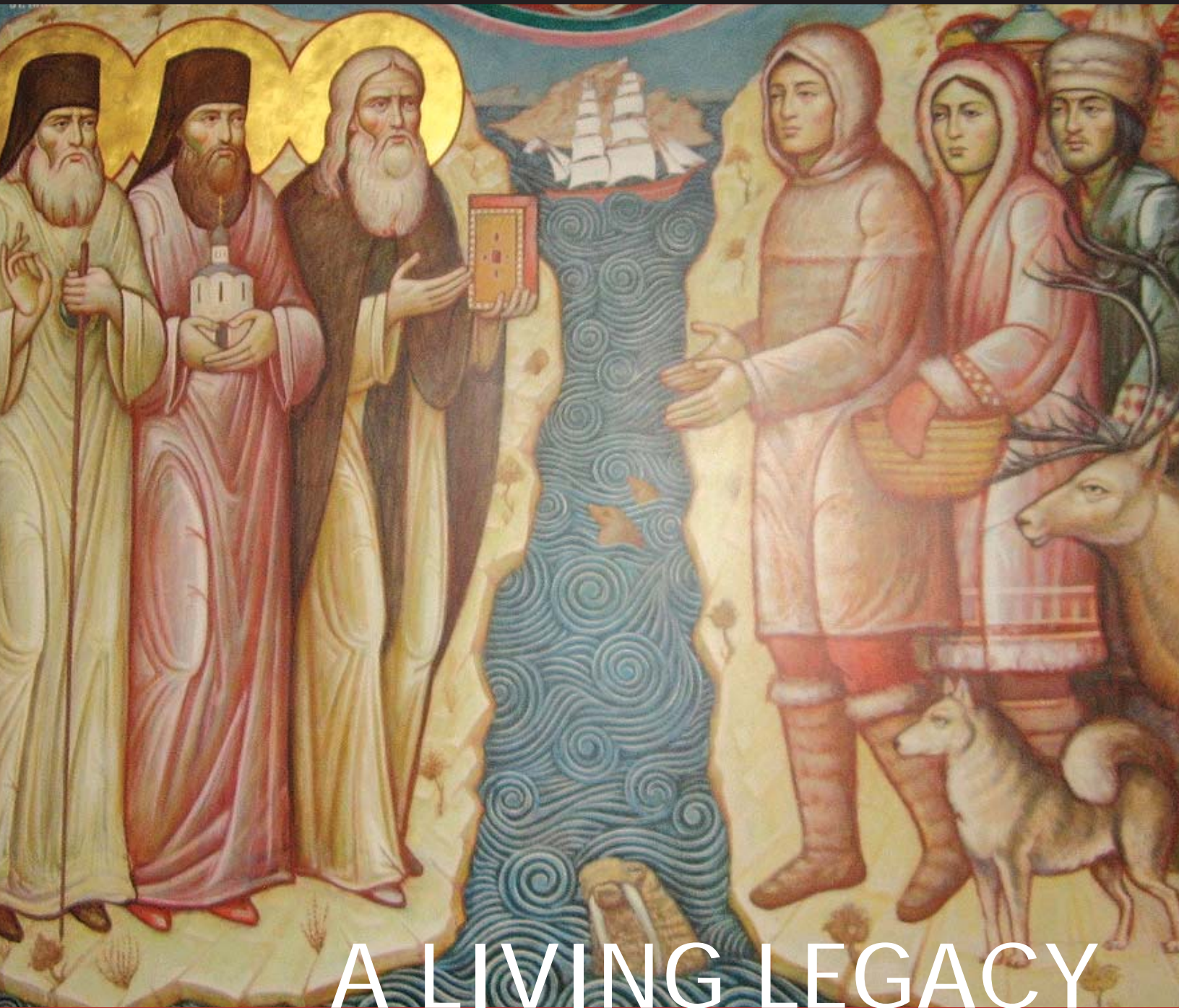


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The Orthodox Church

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



A LIVING LEGACY

Saint Herman of Alaska
North Star of Christ's Holy Church

Building Orthodox unity in the midst of pluralism: A step forward

Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky

One of the realities of Orthodox life and witness in America is the pluralism of Orthodox churches. This pluralism, as a rule, has not prevented eucharistic communion among the churches. Eucharistic communion has been an abiding testimony to the unity of the Orthodox – a unity in sacraments and a unity in doctrine. Although Orthodox unity in one canonical body with one Synod of Bishops has not been achieved in America, the fundamental unity of Orthodoxy has been protected and nourished by the experience of celebrating the Divine Liturgy together and receiving Holy Communion from the same chalice.

While preserving the treasures of the Russian Orthodox tradition, offering a vivid witness to the Orthodox faith and to the martyrdom of the Russian Orthodox Church, and attracting many converts, ROCOR for many years was not in full eucharistic communion with the Moscow Patriarchate and with most other Orthodox Churches. The Act of Canonical Unity, which in 2007 reconciled the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church [Moscow Patriarchate], also opened the way to the restoration of full communion between ROCOR and the Orthodox Church in America [OCA].

A statement on “Relations between the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia,” drafted by OCA and ROCOR commissions working together in joint sessions October 5-6, 2010, was approved and affirmed by the ROCOR Synod of Bishops in October and the OCA Holy Synod in November. *[Read the text of the statement on page 13 of this issue.]* In December, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, Primate of the OCA, took part in a conversation with the ROCOR Synod of Bishops at their meeting in New York. *[See related article on page 14 of this issue.]* The exchange of views was not only positive – it was also constructive and practical and expressed a shared vision of communion and collaboration.

There is much to rejoice about in this mutual determination to clear away the debris of alienation and to rediscover one another in the fullness of eucharistic unity and in the fullness of the Orthodox faith. As the work of the OCA and ROCOR commissions has shown, the two churches have common roots and a shared history. Even the differences between them are signs of this common history. The path of ROCOR, after decades of separation from the Moscow Patriarchate, led in 2007 to canonical reconciliation and canonical unity within one Russian Orthodox Church. The path of the OCA, after decades of separation from

the Moscow Patriarchate, led in 1970 to the granting of autocephaly [self-government] to the OCA by the Russian Orthodox Church. Now there is a growing awareness of the common pastoral and mission tasks and challenges faced by both churches in America, and a growing readiness to work together in accomplishing these tasks and meeting these challenges.

It is important, yet again, to emphasize that there is much to rejoice about in these developments. It is also important not to isolate this journey

of communion and collaboration from the larger community of Orthodox churches in North America. Even as ROCOR and OCA labor together to build a common life and common mission, it is essential to do so in full awareness of the totality of Orthodoxy in America and in the world. The reconciliation of ROCOR and OCA is not a means to separate ourselves from the other Orthodox churches and communities. Rather, this reconciliation is called to assist in the building of Orthodox unity



Metropolitan Jonah [left] with Metropolitan Hilarion, ROCOR First Hierarch, and Synod of Bishops.

in the midst of a pluralism of Orthodox cultures and histories.

There will be some who will dwell on differences between ROCOR and OCA, and may be tempted to regard these differences as irreconcilable. In the face of such temptations, it will be important to take into account that differences are not found merely in the ROCOR-OCA relationship. To mention just one example, the question of the calendar [Old and New, Julian and Gregorian] is a question before the whole Orthodox Church around the world. If this question were to be seen as an irreconcilable difference which prevents communion among the Orthodox churches, then the Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Moscow, Georgia, and Serbia could not be in communion with many of the other Orthodox churches. In the whole Orthodox world it is critically important to distinguish between church-dividing questions, on the one hand, and matters which are not church-dividing, on the other.

When Saint Tikhon, the future Patriarch and Confessor of Moscow, was Archbishop in America, he was confronted by demands to insist on uniformity in the liturgical services. His response was a model of pastoral wisdom. He pointed out that there were liturgical differences in the vast Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian Empire, and that such differences are acceptable within the framework of unity in Orthodox faith and Orthodox doctrine. In other words, he had a clear understanding of priorities, refusing to put all questions in church life on the same level of importance.

May this sense of discretion and wisdom guide us all, through the prayers of St. Tikhon, Enlightener of America, Patriarch and Confessor of Moscow. ■

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AN IMPORTANT NOTE

With the last issue of The Orthodox Church, printing has resumed, although finances do not permit the mailing of copies to individual homes, as had been done for over four decades. The current budget allows for the printing and bulk distribution of approximately 9,500 copies, rather than the former 26,000 individually mailed copies. Every parish will continue to receive a packet of copies in bulk for distribution locally. The number of copies a given parish receives may not correspond to its actual membership.

Individual subscriptions may be requested for a nominal sum. Please see page 27 of this issue for more information and a subscription form.

The Chosen

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:1

I imagine you were living in the first or second century, a citizen of one of the above cities called Asia Minor, present-day Turkey. The great apostle to the gentiles like yourself, Peter, addresses you as a pilgrim, although you have never moved more than a few miles from your birthplace. He means that as one baptized into the Body of Christ, you have been chosen by Our Lord to bear witness to His Gospel of salvation for all mankind. Saint Peter has in mind that those like you, once with nowhere to go on earth, are taking the place of the original migrants, the Hebrews who followed Moses from Egypt into the Promised Land. From Palestine they were taken to Babylon and returned in order to be a "Light to enlighten the gentiles, and the glory of [God's] people Israel." They failed to follow the Light of the world, Jesus, choosing rather to reject Him – and so to fill the void, God the heavenly Father, chose you to take their place.

Saint Peter – himself a Jew – writes that all that happened was anticipated and realized by the Father, including your own election. Perhaps you had surmised that already. Maybe in searching for something, some philosophy or religion to give more meaning to your life beyond survival, amusement, eating, drinking and carousing, you happened upon the Jewish religion. You were tolerated but, unfortunately, as with certain ethnocentric Orthodox Christians in our day, you were not welcomed with enthusiasm – you were not one of "them."

And you hear the way Saint Peter demonstrates that you lack nothing by not being a Jew. He puts it poignantly. You are among the "elect," not some "nobody." The Father had chosen you, even before time existed, to play a role in His plan for inviting humanity to have a share in things divine. You live among the "Dispersion." Christians are scattered like spores in the wind to plant the good news of Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom of heaven wherever human beings live. As one chosen by the Lord to spread the Gospel where you live and beyond, there is the requirement of obedience. You know the invitation of Jesus to "Take My yoke upon you... for My yoke is easy and My burden is light" [Matthew 11:29]. It means that you no longer drift about without purpose or direction. You have a goal – the Kingdom of God – and a direction, a Way to get there through a world that may be full of challenges, suffering, and even death.

Then the apostle Peter writes something quite touching – the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Every Jew would understand the reference to the tenth miracle of Moses. On the night of Passover, when the Hebrews were prepared to flee from the wrath of Pharaoh, the angel of death would visit all houses and take the firstborn son, but he would pass over those homes on which the blood of a sacrificial lamb had been sprinkled over their entries. The blood of the true living Lamb of God Who was crucified – Jesus Christ – is sprinkled over you, so that you will live beyond your death and burial. Here is the gift surpassing all possible presents on earth – His life for yours. Your earthly pilgrimage will end only when you reach the Kingdom of the heavenly Father. Despite your former life, you were chosen, selected, and elected to surrender yourself, whatever that implies, so that you may offer yourself in obedience to the will of Christ, and thereby achieve a meaningful existence throughout the days which the Father gives you here on earth to fulfill His will from heaven. ■

North Star of Christ's Holy Church

Forty years ago – on August 9, 1970 – a simple monk,
Father Herman of Alaska, was glorified as North America's first saint

Virginia Nieuwsma

In an obscure corner of what is now Alaska, on an island called Spruce, a monk labored from the late 1700s until his repose in 1837. Braving subzero temperatures, plagues, storms, and ill treatment from fellow Russians who resented and misunderstood him, Saint Herman lived a life marked by astonishing ascetic labor that gave birth to a deep love and concern for all with whom he came in contact.

Strangely, despite the miracles associated with him not only throughout his life but also after his death, he was all but forgotten after his repose.

"Thirty years will pass after my death, all those who live



As a young monk, St. Herman was cured of a serious neck condition through the intercession of the Mother of God.

now on Spruce Island will be dead, you alone will remain alive, and you will be old and poor; then they will remember me," Father Herman said to his Aleut follower, Ignatius Aliaga. As with other prophecies of the saint, this one too was fulfilled when, in 1867, Bishop Peter [Ekaterinovskiy] of Novoarkhangelsk* began a formal investigation into his life. It wasn't until 1894 that his story became widely known to the outside world, and then his glorification waited another 76 years, until August 9, 1970.

Born into a merchant family in the diocese of Moscow, Saint Herman became a monk in his early 20s, first entering the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Hermitage – associated with the famous Lavra of the same name in Sergiev Posad – near Saint Petersburg, then later moving on to the famed Valaam Monastery on Lake Ladoga in Russian Finland.

* In March 1859, Bishop Peter was consecrated Bishop of Novoarkhangelsk, as Sitka was known at the time, one of two auxiliary bishoprics in the Kamchatka Diocese, of which Alaska was a part.

Chronology

St. Herman and the Alaskan Mission

1756 or 1757 St. Herman is born in the town of Serpukov, southeast of Moscow. Only recently it was discovered that his name was Gerasim Ivanovich Zyrianov.

1777 In his early 20s, he enters Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Hermitage near St. Petersburg.

1782 Attracted by the spiritual fame of Abbot Nazarius, St. Herman enters the Valaam Monastery in Russian Finland.

1793 He volunteers to be part of a missionary team to Alaska, organized at the direction of Metropolitan Gabriel of St. Petersburg. On



December 25, he and seven other monks depart St. Petersburg for Alaska.

1794 On September

24, the monks arrive in Kodiak and initiate the "Kodiak Mission."

1795 Priestmonk Makarios is sent to the Aleutian

Islands, while Priestmonk Juvenal is sent to the interior of the mainland, where he is subsequently martyred.

1796 Priestmonk Makarios returns to St. Petersburg with some Aleuts to complain of the brutality of the Russian traders toward the native population.

1799 The Kodiak Mission's head, Archimandrite Joasaph, accompanied by Deacon-monk Stephen and two other companions, travel to Irkutsk, Siberia, where

He grew to love Valaam with his entire being; monks there remembered him singing on the kliros in a pleasant tenor voice while tears streamed from his eyes. For the rest of his life, Saint Herman considered Valaam his spiritual home; indeed, he called his hermitage on Spruce Island "New Valaam." In a letter to Abbot Nazarius, he once wrote, "Your paternal kindness to my lowliness will not be erased from my heart, neither the terrible impenetrable Siberian wilds, nor its dark forests, nor will the great rivers wash away the memory; neither will rough seas extinguish these feelings. For in my mind I imagine my beloved Valaam and look always at it across the great ocean."

In the second half of the 1700s, explorers were expanding the boundaries of Russia, and Metropolitan Gabriel of Saint Petersburg asked Valaam's Elder Nazarius to choose men to initiate missionary efforts in Alaska. Saint Herman and seven other missionaries arrived on Kodiak Island in 1794, and immediately set out to pursue their new ministry. Sadly, after five successful years of founding schools and churches, the head of the mission, Archimandrite Joasaph – who had been consecrated to the newly created episcopal See of Kodiak – and

his entire entourage drowned in a shipwreck. One after another, most of Saint Herman's companions left. One time, Saint Herman was asked, "How do you manage to live alone in the forest? Don't you get bored?"

He answered "No, I am not alone there! There is God, and God is everywhere! There are holy angels! How can one be bored with them? And with whom is it more pleasant and better to converse, angels or people? Angels, of course!"

In addition to conversing with the angels throughout his hours of prayer and worship, Saint Herman worked tirelessly. He ate and slept very little, and when he slept, he used a bed made of boards, resting his head on a pillow of bricks. All his life, he wore the same simple clothing – a sleeveless deerskin shirt, his cassock and monk's hat, a faded, patched mantle, and his well-worn shoes. In rain and storms, in the midst of winter snow or severe frost, he never changed his garments or added layers for warmth. His physical feats astonished those who knew him; one disciple saw him walking barefoot on a winter's night, hauling a log that would have been difficult for four men to carry. With his own hands he built his cell and chapel and hauled baskets of kelp from the ocean to fertilize his garden. In the midst of his labor, he meticulously kept the monastic rule of prayer.

Tending his own garden and diligently observing his



"I'm not alone," St. Herman assured those concerned for his welfare living a solitary life in the wilderness and tending to his garden. "I'm not alone there! There is God [and] the holy angels.... With whom is it more pleasant and better to converse, angels or people? Angels, of course."



he is consecrated Bishop of Kodiak. Priestmonk Macarius joins them on the return trip, during which they perished at sea in a shipwreck. The Kodiak Mission numbers one priest, one deacon, and two monks.

1800 In a letter to St. Herman, Alexander Baranov, head of the Russian-American Company, accuses the missionaries of inciting revolt against the Russians and forbids them from interacting with the indigenous population.

1801 Against Baranov's wishes, the missionaries attempt to proclaim allegiance to the Emperor. At the end of a violent scene, in which St. Herman attempts to intervene, Baranov places the missionaries under house arrest. No public services were celebrated in Kodiak for over a year. The missionaries complain to the Holy Synod in St. Petersburg.

1804 Fr. Gideon arrives from St. Petersburg to oversee the Mission and restore order.

Chronology to 6

monastic rule didn't keep Saint Herman from reaching out with great love and concern to his neighbors. On feast days and Sundays, he would gather them into the chapel next to his cell and lead them in the holy services. The people loved to listen to his spiritual teaching, and would visit him at all hours of the day and night, staying until early morning to absorb his instruction. The local Russian governor, Simeon Yanovsky, recalled, "To my amazement, he spoke so powerfully, so sensibly, and argued so convincingly that it now seems to me that no education or earthly wisdom could withstand his words. We conversed every day until midnight, and even later, about the love of God, about eternity, about the salvation of the soul, and about Christian life. His sweet speech poured forth from his lips in an unceasing stream."

Saint Herman especially loved children, for whom he would bake cookies, and he watched over those who were weak and powerless. He started a school for orphans, tended the sick during a plague that decimated the population of Kodiak, and defended the native Aleuts before the Russian traders and adventurers who were exploiting them. The people began to tell each other of miracles they had witnessed. Father Herman would tell someone about a future event, and it would come to pass. Animals, even bears, would eat from his hands; he placed an icon of the Mother of God in the sand and a tidal wave receded back into the ocean.

People flocked to Saint Herman for counsel and help. Affectionately, the Aleuts began to call him their "North Star," referring to how his teaching guided and grounded them, or the even more intimate "Apa," which meant grandfather. Couples with troubled marriages would seek his advice. With meekness, he would reproach people for their lack of sobriety or their cruelty. For years, he refused any honorary titles in the Church, preferring the simplest designation, "monk." His letters reflect his simplicity and tender disposition. "Our sins," he wrote, "do not in the least hinder our Christianity.... Sin, to one who loves God, is nothing other than an arrow from the enemy in battle. The vain desires of this world separate us from our homeland; love of such things clothe our soul as if in a hideous



As a young monk, St. Herman was cured of a serious neck condition through the intercession of the Mother of God.

garment. We who travel on the journey of this life and call on God to help us, ought to divest ourselves of this garment and clothe ourselves in new desires, in a new love of the age to come, and thereby receive knowledge of how near or how far we are from our heavenly homeland."

As the time of his repose drew closer, Saint Herman began to tell his disciples to prepare, giving them specific instructions about his burial and services. Everything he prophesied related to his death came to pass, exactly as he had foretold, and so it was that on

December 13, 1837, he leaned his head on the chest of his disciple Gerasim and reposed. "Glory to Thee, O Lord," he pronounced with shining face, just before taking his last breath. In various Aleutian towns, people reported seeing a pillar of light, reaching from Spruce Island to the heavens. "Saint Herman has left us," one villager reportedly said.

Fortunately for the Aleuts and all Alaskans – and all Orthodox Christians in North America – Saint Herman's presence is still felt, serving to inspire many to this day. Miracles attributed to his intercessions have occurred since his repose, and continue to happen today. Most Alaska Natives today remain faithful to Orthodox Christianity, and they honor his memory with prayers and pilgrimages. Saint Herman's relics are enshrined in Kodiak's Holy Resurrection Cathedral, in which his glorification took place 40 years ago, and Orthodox Christian faithful from all over the world continue to venerate them and seek his intercession. ■

Virginia Nieuwsma was recently named Managing Editor of the OCA's web site – www.oca.org.

Chronology

Chronology from 6

1806 Deacon-monk Nectarios leaves Alaska.

1807 Fr. Gideon leaves Alaska.

1811-17 At some point during this decade, St. Herman leaves Kodiak and establishes himself on Spruce Island, off the Kodiak coast.



1811 The Holy Synod closes the Kodiak Diocese and places Alaska and the missionaries under the Bishop of Irkutsk, Siberia.

1816 Arrival of the first priest in Sitka – Fr. Alexis Sokolov.

1816 Martyrdom of Peter the Aleut in California

1819 Simeon Yanovsky, Baranov's son-in-law and successor as head of the Russian-American Co., meets St. Herman, converts, and becomes his spiritual son.

1819 At great personal risk, St. Herman ministers to the sick and dying in Kodiak during a major



epidemic that threatened the lives of many.

1820 A 20-year-old Aleut woman, Sophia Vlassova, becomes St. Herman's

disciple and works at the school he established.

1820 A priest sent to Alaska from Irkutsk deals brutally with St. Herman, tearing up his cabin in search of



Metropolitan Ireney, far right, leads the procession with Saint Herman's relics during the canonization celebration.

The canonization of Saint Herman was celebrated in Kodiak, Alaska, in August 1970, just four months after the Russian Orthodox Church granted autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America.

Metropolitan Ireney, presided at the canonization Vigil in Kodiak's Holy Resurrection Cathedral on Saturday, August 8. Concelebrating with him were Archbishop Paul of Finland, Metropolitan Andrew of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Archbishop John of Chicago, Archbishop Kiprian of Philadelphia, Bishop Theodosius of Sitka, Bishop Joasaph of Edmonton, and Bishop Dmitri of Berkeley. Countless pilgrims from across the US and Canada joined the Alaskan clergy and laity for the historic gathering. For many of the faithful, it was the first opportunity to venerate the relics of Saint Herman, which had been transferred from Spruce Island to Kodiak.

As customary during the Rite of Canonization, the icon of Saint Herman was unveiled and venerated for the first time.

On Sunday, August 9, Bishop Theodosius presided at the celebration of an early Divine Liturgy on the relics of Saint Herman, while Metropolitan Ireney presided at the morning's main Divine Liturgy at the church's altar. ■

North America's unknown bishop

2011 marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of Bishop Joasaph Bolotov, first Bishop of Kodiak

While Saint Herman of Alaska memory is widespread, the head of the Kodiak Mission, Archimandrite – and later Bishop – Joasaph [Bolotov] remains largely unknown. This is in part due to the fact that, a mere five years after he, Saint Herman, and their six companions arrived in Kodiak – and just weeks after he was consecrated as North America's first bishop – he perished in a shipwreck.

Bishop Joasaph was born Ivan Ilyich Bolotov into the family of a parish priest in the village of Strazhkov in Russia's Tver Province on January 22, 1761. After completing his primary education at the ecclesiastical school of a monastery in Kashin, he studied at the seminaries in Tver and Yaroslavl, from which he graduated with honors. He then taught for four years at the Uglich Ecclesiastical School.

During this period, he discerned his calling to monastic life. He was tonsured at the Tolga Monastery in 1786, and was given the name Joasaph. He later moved to a monastery in Uglich, and subsequently to Valaam. The dates of his ordinations to the diaconate and priesthood remain unknown.

Archimandrite Joasaph was raised to the rank of archimandrite in 1793, and appointed head of the team of missionary monks sent to Alaska. With them, he arrived in Kodiak after a ten month journey from Saint Petersburg on September 24, 1794.

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treasures he was allegedly hiding. A new period of persecution by the Russians begins.

1823 Death of Monk Joasaph in Kodiak.

1825 The young priest John Veniaminov – the future St. Innocent – and his family arrive in Unalaska.

1824 Fr. Frumentius Mordovsky arrives in Kodiak as Fr. Athanasius leaves.

1825 Fr. Jacob Netsvetov, the first Aleut priest and one

of Alaska's greatest missionaries, arrives at Attu in the Aleutian Islands.

1831 Ferdinand von Wrangell, administrator of the Russian colony, meets St. Herman. The persecution ends.

1824 Fr. John Veniaminov moves to Novoarkhangelsk [Sitka] and begins his mission among the Tlingits.

1837 On December 13, St. Herman falls asleep in the Lord on Spruce Island, where

he is buried by his disciples.

1867 Bishop Peter of Novoarkhangelsk gathers information and initiates the first formal enquiry into St. Herman's life.

1868 Valaam Monastery publishes the first official biography of St. Herman.

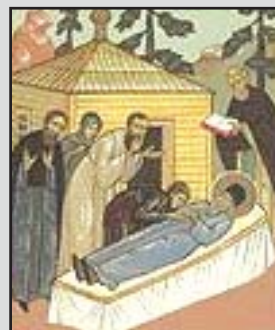
1903 The *Great Russian Encyclopedia*

compares St. Herman to the desert Fathers of the early Church.

1969 The "Metropolia's" Great Council of Bishops

announces its intention to glorify St. Herman.

1970 St. Herman is glorified in rites celebrated at Kodiak's Holy Resurrection Church.



Alaska: When wise stewardship spells survival!

Blessing of Water in the land of Saint Herman highlights new threat to Alaska Native way of life

For many years, His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, has labored to build a greater awareness of the need to protect and preserve the environment as a necessary commitment to stewardship – to manage wisely all creation as a gift of the Creator Himself.

In mid-January 2011, His Grace, Bishop Benjamin, transformed Patriarch Bartholomew's "talk" into "walk" – literally! – as he set foot onto Alaska's frozen Six Mile Lake to bless waters that are being threatened with pollution that could destroy the local villagers' cherished way of life.

Transported from Anchorage by a two-engine Navajo bush plane through Lake Clark Pass to the Tanaina Athabaskan [Indian] village of Nondalton, Bishop Benjamin, accompanied by Igumen Gerasim, Archpriest Michael Oleksa, Barry Migyanko, and videographer Hanna Craig, joined the faithful on the shore of the lake, which connects Lake Iliamna with Lake Clark.

"Situated on the eastern boundary of an area three times the size of Manhattan Island, Nondalton has been targeted by the

Northern Dynasty/Anglo-American corporations to become the world's largest open pit copper and gold mine, threatening the world's largest salmon fishery," explained Father Michael, Acting Chancellor of the Diocese. "The Orthodox villages of Newhalen, Igiugig, Levelock, Koliganek, New Stuyahok, Ekwok, Portage Creek, Naknek, and South Naknek and the city of Dillingham are all threatened by the opening of the Pebble Mine, which would become the world's largest consumer of deadly cyanide as it processes and separates the ores.

Erection of a 740 foot high earthen dam five times larger than one that recently collapsed in Hungary, poisoning the Danube River, would contain tons of pollutants and poisons – in an earthquake zone, no less!

"Hundreds of Orthodox Alaska Natives have banded together to oppose the State of Alaska's authorizing the development of the Pebble Project," Father Michael said. "The Diocese of Alaska has expressed its support for them in their struggle to save their culture, their way of life, and their commitment to the land that has sustained them and their ancestors for the last 12,000 years. In 2009, the Diocese passed a unanimous resolution, invoking God's blessing on any development that would improve the economy and enhance the quality of life in rural Alaska and withholding such approval for any efforts that threatened to pollute or poison the ecosystem.

"The Alaska Native people are 'the voice of the earth' and must now speak up to defend and preserve the land that has sustained them for millenia," Father Michael stated. "Since Northern Dynasty and Anglo-American are Canadian and British corporations, the profits from the Pebble Mine would largely flow outside the United States, while leaving tons of debris, equal to 3000 pounds for every person, man, woman and child on earth, at the end of the mining operation."

A similar mining proposal on the Kuskokwim River, according to Father Michael would "impact even more of our

Stewardship to 26



Bishop Benjamin blesses Six Mile Lake [left] and Lake Iliamna.



It's the little things that mean a lot!

Archpriest John Breck

A good many years ago, Conciliar Press published a brochure, written by Frederica Matthewes-Green, titled *12 Things I Wish I Had Known*, meaning before her first visit to an Orthodox church. It's very much worth reading by all of us, long-time Orthodox parishioners, as well as first-time visitors.

Something similar needs to be written for persons who have recently been received into the Orthodox Church. The focus this time should be on small, but important, details concerning what we call the "Orthodox ethos." This includes such things as the way we traditionally make the sign of the cross, the way we stand or sit during a liturgical service, and the attitude we bring with us as we enter into church and participate in communal worship.

With a large number of people entering Orthodoxy from other Christian traditions or from none, attitudes and behaviors taken for granted in traditional Orthodox countries tend often, and quite naturally, to change under the influence of American popular culture. We are perhaps the most casual people on earth, addressing strangers over the phone by their first name, slouching comfortably when we stand or sit, talking loudly and profusely when we want to make a point, and so on. It's understandable, if regrettable, that these behaviors carry over into Church life, including during services of worship.

People do what they see others doing. It's important, then, that we recognize the power of example. In the best of times, little children will imitate their parents and others as they enter the church, venerate icons, pray quietly or listen to the readings, and wait for the opening blessing. If parents, or others, habitually arrive late to service, talk to neighbors during the reading of the Hours, stand with their hands in their pockets, or sit slouched with legs crossed, then the children will do the same. If parents, or others, make the sign of the cross casually (in "vain repetition") and in non-Orthodox fashion, then the children – and other newcomers to the faith – will tend to do the same.

There are a few things, then, that ought to be taught and stressed about attitudes, gestures and other behaviors, not just for the sake of decorum, but because they have a profound influence on spiritual life and growth. Such things as arriving for a service on time, unless unforeseen events make it necessary to enter the church once the service has begun. Or entering church quietly, greeting others warmly, yet refraining from conversation. Or standing, unless we really need to sit, in respectful silence and in prayer, as an inner preparation for what is to come. And once the service begins, to continue in that attitude, with the heart and mind open to the mystery of grace that unfolds in and around us.

It is not unusual to see recent converts from the Catholic or
Little things to 10

Little things from 9

Episcopalian traditions make the sign of the cross in the usual Western fashion. If the Orthodox manner has developed as it has – the tips of the first three fingers of the right hand pressed together, the last two folded into the palm, touching first the forehead, then the chest, then the right shoulder and finally the left – it is because this gesture represents an essential confession of faith. It affirms our belief in and appeal to the Holy Trinity, it manifests our faith in the divine-humanity of Christ, and it leads toward the place of the heart, the temple of the Holy Spirit. Gestures, every bit as much as words, attest to our belief, our deepest convictions, and they reinforce those convictions through movements of the body.

Two other little but important things need to be said, both to the newly chrismated and to adult cradle Orthodox. Our priests usually preach without text or notes, although they are perfectly free to use either. Especially when the priest uses no such support, preaching is a demanding task. It requires an extraordinary amount of concentration, both on the message he is seeking to convey, and on the people he is addressing. If a baby is howling somewhere in the congregation, it can be terribly distracting. Common sense and a concern for both the priest and the parishioners dictate that parents of a noisy child simply leave quietly for a few minutes (to the narthex or an adjoining room), then return once the child has recovered a little composure.

A final point concerns receiving Communion. In many parishes, communicants make the sign of the cross and/or kiss the chalice immediately after they receive Communion. This well-meaning and pious gesture can be disastrous when it jostles the chalice and leads to the spilling of consecrated wine.

All of this has a practical significance of which we need to be aware, and that awareness should lead our priests and catechists to include it in the basic education provided to prospective converts and to ordinary parishioners. More importantly, it has to do with our spiritual growth, the development of attitudes and behaviors that can guide and fortify us in our movement toward the Kingdom of God. To enter into church in silence, to stand in quiet awe before the mystery of the altar, to open the heart in common prayer to the Lord, to profess and proclaim our faith with words and gestures, and to unite ourselves in Holy Communion with Christ and with one another: this is the essence of spiritual life – life in the Spirit – and it helps reshape and recreate us, from our self-centered sinfulness to the “perfection,” to the God-given grace, to which Christ calls us.

He alone has done the great things to make our salvation possible. Our task is to assume “the little things” that represent our part of the “synergy,” the cooperative effort between Him and ourselves, without which there is no salvation at all. ■

Fr. John, a former professor at St. Sergius Institute, Paris; St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY; and St. Herman's Seminary, Kodiak, AK, is a well known author and speaker.

Dispelling the myths

Recent study of US Oriental and Eastern Orthodox parishes produces some fascinating results

For years, reliable information on various aspects of Orthodox Christianity in North America has been scant, at best. With the recent release of the *Census of Orthodox Christian Churches in the USA*, however, a more accurate profile of US Orthodoxy has emerged, and its findings in many respects are nothing less than fascinating.

Conducted by Alexei D. Krindatch, research consultant to the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, the census was undertaken as a part of the national *Religious Congregations and Membership Study 2010*. It provides information on parishes, monastic communities, membership, and attendance across the jurisdictional spectrum. Even more astonishing is that data used in the study was received directly from local parishes rather than “official” Church headquarters or dioceses.

The census carefully notes that it provides “information only on persons who are – at least marginally – involved in Church life and, therefore, are known to the local Orthodox parishes,” adding that, in line with the experience of other religious traditions in the US, there can be “a significant number of persons who were once baptized in the Orthodox Church and who still consider themselves Orthodox Christians, but who do not participate or attend at all.” In other words, the study provided a census of members of US parishes rather than a census of the entire Orthodox Christian population in America.

In any instance, the study's findings are fascinating and put to rest some of the myths – especially those involving the number of adherents – that for years have made even a moderately accurate profile impossible. Among the census' conclusions:

- Based on stats reported by parishes, there are roughly 817,000 adherents of the various Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions in the US, with an additional 277,000 members of the Coptic, Armenian, Malankara Indian, and other Oriental Churches. The combined total number of parishes is 2,380.
- From 2000 until 2010, the total number of Oriental and Eastern Orthodox parishes in the US increased by 16 percent. Experiencing the greatest percentage increase in the number of new parishes were the Bulgarian Patriarchal Diocese [+122%], the Romanian Patriarchal Archdiocese [+121%], and the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church [+89%]. Only three groups – the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, the Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Armenian Apostolic Church of America [Catholicosate Cilicia] – experienced a decline in their respective number of parishes.
- While the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America [GOA] is the largest in terms of parish members, the Orthodox Church in America has the greatest number of parishes and missions. The smallest jurisdiction is the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America, with two parishes and a total membership of 700 faithful.

Census to 26

The pleasures of gratitude

“It would be better to simply say thanksgiving is the experience of Paradise” [Fr. Alexander Schmemmann]

Archpriest Alexander Garklavs

It is impossible to be human and not feel gratitude. Gratitude is one of the fundamental virtues. Expressed as thanksgiving, whether as an offering or an act of adoration, gratitude frames our orientation towards God. “Let us come into the Lord’s presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise” [Psalm 95:2].

The fullness of life, by which we understand life that is characterized by peace, wisdom, joy, love, and humility, cannot exist without a genuine sense of gratitude. We may not always be aware of the need to be grateful, just as we may not always be thinking of the need to be compassionate, patient, and loving. But rooted firmly within our spiritual nature and marking out the contours of our souls, combined with the need for love and forgiveness, is the divinely implanted capacity to offer thanks.

Living without gratitude is not life. To be conscious of living implies being conscious of life and everything that makes life possible. This naturally leads us to the contemplation of God’s greatness, love, and kindness. In giving thanks, we rejoice in the knowledge that everything we have, and life itself, is a gift. Gratitude is our natural human reaction to the awesome magnificence of God and His creation. In gratitude we accept who we are, satisfied with what we have and appreciative for everything that surrounds us. Peace and true pleasure come from that calm acceptance. Quiet dignity and humble fulfillment displace the anxiety of restless souls when true gratitude exists.

Because gratitude is so important to our psychic makeup, its absence is a serious spiritual malady. The lack of gratitude is connected to very serious sins. When it becomes part of habitual behavior, it is one of the most pernicious of evils. Judas Iscariot’s treachery is understood in terms of ingratitude, as we sing at Matins on Great and Holy Thursday. The apostles, Christ’s “faithful companions,” cry out in thanksgiving while “feeding upon the divine Word. In contrast, Judas is like those who ate manna in the wilderness, “yet while food was in their mouth, in their ingratitude they spoke against God.” The ungrateful Judas, “in his impiety, still carrying the heavenly Bread in his mouth, went and betrayed the Savior.” Ingratitude, linked to greed and envy, leads to deceit and treachery. It is a vice that ranks with the worst of sins, as seen in Dante’s *Inferno*, where Judas, in the nethermost depth of hell, is gnawed at by Lucifer.

A celebration. Gratitude and thanksgiving are basic components of Christianity, together with love and forgiveness. The central sacramental and liturgical celebration of the Church is the Divine Liturgy, the Eucharist – in essence, a Service of Thanksgiving. During the Divine Liturgy, an abundance of prayers expressing thanks to God are offered, explicitly during the Anaphora, when our gifts of bread and wine become the consecrated Body and Blood of Christ. But thanksgiving is not limited to the Eucharistic celebration. Thanksgiving is at the heart of *all* prayer. “Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to the Lord, bless His Name” [Psalm 100:4]. Gratitude is humanity’s primary response to God. It is, at once, the adoration of the Supreme Being and the recognition that only because of the Creator of all do “we live and move and have our being.”

Thanksgiving is apparent in the Old Testament acts of sacrificial offering – those of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others. It is with the advent of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, that we come to comprehend that thanksgiving is a key in the process of spiritual maturation. When one of the ten lepers healed by Christ returns to give thanks, Jesus acknowledges the act as “praise to God” [Luke 17: 17]. The Synoptic account of the institution of the Holy Eucharist underscores the fact that Jesus “gives thanks” before communing the apostles. Among Saint Paul’s most exalted words is the passage in his Epistle to the Philippians, proclaimed on Palm Sunday: “Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” [Philippians 4:7].

Following the apostolic paradigm, Christian practice and piety always includes direct and implied reference to thanksgiving. Saint Gregory of Nyssa wrote that “through God’s mercy the riches poured out on us are many, and our response to them can only be prayer and thanksgiving. Even if we spent our entire life in communion with God, engaged in prayer and thanksgiving, our recompense to Him would be as insignificant as if we had only just begun to pray and be thankful.” While gratitude

Chancellor to 12



Chancellor from 11

may be first offered for the material gifts which sustain our life – air, water, food, etc. – the Church Fathers remind us that greater thanks is due to Our Lord for His spiritual blessings. Saint Ephrem the Syrian proclaims that we “mortals should be grateful to the Son of God, who liberated us from the captivity in which we were held by death because of our sins. He destroyed death, by descending into hell, and freed those held in the tombs. Who will not acknowledge Him for His kindness to us mortal beings?”

The offering of thanksgiving is formulated within the liturgical and prayer life of the Church. There are specific prayers of thanksgiving – those after the reception of the Holy Eucharist, after the birth of a child, and before and after meals – as well as general prayers of thanksgiving celebrating some achievement. But a deeper realization of gratitude leads us to contemplate just how inadequate our thanksgiving is, how little we truly appreciate the many rich blessings that are bestowed on us. Here thanksgiving leads to heartfelt contrition and repentance. “So you want to know how to express thanksgiving?” writes Saint John Chrysostom. “Confess your sins! This is an expression of thanksgiving to God. Those who sincerely confess their sins reveal that they recognize their guilt in committing a multitude of transgressions and the corresponding lack of proper punishment from God. For that we can only thank God.”

With the weight of such Christian Tradition behind us, we may wonder why we often lack any gratitude at all. We live in relative comfort and ease, despite today’s less-than-robust economy. Compared to other regions of the world, we are blessed in many ways. Yet all too often we succumb to envy and greed, craving more and more money, property, possessions, and fame. Perhaps in imitation of their parents, we see children developing greed early on in their development. “Gratitude is a fruit of great cultivation,” Samuel Johnson said. Teaching children to say “thank you” is a good first step, but effort is needed to stem the easy acquisition of avarice and covetousness. An important facet of becoming an emotionally balanced adult is learning that gratitude is the secret to being content in life, to living in peace with oneself and in harmony with others.

Gratitude is strongest in times of want and weakest at times of abundance. This is one of life’s greatest ironies. Listen to the stories of people who went through hard times, such as those who lived through the Great Depression or the years of World War II. Certainly there were horrible and frightful moments of terror that elicit pain. But enduring through those moments, one acquires immense appreciation for the simple things that make life possible. Genuine and deep gratitude are felt by all who endure and survive difficulties. Ironically, in times of abundance, gratitude is often lacking.

Gratitude requires cultivation, as Johnson said. And as Orthodox Christians, we have a great deal for which we should be thankful, not only during formal liturgical celebrations or on major family occasions, such as Christmas or Pascha, but every day, as we gather around the “family altar,” the kitchen or dining room table – the “hearth” of bygone days – to break bread as the “home church.” In so doing, life is transformed into an endless Liturgy, a Service of Thanksgiving, a continual response to our fundamental call as a worshipping people, ever grateful for “the wonderful things He has done for us.” ■

Archimandrite Matthias elected to Midwest See

Election follows nomination by Midwest Diocesan Assembly

Priestmonk Matthias [Moriak] was canonically elected by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America to fill the vacant see of Chicago and the Midwest on November 16, 2010. He succeeds His Eminence, Archbishop Job, who fell asleep in the Lord in December 2009. Following a lengthy search process, Father Matthias was nominated from a slate of three candidates by delegates to the Midwest Diocesan Assembly at Saint Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN on

October 6, 2010. His name was then submitted to the Holy Synod for canonical election.

On November 18, Father Matthias was elevated to the dignity of archimandrite. He will be consecrated to the episcopacy at Christ the Savior Church, Chicago, on Saturday, April 30, 2011, followed by his installation at Chicago’s Holy Trinity Cathedral the following morning.

Born David Lawrence Moriak in Cleveland, OH on April 4, 1949, the son



Archimandrite
Matthias

of Lawrence and the late Gladys Mae Moriak, Bishop-elect Matthias was baptized at Cleveland’s Saint Theodosius Cathedral, where he and his family were members.

At the age of 12, he moved with his family to Parma, OH, and began attending a newly formed mission of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, where he began reading the Hours and the Epistle. He had contemplated joining the Marine Corps after his 1967 graduation from Parma High School, until he met His Grace, Bishop John [Martin] of the Carpatho-Russian Diocese, who inspired him to enter Christ the Saviour Seminary, Johnstown, PA.

In June 1972, he graduated from the seminary; married his wife, Pani Jeannette; and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John.

Bishop-elect Matthias’ pastoral experience has been extensive. He planted a mission parish dedicated to Saint Paul the Apostle in Freehold, NJ, in 1975. In 1982, he assumed the

Bishop-elect to 26

Holy Synod members sign important statements

Landmark statements on autocephaly, OCA/ROCOC relations

At their fall session at the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America's Chancery November 16-18, 2010, members of the Holy Synod of Bishops finalized the text of a pastoral letter on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the OCA's autocephaly.

The letter, the text of which was released on the OCA web site at www.oca.org/news/2340 on December 2 and appears below, affirms that autocephaly remains "a gift which still stands at the heart of our ecclesial life and serves as the basis for understanding ourselves."

Concurrently, the hierarchs gave their blessing to a joint statement, "Relations Between the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia," initially drafted by members of the OCA and ROCOR Commissions at their meeting in Sea Cliff, NY, October 5-6, 2010. [See www.oca.org/news/2289 and www.oca.org/news/2285 for background information.] The text, which received the approval of the OCA and ROCOR hierarchs, was posted on the OCA web site at www.oca.org/news/2353 on December 14, and appears below. ■

InDepth

To the Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America: On Autocephaly

The Pastoral Letter of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America
Nativity Fast 2010

Now, therefore, you 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, in Whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

— *Ephesians 2:19-22*

The Orthodox Church in America is autocephalous not in order to be self-sufficient and isolated, but in order to be in living communion and close contact with all Orthodox Churches... The Orthodox Church in America received autocephaly not in order to be master of Orthodox unity in America but in order to be a servant of this unity.

— *Dmitri, Bishop of Dallas and the South/ Address to Patriarch Pimen on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Patriarchate / Moscow, 1978*

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

Forty years ago, the Orthodox Church in America received its autocephaly from the Russian Orthodox Church and soon after glorified the first North American saint, our Venerable Father Herman of Alaska. The Holy Synod of Bishops gives
Autocephaly to 24

Relations between the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Joint Statement of
the Commissions of the OCA and the ROCOR
October 2010

The Orthodox Church in America [OCA] and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia [ROCOC] share a single origin – the local Church of Russia – and a long history on the North American continent. It was the Russian Church that first sent missionaries to America, established the first parishes, sent the first bishops and established the first dioceses. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, the North American Diocese of the Russian Church was the principal canonical ecclesiastical authority here, and although there were clergy and parishes of differing cultures and languages, many were in the archpastoral care of the bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church. Therefore, there is no question that the formation of multiple jurisdictions on this continent was largely due to the ecclesiastical chaos that ensued after the Revolution of 1917.

The life and witness of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century was marked by violent persecution at the hands of the totalitarian atheist Bolshevik regime brought to power by the communist revolutionaries in 1917. The decades of persecution included the martyrdom of bishops, priests, monastics, and lay people in overwhelming numbers and in numerous killing fields and gulags. Thousands of churches and monasteries were desecrated and destroyed. The voice of the Church was silenced in the public arena. Charitable and educational ministries were made illegal. In the midst of massive anti-religious campaigns
OCA/ROCOC to 25

Holy Synod receives Bishop Mark into OCA

Named Administrator of the Diocese of the South, Bishop of Baltimore

In a letter dated December 8, 2010, Metropolitan Philip, Primate of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, granted a canonical release to His Grace, Bishop Mark [Maymon] to enter the Orthodox Church in America.

The release came in response to the official request of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, on behalf of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America.

Upon receipt of Metropolitan Philip's letter, Metropolitan Jonah expressed his "appreciation for the harmonious relations of the Orthodox Church in America and the Antiochian Archdiocese, as shown most recently in the release of Bishop Mark.... We welcome Bishop Mark into the Orthodox Church in America and look forward to close collaboration in ministry and mission."

Born in New Albany, IN in 1958, Bishop Mark was baptized in the Roman Catholic tradition. He earned a B.A. and M.A. in Biblical Literature in 1985 and 1987 respectively from Oral Roberts University, where he accepted a position as Adjunct Professor of Old Testament. After his conversion to Orthodox Christianity in 1989, he earned a Master of Theology degree from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY.

After his ordination to the diaconate and priesthood in 1997, he served Antiochian parishes in Beaver Falls, PA, and Grand Rapids, MI. In December 2004, he was consecrated to the episcopacy at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Damascus, Syria, and appointed bishop of the Antiochian Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest.

Effective January 1, 2011, Bishop Mark began his service as Auxiliary to Metropolitan Jonah with the title Bishop of Baltimore and Administrator of the OCA Diocese of the South.

Bishop Mark, who will reside in Dallas, has already visited a number of diocesan parishes and missions and is slated to meet with the Diocesan Council in February. ■



Bishop Mark of Baltimore

Metropolitan Jonah, OCA representatives guests of ROCOR Synod

History was made on December 8, 2010, as His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, met with members of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia [ROCOR] at the invitation of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, ROCOR First Hierarch.

The meeting was the first of its kind since December 11, 1950.

Other OCA guests included His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky, and Alexis Liberovsky, OCA Archivist, all of whom participated in the drafting of the Joint Statement of the Commissions of the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, titled "Relations Between the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia." The statement was drafted by members of the OCA and ROCOR Commissions at a their meeting in Sea Cliff, NY October 5-6, 2010.

[Visit www.oca.org/news/2289 and www.oca.org/news/2285 for background information.]

The statement – approved by the ROCOR Synod of Bishops on October 25 and the OCA Holy Synod at its fall session November 16-18 – was released in mid-December. The text appears on page 13 of this issue of *The Orthodox Church*.

The hierarchs also discussed a number of other issues, including the continuation of work of the OCA and ROCOR Commissions, the concelebration of hierarchs, the Episcopal Assembly, and joint efforts in the areas of liturgical translation, publications, and hospital, prison, youth, and other ministries.

Informal discussion and fellowship continued during the luncheon which followed the Synod session.

The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia observed its 90th anniversary in December 2010. ■

Metropolitan Jonah and OCA representatives at meeting with the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.



With Christ we overcome the world

Metropolitan Jonah on the sanctity of life

The Orthodox Church is like Saint John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness. We, like him, preach a message of repentance and the remission of sins in the new desert, the decadent culture of the modern West, mired in the chaos of moral collapse.

The Orthodox Church's message is a message of hope, of healing, of the transformation of one's life, of attaining to the fullness of personhood, of the realization of the divine potential in each human being. Yet, this message requires not only acceptance, but a voluntary cooperation by those who accept it. The Church demands a serious discipline of all who would be members, all who would follow this straight, narrow, and difficult path that leads to salvation. It is a way that demands that we be crucified to the world and its desires, dead to the flesh and its demands, so that we can focus solely on God.

The culture of this world cries out for "justice." It demands vengeance, and it despises the forgiveness of God. It cries out for bread in the wilderness; and when it is not satisfied with bread, it demands meat. It ignores the radiant Presence of God, and laments the fleshpots of Egypt. Nothing can satisfy its endless lusts for money, sex and power. In terror, it refuses to even stand in silence and contemplate the abyss of death, ever trying to distract itself from the ultimate annihilation it so boldly preaches. This complete denial of death leads it to the kind of decadence that has overtaken us: greed, hedonism, and licentiousness, which have led to gender confusion, depersonalization, and the loss of value of human life. A culture of hedonism leads only to the narcissism of a solitary individual, enslaved by his/her lusts, using others for the gratification of the passions.

The world validates abortion, the sacrifice of the life of an innocent child for the convenience of the mother, oblivious to the suffering it will cause that very woman. It depersonalizes the child as a "fetus," while at the same time developing technologies to save nearly identical fetuses in troubled pregnancies. The criterion is not the life of the child; the criterion is simply the desire of the parent: whether the parent wants the child or not. If so, no expense is spared. If not, it is a useless bother, a mass of flesh to be excised like a tumor. What is left, however, is a lifetime of regret, guilt, self-hatred and self-loathing. This is not just an act, but a state of sin.

The last thing the world wants to hear about is sin. And if it refuses to admit sin, neither can it receive forgiveness. Often rightly it cries out against the injustice of the hypocrisy of judgment and condemnation by those who are righteous in their own eyes. But no matter how loud the outcry, the reality of the sin remains, the broken lives and broken hearts. What it needs is to hear the call to repentance, and to heed it. It is the bitter medicine that alone will bring healing. But it is only bitter in that it is the toxin that destroys pride, which is the cancer at

the heart of the illness.

The Lord Jesus cries out through the Church, "Repent and receive the remission of your sins!" Whether those in the Church heed it or not, it is this good news that gives hope. To receive it is an act of humility, to accept the message of repentance, to transform one's life in obedience to Christ's teachings, is the means of life itself. It demands that we accept responsibility for our sins. But by accepting this responsibility, we overcome them and their effect through repentance. For having accepted responsibility for our own sins, we are no longer controlled by them; rather, we gain control over our own lives. We can no longer live by following our mindless passions and desires; rather, we must live deliberately, in a disciplined way, denying the passions of the mind and of the flesh.

The Church's discipline of life is strict, but ultimately, it is the path to true freedom. It is a path to salvation and sanctity, shown again and again in the lives of the saints. It is the path to true personhood and true maturity. Those who would try to change it, so that it accords with the values and standards of the world, miss the point that the Church's discipline, morality, and life is not of this world, and calls us above and beyond it. The Church's discipline, the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles passed on through the Fathers, is not judged by this world, but in fact is the conscience of the world, judging the world. The Church's discipline is the only way out of the morass of sin and brokenness, bitter self-enslavement and self-condemnation, and cycles of abuse.

The discipline of the Church brings us to freedom, because it not only is a code of behavior, but heals our souls, and allows us to give and accept forgiveness. This forgiveness, through repentance, cleanses, and purifies, and allows us to accept ourselves and others without judgment. Thus, we are free! We live in God's freedom, and the fullness of his love.

Thus, however we have sinned, we can be forgiven. Whether we have aborted a child, or consented to it, we can be forgiven. If we bear a child as a single mother, we can be accepted in the community of the Church with love. If we have judged and condemned others, and burn with resentment, we can be freed through repentance. No matter what we have done, no matter how broken we are or how completely we have messed up our lives, we can be healed, forgiven, accepted and loved. And then maybe we can forgive ourselves, and attain to that true freedom.

The Lord said, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." How true these words are! They are freedom and they are life. No matter how much the world has pulled us down, if we accept this light burden and easy yoke of the Orthodox discipline of life through repentance, He is faithful to forgive us our sins. And thus with Christ and in Christ, we overcome the world. ■

Web development team begins OCA web site upgrade

Following an extensive search, the OCA has engaged the services of a development team to upgrade its highly trafficked website.

Developing the site will be Priest John Schroedel, a highly experienced web developer and rector of Saint Juvenaly Mission, Kailua-Kona, HI. As owner of Orthodox Internet Services, he provides web hosting for hundreds of sites, and serves as Web Manager for Conciliar Media Ministries.

J. D. Graffam, owner of Simple Focus, also joins the team as web designer. His comprehensive services focus on usability, function and aesthetics.

Two additional team members, Ryan Platte and Virginia Nieuwsma, began their duties as Tech Manager and web site Managing Editor respectively on January 3, 2011. Mr. Platte brings 10 years of software development and web security management experience to the OCA, while Mrs. Nieuwsma's 29-year editorial career has included serving Conciliar Press, the Antiochian Archdiocese, and St. Vladimir's Seminary.

"These four professionals round out the team, which also includes Archpriest John Matusiak, Senior Editor, and Jessica Linke, Chancery Assistant," explains Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, OCA Secretary. "Work on revamping the site will continue through the first half of 2011. Visitors to www.oca.org can expect an upgrade that will increase the site's overall usability, offer expanded resources and information, and more accurately represent the OCA of today." ■

Holy Synod approves planting grants

At their fall session November 16-18, 2010, the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops approved the recommendation of the Department of Evangelization to award three Church Planting Grants for 2011.

Through the program, grants of up to \$25,000.00 for first year recipients, which must be used specifically to help fund a full-time resident priest and must be matched by the qualifying mission, deanery, or diocese, are awarded each year. Grants may be renewed for a maximum of three years. Since the program's inception over 15 years ago, grants have been awarded to some 30 missions, most of which have successfully transitioned to full parish status.

For the first time, the Archdiocese of Canada will fully fund a grant to one of its missions – Saint Aiden of Lindisfarne, Cranbrook, BC – served by Priest Richard Rene. Another "first" is the awarding of a full grant to the Diocese of Mexico to enable a priest to develop a string of new missions.

Also awarded a full first-year grant was Holy Resurrection Mission, Augusta, GA, where Priest Robert Royer serves as priest-in-charge.

Saint Peter the Aleut Mission, Lake Havasu City, AZ, was awarded a partial grant for 2011. Priest Peter E. Henry, rector, serves the growing community.

Completing the grant program is Holy Cross Mission, Greensboro, NC, which has experienced rapid growth due to the ministry of Priest Christopher Foley. ■

www.oca.org voted best jurisdictional web site of 2010

In December, the members of the OCA's web team were surprised to learn that www.oca.org was named "Best Jurisdictional Web Site" for 2010 by the Eastern Christian New Media Awards [ECNMA].

The ECNMA began in 2008 as "an opportunity for quality Eastern Christian outlets to gain higher visibility on the internet," reads the Awards' web site at ecawards.blogspot.com. The awards are open to all Oriental, Eastern Orthodox, and Eastern Rite Catholic sites and blogs. After nominations are received, voting is open to the public to determine winners.

Several other sites and blogs maintained by OCA clergy and lay persons also received "best of" awards, including

- **Best Domestic Blog:** *Journey to Orthodoxy* – <http://journeytoorthodoxy.com> [Fr. John Peck, AZ].
- **Best Individual Blog:** *Glory to God for All Things* – <http://fatherstephen.wordpress.com> [Fr. Stephen Freeman, TN].



Stephen Freeman, TN].

- **Best News Blog:** *Orthodox Christians for Accountability* – www.OCANews.org [Mark Stokoe, OH].
- **Best Theology Blog:** *Frontier Orthodoxy* – <http://journeytoorthodoxy.com> [Fr. John Peck, AZ].

Among the OCA clergy and laypersons receiving second-place awards were

- **Best Podcast:** *Speaking the Truth In Love* – <http://ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko> [Fr. Thomas Hopko, PA].
- **Best Theology Blog:** *Fr. Ted's Blog* – <http://frted.wordpress.com/> [Fr. Ted Bobosh, OH]. ■

Title to historic Church lands returned to Alaska

In an historic vote at their fall session September 20-23, 2010, OCA Metropolitan Council [MC] members voted unanimously to return title to the ownership of Orthodox Christians in Alaska all real estate the national Church has held in trust since 1867.

According to the Treaty of Cession that placed Alaska under US rule, ownership of the land and buildings was to be retained by the Orthodox Christians who worshiped therein with the legal deeded to the resident Orthodox bishop, to be held in trust for them. In 1870, when the Church's headquarters moved to San Francisco, the deeds went south as well. In 1904, the Archbishop's See once again moved, to New York City – and the deeds went east.

In 1923, Juneau Judge James Wickersham suggested that it would be prudent for the local bishop to hold the titles, rather than the head of the Church in New York.

After a lengthy discussion at the MC's spring 2010 session, Judge Ray Lanier, a MC member from the Diocese of the South, spent an exhausting week in Anchorage, studying records compiled by Ms. Grayce Oakley, the Alaskan Diocese's lands secretary, who had spent over four years compiling and cataloging all the deeds and their histories. Her work enabled the Church to act with proper diligence.

Today – nearly 90 years later – the OCA has heeded Judge Wickersham's counsel.

Additional details may be found on the OCA web site at www.oca.org/news/2272. ■

Archbishop Seraphim suspended, Bishop Irenee named Administrator

On November 30, 2010, the Holy Synod of Bishops named Bishop Irenee of Quebec City Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada following the suspension of Archbishop Seraphim Ottawa and Canada, who six days earlier appeared before the Winnipeg City Police and was charged with two counts of sexual assault of minors.

The decision to suspend the Archbishop came after careful deliberations and in line with the OCA's policies and procedures mandated in cases of sexual misconduct allegations.

Concurrently, the Holy Synod issued a detailed *Mandate for the Synodal Commission for the Investigation of Allegations against Archbishop Seraphim* – the complete text of which appears on the OCA web site at www.oca.org/PDF/NEWS/2010/2010-1201-mandateversionforpublicationrevb.pdf.

In early October, the Holy Synod, acting on the recommendation of the Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct in consultation with the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee, established a Synodal Commission to conduct an internal investigation. The Commission, which held its first meeting in early December, is headed Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania and includes as members Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania; Archpriest Richard Hawrish, coordinator; David Grier, secretary; Protopresbyter Mironne Klysh; Dr. Lila Amirali; and Dr. Thomas Kolivakis. Commission members will report their findings and recommendations to the Holy Synod and, through them, the Archdiocese of Canada and the Church at large.

In a November 25 statement addressed to the clergy and lay members of the Archdiocese of Canada's Diocesan Council, Igumen Alexander [Pihach], Chancellor of the Archdiocese, stated that the events "are alleged to have taken place 25 years ago, when the men making complaints were children. Therefore, a publication ban has been placed against the release of their names. Any release of their names is a violation of the Winnipeg court order.

"In accordance with very strong legal advice to do so, Archbishop Seraphim has remained silent to the allegations against him," the statement continues. "This provides the opportunity for his lawyer to obtain, through the courts, the evidence Winnipeg police have compiled. Archbishop Seraphim will then be able to respond to a full picture of the allegations made against him. Continued prayers are

requested for all concerned in this situation."

Anyone with relevant information should contact the Synodal Commission at PO Box 27058, Saskatoon, SK, Canada S7H 5N9 or investigation@oca.org. A dedicated telephone line – 306/974-1812 – became operational on December 15. All communications will remain confidential and will be referred directly to the Commission.

Background data may be found www.oca.org/news/2338, www.oca.org/news/2336, www.oca.org/news/2313, www.oca.org/news/2308, and www.oca.org/news/2282.

Additional information will be posted on the OCA web site as it becomes available. ■

New STOTS Dean installed

Archpriest Alexander Atty was installed as Dean and Chief Operating Officer of St. Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA on October 30, 2010.

The installation Service of Thanksgiving was celebrated at St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church, Wilkes Barre, PA.

OCA to 27



Strong Orthodox presence at March

Metropolitan Jonah, pictured with [from left] Bishop-elect Matthias and Bishops Michael, Tikhon, and Melchisedek, joined tens of thousands of participants at the annual March for Life in the US capital on January 24, 2011.

"Abortion creates a culture of death, which creates a culture of despair, which condemns a generation of women to self-hatred, to decades of guilt, to decades of despair," Metropolitan Jonah told the crowd that gathered for the pre-March rally.

Metropolitan Jonah also led Orthodox Christian marchers from across the US in prayers before the Supreme Court.

Also participating in the March were faculty members and students from Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, and Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY.

Further information and photos are available on the OCA web site at www.oca.org/news/2392. ■

Archpriest George Nedelkoff

Ft. Wayne, IN – Archpriest George Nedelkoff, retired pastor of Saint Nicholas Church here and former Chancellor of the Bulgarian Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America, fell asleep in the Lord on Thursday, December 30, 2010.

Born in Varna, Bulgaria, on August 16, 1926, he studied at Saint John of Rila Seminary, Sofia, Bulgaria, but emigrated to Vienna, Austria, as the Red Army entered his homeland. Ongoing studies in Saltzburg were interrupted with the end of World War II. He later studied at the Ukrainian Husbandry University, Regensburg, Germany, before emigrating to England, where studied at the University of Nottingham.

After arriving in the US, he married the former Maria Theodoroff in 1949. The following year, he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood by His Eminence, Metropolitan Andrey of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. He served parishes in Youngstown and Akron, OH and Pittsburgh, PA before assignment to Saint Nicholas Church, Fort Wayne, IN, where he served for 36 years until his retirement in 1992.

His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill elevated him to the rank of archpriest on September 27, 1964.

Father George authored many articles, pamphlets, and booklets on the Orthodox faith. In retirement, he published a bi-monthly bulletin for Bulgarian immigrants, endeavoring to teach them about the Orthodox Christian faith. During the cold war years, he helped many refugees from Bulgaria and Macedonia find work and lodging in the US.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Nicholas Church on January 8.

May Father George's memory be eternal! ■

Priest Peter Nicholas Milanovich

Orlando/Longwood, FL – Priest Peter Nicholas Milanovich, who was attached to Saint Stephen the Protomartyr Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on November 24, 2010.

The beloved husband of Mary Dotlich Milanovich; father of Donna Milanovich [George] Srajer, Nicholas Milanovich [deceased], and Bob [Cindy] Milanovich; and grandfather of Chas [deceased] and Garrett Milanovich and Hannah, Samuel, and Benjamin Srajer, Father Peter was born in Hobart, IN. After receiving an associate degree from Roosevelt University, Chicago, he served for three years in the US Army 1st division occupational forces in Germany. He lived in the Gary, IN area until 1965, when he and his family moved to central Florida.

He was ordained to the priesthood at the age of 40.

Funeral services were celebrated at Saint Stephen Church.

May Father Peter's memory be eternal! ■

Mrs. Katherine Matychak

Lopez, PA – Mrs. Katherine Gulick Matychak, mother of the Rev. Mother Christophora, Abbess of the Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA; Archpriest Andrew Matychak, Altoona, PA; and Andrea Anderson, Denver, PA, fell asleep in the Lord here on September 24, 2010.

A lifelong resident of Lopez and member of Saint Vladimir Church, she was born March 8, 1927. She married Andrew Matychak in 1947, and served faithfully as his beloved wife and mother to their three children. She also extended her love to her neighbors, her large extended family, and her many friends. Baking was her hobby, and no one left her home empty handed. She sang in the parish choir, which she directed for most of

her life, and often sang the responses by herself, even on the last Sunday of her life.

She is also survived by several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, a brother and sister, and the nuns of the Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA, who affectionately called her their "Grams."

His Grace, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, presided at funeral services and interment at Saint Vladimir Church and cemetery, assisted by her son and several priests. Responses were sung by the nuns of the Monastery of the Transfiguration.

May Mrs. Matychak's memory be eternal. ■

Mr. Flore Lekanov, Sr.

Kirkland, WA – Mr. Flore Lekanov, a leading defender of Alaska Native rights in the 20th century; and a member of Saint Katherine Mission here, fell asleep in the Lord on September 17, 2010.

One of 12 children born to Reader Anatoly and Agnes Lekanov, he grew up on Saint George in the Pribilof Islands. He and his family attended the island's only church, Saint George's, where he sang in the choir.

During World War II, the US government forced residents of Saint George and Saint Paul Islands to relocate to Funtler Bay near Juneau, an experience recorded in a 2005 PBS documentary, *The Aleut Story*, in which he and other survivors were interviewed. Ten percent of the evacuees, including one of Flore's sisters and both of his grandmothers, died from poor housing conditions and disease.

He earned a BA in Philosophy from Whitworth College and a MA in education from the University of Washington, Seattle, after which he taught in Alaskan villages and cities, including Sitka and Fairbanks. In Anchorage in 1975, he earned the distinction of becoming the first native Alaskan to hold the position of principal in a public school.

He also served as the director of anti-poverty programs for the state and a leader of efforts to defend native interests. He contributed to the formation of the Aleut Corporation, and he helped found and became the first chairman of the Alaska Federation of Natives in 1966. He also helped pave the way for the historic Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, and was present at the White House when President Richard Nixon signed it into law. In recognition of his service to the peoples of Alaska, he was recruited by the Nixon administration to become Deputy Director of Community Programs for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC, a position he held for two years.

After his retirement, he moved to Seattle, where he sang in the choir at Saint Katherine's and continued work on his yet-to-be-published memoirs.

At the time of his death, he was surrounded by his wife of 40 years, Mary, his children, and fellow parishioners. He passed his final hours greeting visitors with a warm smile, saying "thank you," and singing Orthodox hymns in the Aleut language.

May Mr. Lekanov's memory be eternal! ■

Mr. George Lichvarik

NAPLES, FL – Mr. George Lichvarik, a well known Orthodox Christian layman and fraternalist, fell asleep in the Lord here on August 27, 2010, two weeks after celebrating his 97th birthday. He had been in declining health for several months.

A long time Cleveland area resident and member of Saint Innocent Church, Olmsted Falls, OH, he and his wife retired to Florida, where they were members of Saint Demetrius Mission, Naples.

For many years he served as president and CEO of the Orthodox Society of America. He was instrumental in OSA's merger with the Loyal Christian Benefits Association and served as a member of its board of directors. He was active in the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, and other Church-related organizations. He also served as an auditor for the Diocese of the Midwest.

In Memoriam to 22

Photo: ACT/Paul Jeffrey



Children study in a quake-damaged school building in the rural Haitian village of Embouchure.

One year after

IOCC remains faithful to ministering to the needs of Haiti's most vulnerable earthquake victims

One year after a 7.0 earthquake devastated the lives of millions of Haitians, reminders of the disaster – and the ongoing consequences and major storms – are still being addressed by International Orthodox Christian Charities [IOCC].

“Beyond the immediate needs that emerged following the disaster, the earthquake has exposed the suffering of the Haitian people,” observed Constantine M. Triantafilou, IOCC executive director. “Much remains to be done to address the long-term need for permanent housing, clean water and sanitation, and other basic necessities that will help to restore justice, dignity and peace for the people of Haiti.”

IOCC has provided \$4 million in direct assistance to the people of Haiti since January 12, 2010. Still, the level of devastation that required one of the largest relief operations in history has been complicated by a fragile infrastructure, limited government capacity, and soaring poverty levels.

“The earthquake was the first of three major disasters that threatened Haitians this past year,” said Mark Ohanian, IOCC director of programs. “The frequent disasters and threats to public health call attention to the vulnerability of the Haitian people, the magnitude of the work ahead, and the continuing need for assistance.”

IOCC continues to focus its efforts on delivering basic food and hygiene items, providing assistance to schools, addressing health and hygiene needs, and mitigating the long-term effects of natural disasters.

“We are working on rebuilding schools that not only serve as centers for education, but are built to withstand hurricanes and other natural disasters, and will serve as disaster shelters,” explained Ohanian.

Other IOCC projects include reforestation programs that will help to prevent mudslides. Construction of sustainable sanitation facilities to contain waste and prevent the contamination of water supplies and prevent health threats like cholera are also underway.

IOCC, an agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, was established in 1992 as the official humanitarian aid agency of North America’s Orthodox Christians. IOCC has implemented programs in more than 35 countries around the world and is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance, and advocacy.

To help IOCC address the ongoing needs of disaster victims around the world, like those in Haiti, visit www.iocc.org, call toll free at 1-877-803-4622, or send a check or money order payable to IOCC to PO Box 630225, Baltimore, Md. 21263-0225. ■

Ministering to the most vulnerable
Frs. Barnabas and Pavlos of the Orthodox parish of St. Jean de Freres in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, visit with people still living in a tent city since the 2010 earthquake. More than one million Haitians living in temporary shelters remain vulnerable to tropical storms, water-borne disease, poor sanitation, and other threats.

Photo: IOCC





Teach like a champ! *By observing a few simple and focused principles, classroom management – even when dealing with preschoolers – is not as difficult as it seems!*

Getting a grip

Tips for managing your classroom – and ministering to your students!

Valerie Zahirsky

For those teachers who like practical examples and clear definitions, *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College* by Doug Lemov will be a welcome and useful tool. While the book offers a compilation of techniques used by successful public school teachers – the author has given these techniques names, and has divided them into sections such as “Structuring and Delivering Your Lessons,” “Engaging Students in Your Lessons,” and “Challenging Students to Think Critically” – much of what is found therein can easily and successfully be applied to the Church school experience.

The book is essentially about classroom management, and is geared toward teachers in the primary grades and middle school, with only a few examples from high school. It will be especially helpful to newer teachers; for those with many years of experience some of the topics are basic and familiar, but the book still provides a good refresher.

Encouraging reflection. One method Doug Lemov describes is called “Everybody Writes.” The teacher asks a question, one that requires thought and consideration. Then, rather than calling on someone to give a quick verbal answer, the teacher has everyone take some time to think, and then write a response. This is followed by discussion, but because the discussion has been preceded by mental and written

reflection on the students’ part, it will probably be fuller and deeper. This method is appropriate for Church schools, because the Orthodox faith provides innumerable “deep questions!”

Managing the classroom. A technique called “Strong Voice” includes several helpful ideas. One is that teachers should remember that they “speak” not only with their voices, but nonverbally as well. So, when giving directions, the teacher should stand straight and still, not doing anything else while speaking. To pass out papers or straighten the desk while giving directions will subtly diminish the importance of the teacher’s words.

Another suggestion is that a student should not be allowed to change the topic when the teacher is calling for a change in behavior. An example would be when the teacher says to a student, “David, please take your foot off Margaret’s chair.” David may reply, “But she keeps moving her chair back into my space.” The proper response, Doug Lemov says, is not “I’m not concerned right now with what Margaret is doing.” Rather, the teacher should continue to focus specifically on David, and what David is being told to do, not letting the topic be changed. Lemov suggests this response on the teacher’s part: “Right now, I need you to follow my directions and take your foot off Margaret’s chair.”

Challenging students to be critical thinkers. As teachers of the Orthodox Christian faith, we are eager to strengthen our students’ faith and knowledge. We have a rich tradition to share with them. But in our eagerness, realizing how much there is to teach and how little time we have, we may try to do too much. In one of his suggestions about challenging students to think critically, Doug Lemov cautions against asking more than one question at a time. He says that teachers are “most at risk of asking students more than one question when they’re excited about teaching....” That may apply to many of us!

One example might be a question like this: “What kind of person was Zacchaeus, and why did Jesus stop to talk with him?” This is really *two* questions, and the answers demand two different kinds of thinking. To answer the first part, a student must consider the character traits of Zacchaeus, and the kind of life he had led. The second part of the question requires a student to consider the ways Jesus dealt with sinners, repentant people, and those who seemed really interested in being with Him, for Zacchaeus was all of these things. We need to decide, as teachers, which of these we want students to think about and focus on, and not try to have them do several kinds of thinking at once.

Teach Like a Champion is not altogether innovative. Others have written about using praise effectively, how best to frame questions, checking for understanding, and many other topics that Doug Lemov covers. But his examples are helpful, and the book includes a DVD that shows good teachers in action. Many Church school teachers can benefit from what he has to offer. ■

Valerie Zahirsky chairs the OCA’s Department of Christian Education.

The repose of Serbian Metropolitan Christopher

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, presided at the funeral of His Eminence, Metropolitan Christopher [Kovacevich] of Libertyville and Chicago of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who fell asleep in the Lord on August 18, 2010.

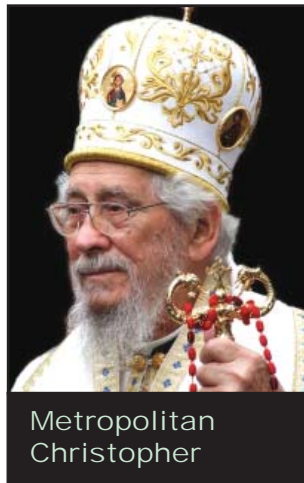
Shortly before his repose, Metropolitan Christopher had been diagnosed with bone and brain cancer, for which he was undergoing treatment.

Metropolitan Jonah was to have visited Metropolitan Christopher at his residence later that week.

A native of Galveston, TX, Metropolitan Christopher was born to Serbian immigrant parents. He attended Nashotah House Seminary, Nashotah, WI and graduated from Saint Sava Seminary, Libertyville, IL. After marriage, he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood. He subsequently earned a B.A. at the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Divinity from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA. He also completed courses and examinations for a doctorate at the Chicago Theological Seminary.

While ministering to parishes in Pennsylvania and Illinois he served as chaplain at four universities. He assisted his parishes to become bilingual in their worship and education programs. He also was active in the defense of unity and canonical order in the Serbian Orthodox Church during a period of schism. As a priest, he served as spiritual father, counselor, youth worker, administrator, educator, and above all, in priestly ministry at the holy altar. Widowed in 1970, he is the father of four and the grandfather of nine.

Elevated to the episcopate in 1978 by the Assembly of Bishops in Belgrade and tonsured with the monastic name Christopher, he became the first American-born bishop to serve a diocese of the Serbian Church in North America. As Bishop of Eastern America and Canada, he developed a diocesan religious education program. Active in ecumenical circles, he served on the joint commission of Orthodox and Roman Catholic bishops and on the Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue, and he represented his Church in both the National and World Councils of Churches. In 1991, he was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan of the Midwestern Diocese of his Church, thereby becoming its Primate. Most recently, he was named Metropolitan of Libertyville and Chicago. In May 2010, he served as secretary of the Assembly of



Metropolitan Christopher

Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America.

Five Serbian hierarchs concelebrated at the funeral at Chicago's Holy Resurrection Cathedral: His Grace, Bishop Georgije of Canada; His Grace, Bishop Longin of the New Gracanica-Midwest Diocese; His Grace, Bishop Mitrophan of the Eastern Diocese; His Grace, Bishop Maxim of the Western American Diocese; and His Grace, Bishop Irinej of Australia and New Zealand. Also concelebrating were His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate [OCA]; His Grace, Bishop Peter of Cleveland [ROCOR]; His Grace, Bishop Mark of Toledo [Antiochian Archdiocese]; His Grace, Bishop Daniel of the Western Eparchy [Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA]; and His Grace, Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos [Greek Orthodox Metropolitanate of Chicago].

May Metropolitan Christopher's memory be eternal! ■

Assembly web site makes its debut

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America's web site made its debut on December 17, 2010 at www.episcopalassembly.org.

In addition to information on the Assembly's history, establishment, and current activities, the site features comprehensive lists of all member Churches and hierarchs; a wealth of informative documents, statements, and addresses highlighting its inaugural meeting; directories of Assembly agencies, endorsed organizations, commissions, consultations, and committees; a soon-to-be expanded directory of parishes and institutions; and a wealth of other information and resources.

The Assembly – originally known as the Episcopal Assembly of North and Central America – met for the first time in New York, NY, May 26-28, 2010, under the chairmanship of His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Over 60 Orthodox Christian hierarchs, including His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah and the diocesan and auxiliary bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, participated.

The Assembly is the result of the decision of the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, which met in Chambésy Switzerland in June 2009, in response to the decision of the extraordinary Synaxis of the Heads of the Autocephalous Churches convened by His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. One of twelve assemblies convened around the world in regions where there is no singular Orthodox presence, the Assembly includes all active canonical bishops who reside and minister in North and Central America and will meet annually. The Assembly is the successor to the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA]. ■

TURKEY

An important step for Ecumenical Patriarchate

Turkey complied with a European Court of Human Rights ruling on November 29, 2010 by returning a 19th century orphanage on Buyukada Island to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The move, according to Associated Press, is likely to appease the European Union, which has also called on the Turkish government to reopen the Patriarchate's theological seminary and return dozens of other properties, including schools and churches, seized decades ago.



A jubilant Patriarch Bartholomew *displays deed to orphanage.*

The European Court ruled in June that the land was registered to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, giving it de facto legal status to the building.

Turkey is also under pressure from the European Union to reopen the Patriarchate's Halki theological seminary that trained many Church leaders, including His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, before it was closed by the authorities in 1971. The government, keen to boost its bid to join the EU, has in recent years taken steps to improve the rights of its non-Muslim minorities, but has so far refrained from any move on the seminary. Still, there have been positive signals that the government will reopen the school, as it has been working on a formula to bring it in line with Turkey's university system.

"We are optimistic that our government will reopen the school next year at the latest after nearly half a century has passed since the school closed in 1971," Patriarch Bartholomew said in July 2010. ■

"It is an important development to show respect for law, democracy and minorities," said Cem Murat Sofuoglu, an attorney for the Patriarchate, after receiving the title deed. "A right has been taken back."

Turkey took control of the 19th century building in 1997, many years after it was abandoned, on the grounds that it belonged to another foundation and had fallen into disuse.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate, however, said the government had refused to issue the necessary permits to maintain and repair the building, which is one of the largest wooden structures in the world.

Metropolitan John of Nicaea

Turku, Finland – His Eminence, Metropolitan John of Nicaea, fell asleep in the Lord here on July 1, 2010.

Born in 1923, he was consecrated to the episcopacy in 1969. In 1987, he was appointed Metropolitan of Helsinki, a position he held until his voluntary resignation in 2001, when he was named Metropolitan of Nicaea, a titular See of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

While his views were often considered controversial, he was widely known as a theologian, translator, author, ecumenist, and expert in canon law. According to the Finnish Church web site www.ort.fi, he will be remembered by the faithful as "a caring and respected shepherd."

May Metropolitan John's memory be eternal! ■

AFGHANISTAN

US, Georgian chaplains celebrate Nativity

Archpriest Jerome Cwiklinski, US Navy Chaplain and a priest of the Orthodox Church in America, and an Orthodox chaplain from the Republic of Georgian concelebrated the Divine Liturgy on the Great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord for military personnel here on January 7, 2011.

In a video interview posted at <http://www.dvidshub.net/video/105148/us-and-georgian-service-members-come-together-worship>, Father Jerome, who serves with Marine Corps Forces Central Command, discusses the significance of the event. It contains moving images of the Liturgy in addition to commentary.

As an aside, Father Jerome noted that "what goes around, comes around. In 1944, Saint Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN contributed the first Orthodox priest to the Navy Chaplain Corps – Father Alexander Seniavsky. Since World War II, the Orthodox Chaplaincy perpetuated from the legacy of Father Alexander to the present time and the Global War on Terrorism. Another spiritual son of Saint Mary's, Lance Corporal Michael Memorich, was a recent beneficiary of that legacy, as I visited him in Afghanistan."

"We hope that the faithful will alert Orthodox Christian service members they know who are serving in Afghanistan and advise them to contact their respective unit chaplain to make arrangements to visit with an Orthodox chaplain," asks Father Jerome.

Father Jerome and Priest Christopher Moody, a National Guard chaplain and priest of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America currently deployed to Afghanistan, provided coverage in Afghanistan's northeastern region in December and January. ■

Autocephaly from 12

thanks to Almighty God for the prayerful intercessions of Saint Herman and of all the saints who shone forth on this continent and likewise celebrates and affirms the gift of autocephaly. By the grace of God, this great gift was the result of a long process of reconciliation between the Metropolia and the Moscow Patriarchate, whose relations had tragically gone astray, a gift which still stands at the heart of our ecclesial life and serves as the basis for understanding ourselves.

At the same time, much has transpired in the past forty years within the life of the Orthodox Church in America. A most significant event took place on May 25-27 of this year with the convening of the first Episcopal Assembly for the region of North and Central America. All of the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church in America participated in this historic gathering of the canonical Orthodox Bishops of this region. Our Holy Synod is grateful to His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who wisely undertook the task of convening the Fourth Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambésy, Switzerland in June of 2009. This Preconciliar Conference resulted in the establishment, with the blessing of all the Orthodox Patriarchs, of an Episcopal Assembly for our region which has as its goal the “swift healing of every canonical anomaly” [*Message of the Patriarchs 3.12*] and the working out of a solution to Orthodox administrative unity on this continent.

This event, as well as the recent dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, has provided us with an opportunity to enter more fully into the pan-Orthodox process in North America. As such we have reflected on how we understand our life and work and how these can become a means for greater and deeper interrelationship with the other Orthodox Churches as we move towards authentic unity through the process of the Episcopal Assemblies.

As we reflect upon the past forty years, we affirm the following principles:

1. We understand ourselves to be an indigenous, multi-ethnic, missionary Church, laboring to bring Orthodox Christianity to all citizens of this continent.
2. We affirm that our historical reality derives from the Russian Orthodox Church and that we have humbly received and faithfully maintain the inheritance of the Russian Mission of 1794, the Diocese of Sitka in 1843, the Diocese of San Francisco in 1870, and its relocation to New York in 1907, and the Autocephaly of 1970.
3. As directed by the *Tomos*, we live as other self-governing Churches do: electing our own bishops and Primate, without confirmation by any other Synod; maintaining inter-Church relationships with all other Churches; and consecrating our own chrism.
4. As envisioned in the *Tomos*, we believe that the autocephaly given to us will be fully realized when the promise of Orthodox unity in North America is fulfilled, and the OCA together with all the Orthodox faithful in North America become one united Autocephalous Church of America, recognized by all other Orthodox Churches.
5. We commit ourselves to work within the Episcopal Assembly in order to realize the goal of unity.

We express our gratitude to all the Patriarchs for their care and ask all of the clergy, monastics and faithful of the Orthodox Church

in America to be of one mind and one heart to offer thanksgiving to God for the gift of the Church, whose mission in this world is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the people of North America. We ask the clergy and faithful to pray that we be worthy of the heritage of the saints who shone forth in North America in building up the Body of Christ, fulfilling these words of Scripture: “Speaking the truth in love, may [we] grow up in all things into Him Who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” [Ephesians 4:15-16].

Asking God’s blessings on all the flock,
The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America

The Most Blessed Jonah
Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada
Locum tenens of the Diocese of the Midwest
Locum tenens of the Diocese of the South

The Most Reverend Nathaniel
Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate

The Right Reverend Nikon
Bishop of Boston, New England and the Albanian Archdiocese

The Right Reverend Tikhon
Bishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

The Right Reverend Benjamin
Bishop of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West
Locum tenens of the Diocese of Alaska

The Right Reverend Alejo
Bishop of Mexico City and the Exarchate of Mexico

The Right Reverend Melchisedek
Bishop of Pittsburgh and the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania
Locum tenens of the Bulgarian Diocese

The Right Reverend Michael
Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

The Right Reverend Ireneë
Bishop of Quebec City and Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada

Archimandrite Matthias [Moriak]
Bishop-Elect of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest ■

Resources

OCN internships available

The **Orthodox Christian Network [OCN]** is offering six-month internships for undergrad and postgrad college students. Internships are available in Come Receive the Light, internet radio station, audience insight and research, audio engineering, communications/marketing/branding, design, multimedia, broadcast and reference libraries, podcasting, etc. Internships may be pursued locally. **Interested?** Send a letter of interest, resume, writing sample where applicable, and letter of recommendation from your parish priest to FrChris@stdemetrios.org. To learn more visit OCN's web site at www.myocn.net. ■

and by means of unjust laws, religious believers, both clergy and lay, were deprived of their rights and put on the margins of society as objects of derision and discrimination.

The decades of persecution were a time of human suffering and genocidal cruelty. These years were also a time of witness to Christ and faithfulness unto death. What the Russian Orthodox Church endured during Soviet rule affected Church life outside Russia.

In the Diocese of the Aleutians and North America, the loss of contact with the Church of Russia and the loss of support from Russia created confusion and even chaos in the midst of uncertainty. From this turmoil emerged the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America (popularly known as the North American Metropolia), which is today the Orthodox Church in America.

For the millions of refugees fleeing from revolution and civil war in Russia and settling in the Balkans and Western Europe, in Asia and the Americas and Australia, there was need to find comfort and support within Church life under new circumstances.

With regard to the situation of the clergy and parishes of the Russian Church that were found abroad, there were two distinct directions that evolved. The first was the striving for a unified central Church Administration which could oversee the ecclesiastical life abroad until conditions would change in the homeland and the Patriarchate, independent of Soviet control, could be restored. The second was the striving toward the establishment of a completely independent self-administered Orthodox Church in North America.

These two directions are the essence of the conflict between the bishops, clergy and parishes which would become the Orthodox Church in America and the bishops, clergy and parishes which would remain part of a central Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

However, even after the rupture of relations that occurred at the Seventh All-American Sobor in 1946, there were periods of close collaboration and mutual support between the North American Metropolia and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Even when the close collaboration faltered, support and welcome to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia was offered by the American Metropolia in the period when the Synod of ROCOR bishops moved from Europe to the United States.

On December 11, 1950, a joint meeting of the Metropolitans Anastassy and Leonty and bishops of the Metropolia and ROCOR was held in New York. As noted in the official Minutes of ROCOR's Council of Bishops, the Metropolia and ROCOR hierarchs had during their meeting "unanimously recognized that the sad fact of ecclesiastical separation causes significant damage to the holy cause of Christ's Church: it weakens the preaching of Orthodoxy, undermining Church discipline and a sense of responsibility among clergy of the Church, is a temptation for the faithful, diminishes the prestige of the Church in the heterodox world and makes more difficult its struggle with militant atheism. It was unanimously determined that the Church's unity is necessary."

Those Minutes also note that "after the discussion of practical ways for achieving Church unity the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in conjunction with the

bishops of the American Metropolitan See, accordingly recognized that the most appropriate path for that time was the preservation of the existing organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the American Metropolia, which will exist in parallel, but will be in close fraternal cooperation between themselves, periodically calling meetings of hierarchs of both Church organizations to resolve common or contentious issues with a firm hope that further ways to more closely achieve canonical unity with God's help will be provided by life itself."

After the meeting of the two first hierarchs and members of their Synods, the Great Council of Bishops of the North American Metropolia issued an Archpastoral Epistle dated December 2/15, 1950, which included the following statement: "Let enmity between brothers be abolished and let mutual respect be established on the basis of our mutual acceptance of the co-existence of two paths for the Church in this country, one permanent and one temporary, which are the result of the exceptional sufferings of our time, full of terrible events, and forebodings, imperiously demanding from all the greatest submission to the Lord, the greatest brotherly love and moral support for each other. This does not break, but further strengthens the historical path of our Metropolia.

"What happened after the close of the Council on December 11, i.e. Metropolitan Anastassy twice visiting our newly elected primate at the Holy Protection Cathedral, and the talk that we bishops had which took place the same evening with the hierarchs of the Russian jurisdiction Outside of Russia who visited us, determines the possibility of peaceful life in parallel, subject to internal mutual respect and clear delineation of our canonical rights and historical foundations. The Russian Church Outside of Russia has its own flock in America as well. She has spread her wanderers' tent in this country, too. Let the peace of God be with its zealous hierarchs, its kind shepherds and its laity!

"Let brotherly love prevail, and let mutual forgiveness of past wrongs be accomplished. The American Metropolia wishes to live in peace with these brethren as well, based on the temporary presence of their hierarchical administration on the territory of America until the future free All-Russian Local Council.

"No treaties or agreements protect this decision of our Church coexistence. It rests upon the requirements of life itself and the clear precepts of the Savior: 'By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if ye have love for one another' [John 13:35].

"The clear and unconditional definition of our own canonical path, made at the 8th All-American Sobor, requires us to have an attitude of brotherly love toward those who, while wishing to preserve their temporarily separate ecclesiastical administrative organization next to ours, are our brothers in Christ."

Despite these mutual efforts toward establishing brotherly relations, the paths of the Church Outside of Russia and the American Metropolia continued to be separate.

In 1970, by recognizing the self-governing status of the Metropolia with the granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly, eucharistic communion between the Russian Orthodox Church [Moscow Patriarchate] and the American Metropolia was restored and reconciliation was achieved.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the deep and extensive changes in Russia with the renewal of Church life, the restoration of thousands of churches and monasteries, the freedom to bear

public witness to the Gospel in Russian society, a process of dialogue between ROCOR and the Moscow Patriarchate led to the restoration of canonical unity through the Act of Canonical Communion in 2007.

It is now time for the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia to declare together in the spirit of mutual repentance and mutual forgiveness that we are committed to living together as brothers in Christ and as sister Churches, and to sharing a common witness to the Gospel of Christ and the Holy Orthodox Faith. This common witness should most clearly and most fully be expressed in eucharistic communion.

In addition, we see the need to work together in harmony on joint projects, such as pastoral education, parish schools, student outreach, translations of services, ministering to the poor and needy, and missionary efforts. To work in harmony we will need to reflect together on theological, pastoral, and liturgical issues which we face in our ministry in North America.

We also affirm the need to examine together and develop a common understanding of the historical record concerning our churches. These hopes and endeavors can be encouraged and advanced through periodic meetings of our first hierarchs, bishops, clergy and laity to discuss matters of mutual concern, including those theological, liturgical and pastoral issues. We are committed to the processes and goals expressed in the Chambésy accords of June 2009, specifically the active participation of both our Churches in the regional Episcopal Assembly as we strive to achieve Orthodox unity on this continent.

The following text from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians is addressed to us, and therefore to the believers of the Orthodox Church in America and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia: "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].

We ask for the intercession and blessing of the Holy Hierarch Tikhon, Patriarch and Confessor of Moscow and Enlightener of North America and all the saints who have shone forth on this continent as we labor "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" [Ephesians 4: 12].

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*A Russian translation of the text may be found at
www.synod.com/synod/2010/12rocorocastatement.html.* ■

At the 14th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America in 2005, he was awarded a Synodal gramota in recognition of his years of devoted service to the Church and related agencies.

Preceded in death by his wife, Olga, he is survived by his daughter, Nina.

May Mr. Lickvarik's memory be eternal! ■

Archimandrite Jerome [Newville]

Clayton, WI – Funeral services for Archimandrite Jerome [Newville], a priestmonk of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas [Romanian Patriarchate] who fell asleep in the Lord on August 21, 2010, were held at Holy Trinity Church here on August 27. Father Jerome had formerly resided at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA.

A convert to the faith, he taught at Saint Tikhon's Seminary from 1963-1967. From 1968 until 1971, he studied in Romania. After his ordination and monastic profession, he established a hermitage in rural Wisconsin with the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Victorin, and served parishes in Massachusetts, Nebraska, and Canada.

May Father Jerome's memory be eternal!

Preoteasa Florica Batu Ichim

Kitchener, ON, Canada – Preoteasa Florica Batu Ichim, 65, wife of Archpriest Dumitru Ichim, pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on September 4, 2010.

Born in Bucharest, Romania, she served alongside Father Dumitru for 36 years. The author of 10 books, she was widely known for her poetry and her column in *Solia-The Herald*.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by six children, two grandchildren, a sister, and three nieces.

His Grace, Bishop Irineu of Dearborn Heights, presided at funeral services at Saint John the Baptist Church.

May Preoteasa Florica's memory be eternal! ■

Archpriest Joseph MacLellan

Winnipeg, MB, Canada – Archpriest Joseph MacLellan, who in retirement was attached to Saint George Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on July 28, 2010.

Father Joseph was born on July 17, 1936 in Falconbridge, ON. As a young man, he attended flight training school with the Royal Canadian Air Force in Moosejaw and Portage la Prairie, where he met his future wife, Martha.

Prior to his conversion and ordination, he was employed by the Greater Winnipeg Gas Co. In addition to pursuing the OCA's Late Vocations program, he received a Diploma in Pastoral Training and a Licentiate in Theology, cum laude, from Saint Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox College at the University of Manitoba in 1979 and 1980 respectively. In 1984, he was ordained to the priesthood in the OCA's Romanian Episcopate. In serving several parishes across Manitoba and Saskatchewan, he continually displayed commitment to his parishioners and spoke of them with great love and respect. Due to failing health, he retired from active ministry in 2003.

Besides his wife of 52 years, Preoteasa Martha, he is survived by seven children, and 15 grandchildren.

His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate presided at funeral services at Saint George Church on August 3.

May Father Joseph's memory be eternal! ■

Dispelling the myths

- While individual Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches report that church attendance ranges from a high of 77% to a low of 12%, the across-the-board percentage of faithful who attend services “regularly and frequently” stands at 27%. Equally diverse is the size of the “average” parish. On the high end, the “average” GOA parish lists 908 persons, while parishes of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America, the Bulgarian Patriarchal Diocese and Carpatho-Russian Diocese reported an average of 81, 130 and 133 persons per parish respectively.
- Overall, Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Christians make up 0.34% of the total US population, with a significantly higher percentage in Alaska [1.93%], Massachusetts [0.93%], New Jersey [0.83%], New York [0.72%], and Rhode Island [0.72%].
- While Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Christians live in every state, nearly half – 48% – live in California [14.5%], New York [13.5%], Illinois [7.2%], New Jersey [6.9%], and Massachusetts [5.9%]. The states with the largest numbers of parishes are California [255], Pennsylvania [250], New York [240], Florida [136], and New Jersey [128].

The complete text of the census is available in PDF format at www.orthodoxreality.org. ■

Stewardship from 8

Wise stewardship spells survival

people, but we cannot fight this war on two fronts. We need to defeat Pebble first, and then, if necessary oppose the Donlin Creek mine, which would almost certainly destroy the much larger Yup'ik villages in that region.”

Before returning to Anchorage on January 21, Bishop Benjamin blessed Lake Iliamna, which was evangelized by Saint Juvenaly and companions in 1796-1797, and Aleknagik Lake.

In every instance, as Bishop Benjamin led the clergy and faithful in the Great Blessing of Water, he invoked God's blessing upon “these waters,” asking that they become a “fountain of holiness, sanctifying those who drink it, anoint themselves with it, and use it for the sanctification of their homes.”

“Maintaining the quality and protecting the purity of these rivers and lakes becomes a sacred duty for all Orthodox believers, not only in the region, but throughout the world,” Father Michael concluded. ■

Bishop from 6

North America's unknown bishop

Notification of his election to the episcopacy reached Archimandrite Joasaph only in 1798. He was summoned to Irkutsk, Siberia, where his consecration to the episcopacy took place on April 10, 1799. Due to the city's remote and isolated location, Bishop Benjamin of Irkutsk received exceptional instructions from the Holy Synod to perform the consecration alone. This is the only known case in the entire history of the Russian Orthodox Church of an episcopal consecration conducted by a solitary bishop.

On Bishop Joasaph's return voyage to Alaska aboard the

Phoenix, a raging storm struck on May 21-24, 1799, sinking the ship near the Alaskan coast. Bishop Joasaph and everyone aboard the ship perished, including Priestmonk Macarius and Deacon-monk Stephen, who also had been among the original Alaskan missionaries, and an entourage of sextons and choristers. This tragedy was a serious setback for the Orthodox mission in Alaska and a significant loss for the Russian colony, as the *Phoenix* also was carrying much needed supplies to Kodiak.

Bishop Joasaph's insightful ethnological studies of Alaska, considered invaluable by secular scholars, were published in 1805.

In 1811, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church officially closed the Kodiak episcopal see. A new hierarch for Alaska would not be appointed for nearly three more decades.

In 1899, in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of Bishop Joasaph's repose, Saint Tikhon of Moscow, at the time Bishop of the Aleutians and Alaska, praised his missionary fervor and invoked his name in intercessory prayers. ■

Bishop-elect from 12

Bishop-elect Matthias

pastorate of Saint Michael Church, Saint Clair, PA, a well-established parish founded in 1897. He also served parishes in Jenners, PA and Gary, IN. In 2004, he was assigned to Christ the Saviour Cathedral, Johnstown, PA, and served as Associate Pastor and the Prefect of Christ the Saviour Seminary, where he taught liturgics. Two years later, he was assigned to Saint Gregory of Nyssa Church, Seaford, NY.

He and his wife raised two children – Rachel Sumner and her husband of Charlestown, WV, the parents of two children, and Priest Matthew D. Moriak, pastor of Holy Ghost Church, Manville, NJ, and his wife, Pani Jodi, parents of two children.

In May 1996, Pani Jeannette was diagnosed with acute leukemia and fell asleep in the Lord 11 months later. Prior to his wife's illness, Father Matthias had begun studies at Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, which he discontinued during his wife's illness. In 1998, he resumed studies and was awarded a Master of Divinity degree.

Following his wife's repose, Bishop-elect Matthias visited several monasteries for healing and spiritual strength, including the Iveron Monastery on Mount Athos, at which he lived for the entire month of May 2003. On October 14, 2003, he was tonsured to monastic rank.

During the last decade, he visited Guatemala's Holy Trinity Monastery and Hogar Rafael Ayau Orphanage on his own and as a mission team leader. For the last two years, he served as spiritual father to the nuns at the monastery and the children at the orphanage. He has baptized at least 60 children and adults in Guatemala.

He also has traveled to Turkey, Israel and the Holy Land, Greece, and Alaska.

He has served as Regional Director of the Education Commission of the Carpatho-Russian Diocese, President of the Northwest Indiana Orthodox Clergy Association, and Chaplain of Manor Care Nursing Center, Pottsville, PA.

After receiving a canonical release from the Carpatho-Russian Diocese, he was received into the Orthodox Church in America on September 1, 2010. ■

Fr. Alexander brings with him over 30 years of experience as a parish priest and chief administrator. He is joined at the seminary by his wife, Khouria Olga, and their two children.

Fr. Alexander holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the University of Philadelphia, a Master of Divinity from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, and a Doctorate in Ministry from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

The OCA Holy Synod of Bishops gave its blessing to Fr. Alexander's appointment in March 2010, permitting him to remain attached to the Antiochian Archdiocese while serving as the Dean of the OCA seminary.

Fr. Alexander officially assumed duties on July 1, 2010. ■

Metropolitan Jonah calls for prayers in wake of terrorist attacks in Egypt and Russia, Arizona shooting

Metropolitan Jonah called upon all clergy and faithful to remember in prayer victims of three separate tragedies in January 2011.

On January 2, prayers were requested for victims of a New Year's Day suicide bombing at the conclusion of a midnight Liturgy at a Coptic Church in Alexandria, Egypt. Similar requests for prayers were issued by the Moscow Patriarchate and other Orthodox Churches.

The bombing, which claimed the lives of at least 21 Coptic Christians, was the latest in a string of attacks against Egypt's Christians. As widely reported in the media, it was the first suicide bombing affecting a Christian church. Earlier attacks involved shootings and less serious bomb attacks.

No attacks were reported against the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, located in the same city.

Six days later, Metropolitan Jonah requested prayers for victims of the January 8 Tucson, AZ shooting that killed six and injured 14 others, including Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

And on January 24 – less than 48 hours after he and Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania had returned from a one-week unofficial visit to Russia – he once again requested prayers for the victims of a suicide bombing at Moscow's Domodedovo International Airport, which left at least 35 confirmed dead and nearly 150 hurt.

"News of the attack was truly frightening," said Metropolitan Jonah, who was informed of the attack during the March for Life in the US capital. "We had just passed through Domodedovo, which makes this tragic news all the more incomprehensible. Our prayers are with the victims and their families, as well as the entire Russian nation, as yet again we are reminded of the fallen nature of this world and the consequences that befall us when that 'peace which passes all understanding' is absent in the hearts and minds of so many.... I call upon the hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America to pray for the victims of this tragedy, and other recent tragedies, and to pray that 'the peace of the whole world' for which we continually pray can -- and will -- prevail." ■

OCA Treasurer releases report for January 1–September 30, 2010

Melanie Ringa, OCA Treasurer, recently released a detailed report which includes "The Statement of Activities - Actual vs. Budget" for the first three quarters of 2010 and the "Comparative Balance Sheets as of September 30, 2010 and September 30, 2009."

The complete report is posted in PDF format on the OCA web site at www.oca.org/PDF/NEWS/2010/2010-1021-q3financialreport.pdf.

Reports, minutes, and related documents of the Metropolitan Council's 2010 fall session are also available at www.oca.org/news/2304. ■

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Theophany blessing of waters

Despite record cold, the outdoor blessing of waters was celebrated this year in a growing number of places **Above/** Fr. Michael Spainhoward and the faithful of SS. Cyril and Methodius Mission, Chico, CA bless Chico Creek at Hooker Oak Park. **Below, L/** Metropolitan Jonah and Bishop Melchisedek celebrates the rite at the OCA Representation Church of St. Catherine, Moscow, Russia, on January 18. **Below, C/** Bishop Tikhon presides at a pan-Orthodox blessing of the Susquehanna River in Harrisburg, PA. ■



Northern California youth enjoy pan-Orthodox lock-in

Below, R/ Youth from several northern California parishes and jurisdictions attended the annual Nor-Cal Youth Lock-in at St. Christina of Tyre Mission, Fremont, CA, in December. The teens spent two days exploring the theme, "The Search for More," which focused on evaluating and prioritizing their values as Orthodox Christians. They also engaged in a service project – cleaning a local park – and enjoyed a midnight game of Capture the Flag.

"These events are part of a regular effort begun in 2006 to gather youth from area parishes for spiritual growth, service, prayer, and fellowship," said Fr. Michael Anderson, host pastor and Youth Director for the Diocese of the West. "Other regular activities include a spring and fall retreats/lock-ins, a summer BBQ, and St. Eugene summer camp."

"These events are crucial for the life of the Church," he said. "If our youth are to grow in the faith and have the support they will need to make spiritually healthy decisions and choices as they grow, they need these kinds of regular gatherings to build supportive friendships and take their knowledge of their faith to the next level." ■