

Metropolitan Tikhon, OCA delegation return from celebrations commemorating St. Tikhon of Moscow

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and the members of the delegation of the Orthodox Church in America who had traveled to Moscow to participate in celebrations marking the 100th Anniversary of the Election and Enthronement of Saint Tikhon as Patriarch of Moscow and the Restoration of the Patriarchate returned to the US on Friday, December 9, 2017.

As reported earlier, His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow had extended invitations to the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches to participate in the celebrations and services marking the historic occasion.

Metropolitan Tikhon and the OCA delegation, which included His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa; Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk, Rector of Saint Tikhon of Moscow Church, Anchorage, AK; Melanie Ringa, OCA Treasurer; Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak; and Subdeacon Roman Ostash, arrived in Moscow on Friday, December 1. Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop Daniel and Father Daniel paid a introductory visit to the US Ambassador, His Excellency Jon M. Huntsman.

The following afternoon, Metropolitan Tikhon and delegation members attended a session of the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral. During the session, each of the Primates and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches in attendance addressed the assembly.

On Sunday morning, December 3, Metropolitan Tikhon presided at the Divine Liturgy at the Valaam Monastery Representation Church in Moscow, at which Bishop Daniel and the clergy members of the OCA delegation served. Also concelebrating were His Eminence, Metropolitan Paul of Khanty-Mansyisk and Surgut and His Eminence, Archbishop Justinian of Kalmykia and Elista. Following the Divine Liturgy, Igumen Joseph [Kryukov], a graduate of Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, hosted Metropolitan Tikhon and the delegation for a festive lunch with members and friends of the monastic community. In the evening, Metropolitan Tikhon attended a dinner honoring the Primates, hosted by Patriarch Kirill.

The highlight of the visit was the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at Christ the Savior Cathedral on Monday, December 4, at which His Beatitude, Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, presided as senior hierarch. The Primates and their representatives concelebrated. The relics of Saint Tikhon had been brought from the Donskoy Monastery, where they are

enshrined, to the cathedral for the Divine Liturgy. Later that evening, Metropolitan Tikhon and the other Primates attended an anniversary concert in the State Kremlin Palace and a dinner hosted by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin.

On Tuesday, December 5, Metropolitan Tikhon and the OCA delegation visited the Savvino-Starozhevsky Monastery in Zvenigorod and the recently restored New Jerusalem Monastery in Istra.

The following morning, December 6, Metropolitan Tikhon and delegation members had the rare opportunity to visit the room in which Saint Tikhon fell asleep in the Lord in 1925. At the time of his repose, the site was a medical clinic, although today it contains offices. They also visited the 14th century Monastery of the Conception of Saint Anna. In the afternoon, they met with Patriarch Kirill at the Patriarchal Residence in the Danilov Monastery. [See related story, gallery and video.] In the evening, Metropolitan Tikhon presided at the celebration of the Vigil for the patronal Feast of the OCA's Representation Church of the Great Martyr Catherine in Moscow.

On Thursday morning, December 7, the Feast of Saint Catherine, Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop Daniel and the OCA delegation celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Saint Catherine Church. Among the concelebrants were His Grace, Bishop John of Naro-Fominsk, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA; Archpriest Nicholas Kretchikov, District Dean; Archpriest Nicholas Balashov, Deputy Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; Archimandrite Feoktist [Dimitrov], Representative of the Church of Bulgaria to the Moscow Patriarchate; Archimandrite Seraphim [Shemiatovskiy], Representative of the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia to the Moscow Patriarchate; and the clergy of Saint Catherine Church and other local clergy. Established in 1992 with the appointment of Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak as the OCA's first Representative to the Moscow Patriarchate, the OCA Representation has been based at Saint Catherine Church since the mid-1990s. Also in attendance at the Divine Liturgy were His Excellency, John Kur, Ambassador of Canada and Her Excellency, Ms. Norma Pensado, Mexican Ambassador. Representing the US Embassy was Political Minister Counselor Christopher Robinson. A press release and photo gallery of the celebrations at Saint Catherine Church will be forthcoming.

A photo gallery is now available on the OCA web site and Facebook page.

Archpriest Alvian and Matushka Helen Smirensky

Archpriest Alvian and Helen Smirensky fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday morning, December 10, 2017, in adjoining beds at Albany Medical Center within hours of each other.

The Smirenskys had been married for 59 years, having met and married in New York City while she was attending Barnard College and he was attending Saint Vladimir's Seminary.

Father Alvian was born on May 11, 1929 in Harbin, China to Sophia and Nicholas Smirensky. He attended elementary school in Japanese-occupied Manchuria. With conflict increasing between Japan and China, he emigrated with his mother Sophia in September 1939, settling in San Francisco, CA. He graduated from Saint Ignatius High School in 1948 and later from the Merchant Marine Academy. He served as a naval officer in the Korean Conflict from 1951 until 1954 on the Destroyer USS John A. Bole. He retired from military service with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. After service in Korea, he moved to New York City to attend Saint Vladimir's Seminary from 1954 until 1957. He later completed a second master's degree at Saint Vladimir's. He was ordained to the priesthood by Metropolitan Leonty on September 13, 1958.

Father Alvian served in the US Naval Reserve as a chaplain and as a parish priest in a number of locations, including Saints Peter and Paul Church, Meriden, CT; Holy Resurrection Church, Wayne, NJ; Saint Basil Church, Maplewood, NY; Saint Nicholas Church, Cohoes, NY; and Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Albany, NY. After retiring from parish ministry, he was attached to Holy Wisdom Temple, New Skete Monastery, Cambridge, NY. He also served in State government, retiring in 1991 as Director of Information Services for the New York State and Local Retirement Systems.

Matushka Helen was born on November 3, 1933 in Prague, Czechoslovakia to Michael and Elizabeth Kefeli. She was predeceased by her sister, Lisa. She is survived by her brother, George Kefeli and his wife, Joan, of Thornville, OH, and their children Drew Kefeli and Natasha Lattin, as well as by her sister Lisa's children, David Springer of Austin, TX and Eric Springer [Lisa] of Melbourne, FL. Matushka Helen and her extended family lived in Prague through the German occupation and World War II. They left Prague prior to the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia and lived in a series of displaced persons camps in Germany until November 1949, when, with the sponsorship of the Tolstoy Foundation, she emigrated to the US with her family and settled in

Nyack, NY. She received an undergraduate degree from Barnard College in 1957, majoring in Russian Regional Studies. Later in life, after many years of working in libraries, she completed her Master of Library Science degree in 1985 at SUNY Albany's School of Library Science, where she was a member of the Beta Phi Mu International Library and Information Studies Honor Society. She was employed as a cataloger at SUNY Albany and retired as a senior librarian from the New York State Library in 1996. She served as the New York State Library's representative to the CONSER Operations Committee for a number of years. She also loved to read and knit afghans for family and friends and for sick and abused children. She knitted more than 160 afghans.

May Their memories be eternal!

Luke 14:16-24 (*Gospel*)

Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.' For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper."

Prophet Daniel Commemorated on [December 17](#)

The Holy Prophet Daniel is the fourth of the major prophets.

In the years following 600 B.C. Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, the Temple built by Solomon was destroyed, and many of the Israelite people were led away into the Babylonian Captivity. Among the captives were also the illustrious youths Daniel, Ananias, Azarias and Misael.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon ordered that they be instructed in the Chaldean language and wisdom, and dressed them in finery. Handsome children of princely lineage were often chosen to serve as pages in the palace. *Con't Page 9*

Prophet Daniel Con't

For three years, they would be fed from food from the king's table. After this they would be allowed to stand before his throne. Daniel was renamed Baltasar, Ananias was called Shadrach, Misael was called Mishach, and Azarias was known as Abednego. But they, cleaving to their faith, disdained the extravagance of court, refusing to defile themselves by eating from the king's table and drinking his wine. Instead, they lived on vegetables and water.

The Lord granted them wisdom, and to Saint Daniel the gift of insight and the interpretation of dreams. The holy Prophet Daniel preserved his faith in the one God and trusted in His almighty help. He surpassed all the Chaldean astrologers and sorcerers in his wisdom, and was made a confidant to King Nebuchadnezzar.

Once, Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream which terrified him (Daniel 2:1-6). He summoned magicians, sorcerers, and Chaldeans before him to interpret the dream. When they asked him what he had dreamt, the king refused to tell them. He said, "If you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins." The Babylonian wise men protested that no magician or sorcerer could be expected to do this. Only the gods could reveal the dream and its meaning, they told him.

The king ordered all the wise men of Babylon to be executed. When they sought Daniel and his companions to put them to death, Daniel asked that the king's sentence not be carried out. He said that he could tell the king what he dreamt, for it had been revealed to him in a vision. Daniel was brought before the king and was able to reveal not only the content of the dream, but also its prophetic significance. After this, the king elevated Daniel to be ruler of the whole province of Babylon, and the chief of all the wise men.

During these times King Nebuchadnezzar ordered a huge statue to be made in his likeness. It was decreed that when people heard the sound of trumpets and other instruments, they should fall down and worship the golden idol. Because they refused to do this, the three holy youths Ananias, Azarias and Misael were cast into a fiery furnace. The flames shot out over the furnace forty-nine cubits, felling the Chaldeans standing about, but the holy youths walked in the midst of the flames, offering prayer and psalmody to the Lord (Daniel 3:26-90). The Angel of the Lord appeared in the furnace and cooled the flames, and the young men remained unharmed. This "Angel of Great Counsel," as he is called in iconography, is identified with the Son of God (Daniel 3:25, Isaiah 9:6). In the first

Canon for the Nativity of the Lord (Ode 5), the Church sings: "Thou hast sent us Thine Angel of Great Counsel." The emperor, upon seeing this, commanded them to come out, and was converted to the true God.

Under King Baltasar, Saint Daniel interpreted a mysterious inscription ("Mane, Thekel, Phares"), which had appeared on the wall of the palace during a banquet (Daniel 5:1-31), foretelling the downfall of the Babylonian kingdom. Under the Persian emperor Darius, Saint Daniel was slandered by his enemies, and was thrown into a den with hungry lions, but they did not touch him, and he was not harmed. The emperor Darius then rejoiced over Daniel and ordered people throughout his realm to worship the God of Daniel, "since He is the living and eternal God, and His Kingdom shall not be destroyed, and His dominion is forever" (Daniel 6:26).

The holy Prophet Daniel grieved deeply for his people, who then were undergoing righteous chastisement for a multitude of sins and offenses, for transgressing the laws of God, resulting in the grievous Babylonian Captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem: "My God, incline Thine ear and hearken; open Thine eyes and look upon our desolation and that of Thy city, in which Thy Name is spoken; for we do not make our supplication before Thee because of our own righteousness, but because of Thy great mercy" (Dan 9:18). Because of Daniel's righteous life and his prayers for the people's iniquity, the destiny of the nation of Israel and the fate of all the world was revealed to the holy prophet.

While interpreting the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, the holy, glorious Prophet Daniel spoke of a great and final kingdom, the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (Dan 2:44). The prophetic vision about the seventy weeks (Dan 9:24-27) speaks about the signs of the First and the Second Comings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is connected with those events (Daniel 12:1-12).

Saint Daniel interceded for his people before King Cyrus, who esteemed him highly, and who decreed freedom for the Israelite people. Daniel himself and his fellows Ananias, Azarias and Misael, all survived into old age, but died in captivity. According to the testimony of Saint Cyril of Alexandria (June 9), Saints Ananias, Azarias and Misael were beheaded on orders of the Persian emperor Chambyses.

Saint Daniel and the three holy youths are also commemorated on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, and on the Sunday of the Holy Fathers (Sunday before the Nativity).



Holy Youth Ananias
Commemorated on [December 17](#)

The Holy Youth Ananias (“God is gracious”) was a companion of the Holy Prophet Daniel. He was chosen to serve in the king’s palace with Daniel, Azarias, and Mishael (Daniel 1:6), who were all from the tribe of Judah. They gave Ananias the Chaldean name Shadrach (“royal”). They were thrown into a fiery furnace when they refused to worship the golden idol set up by King Nebuchadnezzar, but the angel of the Lord preserved them (Daniel 3:25).

The Seventh and Eighth Odes of the nine Biblical Odes at the back of the Psalter are taken from The Song of the Three Holy Youths (found in the Septuagint text of the Old Testament used by the Orthodox Church).

The Three Holy Youths and the Prophet Daniel are also commemorated on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers and the Sunday of the Holy Fathers.

Holy Youth Azarias
Commemorated on [December 17](#)

The Holy Youth Azarias (“whom God helps”) was a companion of the Holy Prophet Daniel. He was chosen to serve in the king’s palace with Daniel, Ananias, and Mishael (Daniel 1:6), who were all from the tribe of Judah. They gave Azarias the Chaldean name Abednego (“servant of Nego”). They were thrown into a fiery furnace when they refused to worship the golden idol set up by King Nebuchadnezzar, but the angel of the Lord preserved them (Daniel 3:25).

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The Three Holy Youths and the Prophet Daniel are also commemorated on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers and the Sunday of the Holy Fathers.

POSITIONS ON THE BOARD

The following positions are:

President: Matt Adamcio Secretary: Bobbie
V.P.: Roddie Mazurik Treasurer: Laura
Trustee: Fred Cassell

Anyone interested in running for any one of these offices please see Fr. Andrew. A simple background check must be done before you can hold an office.

Holy Youth Misael
Commemorated on [December 17](#)

The Holy Youth Misael (“Who is what God is?”) was a companion of the Holy Prophet Daniel. He was chosen to serve in the king’s palace with Daniel, Azarias, and Ananias (Daniel 1:6), who were all from the tribe of Judah. They gave Misael the Chaldean name Meshach (“guest”). They were thrown into a fiery furnace when they refused to worship the golden idol set up by King Nebuchadnezzar, but the angel of the Lord preserved them (Daniel 3:25).

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Christ the Savior parish faithful serve Thanksgiving Dinner in Chicago’s Little Village

For the fifth year, Archpriest John Baker and the faithful of [Christ the Savior Church](#) here provided Thanksgiving dinner to the needy in Chicago’s Little Village neighborhood.

“Each year our Little Village Thanksgiving dinner has grown and changed in different ways,” said Eddie Bocanegra, one of the dinner’s organizers. “With Father John’s blessing and the approval of our parish council, we continued our partnership with Padres Angeles (Parent Angels), a local group of mothers that supports families impacted by community violence, in addition to Father Tom Boharic, a local Catholic priest.”

This year, Christ the Savior parish expanded its partnership with Kolbe House, a ministry based at Assumption Catholic Church that supports inmates at Cook County Jail and families of the incarcerated living in Chicago.

“Not including volunteers, we served meals to 127 people; 100% of the families who attended had either lost a child to violence or have a loved one incarcerated,” Eddie explained. “Even though the event this year was smaller than in previous years, we reached a group of people who often feel isolated and deeply depressed during the holiday season and frequently scorned by the rest of society.” The meal connected people and created a sense of community.

“For many, this is the only Thanksgiving meal they eat,” Eddie continued. “The professionalism and humble servitude of the volunteers made a deep impression on the attendees and our local partners. We learned a lot in coordinating the event this year and are always interested in learning how we can improve for future years.”

[A photo gallery may be viewed on the parish web site.](#)