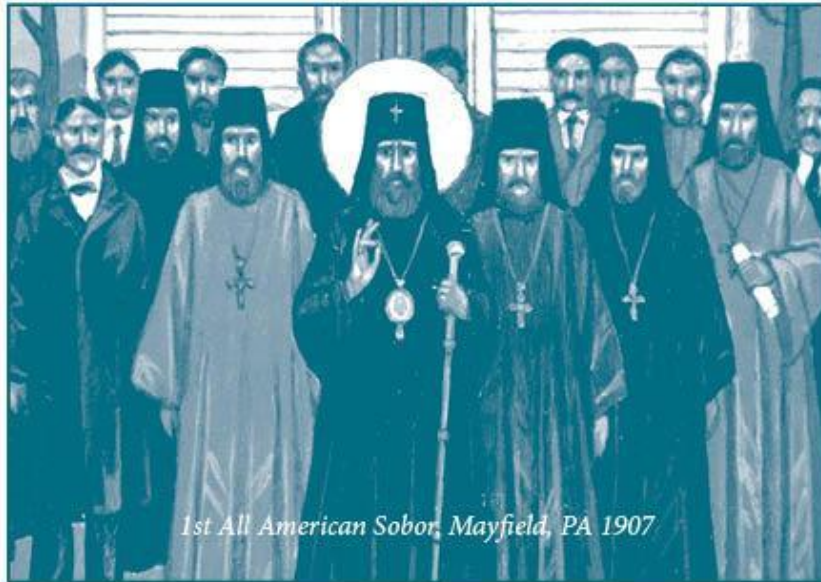


THE 18TH ALL AMERICAN COUNCIL



HOW TO EXPAND THE MISSION

JULY 20-24 2015 • ATLANTA, GA

**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE
18TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL**

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This report contains the official and approved minutes of the 18th All-American Council to be held in Atlanta, Georgia from July 20 through July 24, 2015.

This report contains the minutes for the six plenary sessions and includes relevant attachments. A separate report contains the various PowerPoint presentations given during the Council. All of the reports that were sent prior to the Council may be found online at www.OCA.org in the Archive section under All-American Councils. These reports include the Official Delegates' Handbook, Officers' Report, Departments and Institutions' Report and Financial Reports. Also included online are the various videos that were presented at the plenary sessions.

1. *Plenary Session I*
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18TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL PLENARY SESSION I MONDAY, JULY 20, 2015

OPENING PRAYER SERVICE AND CALL TO ORDER

The 18th All-American Council (AAC), Plenary Session I, began at 7:40 with an opening prayer service.. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, declared the 18th All-American Council open at 8:06 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

APPROVAL OF CLERGY AND LAY CHAIRS

His Beatitude asked Archpriest Eric Tosi, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) to present to the assembly the appointments of Archpriest Peter Baktis, Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Mission, Diocese of New York and New Jersey, as Clergy Vice-Chair; and the Honorable E. R. Lanier, Diocese of the South, as Lay Vice-Chair, and Gloria Cofer as Parliamentarian. The candidates were approved by consensus.

COMMITTEE APPROVALS

Judge E. R. Lanier asked for and received approval of Council Committee Members and Chairs by unanimous consent:

SECRETARIAT

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

COUNCIL TELLERS

Fr. Timothy Hojnicky, Chair, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Fr. Daniel Matthewson, Diocese of Western Pennsylvania
Fr. Mikel Bock, Diocese of Alaska
Fr. David Koles, Diocese of New England
Fr. Joel Weir, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. Stephen Soot, Diocese of the West
Fr. Vasyl Kolega, Archdiocese of Canada
Tamara Skvir, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Nicholas Vansuch, Diocese of the Midwest
Angela Parks, Diocese of the South
Subdeacon Johann Morse, Diocese of the West
Justin Nescott, Diocese of Western Pennsylvania

James Magruder, Archdiocese of Washington

COUNCIL CREDENTIALS

Deacon Justin Mitchell, Chair, Archdiocese of Canada
Fr. Elijah Mueller, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. Leonid Schmidt, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Fr. Victor Nick, Diocese of Alaska
Katherine Wilkalis, Diocese of the West
Chris Herbert, Diocese of the South
Barry Migyanko, Consultant
Ryan Platte, Consultant

COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

Fr. David Lowell, Chair, Diocese of the West
Fr. Paul Jannakos, Bulgarian Diocese
Fr. Ignatius Gauvain, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Fr. James Dank, Diocese of the Midwest
Deacon Alexander Cadman, Diocese of Western Pennsylvania
Dr. Bill Samsonoff, Stavropegial Institutions
Deacon Brendan Doss, Diocese of the West
Taylor Hostetter, Diocese of the South

COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

Fr. Timothy Sawchak, Chair, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. James Parnell, Diocese of New England
Fr. John Diamantis, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Fr. Thomas Moore, Diocese of the South
Larry Skvir, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Jean Nelson, Diocese of the West
Dr. Paul Meyendorff, Stavropegial Institutions
Albert Foundos, Albanian Archdiocese

COUNCIL PRESS & INFO

Fr. Dennis Rhodes, Chair, Albanian Archdiocese
Fr. Gregory Safchuk, Archdiocese of Washington
Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Fr. John Parsells, Archdiocese of Washington
Deacon Gabriel Aldridge, Diocese of the South
Fr. Stephen Freeman, Diocese of the South
Claire Nobles, Archdiocese of Washington

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Clergy Vice-Chair noted that there have been some changes to the proposed agenda since its initial dissemination. He called on Fr. Eric Tosi, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, to explain the changes. Fr. Tosi listed the changes to the agenda as follows:

The Diocese of New England presentation will be moved to Session 2, while the Bulgarian presentation will take its place in Session 4. Lawrence Barlow of SS Peter and Paul Church in Endicott, NY moved to accept the proposed change. Fr. John Vitko of St. Luke Church in Mclean, VA seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

GREETINGS

Letters of greeting TO THE 18th AAC from Kasim Reed, Mayor of Atlanta, and Nathan Deal, Governor of Georgia were read by Fr. Peter Baktis.

Archbishop Mark of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania extended a welcome on behalf of the Preconciliar Commission.

Archimandrite Gerasim (Elie), Administrator of the Diocese of the South, made welcoming remarks. Barbara Massoudi & Michaela Staskiewicz lay co-chairs of the local committee also gave brief welcomes.

VIDEO PRESENTATION

“Expanding the Mission” was shown.

ADDRESS OF THE METROPOLITAN

His Beatitude, the Most Blessed Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada presented his address to the Council.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Fr. Andre Paez, St. John the Evangelist Mission, Tempe, AZ: What will it take to unite all jurisdictions, to become one Church? What can we do on the ground level?

His Beatitude encouraged participation in pan-Orthodox gatherings and taking a lead in organizing such events. He noted that everyone is called to take the lead in forging the bond of love between people.

Fr. Anastasy Richter, Holy Assumption Church, Canton, OH: What is on the agenda for the 2016 Great and Holy Council? Will the OCA be invited to participate?

His Beatitude stated that planning is moving ahead for the Great and Holy Council of autocephalous Orthodox Churches to convene in 2016. An agenda is being formulated. The other jurisdictions in the United States are able to be represented by their Mother Churches. His Beatitude has personally expressed to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew his hope that the OCA will be granted some form of observer status at the Council.

REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR

Fr. John Jillions highlighted key points covered in his report with regard to expanding the mission. What motivates people to change is love and acceptance, not a requirement of progress. He quoted Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America President Becky Tesar's paraphrasing of John F. Kennedy: instead of asking "What is in it for me?" it time for us to ask, "What have I done to support the OCA?"

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

13 Hierarchs

239 Clergy Delegates

219 Lay Delegates

5 Retired Clergy

101 Observers

4 Guests

TOTAL: 581

VOTING COUNT: 471

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

Fr. Eric Tosi asked for acknowledgement of the Local Organizing Committee for all their hard work over the past two years of planning. He spoke of the peace and stability that is settling over the Church. He expressed gratitude to Metropolitan Tikhon, the Holy Synod of Bishops, fellow officers and co-workers. He mentioned those who have fallen asleep in the Lord since the 16th All-American Council: Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko. Helen Detke, Greg Sulich and Dr. Constance Tarasar.

Judge Lanier reminded delegates that weighty matters will be considered at the next day's sessions. He encouraged all participants to read the materials.

Motion to adjourn by Fr. John Vitko, seconded by Fr. Chad Hatfield, Chancellor, St. Vladimir's Seminary, Stravopegial Institutions. The plenary concluded at 10:25 PM with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet".



THE APOSTOLIC WORK OF THE CHURCH
ADDRESS OF THE METROPOLITAN TO THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
EIGHTEENTH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
July 20, 2015

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

R E A L I T I E S

*O Eternal God, Holy King, Maker of Heaven and earth,
Jesus Christ,
Son without beginning of the Father
without beginning,
Who with incomprehensible goodness hast called me
from nonbeing to this life
Who hast granted to me the blessing of baptism
and heavenly rebirth
And hast set the seal of Thy Holy Spirit
on the members of my body,
As Thou has kindled the desire to seek after Thee,
the only one true God,
Hear now my prayer.*

Your Eminences,
Your Graces,
Honored Abbots and Abbesses and monastics,
Very Reverend Fathers and Clergy Wives,
Distinguished Delegates of the All-American Council and Guests,

I introduce this, my address to the delegates gathered this evening in Atlanta for the Eighteenth All-American Council, with this morning prayer of Archimandrite Sophrony, of blessed memory, not only because it is good to begin all things with prayer, but as a reminder to all of us and to myself; a reminder that we have an eternal God to Whom we owe everything; a reminder that this eternal God saw fit to call me, and all of creation, from nothingness into being; a reminder that, no matter how far I fall from this high calling of being created by such a God, I

can still receive His illumination through baptism and repentance; a reminder that there is no-one and no-thing that I can desire or seek after that will fill me more than Jesus Christ, the Son without beginning of the Father without beginning.

My hope is that all of us, Orthodox Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ, will remember these realities as we prayerfully approach our work in council this week. It is only through prayer, and the life that flows from prayer, and the virtues that are engendered by prayer, that we can reach our goal; and our goal is not the passing of resolutions or the compiling of minutes; our goal is not to debate issues or share our opinion; our goal is not to get to the end of this week or even to set the agenda for the next triennium.

Our goal is to seek God above all, and to let this desire illumine our work together, so that we might make our own the words of Saint Herman of Alaska:

“And I, a sinner, have tried to love God for more than forty years, and I cannot say that I perfectly love Him,” ... “at least let us make a vow to ourselves, that from this day, from this hour, from this very moment, we shall strive above all else to love God and to fulfill His Holy Will!”

THE WAY OF MARTYRDOM

We gather in Council at a time when the world, as it is wont to be, is enshrouded in military conflict, economic hardship, civil war and persecution. Even if we remain somewhat shielded from these global realities in our own North American context, we nevertheless feel the weight of these worldwide struggles even as we wrestle with our own challenges in the economic, political, spiritual and moral spheres.

What can we, as the Orthodox Church in America, offer in the face of these challenges? How can we, small and numerically insignificant, imagine contributing even a bit of light in the midst of such darkness?

The only way to do something is to heed the words of the Lord, who tells us: *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it; Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)*

The way of the Church, and the path of Christians walking along that way is difficult, painful and full of sorrow because it is the way of the Cross. But the way of the Cross is also the way of the Resurrection, though this way may lead us through hell itself. And through the Cross and the Resurrection, we find the love of Christ, Who bore the former and gave us the latter. The way of the Church is the way of sacrifice and martyrdom – this has been so since the foundation of the Church and it remains true for us today. But it is a sacrifice that begets life and a martyrdom that is victorious in Christ’s holy resurrection.

A few months ago, I made my official Irenic - peaceful - visit to the ancient Church of Georgia, a Church which has witnessed the martyric life of Christianity from its foundations even up to more recent times. Exactly four hundred years ago, in 1615, the Persian shah, Abbas I, led his

great army in an attack on the country of Georgia. At one point during his campaign, he was drawn to a flaming column of light high up in the mountains of the Gareji region. He asked about it and was told that there was a great monastery located there. It was the night of Holy Pascha and the monks of the Davit-Gareji monastery were circling the Church three times with lighted candles in celebration of the Lord's resurrection. When the Persians arrived at the monastery, the Abbot, Arsen, approached the leader and asked that the monks be given a bit more time to finish the service and for all the brothers to receive Holy Communion. The Persians allowed for this and the fathers partook of the Holy Gifts, encouraged one another, and then presented themselves clad in festive garments before the unbelievers, who straightaway beheaded the Abbot and massacred a total of 6,000 brothers.¹ Those martyred brothers now "as a cloud of witnesses" intercede before the throne of God for the salvation of those in the Church of Georgia.

My dear brothers and sister in Christ – we cannot begin to speak about how to expand the mission, the theme of our Council this year, if we do not begin with the reality of martyrdom, which is the only authentic foundation for our Apostolic work.

WHERE TO EXPAND THE MISSION

This Apostolic work is not just a theory, just as martyrdom is not just a theory or principle. They are realities of our Church life that challenge us where we are. And we are here, in North America, called to be apostles and martyrs for Christ.

Saint Tikhon of Moscow, the Enlightener of North America, understood this fully when he addressed a similar gathering to ours 106 years ago. He entitled his talk with the words which we have chosen as the theme of this week's Council; and he did it with the full realization that the question "how to expand the mission" could only be answered with a full acceptance of the martyric life of the Church and a commitment to live that life where he was, where the Church was, and where the Church could be.

Twenty-two years earlier, Saint Tikhon had addressed his new flock in San Francisco with the following words:

By the will of God, I, too, in my unworthiness, was called to apostolic service here, and so now I too *will say to those called 'not my people,' 'You are my people; I will call 'beloved' the one called 'not my loved one.'* Until now, we had been strangers to each other, and did not know each other. Henceforth, the Lord Himself is placing us into a bond of closeness, into a mutual relationship of bishop with his flock and flock with her bishop.

Just as the Georgian monks facing certain death on the feast of Holy Pascha, so Saint Tikhon clung to the joy and the hope of the resurrection which would be the foundation of his apostolic work, and this, without any foreknowledge of the Cross that would be his to bear as Patriarch of the Russian Church.

¹ The Lives of the Georgian Saints, page 279.

The same year that the martyrdom of the 6,000 Holy Martyrs of the Gareji Wilderness took place (in 1615), an entire continent away, a different kind of tragedy took place when arsonists set a fire which destroyed the town of Wymondham, in England. Surviving that tragedy were George Packard and his wife Mary, who in that same year, gave birth to a son, Samuel. This was a time of religious and political foment in England, and though Samuel was not old enough to remember the destruction of his town, he quickly became aware of the difficulties and changes that his country was undergoing. At the age of twenty, Samuel married Elizabeth Conant, and two years later, in 1638, with one child and another on the way, they set sail on the good ship “Diligent” bound for Boston, Massachusetts, following the thousands of pilgrims who had already sought out the New World as a place of religious and political refuge.

The Puritans brought to the New World an expression of Christianity that may seem far removed from the ancient Christianity preserved within Orthodoxy. And yet the reality is that this expression of Christianity helped to create the environment into which later waves of immigrants, from many parts of the world, would enter and the context within which Orthodox missionaries, including ourselves today, would be called to labor. We are familiar with this history within the Orthodox world, familiar with the questions of ethnicity and the challenge of forging an authentic Orthodox identity here, in the midst of a very complex social and cultural context, which was coming into being two hundred years before the arrival of the Monastic Missionaries to Kodiak, Alaska, and which context continues to evolve to this very day.

CHALLENGES

WHY EXPAND THE MISSION

The Apostolic Work of the Church does not happen automatically, as the simple result of our physical presence in North America. We, as members of the body of Christ, the Church, are called to bear witness (martyria), and we are called to do this in many ways, each perhaps unique to our calling and our personal gifts, but each directed towards one goal: our healing and salvation in Jesus Christ and the proclamation of this healing and salvation, and the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven, to the broken and wounded people of the world.

And when we speak of the world, we refer not only to the global community as portrayed in the nightly news on television, but to our own local communities. In North America, we face a) the continual disregard of human life (from abortion to the selling of the body parts of aborted children), b) moral and ethical challenges (from addictions of various kinds – drugs, alcohol, pornography, to distorted understandings of the human person and marriage), c) spiritual struggles (from a general spiritual malaise to distrust of organized religion) and d) all the ills that flow from the self-centered individualism of our secular society.

Even if one were to try to ignore the extreme examples, such as the violent attacks on innocent people, or the story of three-year old Jack, who one day in the car decided that he was unhappy being a boy, prompting his mother to immediately take him to the store to buy girl’s clothing for him, and to seek the support of a therapist, leaving not only this family but most likely an entire community (whether they realize it yet or not) in a state of spiritual and emotional confusion – even without such extreme examples, an Orthodox Christian might rightly wonder if the world really has gone mad.

It is precisely because it has indeed gone mad, and has been that way since the time of the first confusion wrought by the deceiver and father of lies. And it is our work as the Church to help bring about sanity and wholeness to the foolishness and brokenness wrought by the passions that afflict mankind, which can only be accomplished through Christ's victory over corruption and death.

This is why we must expand the mission.

Immediately following the recent *Obergefell v. Hodges* Supreme Court decision, our Holy Synod of Bishops issued an initial statement of response. But it is also clear that, in an analogous way to the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, the implications of this most recent decision are far-reaching and will require careful theological, pastoral, and legal consideration.

Our Holy Synod is already in discussions about ways to approach the long-term consequences of this decision, including the consideration of the withdrawal of our clergy from serving as agents of the state in civil marriages altogether and taking proactive measures to help our parishes deal with the new pastoral and legal realities that will confront them. These are complex matters and will require much discernment, as well as dialogue with the other jurisdictions in North America within the Assembly of Bishops.

At the same time, I would like to assert very clearly a number of related points.

At his ordination, every single bishop promises the following: “to observe the canons of the Holy Apostles, and of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, and of the pious Provincial Councils, the traditions of the Church, and the decrees, orders and rules of the Holy Fathers. All things which they have accepted I accept. All things which they have rejected I reject. I promise to preserve the peace of the Church, and firmly to hold and to teach with zeal the people entrusted to me. I promise to devise nothing whatsoever which is contrary to the Orthodox Catholic Christian Faith all the days of my life.”

This is the only foundation upon which we, as a Church, can stand. And therefore, I would like to state very firmly and clearly that the Orthodox Church must continue to proclaim what she has always taught: that marriage is the union between one man and one woman and the Orthodox Church in America can in no way deviate from this teaching, and as we have not in the past, so we will never in the future, bless or recognize same-sex unions in any sacramental way.

At the same time, the Church must fulfill her apostolic work, which is to bring humanity closer to Christ God, our Creator, Redeemer and Lord, through the process of healing of every human person by means of the grace of the Holy Spirit and our own small efforts. And this needs to be done within the public, legal and civil context we find ourselves in, which always makes things complicated.

In relation to this particular debate, Fr. Thomas Hopko, of blessed memory, wrote: “The homosexual Christian is called to a particularly rigorous battle. His or her struggle is an especially ferocious one. It is not made any easier by the mindless, truly demonic hatred of those who despise and ridicule those who carry this painful and burdensome cross; nor by the

mindless, equally demonic affirmation of homosexual activity by its misguided advocates and enablers.”²

We must be careful, as members of Christ’s Holy Church, to avoid falling into either of these extremes. The Church can no more align herself with the Westboro Baptist Church, with its ferocious and mean-spirited certainty that “God hates fags”, than it can with those who misguidedly hail the recent Supreme Court decision as a testimony that “love wins.” Just as our response to the tragedy of war cannot be, as was common several decades ago, to shout: “make love, not war” so we must be sure that our stand is taken solely on the life of Christ and the teachings of the Gospel.

There have been, and will always be political and constitutional debates in North America. As the Church, however it is our task to prayerfully and carefully navigate these choppy waters. And this should be nothing new for us. In 1808, having fought and been wounded in the war of American independence, having lived through the turbulent period of the founding of the United States, having received their Divinity Degrees from Harvard University, two of Samuel Packard’s grandsons, the Reverend Asa Packard and the Reverend Hezekiah Packard began their ministries in the context of this fledgling nation. Even then, in 1808, Reverend Asa wrote to his brother the following:

I am going to Town Meeting with a heavy heart. The meanest, most vicious, ignorant and contemptible democrat will nullify my vote by depositing his own. This single circumstance, [namely] the suffrage of the rabble (always dupes to the most artful demagogue) is a mortal, destructive germ in our constitution. But what remedy is possible? I wish I could repel every tho’t of political matters, which cannot affect my usefulness; repel it as effectually as an impious man casts off fear and puts far away the evil day.

As it was in those days, so it is today: we all have our opinions about the political, social and cultural context we find ourselves in. However, we cannot afford, as Christians, to define ourselves narrowly as republican or democrat; as conservative or liberal; as viewers of Fox News or listeners of NPR; as East Coasters or West Coasters; as Confederates or Unionists – if these things distract us from Christ.

I am reminded of the words of David St. Hubbins, who once said:

“It’s such a fine line between stupid and clever.”

And the reality is that, on both sides of any human debate or issue, there are those who are wise and those who are foolish. Our task as Orthodox Christians is not to align ourselves on the political spectrum, but to find that fine line between clever and stupid, which can only be found in the wisdom of Christ and the foolishness of the Cross.

When Saint Nicholai of Zicha was imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp during World War II, he spoke about how he survived the hardships of his imprisonment:

² Hopko, Fr. Thomas, *The Homosexual Christian*, OCA Department of Christian Education.

“You sit in the corner and say over and over again, ‘I am dust, I am ashes, take my soul.’ And suddenly your soul is taken up and sees God face to face. But you cannot endure this, and you say to Him, ‘I am not ready, I can’t... send me back.’ And so once more you sit there, for hours on end, repeating: ‘I am dust, I am ashes, take my soul.’ And once more, the Lord catches you up. Were it possible, I would exchange what remains of my life for one more hour in [Dachau].”

Such experiences should put matters into perspective for us all.

WHO IS TO EXPAND THE MISSION?

Such perspective is what the Orthodox Church in America has gained over the past ten heavy and difficult years. A painful series of complex financial and administrative crises yielded deep fracturing within the body of the Church, fracturing that was felt within every member of that body: in our dioceses, in our parishes, in our monasteries, in our seminaries, and in our families. Such division bore unhealthy fruit in frustration, disappointment and anger within the hearts of many, which resulted in defensiveness, distrust, judgment and resentment between brothers and sisters in Christ. Indeed, the very fabric of our life was torn, leaving many wounded in heart and broken in spirit.

Have we found healing from this brokenness? Although a certain appearance of calm has recently settled on the Church, the effects of the above struggles are still being felt very keenly on all levels. The time has come for every one of us to genuinely enter into the spirit of mutual forgiveness which will lead us on the path to reconciliation, healing and a refocus on the one thing needful: our own salvation and the salvation of the world. Although it is above all God’s grace that can truly heal our wounds, each of us is called to accept our responsibility for those wounds so that we might “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” as Saint Paul reminded us in Sunday’s Epistle reading.

In order to receive in its fullness the light and joy of the resurrection, it is first necessary to confront death, corruption and the passions within our own hearts, as we do during the season of Great Lent. The first step on that journey is the asking of mutual forgiveness, and therefore, as we begin to discern where our apostolic path will take us, I would like to ask forgiveness of each of you for all the ways that I have contributed to our past fracturing and the painful events that we have passed through. I offer this as an expression of sorrow and repentance for the pain and suffering that so many of us have endured and I ask that the Lord will strengthen all of us with His mercy and His grace as we both evaluate where we are now and where we should be going in our apostolic journey.

If we ask ourselves, who is to expand the mission, we cannot but answer that it is every single one of us, every single one of us who has perhaps been wounded but also strengthened by the struggles of the past ten years. In particular, though, I would like to take a moment to speak specifically about the clergy.

For the past several years, clergy sexual misconduct matters have occupied our attention and have yielded some positive response in terms of both the protection of the young and the vulnerable in our communities and the healing of those who have fallen prey to these

temptations. But the progress that has been made should not obscure an even deeper problem that needs our attention: the spiritual, emotional, physical and psychological health of our clergy.

A greater coordinated effort, involving the Holy Synod, our seminaries, our dioceses and our parishes and families, needs to be implemented in a positive effort of strengthening the health of our clergy so that they can do the work of missions and evangelism, preaching and teaching, healing and comforting, that they are ordained to do.

Already, much has been done towards this end. Our clergy have been participating in many opportunities for enrichment through the Department of Continuing Education and the recently re-established Department of Pastoral Life, which will provide a means of beginning to address this critical area of Church life. Other established areas, such as the OCA Pension Plan have been in place for many years as a means of concrete financial support to our clergy and their wives at the time of their retirement. The Holy Synod continues to remind all our parishes that this plan is, in fact, mandated for all our clergy and encourages all of our parishes to fulfill this obligation. In addition there is much work that needs to be done in the area of clergy compensation, but also in the broader area of the spiritual and physical well-being of our clergy.

This must be a priority for us.

WHEN TO EXPAND THE MISSION

If we are to expand the Mission, we must begin today and we must begin at this All-American Council. This does not mean that we have not begun already, but only that we must, with the Psalmist, continually say: *And I said, now have I made a beginning; this change hath been wrought by the right hand of the Most High. (76:11)*. This verse is often cited in the context of the ascetical struggle and discipline of the monastics, which requires a daily renewal and effort to preserve enthusiasm. As Saint Anthony the great said on his deathbed:

You know the treacherous demons -- you know how savage they are, even though weakened in strength. Therefore do not fear them, but rather draw inspiration from Christ always, and trust in Him. And live as though dying daily, paying heed to yourselves and remembering what you heard from my preaching.

Although the fracturing of the last ten years has left all of us wounded, it has been an opportunity for us to make a new beginning and to draw inspiration from Christ. Through these new beginnings, our Church has seen some good fruit: a healthy implementation of accountability and transparency within the central administration, a stronger bond of brotherhood within the Holy Synod, and a recognition within the body of the Church of our fragility and of our need to pull together in facing the challenges before us.

From the beginning of our autocephaly, there have been voices that have been critical of that status, as there are today voices that claim that our place here in North America is not welcome and that our contribution has been weakened by the past years of struggle. Certainly, all that has happened humbles us, but at the same time, we know that it is through being humbled that we learn humility, which is not weakness but strength.

Beginning in 2009, a process was begun on the world Orthodox stage when the fourth pre-conciliar commission meeting in Chambésy instituted Episcopal Assemblies in the thirteen regions of the so-called diaspora. The Assembly for North America was later divided into the **Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the United States**, with a separate Assembly being created for Canada. The Assembly for the United States has probably been the most active of all the Assemblies to date.

Whereas in the past, the Orthodox Church in America was usually placed in a defensive position vis-à-vis her status as an autocephalous Church, the current context of the Assemblies provides us with a significant opportunity to contribute to the creation of a plan for the canonical reorganization of our region, which is one of the mandates of the Chambésy process. Several plans have been considered by the US Assembly over the past two years, with none of them gaining traction among the entire Assembly.

The Holy Synod of the OCA contributed a response to the document that we were asked to comment on, in which we proposed that the best plan for canonical reorganization in our region is a fully local Church with its own functioning Holy Synod, whose purpose would be to minister to the faithful of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Discussions are continuing in this direction and we are preparing ourselves for the sixth gathering of the Assembly of the United States this coming September.

As part of those preparations, I travelled to Constantinople in December, as part of a delegation representing Saint Vladimir's Seminary. More recently, I was asked to join the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Bishops (on which the OCA is currently not represented) on a visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to discuss the work of the Assembly here in the United States. It is my hope that we will continue our good relations with all the worldwide Orthodox Churches, even as we continue to work in close collaboration with all the jurisdictions here in North America.

One of the roles of the Metropolitan is to represent the Orthodox Church in America in relation to world Orthodoxy, since no matter how strong a spirit of independence we may have inherited from our nation and from our forebears, we remain part of a universal and ecumenical Church. We cannot expand the mission in isolation from the rest of the Orthodox world.

Since becoming Primate, I have met with the Primates of all the Orthodox Churches except for Patriarch Daniel of Romania and have concelebrated with 9 of the 14 Primates. It is also the ancient custom for a newly-elected Primate to make official Irenic visits to the other autocephalous Churches, and I have made such visits to the Church of Russia and the Church of Georgia. Discussions are in motion for possible visits to others.

H O P E S

THE APOSTOLIC WORK OF THE CHURCH

Last week, as I was walking on the grounds of the Chancery early in the morning, I came across a small bird, who was visibly wounded and hopping along with great difficulty, its head to the ground and pushing itself with great effort through the tall grass. I wondered to myself whether I

should try to help in some way, or just leave nature to care for itself. Choosing the first option, I scooped up the small bird, placed it in a shoebox lined with a towel and drove it to a nearby wildlife care facility. The veterinarian examined the bird and handed it back to me saying that the bird was fine, that it was just a baby and that I should place it back where I found it. So I drove back to the Chancery and did as the expert had told me, leaving the bird where I found it. I made the sign of the cross over it and returned back to my work with a small prayer that the bird would survive.

I did not check again until the next day, when I found the bird, a few hundred feet beyond where I left it, lying dead in the grass, its feathers scattered and ants already beginning to crawl over it.

I offer this story as an image of the pastoral life of the Church, which, more often than not, is very messy, confusing and full of uncertainty. Sometimes our best intentions, as bishops, priests or concerned laypeople, are thwarted by the realities of the world and the choices of individuals. None of us can be certain that the choices we make or the help that we offer will bear fruit. Sometimes all we can do is make a decision and trust that our Lord will bring about healing. We have to accept that we will make mistakes, accept that not everything will be perfect, that sometimes even the guidance of experts will fail those whom we seek to help, but nevertheless always trusting in God's mercy and kindness as we act upon what we pray is beneficial for our salvation and the salvation of our brothers and sisters.

This pastoral work is the Apostolic Work that falls to each of us. This is another reason why we seek to expand the mission.

HOW TO EXPAND THE MISSION

Following the All-American Council in Seattle, the Orthodox Church in America entered upon a Strategic Plan process which has yielded some very concrete projects and positive results, which reflect where our clergy and faithful think the Church should be directing her energies. The Strategic Plan process, which is presently in the stage of being rolled into the life of the Church, presented a model for broad cooperation within our Church, and we offer our thanks to all who spearheaded and participated in this process, which is an on-going one.

But we must not stop there. This All-American Council is pivotal for the Orthodox Church in America and there are several concrete measures that we must consider this week.

The first is the **Statute Revision**.

In 2013, the Holy Synod blessed the Statute Revision Commission, the fruit of whose excellent work will be considered tomorrow. The proposed Revised Statute has undergone a period of Church-wide review, which for some, may not have been sufficient. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that we have had the benefit of last the forty-four years of operating under that Statute, which itself was founded on a series of historical precedents. In addition, the revision we are considering is itself open to further review and amendment in years to come.

The Holy Synod has reviewed the proposed Revised Statute and strongly supports its approval by this All-American Council at our plenary session tomorrow morning. It is truly a remarkable

document which both clarifies areas of ambiguity and fills in those areas that are missing, such as stavropegial institutions, the monasteries and the competencies of various bodies within the Church. More broadly, it takes into account the actual experience of the Church over the past forty years, including the lessons learned during our recent difficulties, as well as the realities of a changing legal environment in the world around us.

I feel confident that when this Council approves this document, we will have a strong foundation upon which to focus on the work of expanding the mission through the better operation of our parishes, dioceses and the ministries that allow us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned and become icons of Christ.

This past Sunday, we visited the Loaves and Fishes Ministry, a ministry to which the image of the bird I gave earlier applies. It is a great ministry, but not every one can do it, nor is there sometimes full support from the parish. And this is the reality in all of our parishes. We try, we encourage good works, we have many ministries: feeding the homeless, Agia Sophia Coffee Houses and other bookstores that are spreading throughout our dioceses... All of these things are messy. They don't happen magically. We can do these things because we have a solid Statute in order to do these messy works and to enter into those ministries with zeal and courage.

A second concrete proposal we are considering, also tomorrow, is the **Finance Resolution**.

The Holy Synod has expressed its full support for this resolution which is the fruit of four years of discussion, debate and wrestling within our Church, in an attempt to fulfill the mandate of the 16th All-American Council in Seattle to find a new and better way to support the life of the Church. The Holy Synod has also expressed its full support of the work of the OCA Chancery, which is not simply the "central administration" but part of the life of our Church.

This is really a crucial moment in the life of our Church. For how many years have we discussed and debated making the move from an assessment-based and per capita-based system of funding the Church to one that is based on proportional giving and a stewardship model that is more sound. Although we can be sure that further debates and discussions will take place over the next triennium and beyond on this question, the resolution we will be considering takes us to a point that we have never been as a Church. And if we can deal with this resolution in unity and with trust in God's guidance for us, we will be in a much better position.

THE PILLARS OF OUR EXPANSION

I have already mentioned clergy health and our progress in terms of external relations. These are two elements of four that I have made to the Holy Synod for the setting and implementation of a long-term direction for the Orthodox Church in America. Under the guidance of the Holy Synod, I will be appointing a Mission Expansion Advisory Board to assist me in forging this direction along with the fullness of the Church.

I. The Spiritual Life

When I visited the Holy Mountain for the first time as a novice, I was filled with the expectation of finding paradise – and I did. The sacredness of the Holy Mountain of Athos is a reality and

should not simply be dismissed as an idealized or romantic vision found here in the West. But neither should we forget that there are human beings struggling in that paradise. I went there with the sense that our monastic life in North America was weak and with the hope that I would find perfection. There was a moment which made a deep impression on me:

The monks were gathered for an all-night vigil, it was cold, the wood fire was barely heating a small section of the temple, and I observed an elderly monk, standing in his stall, holding a prayer rope, deep in prayer. Another elderly monk came by him, pointed to the prayer rope and then to himself, indicating that he thought that this was his prayer rope. They started to tug, each on one end of the prayer rope, until finally one of them gave up.

But that moment was the moment I knew that it was alright for me to return to my monastery in South Canaan and to struggle there.

The Monastic Life can help us because we all have idealized visions of what our monasteries should be, what our parishes should be, what our own spiritual life should be. But true monastics remind us that, while we do need to strive for perfection, yet we are really only wretched creatures in need of God's love and healing. So we need to strengthen our monastic life in North America.

A Synaxis of Monastic Superiors was held last year at the Chancery at which a dozen representatives from our monasteries shared in very candid and in-depth discussions concerning the life and challenges of our monasteries. At the end of October this year, a second Synaxis will be held at the Saint John of Shanghai Monastery in Manton, California.

In addition to supporting our monasteries as institutions, it is important for all of our clergy and faithful to recognize the great contribution that the monastics make to the Apostolic Work of the Church. It has historically been the monasteries that were on the forefront of the missionary endeavors of the Church, beginning with the example of the early Church. But the life of prayer and repentance is required of all of us. We are grateful for the example and the life of the monastics, and we need to encourage our children to consider this sacred life.

We are extremely blessed to have three **Seminaries** within the OCA and the Mission Statements of all three of our schools reflect that they are a primary source for the rekindling of our apostolic fervor, not only within the seminaries themselves but within our dioceses and parishes.

Parishes need to support the 1% resolution adopted in Seattle: when you set your parish budget, set aside at least 1% to support the seminary or seminaries of your choice. But beyond that, we need to re-emphasize the central role of our seminaries in the life of the Church. Especially now, with the growing need for theologically sound teaching, for pastorally grounded ministry and for missionary growth, the seminaries remain, along with our monasteries, as the chief centers for such knowledge.

We need to have properly trained and educated clergy who will serve our parishes with zeal and enthusiasm. We also need to acknowledge that three years of seminary is not enough to provide all the resources and experience necessary for our clergy and so we must support our seminaries as centers of continuing education, both for the clergy and for the laity.

It is also important for all of our seminaries to work together towards this goal. As part of this endeavor, I will be calling for a joint meeting of the Board of Trustees of all three of our Seminaries sometime in the Fall in order to address the common issues that face all of our seminaries. I ask all of you to pray for, and contribute to, this work on the local level.

II. External Affairs

I have spoken already about the work that is being done on the level of the Assembly of Bishops. This work, as well as our relations with the worldwide communion of Orthodox Churches, our relations with the non-Orthodox and our participation in various ecumenical bodies, needs to be strengthened and prioritized. In order to help with this, I will be calling for an **external affairs consultation** some time in the Fall.

III. Stewardship

When the Finance Resolution is approved tomorrow, the third pillar of our focus moving forward will need to be the stewardship of our assets. Not simply our physical and financial assets of the Church, but all questions affecting the life of the Church including communication, in relation to the specific question of financial stewardship. In this connection stewardship is not just a matter for parish and diocesan action. It's personal. So please join me and the Holy Synod on Wednesday evening for a reception for the **Stewards of the OCA**. And if you're not a member already, I hope you will consider adding your name and being willing to identify yourself as someone who believes in the mission of the Orthodox Church in America.

IV. Evangelism and Outreach

All the work that we do as the Church is Evangelism and Mission, that is to say, the Apostolic Work of the Church. So on the one hand, it is less than ideal to approach evangelism and outreach as a separate component of the life of the Church. It is, in fact, the life of the Church.

Nevertheless, it is sometimes helpful to hone in on specific things in order to implement this vision on a practical and realizable level. Recently, our Church received a generous and unrestricted bequest of \$1,000,000, which was to be used specifically for missions and evangelism. After a thorough process of review and analysis, and with the blessing of the Holy Synod, the first Mission School was held this year in Detroit with much success, funded entirely from the interest of this bequest.

In addition, we continue to see much from the **Mission Planting Grants** which are overseen by Fr John Parker, who also called together an Evangelism **Summit** as part of the work of the Department of Evangelization.

Just as the life of prayer and repentance is not the concern of monastics alone, so apostleship is a vocation for the entire Church. Archbishop Anastasios of Albania reminds us that: "each one of us personally, bears his or her share of responsibility, as a living cell of this organic whole. Interest in apostleship, in mission, is not the specialty of particular groups or individuals, but a

definitive characteristic of the Church herself. It is designated as the occupation of the Church. It is the *sine qua non* of its life.”³

OUR VISION

The Orthodox Church in America holds sacred its vision for a local Orthodox Church in North America and we are able to articulate this more firmly than any other jurisdiction on this continent. Not only this, but while living in brotherly good relations with all other Orthodox, we have had the blessing of being able to live the reality of that local Orthodox Church and to strive to be all things to all people, so that even a few might be saved.

We should preserve this vision with zeal both now and in the future, as our founders have preserved it and proclaimed it in the past. We should do this while also remaining committed to the work of the Assembly of Bishops and remaining supportive of the work that is taking place in all local Orthodox Churches worldwide. We are North Americans who enjoy great freedom and blessings, but our consciousness of the martyric witness of Christians, both in the past, and today, keeps us sober and humble, so that we do not, and should not, fall into any kind of triumphalism or isolationism, which are antithetical to the Gospel of Christ.

At the same time, perhaps some of us, looking at the world around us, become discouraged, skeptical or fearful. We worry about the decisions handed down by our courts of law, we are fearful of the decisions taken by our elected officials, we wonder how long our children can remain shielded from the negative and harmful ways of life that are presented to them, often very forcefully.

Saint Tikhon of Moscow once said that, “...[M]ost importantly, the Orthodox Church accomplishes her [missionary] task in silence, with humility and godliness, with an understanding of human frailty and divine power.”

Besides Saint Tikhon, we have many bold advocates for our vision in North America. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann spoke at the time of the funeral of Metropolitan Leonty, noting that His Eminence had left the Church in North America with a legacy: a legacy of unity, the legacy of his vision of the Church and the legacy of being a true man of God.

Concerning unity, Fr. Alexander said: “His whole life was above everything else a ministry, a liturgy of unity, and in this he fulfilled the first and most essential function of the Bishop. He literally kept us together in his heart, in his prayer, in his love. And his heart was big enough for all and everything. And everyone, whatever his position, his calling, his ideas, could identify himself with the Metropolitan and through him with the Church... Whenever he appeared – all knew immediately that he was the Father, the center unity; all felt immediately secure and confident in his love, understanding and response.”

Concerning his vision for the Church, Fr. Alexander wrote of the way in which Metropolitan Leonty equally united a deep attachment to Russian Orthodoxy and to what it means to be Orthodox in North America. “Paradoxically enough, in this perfect harmony between his Russian roots and his American ministry he was more American than many American-born Orthodox,

³ Archbishop Anastasios, page 266

more Russian than many newcomers. He had no fears, no suspicions, no frustrations. He was equally alien to pseudo-conservative negativism and to pseudo-progressive compromise. He simply was what he was – a Russian Orthodox truly aware that God had sent him to America to love it and to dedicate to it his Orthodox faith and his Orthodox heart.”

Finally, and the most important of his legacies, according to Fr. Alexander: Metropolitan Leonty “was a man of God. He lived in and by God, and no one has ever approached him without feeling that he has touched and entered upon the reality of the spiritual world.”

This is what it means to truly be a branch of Christ. This is what is offered to us by all the saints: Saint Herman of Alaska, Saint Tikhon of Moscow, and Saint Raphael of Brooklyn, whose centennial of repose we celebrate this year as well. This is what each of us is called to aspire to as followers and worshippers of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

One year after Metropolitan Leonty’s repose, the 10th Great-Grandson of Samuel Packard was born in Boston, Massachusetts, not far from where his ancestor had landed three-hundred and fifty years earlier. He travelled to France and then returned to St Louis and finally settled in Reading, Pennsylvania. He travelled to Chicago where he embraced the Orthodox Faith and then attended Seminary, where he also joined the Monastery. He now stands before you as the one offering this address to the 18th All-American Council.

The anecdotes I related about the Packard family are part of my family history, and this history is important to me, but it does not define who I am. Rather, it reminds me of the human struggle and reminds me that there is always human effort required on my part to find God and to live a life worthy of Him.

Earlier I mentioned the Reverends Asa and Hezekiah Packard. Each of them fought in the Revolutionary War. Hezekiah, at the age of 14, heard the canons at Bunker Hill and resolved to enlist as a fifer under Col. John Dudley Sargent. His brother, Asa, also enlisted and was wounded in the battle of Harlem Heights, on September 16, 1776. A musket ball was lodged in his spine that the surgeons were unable to remove, so he carried that musket ball in his spine for the rest of his life, including his time at Harvard Divinity School with his brother and in his service as a Congregational Minister in Massachusetts. Asa recounts the following story:

In 1777, early in January, I (Asa Packard) was passing through Farmington, returning from the army in New York to my parents at Bridgewater. The wound I received in battle was not healed, the ball still troubled me. I could not walk without an arm to lean upon, and with assistance could travel but a few miles in a day. On a Sabbath morning, with snow on the ground, I was in Farmington Village, leaning on my friend who led me; striking something with my foot, I fell. Bursting into tears I said: “I can go no farther. I will die here if I must die!” I looked around upon houses in sight and selected a neat, snug-looking, one-story house, not painted, standing some ten rods east of the road on a little rising ground. “There,” said I, “we will try there.” A Mr. Thomas Cowles was its owner. We went in. The venerable aged man had his great Bible before him on a small

table before the fire. His red worsted cap, brown coat and small clothes and his blue stockings I well remember. I told my wishes and my suffering. He said he could not take me; his daughter, who took care of him, was feeble. I was in tears (and am now). "Sir," said I, or similar words, "my parents are living and reputable situated, and if your son, situated as I am, should make such a request of them, as I do of you, they would not turn him away. You must let me stay." About this time his daughter came in. She was forty or fifty years old. What she said I do not remember, but both consented to admit the poor sick boy, and greater kindness than theirs was never realized by a sufferer. How long I was there, I cannot recollect, but I was very ill and totally delirious several days. An elderly physician attended me, and when my brother came to relieve me, both Mr. Cowles and the doctor refused to take any compensation. I wrote Mr. Cowles often, and he answered me, till after my ordination. Having a direct conveyance, a little before his death, I sent him two books, and wrote in each, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in."

That musket ball, which was lodged in Asa's spine was kept in the family. I have it with me. It is not a relic, but it reminds me of where I came from, that even as an Orthodox Metropolitan, I have a history, as each of you does, both grounding you to where you are and spurring you on towards the Heavenly Kingdom. And each of you is here as a member of the body of Christ, the Holy Church. But what is amazing is that all of us are gathered here as the Church. We may have our own opinions about our countries, about social and moral issues, about immigration issues, gun control, about states rights and centralized government, about diocesan sovereignty and the central administration.

But we should never forget that every one of us is a member of the body of Christ. And this gives me hope, hope in the beauty, goodness and kindness of humanity, hope in the potential of our Church to be a true witness to the divine beauty, goodness and kindness that is offered to all of mankind, hope that, by God's providence, I stand before you as the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, and that I am able to hear your concerns and hopes, your complaints and praises, your frustration and your encouragement. And having heard them, I can be assured of your love and your prayers, as you have my love and my prayers.

I ask you to join me in this ascetical journey to discern and develop the work of the Gospel that we need to accomplish through prayer, repentance and common work for the glory of God, always remembering the words of the Lord:

Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. (Matthew 7:24-25)

AMEN

Chancellor's Address at the All American Council in Atlanta: "How to Expand the Mission"

Glory to Jesus Christ!

You already have my full written report, so I will only highlight a few main points.

I can say that by the grace of God and the efforts of many the OCA is now on a path to a calm and healthy normality unimaginable in the fall of 2011. As Metropolitan Tikhon said we can turn our attention to the real work and mission of the Church.

The work we do as the OCA's central administration with His Beatitude, the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council is first and foremost to foster a sense of mission, identity and connection among our parishes and dioceses as "The Orthodox Church in America." We serve people from a wide range of backgrounds. But we share a vision about being Orthodox Christians *here*—in the US, Canada and Mexico. We have planted our roots *here*, we love the culture, people and history *here*. Sticking closely together in our OCA identity is all the more important when we are only about 100,000 souls scattered across fifty states and three countries.

Our focus is "How to Expand the Mission." We as Orthodox Christians have largely accepted North America's vision of who we are. *"You are one of several hundred religious denominations and sects and your churches are exclusive gatherings that cater either to specific ethnic groups or to religious, political and social conservatives who are attracted to Eastern Orthodoxy."* This is what we are being told. Of course this is a caricature, but it's what the public thinks of us, if they think about us at all.

But this is not who we really are. We are the Orthodox Church in America. We are the expression here of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, even if that sounds delusional at times. Like last Friday night. My wife and I arrived in Atlanta early that day and on the spur of the moment decided to join 40,000 other people and watch the Atlanta Braves play the Chicago Cubs (Atlanta won.) It was a great atmosphere, yet I would guess that almost all of those 40,000 had zero idea that we are here in Atlanta talking about how to expand the mission. Despite that, nothing stops us from being who we are: members of the Church, with a capital C, whether others know it, accept it, ridicule it, reject it or not. To be the Church in this universal sense means we look at every human being the way God does. *Regardless of who they are or what sins they have committed this is a child of God. This is someone for whom Christ died. This is someone for whom the Orthodox Church could be a spiritual home.*

The Church is also a spiritual hospital for *all*. Jesus envisioned a Church that would bring everyone from the highways and byways, the poor, the sick, the lame and the maimed: wounded people all in need of healing. And we are among them. We are all "the first of sinners," receiving communion "for the healing of soul and body." We are all works in progress.

Yesterday I had the privilege of joining the Holy Synod of Bishops for a visit to the Loaves and Fishes Ministry at the OCA's St John the Wonderworker Church here in Atlanta, where Father Thomas Alessandrone is the pastor. They serve 20,000 meals a year to people on the street and in need. But they do a lot more as well whenever someone is ready to change his or her life. Reconnecting them with their families. Helping them negotiate the maze of social services. Putting them in touch with medical, dental and mental-health care. Getting them a phone, a postal address and an email address so the able-bodied can look for work. The aim if possible is to give them the resources to be self-sufficient. But as Fr Thomas told us, "These people are used to being looked at as blights on the landscape. So the message we want to give them is 'I love you the way you are.' We don't require progress to continue serving them. Because what motivates people to change is an experience of love and acceptance, not more judgment. We help them when they're ready."

Now that's a lesson in how to expand the mission.

Like the Loaves and Fishes Ministry we must not require progress in order to welcome those who come to us with whatever ills of soul and body may afflict them. Who knows what can happen in a person's life when he encounters someone in the Church who even now says to him, "I love you the way you are"?

Last night Becky Tesar gave a powerful exit speech as the outgoing president of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA). Over the last three years she was feeling increasingly embattled as she was asked time and again, "What do I get from my membership?" But the more she pondered these questions and her defensive answers she said, "I started to think, that like President Kennedy, instead of continuing to ask 'what's in it for me' it is time for each of us to look inside ourselves and ask, "What have I done for the FOCA?" Each of us can ask the same questions about our membership in the Orthodox Church in America. Instead of continuing to ask "what's in it for me, for my parish, for my deanery, for my monastery, for my diocese," it is time for each of us to look inside ourselves and ask, "What have I done to support the Orthodox Church in America as a whole? How have I made the Orthodox Church in America stronger, better and relevant to the challenges facing Orthodox Christians today? Have I done my share?"

We are a tiny church on the vast North American landscape. But we have a precious treasure to offer. And despite our small size, our vision for America gives us unique possibilities unknown in other parts of the Orthodox world. As Archbishop Anastasios of Albania said, "In North America especially, the Orthodox witness is offered within a dynamic society with universal interests. In such a society Orthodoxy is in a state of mission—and she cannot, certainly, be content with a museum-like preservation of the glorious Orthodox past of far away homelands. Something substantially new and important ought to arise..."

This week, we must keep asking ourselves what this new and important "something" might be that God is calling each of us to do.

Speech before the 18th All-American Council

Archpriest Eric George Tosi

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann wrote, “It is impossible to speak about our situation in America unless we refer it to our normal and essential term of reference, the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church –has always been both the heart and the form of an Orthodox world. Only here in the West, and for the first time in the history of Orthodoxy, do we think of the Church in terms only of a religious institution such as diocese, parish, and so on. No one in organically Orthodox countries has ever thought of the Church as being distinct from the totality of life.” The Church is not thought of as distinct from the totality of life

So the work that we do at the Chancery, in fact the work we do as individuals, parishes, deaneries, dioceses, regardless of the level, the intensity, the focus, or the level of required expertise is the work of the whole Church. The Church, on a functional or organizational level cannot be thought of as separate entities but rather all being parts of the Body of Christ...in its totality. As such in this very short time I have before you, I will succinctly relate some of the work in the part of the Body of Christ that has been entrusted to me and over which I exercise stewardship. You can read a more full report in the Officers reports that was posted online and in the reports that are posted after each Metropolitan Council/Holy Synod meetings. I really do encourage everyone to read these as they do present a very accurate record of the varied work of the Church.

I would be remiss if I did not state outright that the last four years have been most interesting if not downright challenging. It has been a time of turmoil, transition and ultimately some stabilization. We have come together through one of the most difficult times in the short history of the Orthodox Church in America in which we, as a Church, experienced upheavals, mistrust,

misinformation, and a swirling round of intense work to address these issues. Yet we, as a Church, confronted them, one by one, patiently and responsibly and in as timely a manner as was possible due to the circumstances and the issues. The result was a level of stability and a growing peace in the Church. Not everything is perfect and certainly there is much to be done but one can sense a level of peace and stability settling into the work. Whatever the issues and whatever the decisions (some of which people agreed with and some of which people did not), they were our issues and our decisions as the Orthodox Church in America. We worked through and resolved our own issues and perhaps this is the critical sign of the maturing of our very young Church. These are our issues and we will resolve them.

Perhaps the reasons there may be some skepticism is that often there is little public insight into the background of these matters. It is difficult to impart sensitive material, discussions and even the circumstances of the events themselves. This is exacerbated by the ever growing world of communications in which some of what is reported is accurate and some is clearly not. What we as a Church must bring to this world is prayer, discernment and a healthy dose of skepticism that not everything that is reported is actually true and helpful. What we must do is to communicate with one another, talk to the clergy, talk to the hierarchs, talk with those who will be of a sober mind and clean heart. As Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) stated, “As Christians we are here to affirm the supreme value of direct sharing, of immediate encounter -not machine to machine, but person to person, face to face.” Our stability as a Church rests on that simple paradigm of “person to person, face to face.”

With that being said there are a host of persons that deserve the gratitude of the entire Church. They range, first and foremost, from the many volunteers from the clergy and laity who give of themselves and their time. In a period of reduced budgets, decreased personnel and increased responsibilities for a shrinking few, it is these people that the Church relies upon daily. Many of these persons' names will never be known but to a few but these volunteers all have the love of the Orthodox Church in their hearts. Likewise we need to thank the hierarchs, clergy, staff and administration who labor in the vineyard in various ways, all bringing to the Church their love and dedication to Her vision and mission. Our Church is not built on edifices of stone and mortar but on the faithful people to whom God has entrusted the Church, whether as pastors, rectors, teachers, laity and, yes, even the administrators who work on the behalf of all. We are humbled by them and the Church could not do what it does without them.

Among the first, deep gratitude must go to His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon whose wisdom, patient leadership, deep faith and inexorable good humor allows all of us who work with him to truly feel we are cared for, listened to and led. I have watched him over the past two years respond to some difficult situations, navigate challenging problems, and address some of the most critical areas of Church life that OCA has ever faced. He has done so with the highest integrity and humility. He is seen worldwide as a true leader and, what is perhaps most important to him, a true monk. I am extremely thankful to be working for and with him.

I also must thank my fellow Officers and co-workers, Archpriest John Jillions, Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Melanie Ringa, the Chancery staff and the many, many people I come into contact with on a daily basis. The members of the Holy Synod with whom I speak to on almost a

daily basis, the Metropolitan Council with whom I work closely with, and all those who work for the Church. Much gratitude is extended to those whom I closely work with on a daily, if not hourly basis, Fr. John Matusiak, And. Joseph Matusiak, Barry Migyanko, Roman Ostash, Svetlana Raducevna, Jessica Fuhrman, Alex Liberovsky, Andrew Boyd and Ryan Platte who offer their time, their talent and their love for the Church. We all owe them far more than we can pay them. I must thank my ever-loving wife and children who patiently endure the missing hours I am away from them. I thank all of them for their patience, their friendship and their support. They are family and they are our family in the Church.

We should also remember the longtime workers in the vineyard who have reposed in the Lord since the last time we gathered. These included the ever memorable Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko who was for many of us, our teacher, our mentor, our cheerleader and our conscience. Many people will never know the invaluable assistance he gave to us during some of the most difficult times over the past years. I miss his encouragement as he always somehow knew when to call when I needed someone to talk to. We must also remember our long time employees Helen Detke and Greg Sulich who were our brother and sister in Christ in the Chancery. It is hard to not have them with us and it is hard not have them with us at an All-American Council. We still hear the echoes of their voice in the hallways of the Chancery. May their memory be eternal!

As stated in the job description, the Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America serves as the primary administrative manager of the OCA. His functions include maintaining the legal status of the OCA, supporting the Church's Councils and Synods and serving as team leader for

planning and logistics of All-American Councils. This also includes collecting, analyzing, summarizing, preserving, and serving as repository for the OCA's official records and materials, including its Archives, and providing reports and other information to the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Council, Legal, and the host of Boards, Commissions and Departments and Institutions of the Church. The Secretary also serves as the officer of the Church responsible for assuring regular ongoing communication between the Metropolitan and his staff and for communication among the members of the staff. The Secretary serves as a member of the Metropolitan Council.

Among his other duties are directing the administrative, housekeeping, estate management, and personal service functions of the OCA Central Administrative Offices. This comprises human resource management, including benefits administration and personnel investigations; correspondence and records management; support to boards and councils; information technology; travel arrangements; and facilities maintenance. The Secretary also establishes policies and procedures, supervises staff, and assures compliance with legal, regulatory and established best practice guidelines.

In addition, the Secretary's position has evolved to include managing all communications efforts of the Orthodox Church in America including the OCA website, official publications, official statements and serving as spokesman for the Church when directed. Included in this work, the Secretary is a primary member of the Crisis Management Team which addresses specific issues that arise when related to Church work that may involve public relations or responses on specific situations and incidents which affect the entire Church. This also includes coordination of efforts

between the Central Church and the Diocese on specific communication matters. There are a host of other additional duties which arise when delegated such as representing the OCA or the Metropolitan at events and meetings which have critical importance to the life of the OCA. Most of the details of this multifaceted and varied work can be found in the Secretary's report...but I must again reiterate, all of this is accomplished because I have teams of people around me.

This Council is focused on the theme of on expanding the mission. This must always be foremost in the mind and actions of all levels of the Church, including the position of Secretary. Without such focus, the Church loses its breath and dies. With it, the very lifeblood of the Church goes out into all the world. We must maintain our focus and do everything with that goal....how are we expanding the mission? At my recent doctoral defense, I made the case about how evangelism and mission may involve individual actions but they are really community activities. The questions posed back to me was that if everything is evangelism and mission then is nothing mission and evangelism? The answer is quite simple, everything is mission and evangelism in the Church. PERIOD. Everything we do must be that. Whether it is pastoring a parish, working in a hospital, worshipping in the Church, scrubbing the floors, cooking dinner...and even administering the Church. It is all mission and evangelism. Our challenge is to see that and work as such together as a Church, despite our difference and perhaps because of our differences. St. Tikhon commented in his first sermon to his flock in North America, "I ask for assistance and cooperation not only from the pastors, but also from my entire beloved flock. The Church of Christ is likened by the Holy Apostle Paul to a body, while a body has not one member, but many (1 Cor. 12:14). These have not one and the same function (Rom 12:4), but each its own: the eye its own, and the arm its own. Each member is necessary and cannot be without the other,

they all have concerns for each other, and there is no division in the body (1 Cor. 12:25-26). So you also, my brethren, are the body of Christ, and members in particular (v. 27). And unto every one of you is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Eph. 4:7), unto the perfecting of the saints, for a work of ministration, for the building up of the body of Christ (v. 12). And for this purpose continue with true love to grow into Him Whom belongs the whole body, which is built up of and joined through the supply of every joint, according to the working in the measure of each single part, receiving increase for the building up of itself in love (v. 15-16).” The work we do at the Chancery is precisely a reflection of what St. Tikhon charged the flock in North America.

The Chancery work is not just bureaucratic work but must be seen as a real pastoral calling. It involves people and issues that go beyond simple administrative oversight. It requires a real and true connection between the work of the central administration and the dioceses, parishes and the people. Otherwise, it would be empty work. Instead it connects the whole together. But it is much deeper than that, it is an evangelistic endeavor. Our dearly beloved and lately reposed Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko wrote, “In many Orthodox Church and church institutions, Christ and his gospel serve merely as a pretext for a variety of religious, ecclesiastical, social, and political ideas and activities that have little, if anything to do with the Lord’s mission in the world. These ideas and activities may be old-fashioned or modern, spiritualistic or secular, relativistic or sectarian, political or pietistic. They may be sophisticated or simplistic, intellectual or popular, refined or vulgar. But whatever or however they are not rooted in Jesus Christ. Nor are they guided and guarded by the gospel image and teaching of and about Jesus and God the Father; nor are they informed by the Holy Spirit who is always and everywhere the Spirit of God.” May we never fall into that trap but rather ensure that all our labors are done in the light of

Christ. Fr Hopko continues, “The Church, as Fr. Alexander Schmemmann has said, is not an organization with a gospel; it is a gospel with organizations; it is not an institution with mysteries; it is mystery with institutions, Church unity, in this perspective, is unity in the gospel of God and the mystery of Christ as revealed, known, proclaimed, celebrated, and witnessed in the formal ecclesiastical doctrines, sacramental structures, and liturgical rites of the Christian churches. In this perspective, Church unity has virtually nothing to do with theological systems, church politics, popular pieties, or holy people. It has only to do with the formal faith, order, and worship of the Christian churches *qua churches*. It is about what the churches of Christ, Christ’s one holy Church, believe, teach, pray and do.” May we always believe, teach, pray and do.

18TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL PLENARY SESSION II TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2015

SESSION OPENING

The Second Plenary Session opened at 9:47am with the singing of “*The Grace of the Holy Spirit.*”

Fr. Peter Baktis, Clergy Vice-Chair
Judge E.R. Lanier, Lay Vice-Chair

PROCEDURES FOR INTRODUCING RESOLUTIONS

Fr. Timothy Sawchak, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, reviewed the procedures for introducing resolutions according to the procedures listed in the Delegate Handbook, pages 13 and 20-21. He also reminded everyone that the resolutions and any proposed amendments to said resolutions will only allow for 10 speakers, five for and five against, who will each observe a three-minute time limit to their remarks.

NOMINATIONS PROCEDURES

Fr. David Lowell, Chair of the Nominations Committee, reviewed the information on nominating and electing delegates to the Metropolitan Council and Pension Board according to the procedures listed in the Delegate Handbook, pages 22-23.

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Diocese of Alaska

His Grace, the Right Reverend David, Bishop of Sitka and Alaska, presented a video commemorating Matushka Olga Michael of blessed memory. His Grace introduced her granddaughter, Matushka Olga Fisher, who is present at the Council. His Grace thanked His Beatitude for his presentation last night, and noted how pertinent it is for Alaska, as well, which struggles with a range of problems such as suicide and addiction. He noted that one of Archbishop Benjamin’s last acts as Locum Tenens was to preside at the groundbreaking of a church in Wasilla dedicated to St. Juvenaly and his companion. The church has now been completed and Bishop David served there this spring. There is also a mission in Anchorage dedicated to St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre that just bought its first real building, and is in the process of establishing a wellness center there. His Grace asked for everyone’s continued prayers, and thanked the many people and groups that have labored so faithfully in Alaska: OCMC, especially Fr. David and Matushka Rozanne Rucker and Blake and Pam DiLullo; IOCC, who have supplied funding for RADACT (Rural Alaska Drug and Alcohol Counseling Training), which all seminarians at St. Herman’s Seminary receive; Mary Ann Khoury and Outreach Alaska; and those who support the work of St. Herman’s Seminary to fully fund all Alaskan seminarians so that they are able to graduate with no debt. They are also working on installing fire suppression systems in churches around the Diocese that will extinguish fires without

damaging icons. Recalling a story of the first monks who were asked to go to Alaska, Bishop David recalled the words of Metropolitan Gabriel of Moscow: “He who does not want to aid in the salvation of others cannot save himself.” We cannot be deaf to the calling we have; instead, we must listen to the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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 recent missionary efforts in the Diocese of New England and the Albanian Archdiocese.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

14 Hierarchs
249 Clergy Delegates
225 Lay Delegates
4 Retired Clergy
81 Observers
2 Guests
TOTAL: 575
VOTING COUNT: 488

REPORT OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Fr. Chad Hatfield, Fr. David Garretson, Dr. Paul Meyendorff, and Ms. Maureen Jury presented highlights from the written Metropolitan Council report. The next major task will be revision of the Metropolitan Council Handbook if the approval of the new Statute.

PROPOSED REVISED STATUTE PRESENTATION

His Grace, the Right Reverend Daniel, Bishop of Santa Rosa, presented the proposed Statute on behalf of the Commission on Canons and Statute in order to provide a context for the text of the proposal, including highlights of the written report. Bishop Daniel noted that transparency in the process was of utmost importance from the beginning, with various meetings around the OCA, as well as articles published online on which people could comment. He noted that the Statute needed to reflect the actual life of the Church, to include articles on monasticism, the Officers of the Church, and Stavropegial Institutions, as well as the competencies of various bodies in the Church. There was significant involvement and input from all areas of the church – from individuals and parishes to dioceses, both clergy and lay, and Bishop Daniel expressed thanks for all the comments that served to improve text, spurring many changes that were incorporated into the final draft.

Bishop Daniel then called Judge Lanier to highlight some of the changes that are important in terms of increasing legal protection at all levels of the OCA. Judge Lanier noted that the Statute itself is the Bylaws of the OCA as incorporated in the State of New York, so there is a legal dimension to them that must be considered. The Statute states how we relate to each other, as well as how we should relate to the rest of society. One important change in regards to parish property was eliminating phrasing that could lend itself to unfriendly rulings in civil courts by authorities who are not competent to interpret the

language. Consider how the language was interpreted in radically different ways in Simpson and Mayfield, PA vis-à-vis in Atlanta, GA. We need something uniform that will be predictably interpreted in a uniform way in the courts, with all possible ambiguity removed. The proposed Statute does just that, while preserving the original intent of the 1971 Statute.

Judge Lanier also noted that, contrary to what some might have heard, no procedural rights have been removed in the case of Church Courts. Indeed, these rights are based on the Sacred Canons and Holy Tradition, and cannot be changed by any Statute. All procedural rights in the current Statute are preserved in the proposed Statute.

The Clergy Vice-Chair called Fr. Alexander Rentel to speak about the process and the proposed revision. Fr. Rentel noted that the Statute serves as not only our internal governance rules, but also bridges the gap from the ancient canons to the current life of the Church. He also noted that the entire principle guiding us is found in the 102nd Canon of the Council in Trullo – the entire concern of pastoral authority is to bring back the lost sheep and heal the serpent’s bite. The Statute exists to both protect and build the mission of the Church. A few key points:

1. Every attempt has been made to make a more comprehensive Statute and modify parochial focus to include the wider life of the Church. Elements needing regular updates should be moved out of the Statute so they do not need to go through the extended Statute amendment process. One such example is the complications that have arisen in regards to ecclesiastical courts. Moving such language from the Statute allows the Holy Synod to react in a timely and pastoral manner when complications arise.
2. Many adaptations were included based on the experience we learned during the recent years of trouble in the Orthodox Church in America.
3. Clear lines of authority are established within the Church, to include the competencies of the various bodies. One such area is the AAC, which has no competencies according to the current Statute. However, the proposal leaves room for the various Dioceses to continue to operate in their current fashion as appropriate, such as in models of financial support to the Diocese from the individual parishes.
4. Language has become unclear and contradictory in some places due to the various amendments over the years at previous All American Councils.

Fr. Alexander closed by quoting from the written Statute report: “This proposed Statute revision is an improvement over the old one, and not necessarily because it is perfect in its own terms. By the Grace of God, the next version will be even better.”

The Clergy Vice-Chair called on His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, Chair of the Statute Revision Task Force and Commission on Canons and Statute to speak. His Eminence thanked His Beatitude and the other members of the Holy Synod for the assignment as Chair, as well as the members of the Task Force and Commission for their irenic cooperation in the process. He then briefly highlighted some of the points from the Report on the Proposed Statute Revision for The Orthodox Church in America published in June 2015, particular the Drafting Guidelines and Principles:

1. Make the Statute more comprehensive with regard to the entire life of the Church and modify its current parochial focus.
2. Clarify and elaborate the existing Statute with an eye towards the recent years of difficulty in the OCA.

3. Include to the degree possible amendments and resolutions passed by recent All-American Councils.
4. Establish clearer lines of authority and competencies within the different bodies of the Church.
5. Allow a certain diversity of practice within diocesan and parochial structures as long as certain criteria are met.
6. And, above all, to introduce as few legislative novelties as possible.

Archbishop Nathaniel thanked everyone for supporting the Commission during the process, and noted that the Holy Synod unanimously recommends the adoption of the proposed Statute. He also noted that this is a particularly American problem: we have the privilege of passing a Statute that doesn't require the approval of any civil authority or religious body outside of our own Church. We are being asked how to expand the mission – the proposed Statute is a large part of making sure that we are supported in this expansion by the best ruling documents possible.

The Clergy Vice-Chair asked for a motion to adopt the proposed Statute. Mr Gregory Nescott, St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA made the following motion, seconded by Fr. Paul Jannakos, St Mary Magdalene Church, Fenton, MI:

WHEREAS, the existing Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, adopted at the 2nd All American Council of October 19-21, 1971, has been subject to repeated amendment, causing degradation over time of its internal cohesion and consistency, compromising the clarity of both its scope and function; and

Whereas, said Statute of the Orthodox Church in America is for these reasons no longer well-suited to address the complexities of modern internal governance which now confront our autocephalous Orthodox Church, and it fails to provide satisfactory internal governance guidelines to either ecclesiastical or secular authorities appropriate to and necessary for the life of a modern Church in our society; and

Whereas, in recognition of these deficiencies in the existing Statute, the Holy Synod in October 2013 directed a Statute Revision Task Force to undertake a revision of the Statute, a draft of which revision was thereafter placed in the hands of the Commission on Canons and Statute and published to the Church at large; and

Whereas, said draft of a revised Statute has been endorsed by action of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America and has been unanimously recommended for adoption by the Commission on Canons and Statute;

NOW, THEREFORE:

In accordance and in full compliance with the current Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, particularly Article XIII, Sections 1 and 2 thereof,

BE IT RESOLVED,

That this 18th All American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, assembled in the City of Atlanta, Georgia, in its Plenary Session II of July 21, 2015, does hereby approve, adopt, ratify and confirm in its entirety said revised Statute as and for the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America.

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair opened discussion. He indicated 20 speakers would be allowed with 10 for and 10 against with three minutes allotted to each person.

Proponent: Gregory Nescott. In his long history working with the Statute, he agrees with the Commission's conclusion that the proposed Statute is a remarkable improvement. As an off and on member of the Metropolitan Council over the last 35 years, he dealt with Statute problems the whole time. He thanked the Commission for such an excellent, open, transparent process.

Proponent: Igumen Sergious (Gerken), St Raphael of Brooklyn Church, Inverness, FL: He expressed satisfaction with appropriate wording in Article XIII and that this was a manifestation of the openness and transparency of the revision process.

Opponent: James Gordon, St Symeon Church, Birmingham, AL: He expressed gratitude to the Commission for the revised Statute but opined that the document is fatally flawed for two reasons. Article XII states property is held in trust for the diocese; if the diocese dissolves the property reverts to the OCA. He prefers the ambiguity in the current Statute which allows courts to hear both sides of a property issue. If the proposed Statute is not adopted, local parishes could decide in accordance with their own by-laws to take the property out of the diocese. Only the antimension would be returned to the diocese. He stated his preference of voting on each Statute Article individually.

Proponent: Fr. David Garretson, SS Peter & Paul, South River, NJ: The Statute is about expanding the mission. Fr. Garretson reminisced about his experience at St. Mary of Egypt Church in Atlanta during the Paschal season one year. There was no expanding the mission when everyone was spending 35 hours a week in depositions. The recent SCOTUS decision has the potential to bring additional problems in property issues.

Clarification: Fr. Daniel Mathewson, SS Peter and Paul Church, Edinboro, PA, asked: What do legal title and in trust mean?

Answer: Judge Lanier: It's a rather involved area of real property law. It's a function of the history of English Common Law and real property principles within that context. Legal title has reference to the ownership of an estate as defined by law. In trust means that someone holds the title, but it is used in more general definitions of interest. For example, you would allow the building to be used as a church, but not a fast food restaurant. Originally, everything was in the name of the hierarch, which was consistent with 19th century American practice, but in the interest of those who were in the Church. That came to a halt when there was a shift from title ownership in the bishop to title ownership in the parish corporation, which occurred with the Bolshevik Revolution when funding of the church from Russia ceased. As a result, Archbishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) mortgaged parish property, which caused problems. Soon after, John Kedrovsky tried to assert ownership over the parish properties in North America in the name of

the Living Church. The provisions of the revised Statute have been formulated to protect the church in property matters.

Proponent: Fr. Anastasy Richter, Holy Assumption Church, Canton, OH, thanked the Commission for its hard work to improve our Church.

Proponent: Fr. Michael Meerson, Christ the Savior, New York, NY was in favor but had concerns regarding the implementation of the parish property provisions of the revised Statute.

Clarification: Fr. John Reeves, Holy Trinity Church, State College, PA asked what does the term ‘associates priest’ means?

Answer: Fr. Alexander Rentel replied that this is a typographical error. It was meant to read “associate priest”.

Proponent: Fr. Alexander Garklavs, Holy Trinity Church, Parma, OH noted that the history of the Statute extends beyond 1971 back to the First All American Sobor in 1907.

This revision is the fulfillment of the process begun at that time.

Proponent: Lisa Pilipemko, St. Nicholas Church, Saratoga, CA: Many missions have started through the financial efforts of the people, but we have to remember that they were founded to be a part of the Orthodox Church in America, not to be congregationalist communities. She reminded the Council that contrary to some assertions the Statute will indeed be amended if needed by future Councils.

Clarification: David Zavednak, SS Peter & Paul Church, Meriden, CT: In the last article, it is requested that everyone come into conformance over next 2 years. What happens if they do not follow along by then?

Answer: Fr. Alexander Rentel stated that the idea of having a delayed date was so that everyone would have ample time to consider what needs to happen and make those changes. Ultimately, non-compliance is an issue for the Holy Synod to consider.

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

The motion carried with 473 for and 15 against. The Clergy Vice-Chair called for recognition of the hard work of the Commission, and they received a standing ovation.

The Clergy Vice-Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Igumen Sergious, (Gerken) and seconded by Fr. Antonio Perdomo, St George the Great Martyr Church, Pharr, TX, and accepted unanimously.

The session adjourned at 12:21pm, with the singing of “It Is Truly Meet.”

18TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL PLENARY SESSION III TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2015

SESSION OPENING

The Third Plenary Session opened at 2:10pm with the singing of “*The Grace of the Holy Spirit.*”

Fr. Peter Baktis, Clergy Vice-Chair
Judge E.R. Lanier, Lay Vice-Chair

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Archdiocese of Canada

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Irénée, Archbishop of Ottawa and Canada presented a video highlighting recent missionary efforts in the Archdiocese.

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, spoke about the diocese’s emphasis on clergy health, and introduced Fr. Nicholas Solak from Holy Trinity Church in Stroudsburg, PA. Fr. Nicholas said they are continuing with the good, hard work of faithful clergy and laity under Archbishop Mark’s care and guidance. They are working very hard to move toward better administrative and financial health, so that the diocese will be in a better position to expand the mission. Fr. Nicholas thanked Archbishop Melchisedek for his work as the Locum Tenens during the transitional period until Archbishop Mark arrived. The one major difficulty in the diocese is the combination of declining census and aging membership, which translates into less financial revenue and more stress on priests and their families. Because the health of clergy and their families is always important, Archbishop Mark, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Ian Pac-Urar, and Fr. Nathan Preston traveled to San Francisco to be trained as peer group facilitators by the Pastoral Excellence Network (PEN). They applied for and received a grant from PEN to create a three-year program of peer groups in the diocese, bringing together clergy at all points of their ministry. The peer groups are primarily educational, dealing with parish ministry, as there is a vast, important body of knowledge uniquely known by parish priests doing what parish priests do – counseling, pastoring, and serving. When they identify a pastoral problem, they can work together to look for better solutions and create more effective ministries. Priests need peer support and accountability in the struggle to be good pastors. The peer groups are good places for clergy to be challenged to become better and healthier, which makes for revitalized parishes. By extension, this process also includes the clergy wives, who can form their own peer groups with facilitators. The program has a total of \$50,000 in funding, with half coming from PEN and the other half from the diocese. Currently, the peer groups are voluntary associations that meet quarterly and also attend an annual retreat. There are also funds for books and learning materials. The OCA Department of Pastoral Life is

very involved and helpful, and the program looks viable for expansion to the other dioceses, which could also receive grants from PEN to get a program started.

Diocese of Mexico

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Alejo, Archbishop of Mexico City and Mexico presented a video highlighting missionary efforts in the diocese. Archbishop Alejo spoke about the history of the diocese reaching back to 1972, and the role of Archbishop Dmitri of blessed memory in establishing the Exarchate of Mexico. The diocese has enjoyed good relations with the other jurisdictions present in Mexico, fulfilling the apostolic exhortation of Matthew 28:20. The task of the diocese over the past 44 years has always been expanding the mission, and we enjoy a presence over the entirety of Mexico, with parishes and missions in a number of states. The main challenge has been the lack of clergy able to attend to the needs of our communities. We have to listen to Christ's words in Luke 10:2 – “The field is ripe for harvest, but the laborers are few.” The Lord will empower us to accomplish the task, and want of material goods has never caused suffering in the diocese. Archbishop Alejo expressed his gratitude to Fr. John Parker, Fr. David Rucker, Fr. Ernesto Rios, Fr. Antonio Perdomo, and the Holy Synod for all of their help to the diocese. The diocese is young, and the main concern is strengthening the Church for the future generations, but we remain faithful. Fr. Antonio Perdomo of St. George the Great Martyr Church in Pharr, TX translated Archbishop Alejo's comments.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

14 Hierarchs
242 Clergy Delegates
226 Lay Delegates
5 Retired Clergy
74 Observers
3 Guests
TOTAL: 564
VOTING COUNT: 482

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Ms. Melanie Ringa, Treasurer of the OCA, highlighted some of the major financial milestones since the 16th All American Council in Seattle. The Church has received two major bequests totaling almost \$1.5 million, as well as paid off the Honesdale loan from 2007. The OCA assessment was reduced from \$105 to \$90 per capita, resulting in a decrease of about \$400,000 in the operating budget. Ms. Ringa also noted the falling asleep of Helen Detke and Greg Sulich, who are sorely missed. Our professional and legal costs have also been greatly reduced, from \$860,000 in 2009 to \$70,000 in 2014. The Fellowship of Orthodox Stewards was revitalized as the Stewards of the OCA in 2013. The Metropolitan and Officers of the Church took voluntary pay reductions of 5% in 2014, and there are fewer full-time employees, but the Mission Planting Grant program continues to operate successfully, providing approximately \$100,000 each year to missions across the OCA. Ms. Ringa also reviewed the finances of the past four years, as well as

the first quarter of 2015. She discussed various methods explored in regards to proportional giving since 2011.

Questions and Answers

Fr. David Lowell, Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church, Menlo Park, CA expressed his gratitude for all of Melanie's hard work especially as part time employee.

Fr. Gregory DuDash, SS. Peter and Paul Church, Philadelphia, PA: What is the amount included in the Synodal Chancery's budget for the Seminaries used for? Does it pay for seminarians' tuition? Why did we stop the appeals?

Answer: Ms. Ringa: We do not fund tuition for seminarians. The money goes to the seminaries, which then the funds are used to their best purposes, including grants for seminarians. Ms. Ringa stated that the appeals were discontinued by decision of the Metropolitan Council several years ago.

Ms. Ringa closed by thanking everyone for their prayers, love and support, which have made the progress of the last few years possible.

REPORT OF THE AUDITING COMMITTEE

Mr. Michael Strelka, Chair of the Auditing Committee, summarized his written report and indicated vast improvements over the past seven years since the 15th All American Council in Pittsburgh, PA. He expressed gratitude to all those who have helped the Committee accomplish its work.

REPORT OF THE PENSION BOARD

Fr. Gleb McFatter, Interim Chair of the OCA Pension Board, presented highlights from its written report. Fr. McFatter introduced Ms. Maureen Ahearn, Administrator of the Pension Plan, and expressed gratitude for her hard work. Reviewing the numbers of the past few years, Fr. McFatter noted that plan funding has fallen to about 83% due to recalculated life expectancy rates, but that the actual returns are exceeding the estimated return of 7% per annum. Fr. McFatter thanked the original founders of the plan who had the foresight to consider the need for such a pension plan, and expressed gratitude on behalf of the entire Board to Mr. John Sedor, who is retiring as Chair this year.

Questions and Answers

Fr. James Parnell, All Saints Church, Hartford, CT: Do we have more than 331 priests and employees in the OCA? Isn't participation mandated?

Fr. McFatter: There are about 800 total, of which less than half participate. There have been various attempts to enforce the mandate, but ultimately it is up to the bishops, chancellors and treasurers of each diocese to enroll eligible clergy.

Fr. Daniel Ressetar, Retired Clergy, Harrisburg, PA: Father asked whether clergy in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese receive their pensions at 65 years old and why is that not the case in the OCA?

Fr. David Garretson, SS. Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ, replied the current plan does not allow for concurrent receipt of pension benefits while still working because of federal laws.

Fr. Thomas Mueller, SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Milwaukee, WI stated that nonparticipation in the plan disregards the decisions of previous All American Councils and shows irresponsibility towards those who are participating.

Fr. Antonio Perdomo, St George the Great Martyr Church, Pharr, noted that he is not participating in the plan as he is employed outside the parish and requested the Pension Board to investigate adjusting the plan by-laws to allow participation in such situations

Fr. Matthew Tate, Church of the Annunciation, Milwaukie, OR noted that in 2014 the Pension Board found out that pension benefits could be designated as housing allowance, in the same way that it is applicable to an active clergy salary. He also noted that retired priests are now allowed to work up to two years in a mission parish and may earn up to \$24,000 per annum without jeopardizing pension benefits. This may be applied to multiple mission parishes for successive two year periods.

The Clergy Vice-Chair asked the Pension Board members to stand and be recognized so that those with further questions could contact them.

FINANCE RESOLUTION PRESENTATION

Ms. Melanie Ringa, Treasurer of the OCA, introduced the background of the current proposal, which is based on the actual amounts required to fund all the expenses of the Synodal Chancery, as well as the resolution to move to proportional giving from the 16th All American Council. Ms. Ringa explained how the Resolution would affect each diocese over the course of the next three years.

Fr. McFatter moved the following resolution, seconded by Fr. John Dresko, St. Paul Church, Las Vegas, NV and noted the introductory preamble:

*The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America affirms the important role of the Synodal Chancery in the work of the OCA. We also encourage the transition to proportional giving as the best means of supporting the work of the Church. We also recognize that, at this point in time, **each diocese is at a different place in this process.** To this end we unanimously recommend the adoption of the following financial resolution:*

For the budget years of 2016, 2017, and 2018 the Dioceses (or Archdioceses) of New England, New York-New Jersey, The Midwest, Eastern Pennsylvania, The South, The West, Western Pennsylvania and Washington DC, shall remit its annual financial obligation for the work of the Synodal Chancery according to the following formula:

If the *combined* diocesan (at current diocesan rate) and OCA (\$90 per capita) assessment total is greater than 46% of the diocesan income, excluding restricted, charity, pass-through and designated funds (“gross adjusted income”), the financial obligation in 2016 will be the lesser of the 2015 actual rate or 50% of the 2016 “gross adjusted income”; in 2017 it will be the 2016 rate less 2%; and in 2018 it will be the 2017 rate less 2%. The “gross adjusted income” is intended to represent that which would previously have been the diocesan assessment plus the OCA assessment.

If the *combined* diocesan (at current diocesan rate) and OCA (\$90 per capita) assessment total is greater than 34% and equal to or less than 46% of the “gross adjusted income”, the financial obligation in 2016 will be the 2015 proportional rate; in 2017 it will be the 2% below the 2016 rate; and in 2018 the proportional rate will be 2% below the 2017 rate, not to fall below 34% in any year.

If the *combined* diocesan (at current diocesan rate) and OCA (\$90 per capita) assessment total is less than or equal to 34% of the “gross adjusted income”, the financial obligation will be 34% of the “gross adjusted income” in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

For the budget years 2016, 2017 and 2018, the Archdiocese of Canada and the Diocese of Alaska shall remit their annual diocesan financial obligation at the rate of 10% of their gross adjusted income.

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. The Holy Synod shall continue to work with these dioceses to incorporate them by mutual agreement into full participation in the proportional method of funding the work of the Synodal Chancery.

DISCUSSION

The Clergy Vice-Chair again clarified the procedures for discussion: 10 speakers, five proponents and five opponents, each limited to three minutes on the topic.

Clarification: Fr. Ignatius Gauvain, St Mary Church, Coaldale, PA asked if a diocese raises money for its expenses through a means outside its standard assessment, would it have to pay on those amounts? What happens if the population of a diocese decreases?

Answer: Ms. Ringa: You pay a percentage, not a dollar amount. There is no floor.

Clarification: Dr. Paul Meyendorff, Metropolitan Council Member: What about Stavropegial Institutions?

Answer: Ms. Ringa: Stavropegial Institutions were not considered at the writing of the resolution; it would require an amendment to include them.

Clarification: Mr. Robert Graban, Holy Transfiguration Church, Livonia, MI: Was the proposed amendment published on the OCA website?

Answer: Yes

Clarification: Protodeacon Michael Myers, St. Nicholas Church, Fort Wayne, IN asked if abstentions would be possible when voting on the resolution.

Answer: Yes.

Proponent: Ms. Maureen Jury, St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX noted that adopting this resolution is a commitment to expanding the mission and critical to avoid decline. If it is unsuccessful, it can be revised at the next Council. She further noted that if everyone simply gave two percent, the church could be fully funded. This is a spiritual issue, like fasting.

Opponent: Mr. Michael Geeza, Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, NJ noted that while the OCA has been in existence for 45 years, the issue of the ethnic dioceses is yet to be resolved. He also noted that it is time for all diocese to contribute equally.

Proponent: Dr. Al Rossi, Three Hierarchs Chapel, Yonkers, NY remarked that the Holy Synod has unanimously endorsed the resolution, and that this is a significant statement in and of itself. It is about an attitude adjustment, not about holding up a red or green card.

Opponent: Fr. John Hopko, SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville, CT noted the complexity of the resolution and the potential for issues. He remarked on the simplicity of a head tax and compared the cost of a family meal to the previous assessment of \$105. He further noted that the notion of a per capita is never mentioned in his parish, just free will giving.

Proponent: Fr. Gauvain was concerned that he may have miscommunicated his thoughts earlier and apologized for any confusion. He is in favor of the resolution as a step forward.

Opponent: Fr. Reeves noted the resolution is inherently unequal as it is based on a dual system according to ethnicity. A regularization of the system is needed.

Proponent: Matushka Mary Breton, Annunciation Church, Brick, NJ noted that it is reasonable to expect Christians to disagree on some issues. Nevertheless, the Lord asks to sacrifice all that we have and follow him. It is time to move away from the head tax and accept this resolution.

Proponent: Reader Christopher Herbert, Christ the Saviour Cathedral, Miami Lakes, FL noted his frustration with the head tax and the inability to reach a conclusion for funding the church. We would not need to focus on finances if we were doing a better job of encouraging people to give from the heart.

Clarification: Archbishop Nathaniel noted that the Romanian Episcopate is not under the same Statute as the territorial dioceses are as it is governed by the agreement under which it joined the Metropolia in 1960. The Romanian Episcopate Congress comes together and makes decisions based on what the Holy Synod asks. If the Congress decides it can

give more support, it will, but it will be a free-will offering, not based on a head tax or a percentage.

Clarification: Archbishop Nikon: The Albanian Archdiocese gives approximately 17%, and will continue to do so. The issue of non-territorial dioceses falls within the competency of the Holy Synod, not the All American Council.

Opponent: Fr. John Kreta, All Saints of America Mission, Salisbury, CT noted his concern regarding cutting an additional \$235,000 out of the budget of the Synodal Chancery. We are halfway through the Council and I have spent six years' worth of assessments just to come talk about the assessment. Why are we cutting more and more out of the budget?

Clarification: Ms. Ringa: The potential cuts are just suggestions. These decisions will be made by the Metropolitan Council.

Clarification: Archbishop Benjamin remarked that in Alaska, the economy is based on subsistence. Why do we not have 100% participation in the pension plan? It is because many priests do not receive a salary. Similarly, the Diocese of Mexico has a special arrangement because of extenuating circumstances. This resolution is not meant to be punitive – it is meant to be an encouragement to educate our people on stewardship. It is unbelievable that 60% of a diocesan budget could be going to the Synodal Chancery which indicates that funds in the diocese are extremely limited. The real question is what are we willing to give to God?

Metropolitan Tikhon rose to note that he agrees in principle with the objections he has heard, and knows that we are all working toward the same goal. The position of the ethnic dioceses has been discussed at the last two meetings of the Holy Synod, and those discussions will continue. But if we truly want to do all these good things that have been pointed out, we need to approve the resolution and continue to figure it out. We are all striving to fulfill our responsibilities in the Church through our love for God, but we need to continue to communicate that to our faithful by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and living the life of sacrifice ourselves. Each person here is representing his or her parish, diocese, or institution, and it is complicated. If we vote down this resolution, we have to come up with another resolution to approve, which would most likely be a head tax. The resolution is not perfect, but who among us is perfect? We need to pray and see where the Holy Spirit leads us.

The Clergy Vice-Chair called the question. The resolution passed with 451 votes for, 14 votes against, and 17 abstentions. The motion carries.

The Clergy Vice-Chair adjourned the session at 5:12 pm, with the singing of “It Is Truly Meet.”

18TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL PLENARY SESSION IV WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2015

SESSION OPENING

The Fourth Plenary Session opened at 9:35am with the singing of “*The Grace of the Holy Spirit.*” Metropolitan Tikhon intoned “Memory Eternal” in commemoration of the falling asleep of Protopresbyter John Meyendorff.

Fr. Peter Baktis, Clergy Vice-Chair
Judge E.R. Lanier, Lay Vice-Chair

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Diocese of the Midwest

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

Bulgarian Diocese

His Grace, the Right Reverend Alexander, Bishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese, related the history of his diocese, including revision of the Diocesan Constitution to allow a non-Bulgarian Bishop and to expand the mission to non-Bulgarians. The majority of the clergy and many of the faithful are Orthodox Christians of various ethnicities and backgrounds including converts. The Diocese continues to hold discussions about its participation in the broader life of the Church, which helps identify both points of strength and points for improvement. The Diocese has realized that it cannot be an ethnic museum, but instead must continue to adhere to the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.

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, said that we have spent time talking about how the youth are the future of the Church, but it must also be said that the Church must be the future of the youth. The Diocese continues to fully support seminarians, and recently hosted its first girls’ retreat. An education program for parish council members is underway, as well as focusing on new methods of educating our youth. The Diocese continues to open new missions, as well as to relocate some in order to best serve the community. The “Operations” of restoring and revitalizing various parishes in the Diocese have been extremely successful, taking place from Buffalo to Oneonta to Princeton. Archbishop Michael then presented a video highlighting the expansion of the mission in the diocese.

FINAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Fr. John Vitko, Chair of the Post-Conciliar Commission, presented highlights from the Committee's written report. He noted that most of the Strategic Plan's 10 goals from the 16th All-American Council are well underway and have transitioned into the normal life of the Church. Having accomplished what it was tasked to do, the committee will cease operating. Fr. Vitko expressed the Committee's gratitude to all those involved.

OFFICE OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

The Lay Vice-Chair presented a video of Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of the Office of External Affairs and Inter-Church Relations, delivering the Office's report.

Questions and Answers

Dr. Carston Wagner, St Mary Cathedral, Minneapolis, MN: Is there any dialogue between the OCA and the Coptic Church?

Answer: Dr. Paul Meyendorff, Consultant to the Office, said that there is theological agreement between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, but union has not happened yet. However, there is a significant degree of cooperation at the local level.

Monk Stavros (Winner), Monks of New Skete, Cambridge, NY: There seems to be change in the Roman Church with the new pope. Has that had an effect on Roman-Orthodox relations?

Answer: Bishop Alexander, Chairman of the Office, answered that the developments have been too recent for formal discussion.

Fr. Marcus Burch, St John of the Ladder Church, Greenville, SC: What is the role of the OCA bishops in the Assembly of Bishops and the upcoming Great and Holy Council?

Answer: Bishop Alexander answered that, he has noted a consistent attitude on the part of monastics in Mt. Athos and Romania that they hope and pray that the Council will not happen, believing that it can only result in unfortunate things. As for the Assembly of Bishops, there seemed to be a great plan for actually achieving canonical unity in America, but it encountered deep opposition from a number of members of the Assembly. There does not seem to be any solution in the immediate or near future, but the renewed meeting and dialogue is still a cause for hope. The biggest question, asked by our own Archbishop Nathaniel, is, "Does this body intend to be a synod?" That question has yet to be answered. The Holy Synod's fervent hope is that the answer will be "Yes".

Dr. Meyendorff noted that, as Fr. Kishkovsky said, our mission is to be both Orthodox and American, and commended Fr. Kishkovsky for his dedicated service over the past 25 years.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

14 Hierarchs
242 Clergy Delegates
221 Lay Delegates
5 Retired Clergy
77 Observers
3 Guests
TOTAL: 562
VOTING COUNT: 477

MILITARY CHAPLAINS REPORT

Fr. Theodore Boback, Director reviewed the operations of the Office of Military and VA Chaplaincies, respectively, presented highlights from the Office's written report. Fr. Boback thanked the bishops and faithful for their support. Fr. Gallick, Assistant Director recognized all of the Veterans who have served in the various conflicts since World War II, as well as those serving as Chaplains in the Armed Forces. Fr. Gallick also requested that those interested in becoming Chaplains contact either Fr. Boback or himself.

Questions and Answers

Fr. John Parker, Holy Ascension Church, Mt. Pleasant, SC: How, if at all, are we bearing witness to the dignity of women by speaking out against putting women on the front lines of battle?

Answer: Fr. Baktis stated that, in America, our women in the Armed Forces serve on a volunteer basis. They have made the choice to serve, and have fought for their right to be treated as equals in the military ranks. The military has always been on the forefront of social issues – integration, respect for women, domestic and sexual violence, and the like. A woman who has fought to serve in the Armed Forces would probably find the question offensive. There are no longer any “front lines” in modern warfare.

INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINS REPORT

Fr. Steven Voytovich, Director of the Office of Institutional Chaplaincies, presented highlights of Type equation here.his written report. Fr. Voytovich pointed out that Chaplains are constantly expanding the mission because they spend most of their time ministering and witnessing to those of other faith backgrounds. One particular area of need is in the Federal Bureau of Prisons: there is only one current chaplain, who is nearing retirement. Laypersons may also be commissioned as chaplains for institutional ministry.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

DIACONAL VOCATIONS PROGRAM

Archdeacon Kirill Sokolov, Director of the Diaconal Vocations Program, presented highlights from the Program's written report.

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Matushka Valerie Zahirsky, Chair, Department of Christian Education, presented highlights from the Department's written report.

Questions and Answers

Fr. Robert Miclean, Holy Archangels Mission, Annapolis, MD: The Department website is difficult to navigate. Additionally, what are we doing to address many of the modern social issues facing our youth and teens?

Answer: Matushka Zahirsky said that they are always open to suggestions on how to improve the website. Additionally, this afternoon, there will be a workshop dealing with many of these questions, and the new version of Fr. Thomas Hopko's *The Orthodox Faith* (Rainbow Series) will deal with them, as well.

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND HUMANITARIAN AID

Ms. Donna Karabin, Chair, Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid, presented highlights of the Department's written report. Ms. Karabin noted that there are workshops available both today and tomorrow focusing on the ministries of Matthew 25. She requested that all dioceses without a liaison consider appointing one.

DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Lay Vice-Chair presented a video by Fr. Ian Pac-Urar, Chair of the Department of Continuing Education, highlighting the Department's work since the 16th All-American Council, as well as the results of the recent survey sent out by the Department.

DEPARTMENT OF EVANGELIZATION

Fr. John Parker, Chair, Department of Evangelization, presented highlights from the Department's written report, pointing out that "Expanding the Mission" is the sole goal of the Department. He highlighted the Mission Planting Grants which in the last 10 years has enabled more than 30 missions to support a priest and missionary work in rural Mexico. He exhorted the Council to missionary zeal.

DEPARTMENT OF LITURGICAL MUSIC AND TRANSLATIONS

Dr. David Drillock, Chair of the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, presented highlights from the Department's written report, noting that liturgical music downloads were accessed by almost 5,500 unique users in the month of June alone.

Fr. John Shimchick, Church of the Holy Cross, Medford, NJ, recognized Dr. Drillock for his outstanding decades of joyful service to the Church.

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL LIFE AND MINISTRY

Fr. Nathan Preston, Administrator, Department of Pastoral Life and Ministry, presented highlights from the Department's written report, and noted the results of its recent survey.

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

Mr. Andrew Boyd, Chair, Department of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry, presented highlights from the Department's written report. He noted that Syndesmos (World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth) has been reactivated and is holding a young adult festival in Supraśl, Poland this year, and the OCA will be represented by a youth delegation. There will also be Pan-Orthodox youth conferences held in Ohio and the West Coast this coming year.

Questions and Answers

Ms. Pilipenko: What are we doing to equip our youth to defend the faith?

Answer: Mr. Boyd stated that the written report highlights the work being done in this area, especially with the Academy of Preachers Festival and the Department's YouTube Challenges.

FELLOWSHIP OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA

Ms. Rebecca Tesar, Immediate Past President of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA), presented highlights from the FOCA written report, particularly noting the recent culmination of the charitable campaign, enabling FOCA to donate \$300,000 to married student housing at St. Tikhon's Seminary.

RESOLUTIONS

The Lay Vice-Chair announced that consideration of Resolution 2 on Spiritual Abuse will be deferred to the next plenary session. Dr. Jennifer McClure, Holy Trinity Church, State College, PA, who explained the definition of spiritual abuse as stated in Addendum 1 to the resolution and asked for prayerful consideration of this resolution.

FINAL ISSUES AND ADJOURNMENT

Point of Order: Mr. Nescott asked when information on candidates for the elections would be available.

Answer: Fr. Tosi stated that the biographies will be handed out tomorrow morning.

The Lay Vice-Chair adjourned the session at 1:21pm, with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet."

18th All American Council/External Affairs
Video July 15, 2015
Fr. Leonid Kishkovsky

Your Beatitude, Your Eminences, Your Graces,
Clergy and Lay delegates to the 18th All American Council,
Brothers and sisters in Christ!

The written Report of the Office of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations is available for your information and review along with the other documents disseminated in preparation for this Council. There you will find useful information on the presence and engagement of the Orthodox Church in America in relation to other Orthodox churches, the Assemblies of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the USA and in Canada, theological dialogues, ecumenical organizations, and aspects of our witness in society. The record shows that bishops, priests and laity represent the vision of the Orthodox Church in America with integrity and competence.

I regret that my recovery from illness and surgery during recent months has not been swift enough to allow me to travel to attend the Council. I am grateful for this opportunity to address you, thus complementing my written report on external affairs.

We do well to reflect on the guidance of Holy Scripture for the life and mission of the Church. "...In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence." (1 Peter 3:15) These words of the Apostle are life-giving counsel for evangelism and mission. They are also core commandments for our relations with other Orthodox churches, other Christian bodies – indeed for our interaction with other religions and with society.

This New Testament word to us obviously illumines for us our witness to Christ. Witness to Christ is the calling of Orthodox Christians at all times and in all places. The priority for the Orthodox Church in America is evangelism and mission in North America. This means mission to Americans and Canadians and Mexicans. It also means ministry to ethnic communities in North America. All of this is captured in the Council theme of "how to expand the mission."

Father Alexander Schmemmann once observed that we are called to be truly Orthodox and truly American. Our American identity suggests that our Church brings something unique to the Orthodox table and the Orthodox discourse. Likewise, our Church aspires to witness to the Orthodox faith from within the North American experience, and not as a diaspora. While the texture of our church life includes the immigrant experiences of other cultures and languages, the mission of the Orthodox Church in America does not consist of representing these other cultures to America.

The ecclesial identity of the Orthodox Church in America constitutes what some in the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the USA call an “anomaly.” The other churches in the Assembly represent the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch, Moscow, Georgia, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The Orthodox Church in America, while not dependent on Orthodox patriarchates, affirms communion with them and strives to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). As members of the Assembly, the bishops of the Orthodox Church in America “give an account of the hope that is in them” for a united autocephalous Church in America, doing so with “gentleness and reverence.” This suggests that the real and persistent canonical anomaly in America is the multiplicity of Orthodox jurisdictions.

The stewardship of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon as primate of the Orthodox Church in America has been instrumental in slowly building and rebuilding constructive relations with Orthodox patriarchates and churches. It is worthwhile to identify the steps taken towards strengthening the bonds of unity and collaboration.

In December 2014 our Primate made his official visit to the Patriarchate of Moscow, during which the high point was the concelebration with Patriarch Kirill of the Divine Liturgy in the Uspensky Cathedral in the Kremlin. Upon returning to the United States Metropolitan Tikhon concelebrated the Liturgy with Patriarch John X of Antioch in Washington, DC. Before Christmas Metropolitan Tikhon traveled to Turkey to visit the Theological School of Halki on behalf of St. Vladimir’s Seminary; this visit included a meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul; this has opened possibilities for the resumption of dialogue with the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In April 2015 Metropolitan Tikhon participated in the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Yerevan and Etchmiadzin. From Armenia Metropolitan Tikhon traveled to Tbilisi for his official visit to the Patriarchate of Georgia, which included concelebration of the Divine Liturgy with Patriarch Ilya II of Georgia.

In May 2015 Metropolitan Tikhon participated in the Washington commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, at which the Supreme Catholicos of All Armenians presided, together with the Catholicos of Cilicia.

In June 2015 Metropolitan Tikhon participated in a visit of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the USA to the Ecumenical Patriarch at the Phanar in Istanbul.

At the end of July 2015 Metropolitan Tikhon will preside at a St. Vladimir's Seminary academic convocation for the presentation of an honorary doctorate to Patriarch John X of Antioch, and in September for the presentation of an honorary doctorate to Patriarch Irinej of Serbia.

The communion of our Church with sister churches has also been advanced by the participation of our hierarchs and other representatives in celebrations and events and pilgrimages in Constantinople, in Moscow and Kyiv and Minsk, in Beirut and Tirana, in Presov and Paris, in Romania, Poland, and Turkey.

The Orthodox Church in America in its Tomos of Autocephaly is given the mandate to be in communion with the global family of Orthodox Churches, in good relations with the Orthodox jurisdictions in North America, and to bear witness to the Orthodox faith in society. Our Church must not live in isolation.

There are not many who would dispute that it is necessary to maintain relations and communion with the Orthodox patriarchates and churches. Placing these relations in the framework of our calling to be truly Orthodox and truly American is a helpful way of understanding our identity in inter-Orthodox endeavors.

The gift and mission of being truly Orthodox and truly American extends to the engagement of our Church with other Christians and with ecumenical Christian organizations. There are some who do not readily make this connection. Yet the word of the Epistle of Peter to us surely applies to our encounter with all – Christian and non-Christian. Give an account of the hope that is in you with gentleness and reverence. We are not permitted to remain indifferent to fellow Christians, but are called to give an account of the hope that is in us. We are not at liberty to remain disinterested in people of other faiths. In our society they are our neighbors. We are called to give an account of the hope that is in us. This account of the hope that is in us must be given with gentleness and reverence – and not on in a spirit of arrogance and superiority.

In the history of our Church there are many who excel in giving an account of the hope that is in us. Two such persons have recently died in hope of the resurrection. Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko died in the Lord on March 18, 2015. Fr. Thomas was a priest and pastor, a lecturer and writer, a teacher and theologian. He made profoundly significant contributions to Orthodox theological reflection and Orthodox unity, and to ecumenical dialogue in the quest for Christian unity. Dr. Constance Tarasar died in the Lord on November 7, 2014. Connie was a teacher and educator, a theologian, lecturer, and writer. She made deeply meaningful contributions to Orthodox collaboration in education and to Orthodox engagement in ecumenical Christian collaboration. Both Fr. Hopko and Dr. Tarasar were articulate Orthodox voices and eloquent proponents of the vision of the Orthodox Church in America. To them we owe a debt of gratitude. May their memory be eternal!

In our care for Orthodox truth and in our concern for the life of the Church we often fall into joylessness. Yet, as Holy Scripture testifies, the proclamation of the Good News begins with joy and ends with joy. At the time of Christ's Nativity, the angel tells the shepherds "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people" (Luke 2:10). And after the Ascension of Christ, the Apostles "returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God" (Luke 24: 52-53).

The 19th century Russian mystic, St. Seraphim of Sarov, greeted all who came to him with the words "Christ is risen, my joy."

The witness of the Orthodox Church in America in the world will be credible and powerful and persuasive to the extent that we live and act in the joy of the Resurrection of Christ.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

18TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL PLENARY SESSION V THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2015

SESSION OPENING

The Fifth Plenary Session opened at 11:30 am with the singing of “*The Grace of the Holy Spirit.*” The Clergy-Vice Chair recognized the retired clergy of the OCA and Dr. Constantine Kallaur, as a member of the OCA delegation that received the Tomos of Autocephaly in 1970. Metropolitan Tikhon recognized Fr. Myron Manzuk for his many years of service as Council Manager at numerous All-American Councils, and presented him with an engraved pocket watch.

Fr. Peter Baktis, Clergy Vice-Chair
Judge E.R. Lanier, Lay Vice-Chair

ELECTION TO CHURCH-WIDE OFFICES

Fr. Timothy Hojnicky and Fr. David Lowell, Chairs of the Council Tellers and Council Nominations Committee, respectively, introduced the procedures for electing representatives to the Metropolitan Council and Pension Board. The clergy and lay nominees receiving the most votes is elected to the six-year term, the next highest to the three-year term, and the third highest as alternates. The nominees were announced:

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Clergy

Fr. Theodore Boback, Archdiocese of Washington
Fr. Thomas Moore, Diocese of the South
Fr. Elijah Mueller, Diocese of the Midwest
Fr. James Parnell, Diocese of New England
Fr. Antonio Perdomo, Diocese of the South

Lay

Mr. Larry Skvir
Mr. Michael Strelka
Mat. Katherine Vitko

PENSION BOARD

Clergy

Fr. Gleb McFatter
Fr. John Zdinak

Lay

Mat. Mary Buletza Breton

Mr. Barry Gluntz
Rdr. James Gordon
Mr. Michael Mezmar

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

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

17 Hierarchs (3 Guest Hierarchs)
204 Clergy Delegates
210 Lay Delegates
4 Retired Clergy
70 Observers
3 Guests
TOTAL: 508
VOTING COUNT: 428

RESOLUTION

The Lay-Vice Chair recognized Dr. Meyendorff who moved the following resolution, seconded by Mr. Nescott. The resolution passed by acclamation.

Whereas recent developments in the Middle East have caused great suffering to Christians in the area, leading to numerous deaths, desperate living conditions and mass movements of refugees;

We, gathered at the 18th All-American Council in Atlanta, GA, express our solidarity and support for all suffering people in the area, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we urgently call on our respective governments to take vigorous political and humanitarian initiatives to ensure their protection, the protection of all religious sites, and the survival of Christianity in the lands where it first took root.

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Romanian Episcopate

A video highlighting missionary efforts in the Episcopate was shown.

Diocese of the South

A video highlighting missionary efforts in the Diocese was shown.

Archdiocese of Washington

A video highlighting missionary efforts in the Archdiocese was shown.

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (IOCC)

Ms. Rada Tierney, IOCC Communications Manager, presented a video highlighting the efforts of IOCC to help people affected by the current crisis in Syria, and how crucial it is for IOCC to receive financial support to carry on those efforts.

MISSION SCHOOL

Fr. John Parker, Fr. David Rucker, and Fr. Eric Tosi, Instructors and Facilitator respectively of the Mission School, respectively, spoke about the first Mission School held at St. Andrew House in Detroit, MI from April 20-24, 2015. The Mission School stressed missiology and ecclesiology as fundamental to expanding the mission in the OCA. It was noted that the Mission School is funded by an endowment bequeathed to the OCA.

ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES

Protodeacon Peter Danilchick, Member of the Secretariat of the Assembly of Bishops, presented his personal report on six particular areas of interest: what the Assembly is about; who is doing what; progress toward unity; the major issues encountered; what is next; and, what the role of the OCA is and will be in the Assembly. Protodeacon Danilchick reported that there has been progress toward unity, but there is much more to be done. The OCA has consistently contributed to the work of the Assembly, participating in all committee work and Assembly meetings, and presenting a positive position on canonical restructuring. He suggested that clergy and faithful of the OCA can best help by working with other Orthodox Christians, and making the fervent desire for unity known to the bishops, as well as by praying for them.

Questions and Answers:

Fr. John Zdinak, St. Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH: In view of the newly adopted resolution of solidarity with suffering people in the Middle East and in response to the IOCC presentation, Fr. Zdinak requested a collection at this session to support IOCC in its efforts.

Answer: Metropolitan Tikhon blessed a collection to be taken immediately.

ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA: A SURVEY OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE CHURCH

Mr. Alexei Krindatch, Research Coordinator to the Assembly of Bishops, presented the results of a recent survey on generosity in US Orthodox parishes, to consider whether the OCA is ready to expand the mission. Mr. Krindatch examined the characteristics of OCA parishes that are important for parish vitality and compared OCA responses with those of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. His analysis also examined the major strengths and weaknesses of OCA parishes. Mr. Krindatch thanked everyone who participated in the survey.

Questions and Answers

Mr. Philip Maikkula, St. Stephen the Protomartyr Church, Longwood, FL inquired concerning possible bias in the demographic details of the survey?

Answer: Mr. Krindatch said that the survey was made available in multiple ways, including social media and email. While that could have skewed the age of respondents, it did not.

ELECTION RESULTS

Fr. Hojnicky announced the election results:

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

Clergy

Fr. Perdomo: Six-year term

Fr. Moore: Three-year term

Fr. Mueller: Alternate

Lay

Matushka Vitko: Six-year term

Mr. Skvir: Three-year term

Mr. Strelka: Alternate

PENSION BOARD

Clergy

Fr. McFatter: Six-year term

Fr. Zdinak: Three-year term

Lay

Matushka Buletza Breton: Six-year term

Mr. Gluntz: Three-year term

Mr. Mezmar: Alternate

FINAL ISSUES AND ADJOURNMENT

His Beatitude introduced The Most Reverend Dr. Foley Beach, Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in North America and The Reverend Canon Andrew Gross for Communications and Media Relations who were present at today's session.

His Beatitude announced that the collection for IOCC raised \$11,889.20, and presented the money to Ms. Tierney.

The Lay Vice-Chair adjourned the session at 1:41 pm, with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet."

18TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL PLENARY SESSION VI FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2015

SESSION OPENING

The Sixth Plenary Session opened at 9:44 am with the singing of “*The Grace of the Holy Spirit.*” Metropolitan Tikhon installed the new members of the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board who were elected during the Fifth Plenary Session. Archbishop Michael read a letter of greeting from His Eminence, the Most Reverend Leo, Archbishop of Karelia and All Finland. Archbishop Leo expressed the solidarity of the Church of Finland with the Orthodox Church in America, noting the many similarities in circumstances between the two Churches.

Fr. Peter Baktis, Clergy Vice-Chair
Judge E.R. Lanier, Lay Vice-Chair

RESOLUTIONS

The Lay Vice-Chair introduced Metropolitan Tikhon to speak about Resolution 2 on Spiritual Abuse, which Dr. McClure had presented at the Fourth Plenary Session. Metropolitan Tikhon reported that, after deliberation, the Holy Synod had acknowledged the question of spiritual abuse as a serious one, deserving serious attention, and would be studying the matter further. The resolution was therefore removed from consideration by the Council, but discussion was allowed. His Beatitude thanked those who drafted and prepared the resolution.

The Lay Vice-Chair noted that this action was taken by the Synod with the agreement of the presenters of the resolution.

Discussion

Fr. Edward Henderson, St. John the Baptist Church, Berkeley, CA, stated that the resolution had merit but was in need of development. He expressed a high level of trust in the bishops of the Church to pastorally respond to potential issues of spiritual abuse. He expressed concern regarding inappropriate or unfounded claims made against clergy.

Fr. David Lowell promoted the creation a Church-wide structure to help foster self- and peer-reflection and accountability.

Igumen Gerasim (Powers), Hermitage of Prophet Elias, Smoky Lake, AB, noted that the resolution incompletely addresses the problem of spiritual abuse of clergy by laity, and called for wider discussion on this crucial issue.

Igumen Christopher (Savage), Monks of New Skete, Cambridge, NY, noted that this is an issue that is real, not imagined, and larger in scope than financial or sexual abuse. He expressed gratitude to the Holy Synod for creating a respectful, honest, and safe environment for everyone.

Mr. Charles Warnke, St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX, expressed hope that ambiguous terminology in the current resolution would be addressed.

Fr. Paul Coats, St. Anthony Mission, Rock Hill, SC, shared Dr. Rossi's words in strong support of the resolution, and stated that spiritual abuse can lead to both financial and spiritual abuse—none of which should be tolerated in the OCA.

Deacon Justin Mitchell, St. Benoit de Nursie Church, Montreal, QC, suggested that district deans be invited to visit parishes with greater frequency, so that cases of abuse could be more readily identified, and that there be greater financial support for such visits.

Fr. Ignatius Gauvain warned that there are many problems with the resolution as written. Christ Himself could be accused of spiritual abuse by the guidelines of this resolution.

Ms. Nancy Conrad, St. Elizabeth Church, Poulsbo, WA, recalling past personal experience of spiritual abuse in her parish, forcefully emphasized the seriousness of the problem. She urged that the laity be made aware that they have an avenue of recourse, namely, the district dean.

Fr. John Reeves expressed thanks to the Holy Synod for the fact that, while they had tabled the resolution, it was not to bury the issue but to give it the careful consideration it needs. He urged that the Church become a safe environment so that neither clergy nor laity would experience spiritual abuse.

YOUTH PRESENTATION

Mr. Andrew Boyd pointed out the availability of funds for youth to attend various conferences, through the St. Peter the Aleut Grant Initiative. The younger children shared what they had learned about the American Saints during the AAC, while the older children shared their vision for the OCA. The youth sang hymns and presented Metropolitan Tikhon with artwork that they had made. His Beatitude commended the children for their faithfulness to Christ and the Church, and conveyed the seriousness with which he and the Holy Synod intend to consider their suggestions.

DIOCESAN REPORTS

Diocese of the West

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Benjamin, Archbishop of San Francisco and the West, reported on recent missionary efforts in the Diocese. He noted that most of the parishes reflect the ethnic composition of North America. Since finances are a major challenge to building churches in our society, the Diocese has developed the Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund (OCCIF). Archbishop Benjamin called on Fr. David Lowell to explain the program. Fr. Lowell stated that the program entails parishes loaning money to other parishes, much like in the Diocese of the South. OCCIF is incorporated as its own 501(c)3 allowing the program to expand beyond the Diocese. The hope is to move completely

away from normal banking systems, and become solvent enough to help all Orthodox churches, not only the OCA.

Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania

The Clergy Vice-Chair introduced a video highlighting the history of the Archdiocese and its recent missionary efforts.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

11 Hierarchs

162 Clergy Delegates

152 Lay Delegates

2 Retired Clergy

57 Observers

4 Guests

TOTAL: 388

VOTING COUNT: 325

MONASTERY REPORT

Archimandrite Sergius (Bowyer), Abbot of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Monastery, South Canaan, PA, presented highlights from the written report. Fr. Sergius noted that there has been great restoration at St. Tikhon's in the past four years. There are presently 15 monks. The mortgage of 1.4 million was paid down to 650,000. He stressed that for the national monastery church to have a mortgage is perilous. He remarked that Metropolitan Tikhon is a product of St. Tikhon's Monastery, having undergone a full monastic formation there. He noted that monastic vocations should not be discouraged. His Beatitude thanked Fr. Sergius for organizing and celebrating the weekday liturgies at the AAC. His Beatitude noted that monks are also attuned to concerns about spiritual abuse and health, and will play a vital role in future solutions.

Igumen Christopher noted there are clearly similarities between the two institutions. New Skete has always been a small community, but passionate about renewal. New Skete is grateful for the openness, support, and love of the OCA over the past 36 years.

Igumen Gerasim (Power), Hermitage of Prophet Elias, Smokey Lake, AB described the monastic experience in rural Canada and asked for everyone's prayers.

Hieromonk Innocent (Green), Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Manton, CA: There are 9 monastics in residence. The monastery hosts several retreats each year and noted that guests are welcome.

REPORTS OF THE SEMINARIES

ST. VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fr. Chad Hatfield, Chancellor of St. Vladimir's Seminary, presented highlights from the written report. Fr. Hatfield especially noted the importance of the SVS Press in expanding the mission. Fr. Hatfield asked that parishes honor the 1% resolution from the 16th All-American Council. Two recent alumni, Fr. Timothy Yates, St. Basil Mission, Wilmington, NC, and Mr. Harrison Russin, Observer, were called upon to speak about their experiences at the Seminary.

ST. TIKHON'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Fr. Steven Voytovich, Dean and Chief Operating Officer of St. Tikhon's Seminary, presented highlights from the written report, and again noted the importance of FOCA's contributions to provide married student housing at the Seminary. He noted the importance of having all the seminaries participate in the broader life of the Church. He requested that the Holy Synod consider reinstating the annual appeal.

Fr. Ignatius Gauvain, a recent graduate of St. Tikhon's rose and spoke about his experience at the Seminary.

ST. HERMAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A video was shown about the seminary's mission to foster all Alaskan clergy and lay leaders.

Archbishop Michael lauded the resiliency and important work done at the three seminaries even in difficult times. He spoke about the need to care for seminarians so that they may care for the faithful. He noted that our seminaries have provided leaders throughout the Orthodox world.

OFFICE OF HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

Mr. Alexis Liberovsky, OCA Archivist and Director of the Office of History and Archives, presented highlights from the written report and expressed gratitude to the Archives Advisory Committee whose work will assure the long term care of the OCA archives. Many parishes have rediscovered their histories through documents found in the OCA archives, which provides a firm foundation to expand the mission. Mr. Liberovsky stressed the importance of maintaining parish archives and collecting oral histories.

Archbishop Nathaniel: The Statute Revision Task Force and Commission on Canons and Statute heavily relied on Mr. Liberovsky's vast knowledge of OCA history and documents in the OCA Archives for their work, and could not have accomplished the Statute revision without him.

OPEN DISCUSSION

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

Fr. Edward Henderson noted the multiplicity of liturgical translations into English and requested the creation of two official translations, one using "You/Your" and the other "Thee/Thou".

Dr. David Drillock noted this is what is currently happening. Liturgical translations are posted on the OCA website as soon as they are completed.

Metropolitan Tikhon further noted that there is a current joint project between St. Tikhon's Monastery and St. Vladimir's Seminary to publish a uniform translation of the Psalter.

Fr. Joseph Woodill, St. Nicholas Church, Whitestone, NY thanked everyone who helped with the Council. The Church is an amazing gift.

Mr. Paul Fuentes, St. Christina Church, Fremont, CA encouraged all delegates to share their experiences from the Council.

Monk Ioann, Monastery of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Manton, CA agreed with what Fr. Innocent said earlier in the Monastery Report. Please send your prayer requests to the Monastery, and visit when you can.

Fr. Thomas Alessandroni, St. John the Wonderworker Church, Atlanta, GA thanked AAC participants for the generous contributions to the Loaves and Fishes Ministry, and to Metropolitan Tikhon for his visit to the parish. Please keep the parish in your prayers.

Fr. John Hopko, on behalf of the entire Hopko family, thanked everyone for the outpouring of love and affection for his family since the falling asleep of his father.

Fr. Robert Miclean noted that the youth put together an extraordinary vision, especially in regards to promoting the faith, first and foremost. He reiterated Archbishop Michael's statement that the Church is the future of the youth. More importance needs to be put on youth ministry at the local level.

Ms. Daria Piwinski, Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, NY opined that the issue of "You/Your" and "Thee/Thou" is somewhat minor. Theological terminology are more difficult to comprehend.

FINAL ISSUES AND ADJOURNMENT

Fr. Tosi noted an update on the contributions made to IOCC (\$12,283) and the Loaves and Fishes (\$4088). \$4000 was earned from the joint commemorative book with FOCA, providing seed money for the youth program at the 19th All-American Council.

The Lay Vice-Chair again thanked the Parliamentarian, Gloria Cofer. He declared the 18th AAC closed at 12:41 pm. The closing prayer service followed.