

THE TRISAGION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

The 21st All-American Council



Notes from the AAC

The 21st All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America was held from July 14-18 in sunny Phoenix, Arizona with over 600 attendees present at the main plenary sessions. As usual, the AAC featured a concurrently running youth program and many opportunities for corporate worship, the highlight of which was the serving of the vigil and liturgy services composed in honor of the newly-glorified St. Olga of Kwethluk. As at prior All-American Councils, delegates were asked to carry news of the gathering to the broader Church and act as the council's ambassadors. So, with that being said, I would like to convey some of the Metropolitan Tikhon's general messages to our church and then provide some of the most significant news from the council.

- Speaking spiritually, His Beatitude remarked that it was a truly wonderful thing that the Orthodox Church in America had been a leading voice in the reestablishment of the practice of frequent communion throughout the Orthodox world. However, he expressed concerns that communion was becoming increasingly unmoored from the sacrament of holy confession, in which we spiritually steady ourselves and refocus our hearts on Christ and his commandments. As such, he encourages all the faithful to practice confession on a monthly basis.
- His Beatitude also noted that the OCA was at the vanguard of bringing Orthodox worship into the English language in the 20th century, but he lamented the inconsistent and sometimes haphazard way in which

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Schedules

	COFFEE HOUR	GREETERS	TELLERS
Aug. 3	M. Leathers, L. Georgiou, D. Patel	M. Fedkin & K. Bazilevskaya	M. Fiori & B. Haupt
Aug. 10	H. Torbic, AT Pelikan, Mat. K. Oleynik	R. Patel & Mat. K. Oleynik	M. Fedkin & H. Torbic
Aug. 17	Russian Ladies Group B (Elena G.)	C. Pelllock & M. Leathers	K. Cattell & M. Stickers
Aug. 24	C. Swisher, T. Chambers, C. Pelllock	Chambers & A. Stickers	G. Cattell & M. Fiori
Aug. 31	Church Potluck – Church New Year	A. Stickers & R. Patel	M. Fedkin & B. Haupt

■ RECTOR'S DESK

All-American Council (con't)

translations have been done. Inconsistent translations often cause us to miss when the Church is using the same scripture verses in different contexts or various scriptural allusions, or when hymns or refrains are deliberately echoing or alluding to one another. While stopping short of calling for the immediate creation of a common "liturgical usage bible" or a centralized re-translation and harmonization project, His Beatitude seemed to signal that this is something the Church will have interest in in the medium-term future.

- Another point that His Beatitude emphasized in his opening address was that the OCA's roots are in Russian Orthodoxy, and it behooves us to have a better grasp of the history of the Russian Church and of her saints. He also lamented that very few of our clergy have the ability to understand texts or services in languages such as Slavonic, Greek, or Arabic, thus creating the risk that we become insular and inappropriately idiosyncratic.
- Yet another point that His Beatitude made was that our Church is seeing a large amount of interest, increased attendance, and conversion all across the country. However, to use his language, it is often challenging to "scale up" churches, and it takes a great deal of time and effort to establish and improve properties as houses of worship, and it also takes a long time to responsibly form priestly candidates.
- He also noted that many present-day inquirers seem to be unmoored from a sense of personal or communal identity and that many are initially drawn to the Church from a desire for depth of identity and a sense of belonging. While there is nothing inherently wrong with these desires, he noted, he also said that it is the responsibility of our parishes to help inquirers to turn a desire for identity or culture into a concrete desire for salvation in Christ.
- Along those lines, His Beatitude also noted that many inquirers in recent times have been deeply influenced by YouTube, podcasts, and all other manner of "online Orthodoxy." As such, some come with large amounts of somewhat skewed or off-kilter knowledge about the faith (a knowledge that is divorced from personal lived-experience and parish life). And it is the task of our clergy and parishes to help heal and amend peoples'

misconceptions as they approach and enter into the Orthodox faith.

In addition to these general messages from the Metropolitan, there were a number of important developments that occurred or were reported on at the AAC. Here are some highlights:

- At the first plenary session, Metropolitan Tikhon announced that the Serbian Orthodox Church had requested that the OCA recognize the legitimacy and autocephaly of the Church of Macedonia and return to a state of communion with them. His Beatitude announced that it was the decision of the Holy Synod to honor this request, and to recognize the Church of Macedonia as the newest autocephalous Orthodox Church. To solemnize and consummate this, His Beatitude is arranging for a liturgical concelebration with Archbishop Stefan of Ohrid, to take place in Washington, DC at an as-yet-undetermined future point.
- On the second day of the council, Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco announced his retirement from active ministry, and subsequently the Archdiocese of the West nominated and the Holy Synod elected Fr. Vasily Permiakov, a distinguished liturgical scholar presently working at St. Vladimir's Seminary in New York, to the episcopate. His consecration and enthronement as Bishop of San Francisco and the West will occur later this year.
- The OCA Pension Board announced that the clergy pension plan has made significant strides to returning to "fully funded" status in the last three years, with plan participation increasing 25% in that time. The current projection model of the Pension Board has the pension reaching full funding in the year 2037.
- St. Tikhon's Seminary in South Canaan announced multiple significant initiatives aimed at improving the quality of their programing, facilities, and student life, the most significant of which is the building of extensive married-student housing due to a very large gift from an anonymous donor.
- St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, NY announced that they have ended previous plans to relocate their seminary. In addition, they announced the creation of a

■ NEWS & NOTES

Akathist and Blessing of Fruit

On Wednesday, August 6 at 6 pm, we will serve a special Akathist to the patron saint of North America, Herman the Wonderworker of Alaska, one of whose feasts falls on August 9. Immediately following the Akathist, Father will bless baskets of fruit, as is customary on the Feast of Transfiguration. So please come out and bring your produce for a blessing. (Even vegetables are welcome!)

Adult Ed – St. Herman of Alaska

Following the blessing of fruit on August 6th, Subdeacon Herman Almasy, our parish intern, will present a talk on the life and deeds of Herman of Alaska, who is also his patron saint. St. Herman is the first canonized saint of the North American lands and he lived a striking life marked by missionary zeal, tender mercy toward the weak, and fearlessness in the face of persecution, disease, and natural disaster. As American Orthodox Christians, we ought to know his story. Come join us to learn more!

Annual Memorial – Fr. John Reeves

On Friday, August 22 at 6 pm, Fr. Alex Cadman will lead our parish in our annual memorial service for our beloved first pastor, Archpriest John Reeves. May his memory be eternal!

Congratulations – Adelaide Johnson

Congratulations to Cameron and Josie Johnson on the birth of their second child, daughter Adelaide Emilia Johnson, born on Saturday, July 19. May God grant their family many years!

Celebration of the Church New Year

The Orthodox ecclesial calendar is far closer to the typical American academic calendar than it is to our civil calendar. Join us after Coffee Hour on August 31 for a special Molieben service celebrating the grace of God as we prepare to begin the new Church year on September 1. From September 1 on we begin the cycle of telling the story of Jesus and the "salvation he has wrought in the midst of the earth" all over again.

Fr. Ignatius on Vacation

From August 16-30, Fr. Ignatius and his family will be taking some much-needed time away. During this period, please direct all pastoral requests to Pdn. Mark (814-380-6031, dnmark@holytrinity-oca.org).

OCF Paraklesis

Our OCF college ministry is greatly expanding its weekly opportunities for worship, fellowship, and fun this fall, and one of their main initiatives promises to be a blessing to the whole community. Starting on September 2 and running throughout the semester, the OCF will gather at the church at 6pm to sing the service of Paraklesis to the Mother of God. These student-led services will be open to all, and will offer the whole community another chance during the week to gather and pray. May it be blessed!

Youth Group Kick-Off Pool Party

Calling all 6th-12th graders! Come kick off the new school year with a pool party at the Chambers' home (250 Abington Ln., Port Matilda) on Saturday, August 10th from 4-8pm. The youth group will be providing vegan tacos, but they also ask that everyone bring something to share (make sure it's fast-friendly while we're observing the Dormition!) For details on how to sign up for a side dish or how to RSVP, please see or email Abby Swisher at aaswisher905@gmail.com.

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■ PATRISTICS

Transfiguration (con't)

the redeemer of Israel, as he had shown through the Prophets, and they should not be scandalized in him when they saw his voluntary sufferings, which as man he was about to suffer for us. For they knew him as a man, but did not know that he was God. They knew him as son of Mary, going about with them in the world, and he made known to them on the mountain that he was Son of God and God. They saw that he ate and drank, toiled and rested, dozed and slept, things which did not accord with his divine nature, but only with his humanity, and so he took them to the mountain that the Father might call him Son and show that he is truly his Son and that he is God.

He led them up the mountain and showed them his kingship before his passion, and his power before his death, and his glory before his disgrace, and his honor before his dishonor, so that, when he was arrested and crucified by the Jews, they might know that he was not crucified through weakness, but willingly by his good pleasure for the salvation of the world.

He led them up the mountain and showed the glory of his divinity before the resurrection, so that when he rose from the dead in the glory of his divine nature, they might know that it was not because of his harsh toil that he accepted glory, as if he lacked it, but it was his before the ages with the Father and together with the Father, as he said as he was coming to his voluntary passion, 'Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world existed'.

And so on the mountain he showed his Apostles the glory of his divinity, concealed and hidden by his humanity. For they saw his face bright as lightning and his garments white as light. They saw two suns; one in the sky, as usual, and one unusually; one visible in the firmament and lighting the world, and one, his face, visible to them alone. His garments white as light showed that the glory of his divinity flooded from his whole body, and his light shone from all his members. For his flesh did not shine with splendor from without, like Moses, but the glory of his divinity flooded from him. His light dawned and was drawn together in him. Nor did depart somewhere else and leave him, because it did come from another place and adorn him, nor was it for his use. And he did not display the whole

depth of his glory, but only as much as the limits of their eyes could encompass.

'And there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him'. And the words that they said to him were such as these: they were thanking him that their words and those of all their fellow Prophets had been fulfilled by his coming. They offered him worship for the salvation which he had wrought for the world for the human race; and that



he had fulfilled in reality the mystery they had only sketched. There was joy for the Prophets and the Apostles by this ascent of the mountain. The Prophets rejoiced when they saw his humanity, which they had not known. The Apostles also rejoiced when they saw the glory of his divinity, which they had not known, and heard the voice of the Father bearing witness to his Son; and through this they recognized his incarnation, which was concealed from them.

■ RECTOR'S DESK

All-American Council (con't)

new Ph.D. program in Orthodox studies, which they anticipate will be launched at the beginning of the 2027-2028 academic year.

- St. Tikhon's Monastery announced the successful creation of non-academic training programs in iconography and liturgical music, as well as the completion of a new iconography studio where future iconographers will train.
- The Department of Missions and Evangelism noted that they are temporarily pausing the Church Planting Grant program due to lack of applications. As the lack of

mission grant applicants is very out of phase with the present state of the Church, the department is undertaking a thorough review of the program's terms in order to reconstitute it with a more useful and desirable structure.

- Finally, it was noted that the next All-American Council is scheduled for 2028 in the city of Dallas, TX.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

-Fr. Ignatius

■ PATRISTICS

St. Ephraim On the Transfiguration

From the land comes the joy of harvest, from the vineyard fruits that give food, and from the Scriptures teaching that gives life. The land has one season for the harvest, and the vineyard has one season for the vintage, but the Scripture when read always overflows with teaching that gives life. The land when it has been harvested lies fallow and the vineyard when the grapes have been picked is unproductive, but when Scripture is harvested the grapes of those who expound it are not lacking in it. It is picked every day and the grape clusters of the hope in it are never exhausted. Let us then draw near to this land and enjoy its life-giving furrows; and let us harvest from it grapes of life, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said to his Disciples, 'There are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of man coming in his glory'.

'And after six days he took Simon Peter and James and John his brother to a very high mountain and he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white like light'. Men whom he said would not taste death until they saw the image of his coming, are those whom he took and led up the mountain and showed them how he was going to come on the last day in the glory of his divinity and in the body of his humanity.

He led them up the mountain to show them who the Son is and whose he is. Because when he asked them,

'Whom do men say the Son of man is?' They said to him, some Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. This is why he leads them up the mountain and shows them that he is not Elias, but the God of Elias; again, that he is not Jeremias, but the one who sanctified Jeremias in his mother's womb; not one of the Prophets, but the Lord of the Prophets, who also sent them. And he shows them that he is the maker of heaven and earth, and that he is Lord of living and dead. For he gave orders to heaven and brought down Elias, and made a sign to the earth and raised up Moses.

He led them up the mountain to show them that he is the Son of God, born from the Father before the ages and in the last times incarnate from the Virgin, as he knows how, born ineffably and without seed, preserving her virginity incorrupt; for wherever God wills it, the order of nature is overcome. For God the Word dwelt in the Virgin's womb, and the fire of his divinity did not consume the members of the Virgin's body, but protected them carefully by its nine month presence. He dwelt in the Virgin's womb, not abhorring the unpleasant smell of nature, and God incarnate came forth from her to save us.

He led them up the mountain to show them the glory of the godhead and to make known to them that he is

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