”

So sixteen priests in Moscow were arrested for following the patriarch’s orders. The Bolsheviks brought Tikhon to the trial and put him on the stand. They called him Comrade Belavin. The prosecutor said, “We understand that you are these guys’ boss.” He replied, “Yes, in a sense that’s true.” They said, “We understand that if you order them to do something, they have to do it.” He replied, “Yes that’s true, unless I order them to do something wicked, evil, immoral or heretical. Then I hope that they would not obey me.” The prosecutor then said, “Then I will tell you. If you do not order these men to give up these things, they will be executed.” Patriarch Tikhon replied, “I can order them to give you these things, but I hope that they would not obey me because these things are not ours.” The prosecutor replied, “What do you mean that they are not yours?” St. Tikhon responded, these things are consecrated to God. They belong to God. I can’t give you what belongs to God.” The prosecutor then said, “Yes, but you can order them to do so.” He said, “Yes, I can, but if I did I hope they would disobey me.” The prosecutor said, “If you do not order them to do so, they will be executed.” Then the Patriarch stood up, looked at the sixteen priests and making the sign of the Cross over them said, “Then I bless them to die.” And they were put to death, and so was he.

This is our legacy here in North America. This man was our bishop here before he became the Patriarch of Moscow, a confessor for the faith and a saint of the Church.

Innocent, Tikhon, Leonty, Raphael, Nikolai, Alexis, Jacob, Juvenaly, the child Peter, Protopresbyter Alexander Hotovitzky who served in St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York, Archpriest John Kochurov who served in Chicago, and many others known to God... are our fathers in the faith. May we be worthy of them by doing in our day what they did in theirs.

Our fathers in the faith put it very simply: There has to be an Orthodox Church in North America that is nothing but a Church –the Orthodox Church of Christ – that is not a cultural center, a heritage museum, a summer camp, a therapeutic center, a spiritual path, a way of mystical illumination, a treasury for art, music and architecture.... but the Church of Christ, and nothing but the Church: the Body and Bride of Christ, the Household of God, the Pillar and Bulwark of the Truth, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, “the Fullness of Him who fills all in all” against which the gates of Hades cannot prevail. But which, in its human forms, can be turned into an institution belonging to this age in which the Holy Spirit can be quenched, outraged, grieved and blasphemed.

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We know what went on in the Old World under Communism. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn put it: “70 years and 70 million corpses in the Soviet Union alone.” What did we learn from this? What did they over there learn from it? God forgive me, but sometimes I’m tempted to think: “Not very much!”

And what did we in America learn from our history? What did we learn from our tragedies, our betrayals, our divisions, our quenching, outraging, grieving and even blaspheming the Holy



Spirit? Did we learn anything at all? This is the question put to us in today's Divine Liturgy and in the events of the day still to come. What did we learn, if anything?

Mentioning Alexander Solzhenitsyn, we know that he was undoubtedly the best-known and most famous member of the Orthodox Church in the world in our lifetime. When he was in exile in America, he and his family were members of our Orthodox Church in America (OCA). Fr. Andrei Tregubov was his pastor. Fr. Alexis Vinogradov, also an architect, designed his house in Vermont. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann was his close advisor, and was, I believe, the only one who argued with him and survived!

This great Russian Orthodox writer told the whole world something that can serve as our main "word" at this Divine Liturgy today. He said, "In the prison camp I found God. I found love. I found life. I found the need for mercy and forgiveness for everyone, first of all for my own self."

Our own dear elder, Fr. Roman Braga who was in prison in Romania taught us the same thing. First, he was tortured in a prison where they tried to corrupt his mind and make him blaspheme the faith. When they couldn't succeed in doing that, they put him in solitary confinement for years, without a pencil, a piece of paper or a book. An interviewer once asked Fr. Roman what he learned during those horrible years. He said, "When I was in the torture prison, when they were trying to 'reconstruct my mind', I learned that the devil exists. And then, when they put me in solitary confinement, all alone and having nothing, I learned that God exists."

Sometimes you have to go through these things so you really know that the devil exists, and how cunning he can be. (Although the devil is really quite stupid!) And to know truly that God exists, and that He is with us in our trials. Perhaps in our own way we all have to have such experiences so that we can say with Solzhenitsyn and Fr. Roman the very same thing.

Without being put through what we've been put through in recent years we would never have learned the things that we have to learn, and to know what we need to know to be saved. Solzhenitsyn formulated the lesson in the simplest way. It applied to the prison camp. It applies to Orthodoxy all over the world. And it applies to us in America, and in American society. God willed that it would be so. It is all Divine Providence.

God saw this day. He saw it all. What God wants us to see and to know is simple: Evil is real. And it abounds: stupidity, darkness, envy, vanity, pride, fear. Read St. John Chrysostom. It's unbelievable what he says about all this. He wrote from exile to his closest friend and co-worker, the widow Olympia who was the head of the women deacons in Constantinople. He insisted that "no one can harm him who does not harm himself." If we are angry, he wrote, and if we are despondent, in darkness, and doubting, it's our own fault, not theirs. And he died in exile.

Here we are in this world -- fallen, corrupted, perverted. Yet it is the world in which the Divine Liturgy is celebrated. And we have the Scriptures and the Sacraments and the Services and the Saints...and the Suffering that always goes with it, so that we can be saved.

To refer again to Solzhenitsyn, there are only three things that we can do in this fallen world. There are only three possibilities, and these three are ours today. We can give up in the face of evil, and be crushed. We can give in to evil, and become evil ourselves. Or we can go on, co-crucified with Christ and forgiving everyone who crucifies us.

And we can refer again to St. John Chrysostom whose day it is, and whose liturgy we celebrate. He said in his homilies on First Timothy that we should remember that the Divine Liturgy is celebrated not only for the Orthodox, not only for us. It is offered, as the Apostle Paul teaches, for all people, for the emperor who, at the time, was killing Christians, and for the pagans. And for unbelievers and heretics. And for our worst enemies. This is how we worship and pray, because this is our calling as Christians.

It is especially the calling of pastors and archpastors, of bishops and presbyters, to be the images of Christ Himself on earth. And to guarantee that the Church is the Church, and nothing but the Church: one with the unity of God, holy with the holiness of God, catholic with the fullness of God, and apostolic with the mission of God; that the Church, especially in the person of the bishop, would guarantee that the Church of Christ is the presence on earth of the kingdom of God Himself.

Thus we testify to the Church's reality; and so too to its unity, its integrity, its continuity, its vitality, its harmony, its solidarity. And to its unanimity in the face of all kinds of trials and temptations.

We will be tempted to our very last breath. But we can go on. And we must go on. We cannot give up and we cannot give in. This is what we are called to do as Orthodox Christians and as the Orthodox Church in America— to be faithful to the Gospel and to our calling here in North America.

Brothers and sisters, archpastors and pastors, let us not give up. Let us not give in. But let us go on, doing it God's way, which is always the way of temptations, trials and sufferings, because the victory is already won. And we are going to celebrate that victory right now. Amen.



**17<sup>th</sup> All-American Council**  
**Holy Trinity Orthodox Church**  
**Parma, OH**  
**November 13, 2012**

# Opening Molieben

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His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel  
Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate  
*Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan's See*



# Call to Order

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This Extraordinary Electoral 17<sup>th</sup> All-American Council is called to order



# Appointment of Council Teams

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The Holy Synod of Bishops appoints:

- Archpriest John Jillions, Stavropegial, Clergy Vice-Chairperson
- Judge E.R. Lanier, DoS, Lay Vice-Chairperson

# Appointment of Secretariat

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The Holy Synod of Bishops presents:

- Alexis Liberovsky, Stavropegial, Chairperson
- Priest David Cowan, DoNYNJ, Clergy Secretary
- Cheryl Wilson, DoW, Lay Secretary

# Appointment of Parliamentarian

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The Holy Synod of Bishops presents:

- James L. Williams, PRP and certified Parliamentarian in the State of Ohio to be the Parliamentarian for this All-American Council



# Appointment of Sergeant-at-Arms

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The Holy Synod of Bishops presents:

- Archpriest Vladimir Aleandro, DoNE, Clergy Representative
- Hieromonk Christopher (Savage), Stavropegial

# Appointment of Credential Committee Archpriest David Shewczyk, DoEPA, Chairperson

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- **Clergy:**

- Archpriest Paul Gassios, Bulg
- Priest Joshua Mosher, DoNE
- Priest Elijah Mueller, DoMW

- **Lay:**

- Johann Morse, DoW
- David Grier, Canada
- Sam Williamson, DoS

# Appointment of Teller Committee Archpriest Peter Baktis, Military, Chairperson

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- **Clergy:**

- Priest Mikel Bock, DoA
- Priest Nathan Preston, Alb
- Archpriest Vasyl Kolega, Can
- Priest Raymond Brown, DoEPA
- Priest James Dank, DoMW
- Archpriest David Koles, DoNE
- Priest Martin Kraus, DoNYNJ
- Archpriest Thomas Moore, DoS
- Archpriest Dennis Buck, DoWA
- Archpriest Stephen Soot, DoW

- **Lay:**

- Jeremy Pletnikoff, DoA
- Robin Freeman, Stav
- PDN Michael Myers, Bulg
- Justin Mitchell, Can
- David Yeosock, DoEPA
- Rebecca Tesar, DoMW
- John Krochok, DoNE
- ADN Michael Suvak, DoNYNJ
- Mykel Jacobs, Rom
- Br. Anthony Harmon, Stav
- Peter McLeod, DoS
- Katherine Vitko, DoWA
- Faith Johnson, DoWPA

# Appointment of Press and Information Committee

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- Archpriest Eric G. Tosi (Secretary)
- Archpriest John Matusiak (DoMW)
- Caroline Kruse (DoMW)

# Council Procedures

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This extraordinary All-American Council is to have as its sole agenda item the nomination and election of a new Metropolitan of All American and Canada



# Opening Address

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His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel  
Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate  
*Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan's See*



# Declaration of Vacancy

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- Whereas canonically and juridically His Beatitude Metropolitan JONAH has resigned and the vacancy of the office was officially declared by the Holy Synod according to the Orthodox Church in America [Statute: Article IV, Section 3](#); and
- Whereas the Holy Synod at its session on July 7, 2012 has already accepted such resignation and declared it to be effective on July 7, 2012; and

# Declaration of Vacancy

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- Whereas, following the resignation of His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH the Holy Synod has met and declared formally the office of the Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All-America and Canada vacant, and elected a *Locum Tenens* in the person of Archbishop NATHANIEL to preside at the election of the new Primate; and
- Whereas, the Holy Synod resolved that the nomination and election of the Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada will take place on November 13, 2012, during a special 17th All-American Council; and



# Declaration of Vacancy

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- In addition, whereas this election is to take place at an extraordinary All-American Council, the Holy Synod of Bishops has resolved that the election of a new Metropolitan be the sole item on the agenda.
- In addition, the Holy Synod of Bishops has resolved to appoint Archpriest John J. Jillions and Judge E.R. Lanier, Esq. as chairman for this election.

# Instructions for Election

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- The doors will now be sealed
- Only accredited delegates are permitted on the floor
- All observers will remain in designated areas
- Tellers are to report to podium
- Prayerful and respectful discernment.

# Election Procedures: Article IV, Section 4

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- When a vacancy has occurred in the office of Metropolitan, the bishop senior by rank and date of consecration shall convene the Holy Synod. After the formal vote declaring the vacancy, the Holy Synod will proceed with the election of a *Locum Tenens*. Within a period not exceeding three months (unless some unavoidable necessity forces a prolongment of this period), the *Locum Tenens* will convene an All-American Council at which a successor shall be elected.
- If not already a bishop, a candidate for the office of Metropolitan must fulfill the canonical, moral, and educational requirements stated in *Article VI, Section 9*.

# Election Procedures

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- The election shall take place according to the following order:
- The Council nominates candidates by secret ballot without previous discussion of names. A blank paper ballot shall be distributed to each member of the Council before the vote.
- On the first vote, one single name may be written on each ballot. If the name of a candidate is written on a number of ballots equal to at least two-thirds of the total number of members in attendance at the Council, his name shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for approval by majority vote; in case of rejection, the Holy Synod shall formally state the reasons which motivated the rejection.

# Election Procedures

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- If no candidate receives a number of ballots equal to at least two-thirds of the total membership in attendance, or if the person receiving that number of ballots fails to receive the approval of the Holy Synod, a second vote shall be taken.
- In the second vote, two names shall be written on each ballot; the tellers shall not count any ballot on which fewer or more than two names are written. The names of the two candidates who receive the highest number of ballots on the second vote shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for their choice by majority vote.
- Upon his election, and before the dismissal of the All-American Council, the new Metropolitan will be enthroned according to the established ritual.

# Questions on the Election Procedures?

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# Credentials Report

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Hierarchs	11
Clergy Delegates	295
Lay Delegates	284
Retired Clergy	7
Observers	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>663</b>
<b>Total Eligible to Vote</b>	<b>590</b>
(Hierarchs + Clergy Delegates + Lay Delegates)	
<i>2/3 Requirement</i>	<b>394</b>

# Tellers Procedures

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The tellers will now distribute the ballot for the first round of the nomination and collect them. They will proceed to the designated area for counting.





# First Round of Ballots

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Please write the name of ONE candidate.

Any ballots that have blank, illegible, or more than one name will be invalid.



# Results of First Round of Ballots

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● Bishop Michael	205	● Archimandrite Alexander (Pihach)	3
● Archbishop Tikhon	118	● Hieromonk David (Mahaffey)	3
● Bishop Melchizedek	94	● Archbishop Alejo	2
● Archbishop Nathaniel	49	● Igumen Gerasim (Eliel)	2
● Archbishop Benjamin	23	● Metropolitan Philip (Antiochian)	1
● Metropolitan Jonah	17	● Bishop Irineu (Duvlea)	1
● Bishop Basil (Essey)	17	● Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist)	1
● Archbishop Nikon	13	● Archimandrite Vladimir (Wendling)	1
● Bishop Mark (Maymon)	9	● Igumen Sergius (Bowyer)	1
● Bishop Alexander	8	● Igumen Patrick (Carpenter)	1
● Bishop Irinee (Rochon)	5	● Archpriest Paul Gassios	1
● Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral)	3	● Hierodeacon Herman (Majkrzak)	1
● Bishop Matthias	3	● Invalid/Blank	7
		● <b>TOTAL</b>	<b>590</b>

# Second Round of Ballots

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Please write the name of TWO candidates.  
Any ballots that have blank, illegible, or with the  
same name written twice will be invalid.



# Results of Second Round of Ballots

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● Bishop Michael	355	● Archimandrite Meletios (Webber)	2
● Archbishop Tikhon	317	● Igumen Sergius (Bowyer)	2
● Bishop Melchizedek	161	● Archpriest Paul Gassios	2
● Archbishop Nathaniel	81	● Hieromonk David (Mahaffey)	2
● Bishop Mark (Maymon)	28	● Hieromonk Stavros (Lever)	2
● Bishop Basil (Essey)	25	● Metropolitan Herman	1
● Archbishop Benjamin	23	● Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev)	1
● Archbishop Nikon	23	● Bishop Thomas (Joseph)	1
● Bishop Alexander	20	● Archimandrite Juvenaly (Repass)	1
● Bishop Irinee (Rochon)	15	● Archimandrite Pitirim (Stehnach)	1
● Metropolitan Jonah	14	● Igumen Joseph (Hoffman)	1
● Metropolitan Hilarion (Kapral)	14	● Igumen Patrick Carpenter	1
● Archbishop Alejo	11	● Archpriest David Brum	1
● Bishop Matthias	8	● Archpriest Theodore Heckman	1
● Igumen Gerasim (Eliel)	6	● Archpriest Basil Summers	1
● Bishop Irineu (Duvlea)	5	● Priest John Chudik	1
● Priest David Mezynski	5	● Hierodeacon Herman (Majkrak)	1
● Archimandrite Alexander (Pihach)	4	● Brother Luke (Dorr)	1
● Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist)	3	● Invalid/Blank	11 Ballots = 22
● Archimandrite Christopher (Calin)	3	● Not Submitted	6 Ballots = 12
● Patriarch Kirill (Russia)	2	● <b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1180</b>

# Election by the Holy Synod

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# His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON Eis Polla, Eti Despota!

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# Installation of the new Metropolitan

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# Remarks by the new Metropolitan

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# Closing Molieben

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