



St. Louis, Missouri
July 23-27, 2018

OFFICIAL MINUTES

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This is the official minutes of the 19th All-American Council held in St. Louis, MO from July 23 through July 27, 2018.

Contained in this document are the official minutes of the Plenary Sessions, official transcripts of speeches by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon and official speeches by invited guests. Note that Plenary Sessions 3 and 5 were forums so there are no minutes for these sessions although a summary of these Plenary Sessions are contained in the minutes of Plenary Session 6 where overviews were presented to the delegates. The complete information on the 19th All American Council including PowerPoints and presentations are located at <https://oca.org/history-archives/aacs/the-19th-all-american-council>.

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1. Plenary Session I

MONDAY, JULY 23, 2018

A. Minutes

OPENING PRAYER SERVICE AND CALL TO ORDER

The 19th All-American Council (AAC), Plenary Session I, began at 7:50 PM with an opening prayer service. After the singing of “The Grace of the Holy Spirit” by the Council, His Beatitude, the Most Blessed Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, declared the 19th All-American Council open at 8:17 PM Central Daylight Time.

APPROVAL OF CLERGY AND LAY CHAIRS AND COMMITTEES

His Beatitude asked Archpriest Eric Tosi, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, to present to the assembly the appointments of Archpriest John Zdinak, Saint Theodosius Cathedral, Diocese of the Midwest, as Clergy Vice-Chair; and Mr. David Zavednak, Diocese of New England, as Lay Vice-Chair, and Dr. Leonard M. Young as Parliamentarian. Fr. Tosi also presented the following Committees:

SECRETARIAT

Elizabeth Mikhalevsky, Chair, Archdiocese of Washington
Fr. David Cowan, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Fr. Nicholas Roth, Diocese of the South
Lynnell Brunswig, Diocese of the West
Ellyn Gillette, Diocese of the Midwest
Alexis Liberovsky, Stavropegial Institutions

COUNCIL TELLERS

Fr. Daniel Mathewson, Chair, Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania
Fr. Andreas Blom, Diocese of the West
Fr. Mikel Bock, Diocese of Alaska
Fr. Steven Hosking, Diocese of New England
Fr. Ignatius Hunter, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Fr. Herman Kincaid, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. John Wehling, Diocese of the South
Matushka Christine Hoeplinger, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Matushka Jackie Kudrin, Diocese of Alaska
Matushka Rebecca Lashbrook, Diocese of the Midwest
Casey Lown, Diocese of the South
Justin Wong, Diocese of the West

COUNCIL CREDENTIALS

Fr. Leonid Schmidt, Chair, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Fr. John Cox, Diocese of the South
Fr. Stephan Gresh, Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania
Fr. Stephen Osburn, Diocese of the West
Gloria Bench, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
John Fedak, Albanian Archdiocese
Paul Kidd, Diocese of the Midwest
Barry Migyanko, Consultant, Stavropegial Institutions

COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

Fr. Stephen Vernak, Chair, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Fr. Timothy Holowatch, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Fr. Rodion Luciuk, Archdiocese of Canada
Fr. Lawrence Margitich, Diocese of the West
Fr. Joshua Trant, Diocese of the South
Dr. Richard Comshaw, Diocese of New England
David Lane, Diocese of the West
Mark Radomsky, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

Fr. James Parnell, Chair, Diocese of New England
Fr. Benedict Churchill, Diocese of the South
Fr. Andrew Morbey, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. Michael Senyo, Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania
Protodeacon Michael Myers, Bulgarian Diocese
Judge E.R. Lanier, Consultant, Diocese of the South
Mark Linnehan, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Jeremy Pletnikoff, Diocese of Alaska

COUNCIL PRESS & INFO

Fr. Joseph Lucas, Chair, Diocese of the South
Fr. John Parsells, Daily Video Updates, Archdiocese of Washington
Fr. John Matusiak, Press Releases, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. Geoffrey Ready, Press, Archdiocese of Canada
Fr. Gregory Safchuk, Photographer, Archdiocese of Washington
Victor Lutes, Photographer, Archdiocese of Washington
John Maddex, Podcast, Diocese of the Midwest

Fr. John Dresko, St. Paul Church, Las Vegas, NV, moved to accept the Clergy and Lay Chairs and Committees, and Maureen Jury, St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX seconded the motion. The candidates were approved by consensus.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

David Zavednak presented the proposed Agenda of the 19th All-American Council. Dr. Richard Comshaw, SS. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT moved to accept the Agenda, Fr. Nicholas Finley, Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL seconded the motion. The Agenda was approved by consensus.

GREETINGS

Mr. Tom Chulick, President and CEO of the St. Louis Regional Chamber, welcomed the 19th All-American Council to St. Louis.

His Grace, Bishop Paul of Chicago and the Midwest extended a welcome on behalf of the Preconciliar Commission and the Diocese of the Midwest.

Archpriest Timothy Sawchak and Robert Butchko, Clergy and Lay Chairs of the Local Organizing Committee respectively, also welcomed everyone to St. Louis. Mr. Butchko then read a proclamation from the Mayor of St. Louis, the Honorable Lyda Krewson, declaring July 23 to July 27, 2018 as Orthodox Church in America 19th All-American Council Week.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Fr. Zdinak welcomed His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of Helsinki and All Finland; His Eminence, Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Ecumenical Patriarchate; His Eminence, Metropolitan Seraphim of Zimbabwe, Patriarchate of Alexandria; His Grace, Bishop Flavian of Cherepovets and Belozersk, Patriarchate of Moscow; His Eminence, Archbishop Michael of Prague, Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia; and Archpriest Serge Sollogoub, Exarchate for Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe, Ecumenical Patriarchate, who are attending the 19th All-American Council as guests of the Orthodox Church in America.

INTRODUCTION AND VIDEO PRESENTATION

Mr. Zavednak welcomed Mr. Serge Schmemann, the son of Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann, who shared a few memories of his father and made introductory remarks on the theme of the 19th All-American Council. A short film, "For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy," was shown.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

13 Hierarchs
257 Clergy Delegates
199 Lay Delegates
3 Retired Clergy
96 Observers
14 Guests
TOTAL: 582
VOTING COUNT: 469

ADDRESS OF THE METROPOLITAN

Fr. Zdinak introduced His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, who presented his address to the Council.

HOUSEKEEPING AND ADJOURNMENT

Fr. Tosi made a number of housekeeping announcements.

Fr. Zdinak declared Plenary Session I concluded at 10:01 PM with the singing of “It Is Truly Meet.”

B. Serge Schmemmann Opening Address

Father Alexander's Boy

Comments by Serge Schmemmann at the 19th All-American Council

Your Beatitude, Your Eminences, Your Graces, Reverend Fathers and Mothers, Brothers and Sisters. Or, to simply things, dear friends.

I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to address the All-American Council on behalf of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's family. It is so impressive and wonderful to be here! I can only imagine how this gathering would fill my father with joy—a word he used so often. Actually I am one of six direct descendants of Father Alexander here. But I believe many more, perhaps all of us here, are his heirs, heirs to his teaching and his life, to his profound love for the Church and for this land. Though we have lived abroad for many years, my wife and I very much feel we are here among close family.

I know Father Alexander regarded all of you, all American Orthodox Christians, as his family. An that's not just a rhetorical flourish. When we came to America in 1951, my father was not yet 30, and we were stateless—though both my parents were born outside Russia, they were born as refugees, and had no citizenship anywhere until we came to America. And though my father was thoroughly Russian in his upbringing, and French in his education, America was his first real homeland and it became his beloved homeland.

When I began to drive I often met my father at the airport when he'd return from one of the innumerable visits he made across the country to speak in parishes, on campuses or at conferences, and he would always return filled with enthusiastic impressions and stories about the people, the sights, the history of where he'd been. He loved nothing more than to preach at a parish in the heartland and then to join the congregation in the parish hall for kielbasy and wisdom.

The church in which he was raised in Paris was an émigré church, always looking back to a lost Russia that he never knew except through the church, literature and the stories of his elders. But here, in cities like St. Louis or Madison, he discovered a living church that was fully at home in America, in the present, in the modern world. When he would come to a new place, he would always learn about its history, about the stories of the people in the parish. I traveled with him at time, and I know people sensed the genuineness of his interest and love.

I was actually a beneficiary of Father Alexander's popularity the last time I was here in St. Louis. That was 48 years ago, I'm afraid to say; I was in the Army doing basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, about three hours west of here, and one day the First Sergeant called me in and said to be ready at some predawn hour on Sunday when a priest was coming to pick me up.

It was Father Gene Vansuch, God rest his soul, who drove all the way out to take me to the Divine Liturgy at his parish across the river in Madison, the Church of the Nativity,

where my father had been guest speaker at the consecration of the new church building in 1965 – the year that amazing Gateway Arch was completed.

Father Gene introduced me all around as “Father Alexander’s boy,” and the parishioners gave me a remarkably warm welcome, for which I remain grateful to this day. Then Father Gene had make another round trip to Fort Leonard Wood. So it’s great to be back here, again as “Father Alexander’s boy.”

Now what I’d like to try to do today is simply to share some of my memories of my father, and of the way *For the Life of the World*, that little book that provides the theme of this Council, came to be.

Let me stay a minute with those memories of my very brief military career a half century ago. After a few weeks I was on my way to Vietnam, and after blessing me my father said something very unexpected. “You know, you’re very lucky,” he said. “All of us are going to go back to our normal lives, to our daily concerns and fuss, and you’re off to something totally new, something that will challenge you.”

Now my purpose is not to tell war stories, and to be honest I don’t have any to tell. But that comment, I believe, came from the same sacramental worldview as *For the Life of the World*, the same vision that is so beautifully represented here in the tributes to Father Alexander. Of course as a father he was anxious, and of course his intention was to give me strength for what lay ahead, but what he said to me on that early morning was also a reflection of his passion for life, of his joy in its challenges and riddles and surprises.

For the Life of the World is really a synthesis of that view, a summary of what Father Alexander taught and lived and preached throughout his life. Life was a wondrous gift to be cherished, a gift for which we should be endlessly grateful to the Lord, a sacrament. Those of you familiar with his writing know how often he denounced the endless reductions of life to problems, or the reduction of the Church to ritual. “Reduce” is a word he used often, and it is already there right in the Preface to *For the Life of the World*: “There are those who reduce the Church to the world and its problems, and those who simply equate the world with evil and morbidly rejoice in their apocalyptic gloom.”

No, No, was his cry. The world, the Church, everything we do, is the fulness of life – “fulness” is another word he used a lot. Life is a sacrament to be celebrated and embraced, not “reduced” to pettiness, fussiness, self-absorption, self-pity, or to what he called “religion with a small ‘r’”—“Religion is needed where there is a wall of separation between God and man,” he writes in *For the Life of the World*. “Christ has inaugurated a new life, not a new religion.”

I think that’s what he was telling me that morning, that wherever a Christian looks—even if it is a fearful unknown—he or she “finds Christ and rejoices in Him.” For Father Alexander that was not a teaching, not a dogma, it was his life. My wife and I came here from Lac Labelle, the lake in Quebec on which our family had the summer home that my father so loved.

Some of my finest childhood memories of summer on the lake were around my father. He had a way of making every event a celebration – whether it was a meal outdoors, a swim, preparing the chapel for a service, or taking a walk, the simplest everyday acts became exciting events.

When we took a walk, for example, Father Alexander would take time to choose which walking stick to take and which path to follow. Each had a grand name—Versailles, the Road of Ruins. His embrace of life was contagious. We felt we were participating in something special, something wondrous—and we were. We were living a full life. We have a chapel there dedicated to St. Sergius where he served, and where Father John Meyendorff and Father Tom Hopko served, may they rest in peace.

I have to pause here to note that yesterday, July 22, was the 25th anniversary of Father John's falling asleep in the Lord. We had a panikhida in Labelle, attended by Matushka Maika Meyendorff. I know you all will remember Father John in yours prayers today. May his memory be eternal.

“Christ has inaugurated a new life.” And I believe a new life is also what America inaugurated for Fr. Alexander, for our family. *For the Life of the World* was written barely 12 years after we arrived in the United States, and it is my firm belief that the New World was the critical catalyst that transformed Father Alexander's experiences, ideas, reading, his upbringing in the Russian Orthodox church, into the vision that he would express in this little book. It was as if America and its energy, its openness, its freedom affirmed his view of Orthodoxy, of Christianity, as a life applicable to all faiths and people. He embraced America as a promised land, and American embraced him back. It was a daily affirmation that life could not be an escape from Christ, and that religion could not be an escape from life.

1963, the year during which Father Alexander was writing *For the Life of the World*, was also a year in which he saw many of his dreams coming to fruition. St. Vladimir's had moved from a few apartments in New York to a new campus in Crestwood; my father had his first contacts with Metropolitan Nikodim of the Russian Orthodox Church, which would lead to autocephaly for the O.C.A.; he spent two weeks that year at the Vatican in Rome as an observer at the Second Vatican Council, which transformed the Catholic Church.

It was also the dawn of the turbulent 'Sixties in America. The upheavals had not yet begun, but already there was a search among youth for renewal, for ideals, for mission, and it was this that brought 3,200 college students together for a week in Athens, Ohio for a national Christian student conference on mission. *For the Life of the World* was the study guide, and my father was the keynote speaker.

I was a freshman in college that winter and I accompanied my father to Ohio. I did have an ulterior motive—the woman who is here as my wife was living in Columbus. But I will never forget my amazement when I entered the vast auditorium packed with young people—again, 3,200 American students, 31 of them Orthodox—and my father, an Orthodox priest with a Russian accent, holding them spellbound with his vision.

In later years, my father claimed to be surprised at the enduring popularity of *For the Life of the World*. By the way, it was the first of Fr. Alexander's works officially printed in

translation in Russia. And it was printed by Russian Baptists as a study guide for a vast Baptist gathering in the late 1980s. They generously agreed to share many copies with the Russian Orthodox Church.

But I am not surprised at the continuing impact of the book. I have always found it appropriate that the two works by Father Alexander which have had the greatest impact were not written as theological books. The *Life of the World* is one, and his *Journals* is the other. The major impact of the *Journals* has been in Russia, where the personal writings of an Orthodox priest who joyously embraces the modern world has been a critical guide to many confused believers. I gather you will be seeing a film later by a Russian filmmaker, my friend Andrei Zheleznyakov, who spent a lot of time interviewing people in the U.S. and Canada. The title gives it away—"Apostle of Joy."

Of course Fr. Alexander's other books and articles are important. But these two works were personal, immediate; *For the Life of the World* is a direct conversation with an American student, with an America Father Alexander has embraced with all his heart, just as the *Journals* are a conversation really with himself, about the things that are most important to him and his life. That intimacy, that confessional clarity, is their power: In a preface to a later edition of *For the Life of the World*, Fr. Alexander wrote that there were things he might have written differently, but that he could not change "that which was written once, however imperfectly, with the whole heart."

I confess I still have conversations with my father, sometimes in wonderful dreams, and he still reassures me as he did on that morning long ago how great it is to participate in the joyous life of the world and of the Church. So once again let me thank you, Your Beatitude, for giving me the opportunity to share this very personal perspective on this wonderful work, whose spirit is so richly present in this extraordinary Orthodox gathering in the very heart of America. Lord, it is good to be here.

Thank you.

C. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon's Opening Address

"Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Refuge From Generation to Generation" [1]

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Your Eminence, Archbishop Leo, Your Eminences, Your Graces, My beloved Brother Bishops of the Holy Synod, And Venerable Guest Hierarchs, Honored Abbots, Abbesses, and Monastics, Very Reverend Fathers and Clergy Wives, Distinguished Delegates, Retired Clergy, and Observers, Beloved Youth, Young Adults, and Guests, Christ is in our midst!

We gather in the Name of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, here in the Gateway City within the "Show Me State." This motto is commonly attributed to Congressman Willard Vandiver who, in 1899, is alleged to have said: "I come from a state that raises corn and cotton, cockleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I'm from Missouri, and you have got to show me." And so, although we Orthodox often pride ourselves on our eloquence, we hope that our converse this week will be neither frothy nor unsatisfying, but rather will show the city of Saint Louis our Christian love through edifying discourse and through the inspiring words of the ancient liturgical prayers and hymns that will arise from our gathering.

In the Acts of the Holy Apostles, Saint Paul, speaking about the care we should have for the less fortunate, refers to the words of the Lord, Who said that it is more blessed to give than to receive. [2] One of the desert fathers provides a variation on this theme when he suggests that "it is better to receive hospitality than to offer it." [3] With these paradoxical words, he reminds us of the effort that is often required of us to accept the invitations of our neighbors. It has taken an effort and some expense for all of us to gather from throughout North America and today, we are grateful to the Honorable Mayor, Lyda Krewson, and the people of Saint Louis for providing the Orthodox Church in America an opportunity to receive the warm hospitality offered by this wonderful city, through the kind words of Mr. Tom Chulik of the Saint Louis Regional Chamber. We pray that, in turn, our brief presence here will provide a lasting blessing to the citizens of this good city and that as we receive the gift of your welcome, we may also leave with you with a Church full of grateful hearts.

We are also honored by the humility offered to us by our visiting dignitaries this week, representing several of the Orthodox Churches throughout the world. His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of the Church of Finland is a good friend of the Orthodox Church in America and the connection of the New Valaam Monastery and the missionary monastics to Alaska has provided a strong bond between our Churches. Representing His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy and Ecumenical Throne, is another friend of ours, His Eminence, Metropolitan Nathaniel, newly ordained as the Metropolitan of Chicago for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and familiar to many of us through his faithful service on the Assembly of Bishops. The missionary focus of the ancient see of Alexandria is known throughout the world, as are the apostolic labors His Beatitude, Theodoros, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, represented this week by His

Eminence, Metropolitan Seraphim, a zealous missionary and excellent pastor in his own right. From the Church of Russia, representing His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, is His Grace, Bishop Flavian. We are, of course, grateful to the Church of Russia for the gift of autocephaly and for our continuing good relations. Representing His Beatitude, Metropolitan Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia is His Eminence, Archbishop Michael of Prague. And finally, Archpriest Serge Sollogub, representing the Excharchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Parishes of the Russian Tradition in Western Europe. We welcome all of you and are grateful for the gift that you offer us by your presence with us.

I can speak about the city of Saint Louis from experience because I called it home for three years of my childhood, beginning in 1977, which incidentally was the year of the founding of Holy Cross Orthodox Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. My family lived in a subdivision a bit West of here, in Chesterfield, and I attended River Bend Elementary School and Parkway Central Junior High. It was here that I met some of my earliest childhood friends -- Steve, Jeff, Tom, John, and Ted. Like the youth who are with us this week, I too attended camps and other such events in my childhood.

These early childhood friends, after a few valiant efforts to stay in touch by letter and postcard, were relegated to memory and to school yearbooks. Until the advent of Facebook, that is. Through the magic of the digital technology that is now available to us, I have been able to reconnect with some of them and, upon my arrival here in Saint Louis, I had the pleasure of having dinner with one of these colorfully clad fellows – specifically the one with the plaid pants on the far left – meeting his family and catching up on our lost years.

Several decades earlier, W.C. Handy composed the “Saint Louis Blues” in 1914, which was the year of the outbreak of the First World War and also the year of the founding of Saint Nicholas Church in McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, as well as Holy Assumption Church in Stamford, Connecticut. One particular version of the song was recorded in 1925 by Bessie Smith, accompanied by Louis Armstrong, in the year of the falling asleep of Saint Tikhon, the Confessor and Patriarch of Moscow and the enlightener of North America.

During his time here, Saint Tikhon held and promulgated a vision for Orthodoxy in North America, which would reflect a multi-national character with the particularities in canonical structure, liturgical rules, and parish life preserved in the unity of faith. In addition, he recommended the active involvement of the laity, as he did when in 1905, the year of the founding of the Monastery of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, he wrote: “We must share our spiritual richness, truth, light, and joy with others who do not have these blessings. And this duty does not only lay upon the pastors and missionaries, but on the lay persons as well, since the Church of Christ, according to the wise comparison of the Holy Apostle Paul, is the body, and every member takes part in the life of the body.”

[4]

We are here, of course, to fulfill this duty in community, as the Church, through our participations in this All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America. This is the 19th time that we have gathered in Council since the time of the granting of autocephaly, but the 32nd time that we have gathered since 1907. The purpose of these Councils is to bear witness to the identity, unity, and mission of our Church. This

very room is an expression of those values and our task, this week, and in the years to come, is to carry forth the identity, unity, and mission of our Church into the world, for the life of the world. This is not only our theme this week, but the very purpose of our existence as a Church and as Christians.

So, what could we hope to accomplish towards such a lofty goal in a single week of meetings? Do we not have enough meetings in our lives? We often dismiss meetings and anything that hints of corporate and business life as foreign to the true work of the Church. But even in monasteries, the brotherhood or sisterhood come together, not only in Church for the Divine services or in the trapeza for common meals, but also in regular meetings or synaxes (ιερά σύναξη), sacredly being brought together to talk about the life, challenges, and aims of the monastic brotherhood. And so, even our meetings this week have a sacred and liturgical character to them, as we meet in the name of Christ to accomplish the practical tasks that are before us.

I therefore have great respect for those who plan for meetings – particularly such large meetings as the All-American Council – because they provide for all of us an opportunity to engage in this sacred activity, together. And so, on behalf of all of us gathered here this evening, I express my sincere thanks to His Grace, Bishop Paul of Chicago, who is not only our host this week, but has also faithfully served as chair of the Preconciliar Commission, overseeing this important group, by his calm and steady manner, in all the many and complex preparations that were necessary to bring us here today. It is no small task, and we offer our sincere appreciation to you, Your Grace, and to the many in the Diocese of the Midwest who helped you, especially Father Timothy Sawchak and Mr. Robert Butchko, the Clergy and Lay Chairs of the Preconciliar Commission, who very excellently engaged the local deanery and parishes and tirelessly coordinated the local planning.

Above all, we must give due recognition to Deacon Peter Ilchuk, our Council Manager, who has shouldered, and continues to shoulder, the monumental task of managing all of this – and if any of you have tried to manage something, you know how difficult a task that can be. Deacon Peter, you have served us most admirably, and we thank you for your sacrificial ministry.

This is my second All-American Council since my election. During the past six years, I have sought, with God's help and your prayers, to both fulfill the responsibilities of this office and reflect upon the ways that this Church, the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, ought to continue to forge her identity in this world.

I am, of course, not the first Metropolitan and Primate of our Church. I was preceded by Metropolitan Jonah, who took the helm of the ship as a mighty storm was subsiding. I was preceded by Metropolitan Herman, who was my spiritual father and confessor, who in the midst of that mighty storm, nevertheless brought the ship through the waves and the winds. I was preceded by Metropolitan Theodosius, who served as the Abbot of my monastery and has held the longest tenure as the Primate of our Church. All my predecessors, and the Church that they guided, have faced challenges.

In his address to the First All-American Council, held on October 20-22, 1970, Metropolitan Iriney noted that there was (in his words) "one massive and contaminating obstruction" in the way of arriving at a canonical form for a local and permanent Church

in North America, which was the break with “our Mother Russian Church.” This break, he added, “for years poisoned our Church life with animosity, court cases, mutual accusations,” all of which “served only to hinder Orthodoxy’s primary calling – spiritual and missionary – in America.”

He adds: “Along with the unfathomable ways of God, where ‘the power of Christ is made perfect in weakness,’ this break – despite its tragic character – was possibly beneficial, for it taught us, almost against our will, the hard gift of freedom, of common responsibility for the Church. It taught us ‘to bear each other’s burdens,’ and having deprived us of material help from the Mother Church, it taught sacrificial and active participation of all in the life of the Church.”

This sacrificial and active participation of all in the life of the Church was therefore present in the previous decades of our existence as a missionary Church, and it continued through our journey over the past 50 years. Our young Orthodox Church in America would begin immediately to apply itself to making itself worthy of this gift and exercising its responsibility as a Church, for example in the development of a revised Statute that would more precisely reflect our new canonical status. That process has been ongoing even to the present since, although at our last All-American Council this body passed – almost unanimously – a major Statute Revision, we are continuing, as we should, to make necessary adjustments to reflect the genuine life and functioning of the Church.

In a parallel way, since my election, I have been taking a more focused look at one particular aspect of our Church governance -- the operation and functioning of the Chancery. I was keenly aware of having inherited several successive permutations of administrative structures which, while responsive to the needs and challenges of the time, nevertheless could benefit from a full assessment and evaluation within our present context, in which we have the opportunity to breathe. The six years of my primacy provided this opportunity, not only to intellectually consider these questions, but to benefit from their lived experience in practice so that the most effective adjustments might be made.

After an appropriate period of such reflection, I took the step last Fall, with the full support of the Holy Synod, of asking the assistance of His Grace, Bishop Daniel, of Santa Rosa, whom I appointed as my consultant to help me process and evaluate the administrative needs of the Office of the Metropolitan. In May of this year, I further asked His Grace to serve as Chancery Administrator and appointed a committee composed of members of the Metropolitan Council who could assist with the task of fine-tuning a structure for the Chancery that might most effectively assist me in fulfilling my responsibilities as Primate and be of most benefit to the Orthodox Church in America.

My goal is to complete the current specific process – which is a “reset” more than a “restructuring” – by January 1, 2019. As part of this process, and as a matter of course, I have asked for resignation letters from the Officers and Staff of the Chancery effective at the conclusion of this All American Council. Although I have indicated my intention to accept some, I will not automatically accept all of these letters but will, with personal discussion with everyone involved, be responding to them within the month following our All-American Council. The current staff has been assured that, whether or not any

change are made, they may remain in their present positions until December 31 of this year.

In his address to the First All-American Council, Metropolitan Ireney added the following with reference to the sacrificial experiences of those who went before him: "When we see to what a degree the other ecclesiastical persuasions in America are bound to the faraway centers overseas, we can only thank God for those experiences, by which He enlightened and edified us. And I think that especially on this day, at the very beginning of our Council, we must 'with one mouth and one heart' acknowledge the Church's debt in memory and gratitude to those hierarchs, pastors, and laymen, who in the most difficult period of our history guided the ship of the Church unharmed through the turbulent seas."

And so today, at the very beginning of this Council, I would like to offer my debt of gratitude and appreciation to the present members of my Chancery team. Our Chancellor, Father John Jillions, has been a trusted assistant and advisor to me and has helped me to articulate my own thoughts concerning the life of the Church. He has done this with intellectual integrity and has served as a sounding board for my own thoughts and initiatives. Our Secretary, Father Eric Tosi, is one of the few persons who not only knows the complexities and the abundance of work that takes place in the Chancery, but can balance it all efficiently, as you can see from his report to the All-American Council. And he does all this, while at the same time, overseeing the planning of the monumental event which is the All-American Council, which you will be able to see all this week. His missionary zeal is an inspiration to me and for our Church.

A central, and contentious, focus of our Church life for the past two decades has been finances. Although many over those years have participated in the grueling process of establishing accountability and restoring trust, our Treasurer, Melanie Ringa, has occupied the most central and effective part, not only managing the overall finances of the Church, but leading the process of arriving at a funding mechanism for the Church that would move us from a per capita system of assessment to a proportional system of stewardship. Melanie has guided the meeting of the Chancellors and Treasurers for seven years, yielding a wonderful model of diocesan cooperation and a financial resolution that will be considered this week as a continuation of the one that was almost unanimously adopted at the All American Council in Atlanta. Her integrity, honesty, and forthrightness are worthy of the deepest respect.

I am grateful to all three of my Officers and consider them friends and genuine colleagues in the work of the Church. Together with my personal, administrative, and communications staff, they have been the team that has made it possible for me to both function as your Metropolitan for the past six years. Their work has also allowed me the freedom to devote myself to the work of the Church, and even to focus on specific projects, such as the Four Pillars document that you have each received as delegates to this Council.

The most intense community that I have experienced is that of the monastery. There are others who can speak of both the joys and sorrows of such a life. While not quite attaining the same intensity, I must say that the Chancery is nevertheless a place where friendship and a common desire to work for the stability and safety of the Church has

predominated and helped to make this not simply a community, but rather a genuine family. I give thanks to God for that great gift.

About a month ago, I published on the website of the Orthodox Church in America a document titled, *Of What Life Do We Speak? Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church*. As delegates to the 19th All-American Council, you have each received a physical copy of this small volume, which I have offered to the Church as an attempt to articulate a vision for the Orthodox Church in America for the next decades. This document is not a strategic plan, nor is it a program or a project. It is, rather, intended to be a source of inspiration for such plans, programs, and projects.

The Four Pillars is my attempt at laying out the ascetical framework of our life as the Orthodox Church in America. It is not perfect and it is not intended to implement perfection immediately. It is intended to provide a common starting point for discussion, not only at the All-American Council this year, but beyond. It is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to convey the idea that we need to be comprehensive in our approach to the life of the Church.

The Four Pillars, each with four sub-sections, is not a 16-part manual for all of us to slavishly follow. It is, rather, a guidebook that might help us on our journey here in North America. I have offered my thoughts based on my own experience on this journey and my hopes for the direction the path might lead us. These are encapsulated at the end of each pillar with some “enduring goals” that I believe could provide a common approach to our Church life in North America.

There is a certain flow to the ordering of the Pillars, which I indicate with the use of the image of a tree. The roots are the spiritual life, the trunk is stewardship, the branches are our relations with others and the leaves and fruit stand for our outreach and evangelism. But the reality is that, just as the stages of purification, illumination, and deification are never passed through in a neat order. So it is up to us, in our own context, to determine when and whether some branches need to be pruned, or whether some fertilizer at the base of the tree might bring the barren tree to bear fruit once again.

I welcome not only the feedback of the delegates to the All American Council this week, but also hope that this framework will serve as the foundation and inspiration for the local work that is accomplished in our parishes and in our dioceses and that my Office will serve, not as the creator of our common work but, rather, the expression of that unity.

The Pillars are put forward to provide a sense of stability and peace like the stability and peace that emanates from every holy altar. Our Lord again and again tells us, “*Be not afraid!*” “*Peace be with you!*” But many of us feel overcome by fears and by anxiety about ourselves, about our parishes, about others, about the ideas we hold dear. We get lost in a storm of issues and polemics, seeing nothing but waves, and certainly not Christ walking to us on the water as though it were dry land.

We first need to do the things we are able to do, many of which are present in the enduring goals we need to bring to fruition. When our spiritual life is healthy, when we are good stewards, when we reach out to others, when we reach out to the world, we

can address the messiness of life, the problems that face us, because we take our strength from the peace and fearlessness of Christ.

Today, our society is filled with lonely, anxious, and frightened people. Today our churches are filled with lonely, anxious, and frightened people. Changes are happening at a dizzying rate. We all suffer from an overload of information from the web. And in this virtual world, which is a world of fantasy, we are often at war and making war, just wars and not-so-just wars alike. One of these is over the problem of homosexuality, most recently brought to our attention once again with the publication of several articles on this subject, particularly the latest edition of *The Wheel*, which contained a forward by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware.

First of all, let's put this in perspective. Scripture and Tradition can show us the way. Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians, "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*" [1 Corinthians 6:8]. Now, Saint John Chrysostom comments on this passage as follows: "Paul does not confine his accusations to a short list of types of sin but condemns all equally. He is not so much getting at particular sins as making a general admonition that will secretly convict anyone who may have such things on his conscience" [Homily 16.8]. To bring a sense of peace and unity, the best emphasis is that we have all sinned. We are all sinners. We all need our Savior. We all can be healed. Singling out this particular sin is not an Orthodox approach, especially in thinking that we are all the more righteous in doing so.

People are broken in different ways and require different types of care. Those who are greedy need to learn to become generous. Those who harshly criticize others need to learn to be long-suffering and loving. And yes, those who are unfaithful to their spouses, and those who engage in same-sex sexual behavior, need to learn purity. The Orthodox Church can teach them, can teach us, if we are willing to learn, willing to change, willing to repent, willing to become the persons that Christ desires of us.

What we need to avoid, though, is abstraction and depersonalization that is not useful to anyone. What revelation defines as "missing the mark" remains missing the mark. The Father's love for the prodigal remains love for the prodigal of every sort. Each person, each precious soul, needs to be treated with the discernment, love, and honor due to every human made in the image of God. The Christian understanding of marriage and virginity likewise need to be maintained and exalted as the blessed paths they indeed are. This is a both/and, not an either/or, proposition. We are sinners and we are being sanctified by God's grace.

It is not easy to deal with the messiness of life. It is a lot easier to take a position behind the safety of our computer screen than to descend with another human being into the darkness and confusion of his life. It is a lot easier to take a position on gun control and the Second Amendment than to wrestle with the demons of the man who pulls the trigger or to comfort the mother whose family has been wiped out. This is not about being pro-gun or anti-gun. It is about addressing the attitude that says, as one gun rights advocate writes, "I carry a gun because there are two types of creatures on this planet – there are predators and there are prey." If we as a human race are but

predators and prey, then we are reduced to the level of animals, and perhaps even lower than animals. We must find the human person in ourselves so that we can love the human person (that is Christ) in the other.

The savior of the world will not be found in the next Supreme Court Justice of the United States, nor will the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* absolve us of advocating for the sanctity of life. There are endless such divisive issues facing us in the world we live in. But we cannot keep talking about them in the abstract. Yesterday, the Holy Synod visited the Saint Louis branch of FOCUS North America as they were preparing to feed their neighbors, and it was beautiful to see broken and wounded people receiving the hospitality of other broken and wounded people, all of them finding some measure of comfort, and perhaps even healing, for their lives. I wondered to myself, "Would it be helpful for these people to receive a copy of the latest issue of *The Wheel*, to be introduced to the debate about the female diaconate, or to read Metropolitan Tikhon's newly published Four Pillars Document?" I know what answer I give to that question, and it is in this spirit that I offer the Four Pillars to this Church as an offering from this human heart to you, my neighbors.

At the beginning of this address, I mentioned my friend, Ted. I showed you a picture of us in 1978, and here we are at a restaurant last Saturday, right before we went to have a "concrete" at Ted Drewe's. It is remarkable how our lives, fleeting as they are, nevertheless preserve a continuity to them. Where does this continuity come from? Certainly not from Facebook, although such instruments may play a part in facilitating these things.

Rather, I believe it comes from our human desire to be part of a community – a neighborhood – and to Jesus Christ, Who is the only One Who can provide us with a real sense of stability and safety in the uncertainty and fragility of a world that offers little concrete help to us. We all long to find that friendship that we had when we were young and that somehow seems lost to us in our shattered world.

A few weeks ago, I was at my family home in France. The cows were there too, up in the pasturage, peacefully grazing. The mountains were there too – a seemingly eternal fixture of the landscape. They seem unscalable and yet, they invite us to climb their summits. I myself never get tired of climbing them. They are a symbol of permanence and eternity in the midst of a rapidly changing world. Our Lord Himself spent time in the water, on the shore, but also in the mountains. He went into the mountains to pray, and it is on the mountains that the major events of His life took place.

Many of the images I used in my presentation this evening referred to water -- the waves of life, the storm at sea. We tend to use this image a lot in the Church and then, even though we know the ship we are on is the Church and it will not sink, we nevertheless perhaps get a little nervous and anxious. To me, the mountain is perhaps a more apt image for us to use for the Church today because we all need something solid to see, to stand upon, and perhaps even to climb. When I visited the grave of my aunt who fell asleep this past month, I was comforted by the fact that her grave lies at the feet of these mountains.

There is also water in the mountains, and the rushing movements of the torrent near my ancestral home reminds me of the power of such Alpine streams. The rushing waters of

rivers are often used, like the stormy waters of the sea, as images of the turmoil and tempest of the world, swirling around us and presenting difficulties to the Church. But another way of looking at this image might provide an image of the Church, the living water that courses and powers its way through the dry and barren lands. And inasmuch as we participate in this movement, we will also be contributing in some small way to the life of the world. I leave you with the words of the Psalmist:

They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever. [Psalm 125:1-2]

Amen.

[1] Psalm 89:1 (see also Psalm 101 and 102)

[2] Cf. Acts 20:35

[3] Abba James, in *Benedicta Ward*, page 104.

[4] *Ibid*, page 259.

2. Plenary Session II

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2018

A. Minutes

SESSION OPENING

The Second Plenary Session opened at 9:44 AM with the singing of “*The Grace of the Holy Spirit.*”

Fr. John Zdinak, Clergy Vice-Chair
David Zavednak, Lay Vice-Chair

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Diocese of Alaska

His Grace, the Right Reverend David, Bishop of Sitka and Alaska, presented a video highlighting recent activities in the Diocese of Alaska. Bishop David spoke about some of the particular challenges facing the Orthodox Church in Alaska, as well as St. Herman’s Seminary. His Grace also noted the importance of the coming anniversaries of the Orthodox Church in America’s autocephaly and the glorification of St. Herman of Alaska in 2020. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon presented Mary Ann Khoury, Coordinator of Outreach Alaska, with the Order of St Innocent – bronze medal for her tireless and longstanding contributions to the Diocese of Alaska and St. Herman’s Seminary.

Albanian Archdiocese and Diocese of New England

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Nikon, Archbishop of Boston, New England, and the Albanian Archdiocese, presented a video highlighting the history of the Diocese of New England and the Albanian Archdiocese, as well as recent missionary efforts.

Bulgarian Diocese

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Alexander, Archbishop of Dallas, the South, and the Bulgarian Diocese, presented a video highlighting recent missionary efforts in the Bulgarian Diocese.

NOMINATIONS PROCEDURES

Fr. Zdinak called on Fr. Stephen Vernak, Chair of the Nominations Committee, to review the process of nominating and electing delegates to the Metropolitan Council and Pension Board according to the procedures listed in the Delegate Handbook, pages 27-28.

PROCEDURES FOR INTRODUCING RESOLUTIONS

Fr. Zdinak called on Fr. James Parnell, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, to review the process for introducing resolutions according to the procedures listed in the Delegate Handbook, pages 17-18 and 23-26. He also reminded everyone that the resolutions and any proposed amendments to said resolutions will only allow for 10 speakers, five for (proponents) and five against (opponents), who will each observe a three-minute time limit to their remarks.

PROPOSED STATUTE AMENDMENTS PROCEDURES

His Grace, the Right Reverend Daniel, Bishop of Santa Rosa, on behalf of the Commission on Canons and Statute reviewed the process for proposed Statute Amendments according to the procedures listed in the Delegate Handbook, pages 17-18 and 23-26.

Bishop Daniel noted that there are six proposed amendments to the Statute, which are listed in the Delegate Handbook, pages 51-55.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

13 Hierarchs
260 Clergy Delegates
209 Lay Delegates
2 Retired Clergy
86 Observers
12 Guests
TOTAL: 582
VOTING COUNT: 482

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED STATUTE AMENDMENTS

Bishop Daniel called on Fr. Alexander Rentel, Commission on Canons and Statute, to introduce the proposed amendments.

HOLY SYNOD AMENDMENT ON THE PERIODICITY OF THE ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

The Holy Synod recommends that the current Article III, Section 3, of the Statute be repealed in its entirety and that a proposed amendment to Article III, Section 3, of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America be substituted in its place, as follows:

“The All-American Council shall be convened periodically, normally at intervals of four years. In extraordinary circumstances, such as the unexpected vacancy in the office of the Metropolitan, for which provisions are made in Article IV, Section 3, an extraordinary All-American Council shall be summoned. The place and precise time of the next meeting of the All-American Council shall be determined by action of the Metropolitan Council with the approval of the Holy Synod.”

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair opened discussion.

Opponent: Fr. Paul Fetsko, SS. George and Alexandra Mission, Fort Smith, AR opined that decreasing the periodicity of the All-American Council would reduce the involvement of the laity and prevent the youth from forming bonds with the larger church.

Opponent: Gregory Nescott, St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA stated that the issue has been presented previously. There is significant value in gathering every three years in fellowship and worship.

Proponent: Alexis Liberovsky, St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY provided historical background on the frequency of the All-American Sobors and Councils, noting that there was a large period of time when there was no set frequency, and it has varied since then from every two years to every four years.

Clarification: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon noted that the Holy Synod proposed this because it is reasonable, but that they are still interested in hearing the perspectives of the delegates.

Clarification: Lisa Mikhalevsky, Washington, DC asked if the diocesan members of the Metropolitan Council will continue to have three-year terms as the current Statute indicates.

Response: Judge E.R. Lanier, General Counsel of the Orthodox Church in America, noted that the Commission on Canons and Statute has recommended to the Diocesan Hierarchs that they may solve the possible gap on a case-by-case basis.

Proponent: Mark Linnehan, Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA, would like the OCA to meet with purpose; governed by necessity, not chronology.

Proponent: Maureen Jury, St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX agreed with the proposal from a financial and governance standpoint.

Opponent: Fr. John Vitko, St. Luke Church, McLean, VA stated that one of the founding principles of the Orthodox Church in America going back to its earliest days as the Metropolia is that the voices of the people ought to be heard. As the All-American Council is the highest body of the Church, it is important for it to come together. If we meet less frequently, there is the danger that those other voices might be lost.

Proponent: Fr. Jacob Kulp, St. Timothy Church, Toccoa, GA noted that this proposal represents a strengthening of the dioceses and their voices in the various bodies of the Church such as the Metropolitan Council, which already reflect the increased conciliarity we currently experience.

Opponent: Robert Graban, Holy Transfiguration Church, Livonia, MI noted that we ought to consider the proposed finance resolution before considering this Statute amendment.

Proponent: Fr John Hopko, SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville, CT pointed out that the administrative burden of preparing for an All-American Council is huge. Additionally, parishes might be able to afford to attend the All-American Council every four years more easily than every three years.

Opponent: Fr. Peter Baktis, Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow Mission, Princeton, NJ questioned the function of the All-American Council and the form it ought to take. Our American environment changes quickly and if we meet less frequently, we might find ourselves in a position in which we would have to call extraordinary Councils frequently in order to respond to our environment in a timely manner.

The Clergy Vice-Chair closed discussion and called the question. Dr. Young, Parliamentarian, noted that Robert's Rules of Order specify that in order for a proposed Statute amendment to be adopted, it must receive two-thirds of the total votes cast, and not two-thirds of the total possible votes.

The amendment was defeated with 210 votes for and 203 against.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE PERIODICITY FOR AUDITS BY THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF ALL ACCOUNTS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

In order to reduce the recurring costs and expenses of a semiannual audit by the Audit Committee of the Metropolitan Council of all accounts of the Orthodox Church in America, the Metropolitan Council recommends that Article V, Section 9 be amended to read:

“An Auditing Committee, consisting of three persons with relevant professional experience, shall be appointed by the Metropolitan Council at its first meeting following adjournment of a normally convened All-American Council. Members of the Auditing Committee shall serve for a term from one All-American Council through the next, excluding any extraordinary meetings of the All-American Council. The Committee's duties shall be to audit all accounts of The Orthodox Church in America on an annual basis, to review the audited accounts of all stavropegial institutions on an annual basis, and to present written reports to the Metropolitan Council. The Chair of the Auditing Committee shall attend sessions of the Metropolitan Council solely to make the Committee's reports. An Audit Committee member may succeed himself/herself for one additional term, and may be removed only for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Metropolitan Council. Any vacancy in the Auditing Committee shall be filled in a timely fashion by the Metropolitan Council.”

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair opened discussion.

Clarification: Fr. Justin Patterson, St. Athanasius Church, Nicholasville, KY asked if the Treasurer endorses the amendment.

Melanie Ringa, Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America, answered that she supports the amendment, and offered some historical notes.

There being no further discussion, the Clergy Vice-Chair closed discussion and called the question.

The amendment carried with a two thirds majority.

HOLY SYNOD AMENDMENT ON CLARIFICATION OF THE ELECTION OF AT-LARGE MEMBERS OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

In order to clarify that the At-Large members of the Metropolitan Council are elected from among the delegates to the All-American Council, the Holy Synod recommends that Article III, Section 4,g be amended to read:

“Elect six (6) at-large members of the Metropolitan Council and two alternates from among the All-American Council delegates;”

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair opened discussion.

Clarification: Fr. Antonio Perdomo, St. George Church, Pharr, TX asked whether the nominee receiving the highest number of votes with still be elected to the six-year term.

Fr. Tosi answered that that is correct.

Opponent: Fr. John Anderson, St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX expressed concern that this would disqualify an eminently qualified individual who may not be able to attend the Council.

There being no further discussion, the Clergy Vice-Chair closed discussion and called the question.

The amendment carried with a two thirds majority.

HOLY SYNOD AMENDMENT ON CLARIFICATION OF THE RIGHT TO CANONICAL PROCESS

In order to provide more formal language, the Holy Synod recommends that Article XV, Section 1 be amended to read

“Every member of the Church, whether cleric, monastic, or lay, is entitled to canonical process in the Courts of the Church and may defend and vindicate their legitimate rights in the competent ecclesiastical forum according to the norm of law.”

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair opened discussion.

There being none, the Clergy Vice-Chair called the question.

The amendment carried unanimously.

HOLY SYNOD AMENDMENT ON CLARIFICATION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE SYNODAL COURT

In order to reflect current practice, the Holy Synod recommends that Article XV, Section 7 be amended to read:

“The Synodal Court, comprised of the members of the Holy Synod and presided over by the Metropolitan, shall be convened at regular sessions of the Holy Synod and at other times, as necessary, to address judicial matters that are within its competence. If judgment requires augmentation of the number of bishops, Auxiliary Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, or Diocesan Bishops from other Orthodox Churches shall be invited to participate.”

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair opened discussion.

There being none, the Clergy Vice-Chair called the question.

The amendment carried unanimously.

HOLY SYNOD AMENDMENT ON CORRECTION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS

In order to correct a typographical error, the Holy Synod recommends that Article XII, Section 4.a be amended to read:

“An Associate Priest is a Priest who has been appointed to a Parish by the Diocesan Bishop, receives compensation from the Parish, and carries out ministries within the Parish as directed by the Parish Priest in consultation with the Parish Council. His role in the governance of the Parish is determined by the established Diocesan procedures and norms.”

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair opened discussion.

There being no discussion, the Clergy Vice-Chair called the question.

The amendment carried unanimously.

REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR

Fr. John Jillions, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, highlighted portions of his written report, and reviewed the many changes that have taken place over his past

seven years as Chancellor. He reflected on his impressions of where the Church is headed, the significance of our autocephaly, and the legacy of Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann of blessed memory. Fr. Jillions expressed his gratitude to His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon for his time as Chancellor.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Fr. Eric Tosi, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, offered thanks for close collaboration and support during his ten years as Secretary.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Ms. Ringa highlighted some of the financial milestones since the 18th All-American Council and expressed gratitude to the dioceses for their efforts in the transition towards proportional giving to support the work of the Central Administration.

REPORT OF THE STEWARDS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA (SOCA)

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, Director of SOCA, reported on its history as well as its progress over the past years two years. He encouraged everyone to become a Steward. He also invited everyone to attend the SOCA reception on Wednesday, July 25, 2018 from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM.

REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Reader John Skrobat, Chair of the Audit Committee, delivered the results of the financial audits, noting that the church's financial records are in excellent shape. He thanked the Chancery staff, especially Ms. Ringa, the other members of the Committee and the previous auditors for their hard work during difficult times.

INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED FINANCE RESOLUTION

Fr. John Dresko, Chair of the Finance Committee of the Metropolitan Council, thanked the other members of the Committee, as well as Ms. Ringa, for all their hard work. He presented the highlights of how the financing of the Orthodox Church in America has worked in the last three years since moving to proportional giving at the 18th All-American Council. Fr. Dresko asked Ms. Ringa to show what the proposed resolution would mean to each individual diocese, as well as to the Central Administration.

On behalf of the Metropolitan Council and with the blessing of the Holy Synod, Fr. Dresko moved the following resolution:

“For the budget years of 2019, 2020, and 2021 each territorial diocese with the exception of Canada, Mexico and Alaska shall remit its annual financial obligation for the work of the Synodal Chancery according to the following formula:

Dioceses contributing at a rate greater than 34% of their “net operating budgets” shall decrease their annual diocesan financial obligation by 2% annually from 2019 through 2021, not to fall below 34%.

Dioceses contributing at the 34% rate of their “net operating budgets” shall continue to remit their annual financial obligation at the 34% rate from 2019 through 2021.

For the budget years 2019 through 2021, the Archdiocese of Canada and the Diocese of Alaska shall remit their annual diocesan financial obligation at the rate of 10% of their net operating budget.

The financial arrangements of the non-territorial dioceses (Romanian Episcopate, Albanian Archdiocese, and Bulgarian Diocese) are based upon agreements made when they entered the OCA and are within the competency of the Holy Synod, subject to periodic review.”

DISCUSSION

The Lay Vice-Chair opened discussion.

Clarification: Fr. James Parnell, All Saints Church, Hartford, CT asked what would happen if the resolution does not pass.

Fr. Dresko answered that the Council would have to draft another resolution in order to fund the Orthodox Church in America for the next triennial period.

Opponent: Matushka Mary Buletza, Annunciation Church, Brick, NJ expressed concern that the proposal formulated and forwarded by the Chancellors and Treasurers meeting is not the resolution presented today.

Clarification: Fr. Dresko noted that a number of proposals were presented to the Metropolitan Council which forwarded the presented resolution to the Holy Synod.

Opponent: Fr. Ignatius Gauvain, St. Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, PA noted that the vote in Atlanta was a huge step forward toward a more appropriate way of funding the Church and this stagnates us.

Proponent: Maureen Jury spoke in favor of the resolution and noted that the Diocese of the South is paying more now than under the assessment system.

Proponent: David Lane, Metropolitan Council Lay Representative from the Diocese of the West, noted that if we discontinue the process currently in place, the alternative is to return to the assessment system.

Proponent: Dr. Richard Comshaw, SS. Peter and Paul Church, Meridan, CT noted that his parish’s proportional rate is higher now than it was with the assessment system.

Clarification: Fr. Dresko noted that this resolution only addresses proportional giving of the dioceses to the Central Administration.

Proponent: Mr. Linnehan noted that the proportional rate results in fewer real dollars from his diocese than the assessment did. He is looking forward to when all dioceses will pay the same rate and hopes the rate will be closer to 10%.

Opponent: Fr. Parnell expressed concern that we not shortchange the Central Administration. How can we as the OCA fund what needs to happen and what we want to happen in our Church?

There being no further discussion, the Lay Vice-Chair called the question.

The resolution carried.

HOUSEKEEPING

Fr. Tosi indicated that the remainder of this morning's agenda will be moved to Plenary Session IV. The workshops conducted during Plenary Session III will begin at 2:15 PM.

The Clergy Vice-Chair adjourned Plenary Session II at 1:08 PM, with the singing of "It is Truly Meet."

3. Plenary Session III

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2018

As this Plenary Session was a Forum there are no minutes

4. Plenary Session IV

Wednesday, July 25, 2018

A. Minutes

SESSION OPENING

The Fourth Plenary Session opened at 9:33 AM with the singing of “*The Grace of the Holy Spirit.*”

Fr. John Zdinak, Clergy Vice-Chair
David Zavednak, Lay Vice-Chair

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Clergy Vice-Chair announced that the Holy Synod had approved the minutes from Plenary Sessions I and II, and the minutes have been distributed to the delegates.

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Archdiocese of Canada

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Irénée, Archbishop of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada, presented a video highlighting the history and life of the Archdiocese.

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, presented a video highlighting current efforts in the Diocese, in particular the Clergy Peer Learning Groups that have been formed.

Diocese of Mexico

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Alejo, Archbishop of Mexico City and the Diocese of Mexico, presented a video highlighting the life in the Diocese.

Diocese of the Midwest

His Grace, the Right Reverend Paul, Bishop of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest, presented a video highlighting recent missionary efforts in the Diocese.

GREETINGS TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Nathanael, Metropolitan of Chicago, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, greeted the 19th All-American Council on behalf of His All-Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch.

EXARCHATE FOR ORTHODOX PARISHES OF RUSSIAN TRADITION IN WESTERN EUROPE

Fr. Serge Sollogoub, Exarchate for Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe, Ecumenical Patriarchate, read a letter of greeting from His Eminence, the Most Reverend John, Archbishop of Charioupolis, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

13 Hierarchs
251 Clergy Delegates
202 Lay Delegates
4 Retired Clergy
78 Observers
7 Guests
TOTAL: 555
VOTING COUNT: 466

PENSION BOARD REPORT

Fr. Gleb McFatter, Chair of the Pension Board, and Ms. Maureen Ahearn, Plan Administrator, presented highlights from the written report. Fr. McFatter encouraged all Clergy Delegates to attend the Pension Board Meeting on Thursday, July 26, 2018 from 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM. His Eminence, the Most Reverend Nathaniel, Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate, delivered remarks praising the Pension Program and encouraging all eligible clergy to enroll.

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF REVIEW OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS/SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ORSMA/SMPAC)

Fr. John Jillions, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, presented highlights of the written report. Fr. Jillions also stressed how seriously these matters are taken, as well as how important it is to keep our churches and parishioners safe from harm.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL REPORT

Fr. Chad Hatfield, At-Large member of the Metropolitan Council, presented highlights from the written report.

REPORT ON MONASTIC LIFE

Archimandrite Sergius (Bowyer), Abbot of the Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, presented highlights from the written report on the monastery. He additionally noted that we must rediscover the place of monasticism in our modern Church, recognizing it as the fullest possible measure in this world of being able to live the life to come, and encourage our parishioners to familiarize themselves with our monasteries so that we can all, both lay and monastic, be united in prayer. Fr. Sergius recommended the

creation of an office of Dean of Monastics. He delivered remarks on behalf of the other Monastic Superiors within the OCA.

REPORTS OF THE SEMINARIES

ST. HERMAN'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fr. John Dunlop, Dean of St. Herman's Seminary, presented a video about the history and mission of the Seminary, highlighting the importance of their patron, St. Herman of Alaska, in their work. Fr. Dunlop thanked the attendees for their support in funding all of the seminarian families for the coming year.

ST. TIKHON'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fr. John Parker, Dean and Chief Operating Officer of St. Tikhon's Seminary, presented a video about the Seminary, and delivered additional remarks about the Seminary.

ST. VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fr. Chad Hatfield, President of St. Vladimir's Seminary, presented highlights from the written report, noting that the Church is in great need of vocations, and presented a video on the current vocations crisis.

INTRODUCTION OF DEAN OF ST. CATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR REPRESENTATION CHURCH, MOSCOW

The Clergy Vice-Chair recognized Fr. Daniel Andrejuk, Dean of the Representation Church of the Holy Great Martyr Catherine in the Fields and Representative of the Orthodox Church in America to the Moscow Patriarchate, who began his duties on February 1, 2018.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (BTE)

Fr. Kirill Sokolov, Director of the BTE and the Diaconal Vocations Program, presented highlights from the written report.

PRESENTATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND (OCCIF)

Fr. John Dresko, Member of the Board of Directors of OCCIF, presented a video explaining the purpose of OCCIF and announcing the new investment program. He reminded the delegates that they may ask any questions at the OCCIF booth in the Midway.

PRESENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (IOCC)

Mr. Nick Kasemeotes, IOCC Development Officer, reported on some of IOCC's recent work, as well as thanking those who are supporting their efforts.

PRESENTATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (OCF)

Dn. Alexander Cadman, Secretary of the Executive Board and OCA Representative to OCF, spoke about the importance of ministering to our Orthodox college students to help them continue to grow in Christ. Dn. Cadman also reported on the current state of OCF, and thanked the Delegates for their support of many OCF programs.

PRESENTATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION CENTER (OCMC)

Fr. Martin Ritsi, Executive Director of OCMC, spoke about the history and founding of OCMC, noting that the OCA is instrumental in supporting OCMC's work across the globe, but that more long-term missionaries and supporters are still needed in order to ensure the vitality of the Center's efforts.

PRESENTATION OF THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY (OCPM)

Fr. John Kowalczyk, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of OCPM, reported on the mission and work of OCPM, noting that Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's vision of bringing the Orthodox Faith to all must include those who are incarcerated.

UPDATED CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

At 12:33PM, the Credentials Committee reported the following numbers:

13 Hierarchs
273 Clergy Delegates
217 Lay Delegates
4 Retired Clergy
90 Observers
8 Guests
TOTAL: 605
VOTING COUNT: 503

HOUSEKEEPING

The Clergy Vice Chair announced that there were no resolutions to be considered at this plenary session.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon expressed his regrets that we have not had time to view the Reflections by Hieromonk Alexis (Trader) of the Holy Monastery of Karakallou on Mount Athos.

Fr. Tosi made some brief announcements, including that the Vigil for the Feast of St. Jacob Netsvetov will be served at 5:00 PM, and that the Forums conducted during Plenary Session V will begin at 1:45 PM, instead of 1:30 PM.

The Clergy Vice-Chair adjourned Plenary Session IV at 1:04 PM, with the singing of "*It Is Truly Meet.*"

5. Plenary Session V

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2018

As this Plenary Session was a Forum there are no minutes

6. Plenary Sessions VI

Thursday, July 26, 2018

A. Minutes

SESSION OPENING

The Sixth Plenary Session opened at 1:11 PM with the singing of “The Grace of the Holy Spirit.”

Fr. John Zdinak, Clergy Vice-Chair
David Zavednak, Lay Vice-Chair

GREETINGS TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Seraphim, Metropolitan of the Archdiocese Zimbabwe, greeted the 19th All-American Council on behalf of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa. Metropolitan Seraphim also offered reflections on His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon’s “Of What Life Do We Speak? Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church.”

MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

His Grace, the Right Reverend Flavian, Bishop of Cherepovets and Belozersk, greeted the 19th All-American Council on behalf of His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

REFLECTION

The Lay Vice-Chair introduced a video reflection on honesty by Hieromonk Alexis (Trader) of the Holy Monastery of Karakallou on Mount Athos.

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Diocese of New York and New Jersey

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Michael, Archbishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, presented a video highlighting the current youth ministry taking place within the Diocese, as well as mission and evangelism.

Romanian Episcopate

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Nathaniel, Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate presented a video highlighting the history of the Episcopate.

Diocese of the South

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Alexander, Archbishop of Toledo, Dallas and the Diocese of South, presented a video highlighting recent efforts in the Diocese of the South.

GREETINGS TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

SERBIAN PATRIARCHATE

His Grace, the Right Reverend Longin, Bishop of New Gracanica and Midwest America, Patriarchate of Serbia

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

At 2:30 PM, the Credentials Committee reported the following numbers:

12 Hierarchs
226 Clergy Delegates
198 Lay Delegates
2 Retired Clergy
68 Observers
8 Guests
TOTAL: 514
VOTING COUNT: 436

ELECTION TO CHURCH-WIDE OFFICES

Fr. Daniel Mathewson and Fr. Stephen Vernak, Chairs of the Council Tellers and Council Nominations Committees, respectively, introduced the procedures for electing representatives to the Metropolitan Council and Pension Board. Fr. Alexander Rentel, Secretary of the Commission on Canons and Statute, reminded the delegates that the new Statute supersedes and replaces all previous voting procedures. The two clergy and two lay nominees receiving the most votes for Metropolitan Council will receive three year terms and the nominees receiving the third highest number of votes becomes alternates. For the Pension Board, the clergy and lay nominees receiving the most votes are elected to six-year terms, the next highest to three-year terms, and the third highest are elected as alternates. The nominees were announced:

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Clergy

Fr. Andrew Bartek, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. Theodore Boback, Archdiocese of Washington
Fr. Edward Henderson, Diocese of the West
Fr. David Lowell, Diocese of the West
Fr. Thomas Moore, Diocese of the South
Fr. David Rucker, Diocese of Alaska
Fr. Kirill Sokolov, Diocese of the West
Fr. James Weremedic, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Lay

Ms. Lynnell Brunswig, Diocese of the West
Mr. Mark W. Linnehan, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Mr. Michael L. Thompson, Archdiocese of Washington

PENSION BOARD**Clergy**

Fr. Matthew Tate, Diocese of the West
Fr. John Zdinak, Diocese of the Midwest

Lay

Ms. Mary Ann Bobulsky, Diocese of the Midwest
Mr. Barry Gluntz, Diocese of the Midwest
Mr. Harrison Basil Russin, Stavropegial Institutions
Ms. Joanne Wevodau, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Mr. Gregory Nescott, St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA asked that in the future the nominees be announced the night before the election so that the delegates would have the opportunity to learn more about the candidates outside of their biographies. The Clergy Vice-Chair noted his suggestion.

The election took place, with the results to be announced later in the session.

FORUM FEEDBACK**FORUM 1: SPIRITUAL LIFE**

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Melchisedek, Archbishop of Pittsburgh and the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania, presented highlights from the forum, particularly noting that the key to the spiritual life is being able to exist in the present moment. Mother Christophora (Matychak), Abbess of the Monastery of the Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA, noted that the forum was quite full both times it was presented.

FORUM 2: CARE OF CLERGY

His Grace, the Right Reverend Paul, Bishop of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest, presented highlights from the forum, focusing on the Clergy Peer Groups that were pioneered in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, as well as other issues such as clergy taxes.

FORUM 3: STEWARDSHIP

Mr. Bill Marianes, Director of Stewardship Calling in Atlanta, GA, presented highlights from the forum, focusing on the idea that our entire lives should be a continuous act of stewardship so that we may give a good account before the dread judgment seat of Christ.

FORUM 4: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Fr. Alexander Rentel, Three Hierarchs Chapel, Yonkers, NY, gave a brief outline of what was presented in the forum. Fr. Rentel expressed his gratitude to the other presenters for their contributions, in particular: Fr. Daniel Andrejuk,

Representation Church of the Holy Greatmartyr Catherine in the Fields, Moscow, Russia; Fr. Kishkovsky; Fr. Nazari Polataiko, Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA; Fr Chad Hatfield, Three Hierarchs Chapel; and, Protodeacon Sergei Kapral, Holy Resurrection Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA.

FORUM 5: MISSION AND EVANGELISM

Fr. John Parker, Chair of the Department of Evangelization, presented highlights of the forum. He thanked the other presenters, including: Fr. Thomas Soroka, St. Nicholas Church, McKees Rock, PA; Fr. Andrew Cuneo, St. Katherine of Alexandria Mission, Carlsbad, CA; Fr. Jason Foster, Nativity of the Lord Mission, Shreveport, LA; Fr. David Morrison, St. Anthony the Great Mission, Bozeman, MT; Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA; Fr. David Rucker, St. Herman's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kodiak, AK; and Fr. Matthew Tate, Church of the Annunciation, Milwaukie, OR.

FORUM 6: CARE OF A COMMUNITY

Fr. Eric Tosi, Secretary of the OCA, presented highlights from the forum, stressing four major points: that we must love our people, be the Church, keep our children engaged, and tap into the strength of our ethnic communities. He also thanked His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, and His Eminence Archbishop Alejo for their invaluable contributions to the forum.

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND INTERCHURCH RELATIONS REPORT

Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of the Office of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, delivered highlights from the written report.

ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS IN THE UNITED STATES REPORT (ACOB)

His Eminence Archbishop Michael, Treasurer of ACOB, reiterated the purpose of ACOB, noting that, while progress toward administrative unity in the United States has been slower than hoped, several concrete achievements are happening, among them: the bishops are getting to know each other better and enjoy the fruits of the trust this has engendered; they continue to discuss the potential for unity; twenty-four landmark research studies on the status of Orthodoxy in America; the ACOB website offers a cross-jurisdictional directory of the bishops; and legal resources from multiple jurisdictions have helped equip the churches for positions of strength in our changing civil legal climate. Finally, His Eminence asked the attendees to envision a day when all 52 ACOB bishops might celebrate the Divine Liturgy in Yankee Stadium with the bleachers filled by young Orthodox Christians, to show the world how great our Church is, to the glory of God.

REPORTS OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Matushka Valerie Zahirsky, Chair of the Department of Christian Education, presented highlights from the written report and showed a number of examples of new lesson plans and activities that are now available on the website.

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND HUMANITARIAN AID

Ms. Donna Karabin, Chair of the Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid, presented highlights from the written report, focusing on the Compassion in Action (CiA) Parish Ministry Training.

DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Clergy Vice-Chair presented a video by Fr. Ian Pac-Urar, Chair of the Department of Continuing Education, highlighting the Department's work since the 18th All-American Council, and requesting that the Department's important work be funded in the future.

DEPARTMENT OF EVANGELIZATION

Fr. Parker presented highlights from the written report, noting in particular those missions that are current recipients of Church Planting Grants.

DEPARTMENT OF LITURGICAL MUSIC AND TRANSLATIONS

Dr. David Drillock, Chair of the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, presented highlights from the written report, and stated that over 7,000 pages of music are now available to download on the website, which receives over 30,000 unique visits each month. Dr. Drillock noted that it is of critical importance that we revitalize our parish and mission choirs because of their singular role in spreading the Gospel and the Orthodox Faith in America.

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL LIFE

Hieromonk Nikodhim (Preston), Administrator of the Department of Pastoral Life, presented highlights from the written report.

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

Fr. Christopher Rowe, Chair of the Department of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry, presented highlights from the written report. Fr. Rowe stressed how important our youth are, and how critical our role in their development is. He also noted how wonderful our youth participation has been during the Council this week, and how people are beginning to view the funding of our youth programs as an opportunity, not a burden, but we still struggle with resources. He expressed his gratitude for all the hard work done for the youth programs this week by Fr. Benjamin Tucci and his team. Fr. Rowe asked for everyone to keep our youth and youth workers in their prayers.

FELLOWSHIP OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA (FOCA)

Ms. Marge Kovach, Immediate Past President of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, presented highlights from the FOCA written report, particularly noting the many accomplishments of the last three years. Ms. Kovach also presented a check for \$19,500 to Mr. Louis Zagami, Development Officer for International Orthodox Christian Charities, which was raised through the Gifts of Love Project in 2018.

ELECTION RESULTS

Fr. Mathewson announced the election results:

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Clergy

#1 Fr. Moore
#2 Fr. Sokolov
Alternate Fr. Rucker

Lay

#1 Mr. Linnehan
#2 Ms. Brunswig
Alternate Mr. Thompson

PENSION BOARD

Clergy

Fr. Tate: six-year term
Fr. Zdinak: three-year term

Lay

Ms. Bobulsky: six-year term
Mr. Gluntz: three-year term
Ms. Wevodau: alternate

HOUSEKEEPING

Fr. Tosi announced that over \$6,000 has been raised through collections at services this week for FOCUS North America, and that the newly-elected will be installed tomorrow morning at Plenary Session VII.

The Clergy Vice-Chair adjourned Plenary Session VI at 5:06 PM, with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet."

7. Plenary Session VII

Friday, July 27, 2018

A. Minutes

SESSION OPENING

The Seventh Plenary Session opened at 9:39 AM with the singing of “The Grace of the Holy Spirit.”

Fr. John Zdinak, Clergy Vice-Chair
David Zavednak, Lay Vice-Chair

REFLECTION

The Clergy Vice-Chair introduced a video reflection on ascetic reverence by Hieromonk Alexis (Trader) of the Holy Monastery of Karakallou on Mount Athos.

YOUTH PRESENTATION

The Clergy Vice-Chair introduced a video by the Youth Program, highlighting some of their individual reflections as well as the activities in which they participated. Mr. Dimitrios Rentel and Ms. Miriam Sheehan addressed the attendees on behalf of the youth, reminding everyone that the youth are not simply the future of the Church, but rather are already full members of the Church and ought to be treated as such. Ms. Sheehan noted the importance of strong relationships amongst peers of similar ages for developing closer connections and bonds, which result in the youth maintaining their excitement for the Church. Because of this, Mr. Rentel and Ms. Sheehan noted, we should be investing even more in youth programs; not simply at the All-American Council every three years, but also in youth camps, outings, and other activities which help create those strong bonds. Mr. Rentel and Ms. Sheehan received a standing ovation. The older youth then sang a “Christ is Risen” in Georgian, and then the entire group sang a version of the Trisagion as a round, as well as “Beneath Your Compassion.”

His Grace, the Right Reverend David, Bishop of Sitka and the Diocese of Alaska, also addressed the Council, thanking Fr. Benjamin Tucci, Director of the Youth Program for the 19th All-American Council, and Fr. Christopher Rowe, Chairman of the Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry, for all of their hard work during the week. Bishop David also announced that the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) voted at their most recent assembly to study funding up to \$50,000 towards a full-time Youth Director for the OCA, but we will need to be able to match their efforts so that we can deliver on what the youth have asked for.

Fr. Tucci thanked all of his staff for their hard work this week, and their willingness to accept the uncertainty of stepping into the unknown in order to try to inspire all of us. Fr. Tucci also noted that in icons of the Theotokos, she always points us to Christ, and it is our job to do the same in overcoming our fear of the unknown, just as our Mother did

in saying yes to God's will. The more we engender the love of God in our hearts, Fr. Tucci said, the more we will be able to instill it in others.

His Beatitude, the Most Blessed Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, rose to thank Fr. Tucci on behalf of the Holy Synod, noting that we owe him a deep debt of gratitude for his care of our youth. Metropolitan Tikhon then presented Fr. Tucci with an icon of the Holy Greatmartyr and Healer Panteleimon in appreciation for his work with the youth. He also noted that the youth offer us a living illustration of what it looks like to live out the principles of the Four Pillars, and assured them that the Holy Synod would take seriously the requests they have made.

Fr. John Jillions, Chancellor of the OCA, noted that there is hope in our church, but in order to act on it, it is imperative that we fund a full-time Youth Director. Fr. Jillions then personally pledged \$1000 toward that fund. He asked that if anyone else wants to step up and take action, to please contact Ms. Melanie Ringa, Treasurer of the OCA. This resulted in a number of people being moved to make pledges to the fund:

- Fr. Nicholas Wyslutsky, St Nicholas Church, Mogadore, OH pledged \$1000.
- Fr. David Rucker, Nativity of the Theotokos Church, Port Lions, AK, pledged \$1000 on behalf of OCMC Missionaries.
- Fr. Timothy Hojnicky pledged \$1000 on behalf of Holy Apostles Mission, Mechanicsburg, PA.
- Fr. John Anderson pledged \$1000 on behalf of St Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX.
- Fr. Kirill Sokolov pledged \$2000 on behalf of Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA, and \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. Herman Kincaid pledged \$1000 on behalf of Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Burr Ridge, IL.
- Fr. Mykola Bodnarchuk pledged \$1000 on behalf of St Nicholas Church, Joliet, IL.
- Metropolitan Tikhon pledged \$2000 on behalf of St. Sergius of Radonezh Chapel, Oyster Bay Cove, NY, and \$10,000 personally
- Fr. John Kudrin pledged \$1500 on behalf of Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Saint Paul Island, AK, and stated he would make a personal donation, too.
- Fr. John Vitko pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Luke Church, McLean, VA, and \$2500 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. John Pierce pledged \$1000 on behalf of Holy Resurrection Church, Tacoma, WA.
- Mr. Gregory Nescott, St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA, pledged \$1000 personally, and stated that he would ensure his priest pledges an additional \$1000.
- Fr. James Parnell pledged \$5000 on behalf of All Saints Church, Hartford, CT.
- Fr. Thomas Alessandrini pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. John the Wonderworker Church, Atlanta, GA.
- Igumen Sergious (Gerken) pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Raphael of Brooklyn Church, Inverness, FL, and \$1000 personally.
- Fr. Nicholas Finley pledged \$1000 on behalf of Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL.

- Ms. Caye Caswick pledged \$1000 on behalf of St Luke the Evangelist Church, Palos Hills, IL.
- Fr. Paul Coats pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Anthony the Great Mission, Rock Hill, SC.
- Fr. John Tomasi, Mission of Joy of All Who Sorrow, Culver City, CA, pledged \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. Lawrence Margitich pledged \$3000 on behalf of Protection of the Holy Virgin/St. Seraphim, Santa Rosa, CA.
- Fr. Nicholas Kime pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Herman Orthodox Church, Port Townsend, WA
- Fr. Andrew Cuneo pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Katherine of Alexandria Mission, Carlsbad, CA.
- Dr. David Ford, St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery Church, South Canaan, PA, pledged \$1000 as a minimum and stated that he will spread the word.
- Fr. Michael Butler pledged \$1000 on behalf of Holy Transfiguration Church, Livonia, MI.
- Fr. Jonathan Ivanoff pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. John the Theologian Church, Shirley, NY, and \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. Joel Wilson pledged \$1000 on behalf of Annunciation of the Virgin Mary Mission, Saint James, MO.
- Fr. John Baker pledged \$2000 on behalf of Christ the Savior Church, Chicago, IL, and \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. David Thatcher pledged \$1000 on behalf of Transfiguration of Christ Cathedral, Denver, CO.
- Fr. John Kreta pledged \$500 on behalf of All Saints of North America Mission, Salisbury, CT, and \$1000 on behalf of his family. Additionally, Fr. Kreta said he would ask the Diocesan Council for another \$1000.
- Fr. Vladimir Aleandro pledged \$1000 on behalf of Christ the Savior Church, Southbury, CT, and \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. Barnabas Powell pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Katherine Mission, Kirkland, WA.
- Mr. Justin Wong pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. John of Damascus Church, Poway CA.
- Fr. Jason Foster, Nativity of the Lord Mission, Bossier City, LA, pledged \$1000 on behalf of the Mississippi River Deanery of the Diocese of the South.
- Fr. John Wehling pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. John of Chicago Mission, Rogers, AR.
- Fr. Vasily Fisher pledged \$1500 on behalf of St. James Church, Napaskiak, AK, and \$1000 on behalf of the Diocese of Alaska.
- Fr. Andreas Blom pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Gabriel, Archangel Mission, Ashland, OR.
- Mrs. Roxanne Reid-Bennett, St. Elizabeth the New Martyr Church, Paulsbo, WA, pledged \$1000.
- Fr. Patrick Burns pledged \$1000 on behalf of Three Saints Church, Ansonia, CT, and \$1000 on behalf of the St. Tikhon's Alumni Association.
- Fr. Lev Kopistianksy pledged \$1000 on behalf of Holy Trinity Church, Detroit, MI.
- Fr. Stephan Meholick pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Nicholas Church, San Anselmo, CA.

- Ms. Patricia Christian pledged \$500 on behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary, St. Thomas the Apostle Church, St. Louis, MO.
- Fr. Alexander Vallens pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Patriarch Tikhon Mission, Parker, CO.
- Mr. Vasil Rukavchenko pledged \$1000 on behalf of Our Lady of Kazan Church, Sea Cliff, NY and \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. Steven Voytovich, St. Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, pledged \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Dr. Constantine Kallaur, Holy Trinity Church, East Meadow, NY, pledged \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Fr. Alexander Koranda pledged \$2000 on behalf of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL.
- Fr. John Hopko pledged \$1000 on behalf of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville, Ct, and \$1000 in memory of his father, Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko.
- Fr. John Armstrong pledged \$1000 on behalf of St Herman Church, Littleton, CO.
- Fr. Philip Kontos pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Herman of Alaska Church, Lake Forth Worth, FL.
- Dr. Richard Comshaw, Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT, pledged \$1000.
- Fr. Michael Anderson pledged \$1000 on behalf of St Christina of Tyre Church, Fremont, CA.
- Fr. Jonah Andrew pledged \$1000 on behalf of St. Innocent Cathedral, Anchorage, AK, and \$1000 on behalf of St. Alexis Mission, Anchorage, AK.
- Fr. Ignatius Gouvain, St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, PA, pledged \$100 annually on behalf of his family.
- Fr. Zdinak pledged \$2500 on behalf of St. Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH, and \$1000 on behalf of his family.
- Bishop David pledged \$1000 personally.

Fr. Ivanoff stated that today has shown us that when there's a vision, the money follows, and that this should be a lesson for us.

The Clergy Vice-Chair noted that all parishes and missions should ensure that supporting our youth programs becomes a line item in our budgets in order to keep them going and funded into the future.

Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, Director of the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America, said that he will send an email out giving everyone information on how they can pledge.

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Archdiocese of Washington

Metropolitan Tikhon presented a video highlighting the work of the Archdiocese on the 4 Pillars.

Diocese of the West

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Benjamin, Archbishop of San Francisco and the Diocese of the West, presented a video highlighting the history and recent activities of the diocese.

Archdiocese of the Western Pennsylvania

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Melchisedek, Archbishop of Pittsburgh and the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania, presented a video highlighting recent efforts in the diocese.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Clergy Vice-Chair announced that the Holy Synod approved the minutes from Plenary Sessions IV and VI and that the minutes were distributed to the Delegates.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

At 10:22 AM, the Credentials Committee reported the following numbers:

9 Hierarchs
152 Clergy Delegates
119 Lay Delegates
1 Retired Clergy
47 Observers
6 Guests
TOTAL: 334
VOTING COUNT: 280

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF MILITARY CHAPLAINS

Fr. Theodore Boback, Dean of the Office of Military Chaplains, presented highlights from the written report. Additionally, Fr. Mark Koczak, Fr. Thaddaeus Werner, Fr. James Sizemore, and Fr. Peter Dubinin spoke about their experiences as military chaplains.

REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCIES

Fr. Steven Voytovich, Director of the Office of Institutional Chaplaincies, presented highlights from the written report. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon thanked Fr. Voytovich for his work in establishing institutional chaplaincies for the OCA and for serving as Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary.

FOCUS NORTH AMERICA PRESENTATION

Mr. Seraphim Danckaert, Executive Director of FOCUS North America, spoke about the organization's mission and how we can help. Ms. Ringa presented him with a check for \$6000 from the OCA reflecting the amount that was raised in the collections taken during the liturgical services this week.

FINAL RESOLUTIONS

The Lay Vice-Chair called on Fr. James Parnell, Chair of the Resolutions Committee. Fr. Parnell stated that six resolutions were presented to the Holy Synod, but that they were not deemed within the competency of the All American Council or were items already under action from the Holy Synod. No resolutions were presented for action.

OTHER BUSINESS

Fr. John Parker presented the following statement thanking Fr. Steven Voytovitch for his service as Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary. The statement was followed by applause.

"Whereas Archpriest Steven Voytovich has demonstrated his tireless commitment to Theological Education and Pastoral Formation,

"And whereas the mutual love between the students and Fr. Steven are palpable,

"And whereas Fr. Steven serves at the altar with dignity grace and beauty,

"And whereas Fr. Steven was constant in his support of the Mission Choir

"And whereas he was instrumental in the accreditation of the seminary

"And whereas Fr. Steven's servant heart is observable in his visible actions of humility"

"Be it resolved that the hierarchs, clergy and faithful gathered at the 19th AAC offer our abundant but insufficient thanks to Archpriest Steven Voytovitch for his service as Dean of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary."

OFFICE OF HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

Alexis Liberovsky, OCA Archivist and Director of the Office of History and Archives, expanded on his written report highlighting the upcoming renovation of the basement of the Chancery where the Archives are located as well as additional short-term and long-term needs. He called for the identification of donors to assist with funding of these needs.

The Clergy Vice-Chair expressed gratitude from himself and the Lay Vice-Chair for the opportunity to serve as Vice-Chairs of the 19th AAC.

OPEN DISCUSSION AND INITIATIVES

Metropolitan Tikhon opened the floor for comments, questions, and concerns.

Mr. Nescott: We are not managing our available time well. The Forums did not give enough time to ask questions. Instead of having people read reports that have been distributed prior to the Council, that time could be better used.

Metropolitan Tikhon: I agree. We learn and grow each time we do these.

Fr. Joel Weir, St. Stephen Church, Crawfordsville, IN: At the 18th All-American Council, there was a resolution about spiritual abuse that did not pass, but the Holy Synod said they were going to consider it. Has there been any progress?

Metropolitan Tikhon: The Synod appointed a committee to look into it, which included the people who presented the resolution, and it has been integrated into the Department of Pastoral Life. Bishop Paul: The Synod took responsibility to look into the concerns. His Grace read the following report:

“At the All-American Council in Atlanta in 2015, a resolution was introduced on the floor calling upon the Church to address concerns related to Spiritual Abuse. The Holy Synod intervened and decided it would take responsibility for addressing this concern. Shortly after the Council His Grace Bishop Paul was appointed by His Beatitude to assemble a task force to study this concern. The work group consisted of three laypersons, three clergy, and Bishop Paul. Several values guided this process. First, there was no interest in developing another ORSMA type vehicle for addressing Spiritual Abuse. Second, an important part of addressing this topic needed to focus more on prevention and education and less on investigation.

“The work group has met about four or five times a year in the last three years with the last meeting being in June of 2018. Our work has produced the following results:

1. A definition of Spiritual Abuse was developed. It went through numerous drafts with the Holy Synod approving the final draft at the Spring Session of this year (knowing that this continues to be a developing document based on what new things we learn in the years to come).
2. An outline for a two or three hour presentation on Spiritual Abuse was developed that can be used in seminary presentations and for further development in other settings (perhaps in the Department of Continuing Education).
3. Should anyone raise a concern about specific incidents of possible spiritual abuse, procedures were developed to assist Diocesan Bishops in dealing with this should it arise. This is an internal document for synodal use only.
4. Guidelines for appropriate clergy and lay behavior were also developed. It is not clear at this point as to how this should be disseminated or utilized.

“The question that needs to be further explored is can further curricula be developed on prevention and education on Spiritual Abuse? What OCA department could best address this? It was the consensus of the Spiritual Abuse Work Group that it had fulfilled what it was called to do by His Beatitude and the Holy Synod. At this time we have no further plans to meet.”

Following Bp. Paul’s report, His Beatitude remarked that the work should continue at the diocesan level.

Fr. Leonard Herrem, Sobor of the Holy Resurrection, Saskatoon, SK remarked that while the work on Spiritual Abuse has been effective, it is good practice for clergy to take care of themselves. Peer support is important and the work should continue.

James Mahlke, St. Herman Church, Oxnard, CA appreciated the mix of worship and business portions of the AAC and requested information on when the diocesan videos would be available for viewing through the internet. It was noted that these are already available. It was also noted that all of the plenaries were podcast by Ancient Faith Radio. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon thanked Fr. John Parsells for his work at the AAC as videographer.

Fr. Antonio Perdomo, St. George the Great Martyr Church, Pharr, TX spoke on behalf of the clergy of Mexico to thank the OCA for providing assistance enabling the delegations from Mexico and Alaska to attend the 19th AAC. His Beatitude thanked the clergy of Mexico and Alaska for participating in the AAC. Fr. Perdomo noted that the OCMC mission to Mexico in August still has available space for anyone interested in volunteering.

Alex Rasmussen, Holy Apostles Church, Normal IL requested clarification on voting procedures and the noting of abstentions in documentation. It was noted that abstentions are not votes and are not recorded.

Fr. John Pierce, Holy Resurrection Church, Tacoma WA noted that it would be helpful to have a video of the Chancery for those who do not have the opportunity to visit. His Beatitude stated that this would be done.

Fr. Thomas Andrew, Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church, Kenai, AK thanked the Council for assisting the Alaskan clergy to attend the AAC.

Justin Wong, St. John of Damascus Church, Poway, CA reiterated and supported the request to count and record abstentions. Dr. Leonard Young, Parliamentarian, explained the role of abstentions in voting referencing Robert's Rules. Chairs should not call for abstentions as they are not votes.

Daniel Ralich, St. Nikolai Mission, Louisville (Alliance), OH expressed thanks for a Mission Planting Grant.

Fr. David Bozeman, St. Nektarios Mission, Waxahachie, TX also expressed thanks for the Mission Planting Grant and suggested extending beyond three years even if at reduced rates would be helpful. Fr. Eric Tosi noted that the intent of the planting grants is to encourage missions to develop self-sufficiency.

His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin noted that there was limited family/social time and suggested the organization of conferences that would be designed to provide interaction with and among families that is not available at All-American Councils.

Fr. Michael Anderson, St. Christina of Tyre Church, Fremont, CA noted that the OCA now has good procedures for screening staff for working with youth and asked for recommendations on how to determine the safety and screening procedures for inter-Orthodox events and suggested investigation of such policies implemented by other Churches at events where OCA youth could be participating. Discussion ensued with contributions from His Beatitude, who said that the OCA should take the lead on this. Bishop Paul requested a list of Orthodox camps that use comparable screening be compiled. Fr. John Jillions indicated that this would be addressed by the SMPAC (Sexual Misconduct Advisory Committee).

Fr. Matthew Markewich, Christ the Savior Church, Ballston Lake, NY requested information on the possibility of a unified translation for services, noting the

you/thou and corruption/defilement differences. Archbishop Benjamin noted that the fluidity of the English language makes this difficult to accomplish. His Beatitude noted that a revision of the 1967 Divine Liturgy book has been sent to the Holy Synod for review.

His Grace, Bishop David noted that Archpriest John Zabinko of St. Innocent Cathedral in Anchorage, AK and his wife Maggie have retired for medical reasons and will be relocating to the St. Louis area to be closer to family. Bp. David thanked him for his many years of service in Alaska and requested prayers.

FINAL ISSUES AND ADJOURNMENT

Metropolitan Tikhon announced that the newly-elected members of the Metropolitan Council and Pension Board would be installed at the closing prayer service. He then made closing remarks.

The Clergy Vice-Chair called for the newly elected members of the Metropolitan Council and Pension to come forward for installation.

The Clergy Vice-Chair declared the 19th All-American Council would be adjourned following the closing prayer service.

After the celebration of the prayer service the 19th All-American Council was adjourned at 1:18 PM.

The final video reflection on ascetic reverence by Hieromonk Alexis (Trader) of the Holy Monastery of Karakallou on Mount Athos was played for those who could stay.

Respectfully submitted by the Secretariat of the 19th All-American Council,
Elizabeth Mikhalevsky, Chair, Archdiocese of Washington
Fr. David Cowan, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Fr. Nicholas Roth, Diocese of the South
Lynnell Brunswig, Diocese of the West
Ellyn Gillette, Diocese of the Midwest
Alexis Liberovsky, Stavropegial Institutions

8. Formal Dinner Addresses

Thursday, July 26, 2018

A. Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations

Tonight I am bringing a message to us all – to you and to me – from St. Herman of Alaska. These are the words of St. Herman to us:

From this day forth, from this very hour and this very minute, Let us love God above all and seek to accomplish His Holy Will.

Our pilgrimage as Orthodox Christians of North America, our journey as the Orthodox Church in America, starts with the arrival of Orthodox missionary monks in Alaska. Among them was a holy man – a man living a holy life and making a holy witness.

As our journey unfolded through time, the identity of the Orthodox Church in America was revealed. We were tested and tried, we faced times of trouble, we faced crises and achieved successes. Let's reflect together on our journey. Perhaps we will discover what today constitutes our identity.

We affirm the priority of holiness in the Orthodox mission in Alaska and North America. We affirm the relevance of the holy witness of the Monk Herman for our own witness today in North America. From this day forth, from this very hour and this very minute, let us love God above all and seek to accomplish His Holy Will.

The Monk Herman was a member of the missionary group of eight monks who arrived at Kodiak in 1794. The journey covered more than 7,000 miles and lasted nearly 300 days, it began at Valaam Monastery in Russian Karelia and ended in Kodiak in Russian Alaska. In the midst of primitive conditions and many dangers and hardships, the missionaries endeavored to evangelize the Alaskan natives. Very soon upon arriving at Kodiak the missionaries established the Holy Resurrection Church.

The ruling authority in Russian Alaska was the Russian-American Company, whose policy towards the natives was harsh. The missionaries tried to defend the natives. The Monk Herman was loved by the natives for his humility and compassion. Although he did not learn the language of the native people, the language of love and respect and tender care won the hearts of the Aleuts. Seeking solitude as a hermit and desiring to distance himself from the ruling authority, the Monk Herman moved to Spruce Island, off the Alaskan mainland. He died in 1836 at the age of 81, having served the mission and his beloved Aleuts for 43 years.

The sanctity of the Monk Herman was affirmed in his canonization in 1970, less than half a year after the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America. The remains of the Monk Herman were transferred from Spruce Island to the Holy

Resurrection Church in Kodiak. According to the accounts of many witnesses the services of the canonization were full of light and joy. The participation of Archbishop Paavali of Finland in the canonization symbolized the connection of St. Herman to Valaam Monastery. The Archbishop was himself a monk of Valaam before Finland lost part of Karelia and with it Valaam Monastery to the Soviet Union.

The story of the Alaskan Mission is a story which includes martyrdom, hardships in sea travel, dangers in the wilderness – an authentically apostolic history.

The first dimension of our identity is holiness as lived and embodied by St. Herman. This is the very source of our presence and mission in North America. It is both a gift to be treasured, and a challenge to be fulfilled in our own life and witness.

The second dimension of our identity is the missionary zeal and evangelistic outreach embodied in the life of St. Innocent Veniaminov.

The future great missionary came to Alaska in 1824 as a 27-year-old priest with his wife and children, serving first in Unalaska and then in New Archangel (today's Sitka). Fr. John came because he heeded the call of the Church to bring the Good News of Christ to the Alaskan native people. He had real gifts as an ethnographer and linguist, an explorer and inventor.

While on a visit to Russia in 1839 Fr. John was widowed. He accepted monastic tonsure with the name Innocent in 1840, and in the same year was consecrated as Bishop to oversee Alaska and part of Siberia – a vast diocese. When the Hieromonk Nicholas (Kasatkin) traveled to Japan in 1860-1861, an unexpected winter delay in the Russian Far East allowed him to meet and converse at length with Archbishop Innocent. This encounter was decisive in providing guidance and perspective to Fr. Nicholas for his apostolic labors in Japan. Thanks to Archbishop Innocent, Fr. Nicholas understood the importance of learning the Japanese language and working on the translation of Holy Scripture. Putting this advice into practice, when Archbishop Nicholas of Japan died in 1911 he left a vigorous Orthodox Church with Japanese priests and catechists, with translations of Holy Scripture and divine services, with an expanding network of parishes and mission stations, and deep respect in the Imperial Court and among the Japanese people.

The sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 elicited a written comment by Archbishop Innocent. Rumors had reached him that he was hostile to the sale of Alaska. Seeking to correct the record, he wrote to the Ober Procurator, the lay chief administrator of the Holy Synod appointed by the Imperial Government, with the following points.

1. The sale of Alaska to the United States is a providential step, opening the United States to Orthodox mission.
2. The current bishop in Alaska should be called back to Russia, and should be succeeded by one who speaks English.
3. The episcopal see should be transferred from New Archangel (Sitka) to San Francisco.

4. Allow the bishop to ordain to the priesthood converts from among American citizens.
5. Allow the bishop and all clergy to celebrate the divine services in English, for which purpose the services must be translated into English.
6. Use English rather than Russian as the language of instruction in schools established in San Francisco and elsewhere to prepare people for ordination and missionary work.

In 1868 Innocent was elected Metropolitan of Moscow, serving as de facto first hierarch of the Church of Russia until his death in 1871. He persevered to the end of his life as an advocate and visionary of Orthodox Mission.

Metropolitan Innocent was canonized as a saint in 1977 by the Church of Russia at the request of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America.

The story of Metropolitan Innocent is vivid and colorful, giving us a sense of the missionary vocation of the Orthodox Church. Many others played their part in the evangelizing of the peoples of Alaska and in bringing the Orthodox Faith to North America. A shining example of the apostolic mission in Alaska is the Holy Priest Yakov Netsvetov, whose memory we celebrate today.

The third dimension of our Orthodox identity in America is embodied in the American ministry of St. Tikhon, serving as bishop and finally as archbishop in America from 1898 to 1907. This was a time to continue the Orthodox missionary vocation, a time to welcome and give pastoral assistance to arriving immigrants and their church communities in the United States and Canada, a time to nurture a united Orthodox Church with a culturally and linguistically diverse population.

The ministry of Bishop Tikhon was remarkably varied and yet consistent, modest and patient and yet inspired. His gifts were recognized, as is evident in his elevation to Archbishop in 1905, and his eventual election as Patriarch of Moscow in 1917. Just to identify his accomplishments one by one is also to lift up his vision and its relevance to our identity.

- Transferred episcopal see from San Francisco to New York
- Blessed Isabel Florence Hapgood, a lifelong member of the Protestant Episcopal Church and renowned translator, to make an English translation of the divine services
- Welcomed immigrants from the Middle East and Eastern Europe
- Established new parish communities for the immigrants
- Established seminary in Minneapolis
- Established St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania

- Encouraged the active participation of clergy in making decisions for the missionary diocese
- Provided for election of Raphael Hawaweeny as Bishop for the Arabic speaking communities
- Provided for appointment of an auxiliary bishop for Alaska
- Welcomed the cultural and linguistic pluralism of Orthodoxy in North America by envisioning a united Orthodox Church, with Arabic, and Serbian, and Greek communities led by Arabic and Serbian and Greek bishops
- This pluralism was obviously open to Romanians, Albanians, Bulgarians, and others, as needs required
- Affirmed the openness of the Orthodox Church to dialogue with other Christian bodies
- Convened the first All American Council in 1907, providing for the full participation of clergy and lay delegates
- Described the future of Orthodoxy in America, officially reflecting on future autonomy and even autocephaly

When he was elected Patriarch of Moscow, in the midst of the violence of the Communist Revolution, it was clear to the new patriarch and many others that the road ahead for the Church of Russia was the way of the cross, the way of martyrdom and suffering. St. Tikhon was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1989.

For our Church in America, the impact of Revolution in Russia was felt in the loss of contact with the Russian Orthodox Church. The support from Russia which the Church in America had enjoyed was gone, creating severe budgetary challenges. Among many other losses, the Seminary had to be closed. There was no theological education available until the opening of St. Vladimir's Seminary and St. Tikhon's Seminary in 1938. Slowly, in the middle of the 20th century, our Church, then called the North American Metropolia, regained its footing and its sense of mission. One example was the creation of suburban parishes with divine services in the English language. By the 1960s the Moscow Patriarchate understood that the time for claiming jurisdiction over the Metropolia had passed. And the Metropolia, appealing to the Patriarchate of Constantinople to show leadership in creating a pan-Orthodox unity in America, was told that the problems of the Metropolia could be resolved only with Moscow. This, in turn, brought about the conversations and negotiations that led to the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America in 1970.

For some, the autocephaly has become an abstraction, a technicality, a canonical and perhaps dispensable detail. In reality, the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America confirms the authenticity of the Orthodox Church in America's mission and voice and presence in America. Our mission is not to be an embassy of other countries or cultures. Our mission is to be an embassy of the Orthodox faith in America and to America.

We obviously still live in a time of Orthodox pluralism in North America. Yet we are faithful to the vision of holiness, mission, and unity handed down to us by those who came before us. We live humbly in peace and harmony with Orthodox brothers and sisters who belong to other Orthodox churches. Yet we boldly affirm a vision of common purpose and unity to which all Orthodox are called.

This All American Council has “For the Life of the World” as its guiding theme. When Fr. Alexander Schmemmann wrote his reflections under this title he was preparing to speak to a student conference and was bringing the Orthodox faith, the Orthodox understanding of the sacraments, and indeed the Orthodox worldview to an audience which knew little about Orthodoxy. It is remarkable that this book quickly became popular and meaningful to all manner of readers – both Orthodox and not Orthodox, English-speaking and (through numerous translations of the book) those speaking in many other languages. The book and its teaching and insights remain popular and meaningful around the world. While the book is a personal theological and liturgical reflection of Fr. Alexander, it brings to many the world over the living voice of the Orthodox Church in America.

The joyful eucharistic vision shared with us by Fr. Alexander is a way of summing up the journey of Orthodoxy in America and opening the road to the future. The holiness of St. Herman at the foundation of the Orthodox mission in Alaska, the missionary outreach extended to the “ends of the earth” by St. Innocent, the pastoral faithfulness of St. Tikhon – all this is offered by us to God “on behalf of all and for all” in the Divine Liturgy, the Liturgy in which we confess that Jesus Christ “gave himself up for the life of the world.” Furthermore, this eucharistic vision orients us to the second coming of the Lord, leads us to the peace, joy, and love of the Kingdom of God.

The last words spoken in church by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, a matter of days before he died, were words of thanksgiving on Thanksgiving Day in 1983. This final sermon offered “ourselves and each other and our whole life” to God in a hymn of thanksgiving. With some additions appropriate to our gathering in Council, let us make these words our own here and now as our common hymn of thanks.

Thank You, O Lord! Everyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank You, O Lord, for this Council, our dioceses, our parishes and missions, our monastic communities, and our seminaries where the name of God is proclaimed.

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

Thank You, O Lord, for everyone and everything.

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

Lord, it is good to here! Amen.

B. Address by His Eminence Archbishop Leo of Helsinki and All Finland

Introduction

Tertullian famously asked: “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem”? In the same way, one might ask why I am speaking to you today.

The OCA has a very diverse membership in three countries spread out over a hemisphere; the Church of Finland ministers in but one country, and to a rather homogenous, but more and more international population, of which more than a quarter live in metro Helsinki alone. We are under the canonical protection of Constantinople; you are tied to neither Constantinople nor Russia. It is true that one of our parishes, Ilomantsi, St. Elijah’s pogost, village, was founded in 1492 - the same year Columbus discovered your continent; but it is your language that is spoken around the world; while Finns are most famous for being quiet. So, what does the Church of Finland have to share with the Church in America?

The fact is that we share a special vocation among Orthodox Churches today. Unlike other Orthodox Churches, neither the OCA nor the Finnish Church have a large Orthodox population to sustain us, nor great monuments that have existed for thousands of years to keep us in society’s memory. Unlike other Orthodox Churches we have been given the unique challenge to witness Orthodoxy as minority churches (even among the Christians of our countries) in western, secular democracies. Our present requires, no, demands, that our two Churches, unlike other Orthodox Churches, focus not on the past but the future. In America, as in Finland, we are required to evangelize if we are to survive. Or to use Tertullian’s imagery again, our two Churches do not have the luxury of living in either Athens or Jerusalem.

The World

Thus, the importance of the theme of this Council: “For the Life of the World”. It is phrase that reminds us that we must always be looking to the future. It tells us that not only must we be evangelists, but why.

In Finnish the phrase “For the Life of the World” is but three words: “Maailman elämän edestä”. For once, and only this once, Finnish is shorter than English. The first word, maailma, speaks of the world.

“The world” can refer to the wondrous creation fashioned by the God in the beginning; but it can also refer to the fallen existence that this creation (and we humans) now find ourselves in. As the Church we live in the tension in-between these two meanings. It is not a tension that we can fully resolve in this age, nor is it a tension we can escape.

The fallen world is full of noise - and full of answers. As evangelists if we do no more than offer the same answers over and over again, we are simply adding to the noise. It is no accident that the icon of the great evangelist and Apostle John, shows his finger to his lips, indicating silence. Such silence is not from weariness, fear, shame or lack of faith. It is a reminder that if we are truly to be partners in dialogue with the world, we must sometimes listen. Only by taking problems of those who hear us as seriously as we recommend God's solutions, can we establish trust, so our words might be revealed in all their life-giving power -- no matter whether spoken, texted or tweeted.

Perhaps, though, our most evangelical task in the modern western secular world is not to give answers, but to help society ask the right, the important, questions. Our world is forgetting the very questions to which the Gospel is the answer. Our societies are like the young man of St. Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 19)- very rich - but fewer and fewer people are asking his question - the question that makes us fully human: "Lord what must I do to have eternal life?"

While the tension in the double meanings of the word "world" cannot be fully resolved in this life, it can be transfigured through the Kingdom of God - a Kingdom we may partake of through the Divine Eucharist.

For almost a thousand years the great banquet of our Church - the Eucharist - was increasingly declined by those who had been invited. Unworthiness, ritual impurity, fasting rules - the excuses were many until the Lord sent out his servants - or rather scattered them - through the tragedies of the 20th century, to remind his people that they were still invited and welcome to His Banquet. Like St. John Chrysostom before them, our late Archbishop Paul of Finland and your late Fr. Alexander Schmemmann returned again and again to the importance of the Divine Liturgy. They helped us understand it not as a performance to be watched, but a living, vital inspiring experience that leads, through Eucharist, to that day without evening, the Kingdom of God. Neither man invented liturgical theology, nor eucharistic ecclesiology, but these two were its most profound exponents and champions, in Finland, in America, and throughout the world.

More importantly, they lived what they preached. Their lives were centered on the Eucharist, and their joy was the Divine Liturgy. In the Eucharist they witnessed the reality of Kingdom -- despite revolution, civil war, intolerance, profound loss and the laborious task of rebuilding they both experienced.

For the Life Of...

And this brings us to the second and third word: *elämän edestä*, which in English means "For the life of". Fr. Alexander, who did not speak Finnish, nevertheless offered a wonderful explanation of what this term means in all its fullness. He wrote: "It is the very joy of the Kingdom that makes us remember the world and pray for it. It is the very communion with the Holy Spirit that enables us to love the world with the love of Christ....here we see the world in Christ, as it really is, and not from our particular and therefore limited and partial points of view. ...It is when, 'having put aside all earthly care,' we seem to have left this world, that we, in fact, recover it in all its reality."

It is in the Kingdom of God that the tension of the world seeks resolution, where the world finally finds its expression, in all its reality.

Maaailman elämän edestä – For the life of the world. No phrase better describes the life work of Archbishop Paul and Fr. Alexander than this. By pointing us in their writings to the most sublime experience of the real in the Eucharist, through recovering the Liturgy itself, they help us, even today, to recover the world, in all its reality.

This task of recovery never ends. The world hungers to experience reality; and it is the task of the Church today to call the world back to reality, to life in the Kingdom of God. As I said earlier, it is the unique challenge and privilege of our two Churches to have the common task to witness as minority Churches in our secular, western democratic societies. This unique challenge is external -- which is why our Metropolitan Tikhon and I signed a cooperation agreement last year covering five areas of mutual witness: promoting seminary exchanges; joining in dialogue on ethical issues; reaching out in pastoral care for indigenous peoples of the Arctic, whether in Alaska, Canada or Finnish Lapland; and promoting exchanges among our youth, clergy and monastics. By working together, we shall be more equipped to effectively preach the life of the Kingdom in our countries.

Our common challenge is also internal. After the 2016 Great and Holy Synod it is rather clear that the Churches still speaking about Orthodox unity today are the Orthodox Church in America, and the Churches of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Sadly, so many Orthodox Churches seem less concerned about Orthodox unity these days than nationalist or ethnic concerns. The Kingdom of God is not a nation, nor a people; the Kingdom to which we witness, the Kingdom of which we partake in the Eucharist is neither national, nor ethnic, but is open to all nations and all peoples through baptism and chrismation. Those of us in the secular democratic west know that Orthodox unity, not just sacramental unity, but real canonical unity, is not a luxury, but a necessity for our future -- and the future of the whole Orthodox Church if we are to fully manifest the reality we claim to possess.

If our three churches, the Church of Constantinople, the Church of Finland and the OCA all agree on the need for visible unity, I would add that such unity among our Churches requires leadership. It requires the OCA to continue its leadership in promoting Orthodox unity, here and abroad. I would also encourage the OCA to continue in dialogue with the Ecumenical Patriarchate as to how leadership can best be manifested among the autocephalous and autonomous Churches that make up the Orthodox world today. Visible unity requires more than a symbolic head. Someone has to be able to act in authority when need requires action.

I conclude, therefore, as I began with the imagery of Tertullian. Tertullian failed to realize that the events of Jerusalem led St. Paul to the Aeropagus in Athens even in Apostolic times. Jerusalem has everything to do with Athens; and so too Helsinki with New York, or even St. Louis. Our Church is about to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of its legal establishment as one of the State Churches of the Republic of Finland; you are about to celebrate your 50th anniversary as the Orthodox Church in America. Let us not fear, but rejoice, that God has placed us, one in north of Europe, and one in North America, to preach His Gospel in democracies of free peoples. Thank you for inviting me to listen, learn, and share with you

Most of all, I thank God that we have partaken of the Eucharist together, that we entered, albeit briefly, into the Kingdom of God together; and that we shall now go into the future, together.

May God bless the Orthodox Church in America.