

Assembly of Bishops Convened Digitally, Declares “2021 the Year of the Youth”

A strong majority, thirty-eight, of the fifty-one canonical [Orthodox Bishops in the United States of America](#) began their two-day meeting today to discuss Orthodox Christian Unity in the country. [The meeting](#), which took place online due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, was the first since the transition of the chairmanship to Archbishop Elpidophoros.

In his opening remarks, The Archbishop stated, “we have all faced tremendous trials and tribulations, but we do so in the joy of the Holy Spirit, Who is the root of our authority and the fruit of our labors on behalf of the People of God ... we are the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the USA, Hierarchs who represent disparate communities, but One People of God. Our oneness is a gift, a blessing that is not ours to refuse. There is so much that we can do together for the sake of all our faithful.” Read the full address [here](#).

Furthermore, the august body adopted the 2021 budget, re-elected Metropolitan Gregory as Secretary and Archbishop Michael as Treasurer, and passed a number of motions set forth by the Executive Committee, the Committee for Agencies and Commissions, Affiliated Ministries and Associations, and the Committee for Youth. More detailed information pertaining to said motions will soon be released.

Finally, recognizing the youth as the future of the Church, the Assembly of Bishops declared 2021 the Year of the Youth. A number of initiatives are expected to be launched that will bring together Orthodox Youth from across the nation.

NOVEMBER CANDLE AND BULLETIN SPONSORS

Bulletin: (\$50) From Father Andrew in memory of his mother, Dorothy

Chandelier: (\$50) From Father Andrew in memory of my grandmother, Mary Billy and all my relatives reposed in the month of November.

Altar Candles: (\$50) From Basil in memory of his sister Marion

Candles on the Tomb: (\$25)

Eternal Light & Icon Screen: (25) Open

Birthday greetings of Metropolitan Tikhon to Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria

Your Holiness, Dear Brother and Concelebrant in the Lord’s Mysteries,

I write to Your Holiness today to congratulate you on the joyous occasion of your 75th birthday. May this special occasion be filled with festive joy and sincere thanksgiving to our Lord Jesus Christ, the “shepherd and bishop of (our) souls,” who has chosen you to serve as the leading shepherd of His flock in the Bulgarian lands (1 Peter 2:25). Many years, Your Holiness!

Indeed, when considering the ministry of bishops, one must consider Christ’s example of shepherd leadership. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls out to us, proclaiming the truth about His Father and Himself, and we are free to heed His voice or not. He does not force, He does not strike, but rather freely lays down His life out of His immeasurable love for us, so that we too “may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Dear brother, we have seen this Christ-like love shine forth in you, when we behold the loving pastoral manner in which you tend to your flock, and in the fraternal manner in which you approach the local Orthodox churches everywhere. Our only prayer is that your love may increase more and more!

With fraternal intercessions on behalf of you and your flock, I remain

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

OTHER INCOME FROM SEPTEMBER

Sunday, October 4: \$32 Candles; \$50 Altar Candles; \$75 Vigils; \$50 Bulletin \$100 No Festival

Sunday, October 11: \$37 Candles; \$50 altar candles; \$130 Vigils; \$250 Oct. Sp. Collection; \$100 Sept. Sp. Collection

Sunday, October 18: \$52 candles; \$110 Icon Screen & Eternal light; \$25 food Pantry; \$25 Sp. Collection Sept

Vocation as a Church-wide endeavor

In *Of What Life Do We Speak?*, His Beatitude [Metropolitan Tikhon](#) speaks of vocation as part of the first of the four pillars for the fulfillment of the apostolic work of the Church. He notes that “The pastoral ministry of our clergy has been made more difficult by the many burdens and requirements placed upon them by the changing realities of the world.” In this awareness, our seminaries strive to train and form our future leaders providing excellent education that enables them to face these changing realities.

Taking a step back, however, reveals that the Church is facing today a major challenge commonly referred to as a priest shortage. The Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, with the blessing of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, directed the members of his Office to investigate the current state of affairs in our parishes and analyze data across all the Dioceses. The data itself has been drawn from diocesan reports, which Dioceses prepare and submit annually for the regular Spring Session of the Holy Synod. The results not only reflect the current situation, but also provide insights into what lies ahead in the coming years.

The unit of analysis was active priests for 2020, that is priests who are currently in charge of parishes serving as priests-in-charge, acting rectors, or rectors. The number of priests currently in charge of parishes in the Orthodox Church in America is 640. The priests were subdivided into six age groups. What is immediately noticeable is that a total of 191 priests (156+35) are presently serving in post-retirement age. This number represents 30% of all priests.

Another noteworthy data point is the number of priests who are drawing close to retirement age, age group 55-64. The total number of priests serving in that age group and that will enter retirement age in 5-10 years is 148, or 23% of the entire number of active priests. Meanwhile, we note that priests below the age of 44 are only 141, that is 22% of the total number.

There are currently 36 Master of Divinity students from the Orthodox Church in America enrolled at Saint Vladimir’s and Saint Tikhon’s Seminaries, and who will graduate over the next three years. That is an average of 12 potential priests per year.

This rate is, therefore, insufficiently meeting the urgent priest shortage the Church is already experiencing today. If the enrollment at our seminaries remains steady, over the next 5-10 years, when the 164 priests in the age group 55-64 currently serving will enter retirement age, another 40+ parishes across the Orthodox Church in America will not have a full-time parish priest. Additionally, the Church will lack priests that can be sent out to the many areas in the United States and Canada where there is presently no Orthodox presence.

The data presented show a concerning reality that demands urgent response. Some of the Dioceses have already been experiencing challenges in their ability to fill vacancies in parishes. In some parts of the country, priests are called to serve even two or multiple communities. Our parishes are in need of parish priests who shepherd, teach, preach, comfort, counsel, and serve our communities across North America. Our parishes, the Church at large, the country we live in and its people, are in need of good, competent, and well-trained priests to serve and preach the Good News of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Yet, priests are not only needed to fill vacancies already existing, as well as those which will occur as more senior priests retire. Priests are needed to fulfill the mission of the Orthodox Church in America “to be faithful in fulfilling the commandment of Christ to ‘Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...’”

[Recent statistics commissioned by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops](#) highlight that vast and numerous areas of the United States have few or no Orthodox parishes. In *Of What Life Do We Speak?*, Metropolitan Tikhon calls our attention to the broad responsibility in the mission of the Church, indicating that, “What is called for is a Church-wide endeavor, involving every parish, institution, and individual of the Orthodox Church in America.”

The responsibility to encourage and inspire vocation is not limited to a segment of the Church population. Rather, it is every member of the Orthodox Church in America *Con’t Pg 11*

Vocation Con't

who is called to contribute to the mission of the Church so that our merciful God can continue to raise worthy candidates to the priestly ministry.

Father John Parker, Dean of Saint Tikhon's Seminary, said the following, "We have come to a time to ask an important question, adapted for the Church, raised by John F. Kennedy, in his 1961 Inaugural Address. His words made an indelible mark on the American mind: 'My fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.' It is also time for us Orthodox Christians in America to ask not what the Holy Church can do for you, but what you can do, in offering yourself as a living sacrifice to the Lord, to serve as a priest, and to preach Christ crucified and raised from the dead."

The crisis regarding an upcoming shortage of priests is apparent and can be reasonably inferred from the data. At the same time, however, the Church urgently needs to see to the raising up of choir directors, leaders in religious education, and theologically educated men and women who can serve the Church in a variety of ways. In like manner, it is a Church-wide endeavour to inspire monastic vocation and support monastic communities where, as Metropolitan Tikhon points out, we find a model of relation between inner life, communal worship and work, and surrounding environment. The focus in this article has only been on priestly formation, but the fostering of these other vocations is also important.

All the faithful and parishes of the Orthodox Church in America are encouraged to intentionally pray for vocation and support seminarians and their families. It is also critical to support our three OCA seminaries as they continue to provide excellent education and formation to the new Church leaders. On the note, parishes are called to meet the resolution approved at the [16th All-American Council](#) in Seattle and support seminaries with 1% of their budget.

If you are interested in supporting our seminaries, exploring seminary vocation, and learn about theological formation, please contact: [St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary](#): Fr. John Parker, Dean at info@stots.edu

[St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary](#): Alexandru Popovici, *Academic & Recruitment Advisor* at alpopovici@svots.edu
[St. Herman Theological Seminary](#): office@sthermanseminary.org

Martyr Marcian and Martyrius the Notaries, of Constantinople

Commemorated on [October 25](#)

The Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius, Notaries of Constantinople served in a Constantinople cathedral. Marcian was a reader and Martyrius a subdeacon. They both performed in the capacity of notaries, i.e. secretaries, for Patriarch Paul the Confessor (November 6).

Arian heretics expelled and secretly executed the righteous Patriarch Paul. His throne was given to the heretic Macedonius. The heretics attempted to entice Saints Marcian and Martyrius over to their side by flattery. They offered them gold and promised to consecrate them as archbishops, but all the efforts of the Arians were in vain.

Then the impious threatened to slander them before the emperor, and sought to intimidate them with torture and death. But the saints steadfastly confessed Orthodoxy, as handed down by the Fathers of the Church. Marcian and Martyrius were sentenced to death. Before death, the martyrs prayed, "Lord God, Who has invisibly created our hearts, and directed all our deeds, accept with peace the souls of Your servants, since we perish for You and are considered as sheep for the slaughter (Ps 32/33:15; 43/44:22). We rejoice that by such a death we shall depart this life for Your Name. Grant us to be partakers of life eternal with You, the Source of life." After their prayer the martyrs, with quiet rejoicing, bent their necks beneath the sword of the impious (+ ca. 335).

Their holy bodies were reverently buried by Orthodox Christians. Later, by decree of Saint John Chrysostom, the relics of the holy martyrs were transferred to a church built in their honor. Believers here were healed of many infirmities through the prayers of the saints, to the glory of the One Life-Creating Trinity.

UPDATE ON INCOME & EXPENSES

		Year to date
January		
Income	\$9,758	
Expenses	\$9,992	
TOTAL	-\$234	-\$234
February		
Income	\$4,528	
Expenses	\$9,647	
TOTAL	-\$5,119	-\$5,353
March		
Income	\$4,868	
Expenses	\$7,614	
TOTAL	-\$2,746	-\$8,099
April		
Income	\$10,172	
Expenses	\$9,527	
TOTAL	\$645	-\$7,454
May		
Income	\$5,299	
Expenses	\$5,831	
TOTAL	-\$532	-\$7,986
June		
Income	\$6,050	
Expenses	\$4,028	
TOTAL	\$2,022	-\$5,964
July		
Income	\$6,789	
Expenses	\$9,290	
TOTAL	-\$2,501	-\$8,465
August		
Income	\$7,388	
Expenses	\$7,220	
TOTAL:	\$168	-8,297
September		
Income:	\$7,904	
Expenses:	\$7,100	
Total:	\$804	-\$7,493

Vacancy at Saint Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH Announced

A pastoral vacancy at Saint Theodosius Cathedral, Cleveland, OH was announced recently by His Eminence, Archbishop Paul of Chicago and the Midwest, Orthodox Church in America. The office of Cathedral Dean is vacant, effective immediately.

Galatians 1:11-19 (Epistle)

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

SUGGESTIONS NEEDED FOR 2021 FUNDRAISERS

The Council meet this past week. Among other things, discussed was what do we do if we cannot hold the Halupki Festival in 2021. What alternate plan should we have in case that occurs? It doesn't mean the plan would be used but having something in case to fall back on would be wise.

What can we do?

- Think outside the box.
- Be flexible.
- Bake at home instead of at the church. All parishioners bake / prepare something to donate to sell.
- Hold a drive-thru event. Quite a few churches have done this quite successfully.
- Begin preparing NOW. Don't wait until May or June 2021 to "see what will happen."
- Plan for 2021 Spring Bake Sale and Pierogi Sale and Christmas Bake Sale NOW.
- Think / say / believe "*How can we do this? Let's do this!*" NOT "*That's not how we do it here.*"

The "No Halupki Festival Campaign" raised \$13,500 of a \$16,000 goal. That's 84% of the goal! Pretty darn good! However, that was a "one time" Campaign.

If anyone has any ideas, please contact me or any officer.

Luke 16:19-31 (*Gospel*)

There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

59TH DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

The 59th Diocesan Assembly of the Midwest was held on October 8th beginning at 5 pm CST with prayer. The online meeting brought together over 100 clergy and faithful from all over the diocese. Given the current circumstances, the usual three-day assembly was abbreviated into one meeting held on Thursday evening. Although the format of this year's assembly was much different from years past, the same reports and business were able to be conducted.

In his report, Archbishop Paul began with an encouraging message to "forge on." "We forge on," he explained, "comes from Fr. Thomas Hopko. He often used those words while I was at Seminary. They are the best words I can think of to describe our life in the Diocese at this annual assembly."

Archbishop Paul went on to report on various other aspects of diocesan life, and commended the diocese's resolve to find ways to make things work. The Archbishop resumed parish visits in July of this year. "Resuming these visits," he said, "has been very uplifting to me. To get direct feedback from people whether I want to hear it or not has been wonderful."

During the two-hour online meeting, other topics addressed included plans to develop parish music, youth, and charitable ministries, among others. Of special note was the Archbishop's presentation of the possibility to reopen the monastic community in Marshfield, MO, thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous donor. "I have met extensively with Mother Alexandra (Magan) and vetted her before blessing her to go to Marshfield and continue a monastic witness," reported the Archbishop. "I have always believed that we can't be healthy as a Diocese without having monasteries to support us through prayer, worship, work, and hospitality that monasteries offer."

Other reports came from the office of the Chancellor, Deaneries, Metropolitan Council, Treasury, and various other ministries of the diocese. These reports are available on the assembly web page. A progress report was given on recent renovation work of the new Diocesan Center in Burbank. The report featured before and after pictures and proposals for more upgrades in the upcoming year.

The assembly, the clergy and faithful moved and passed a motion to open the monastery in Marshfield. The monastic community will be directly under the diocese. The costs associated with reopening the monastery will be covered by the anonymous donation; so, with the assembly's vote in favor of the motion, the way is now clear for the process of reopening the monastery to begin.

The meeting concluded with the Archbishop expressing his gratitude for all the delegates meeting in this compacity and then offered a prayer to the Mother of God. For further information or reports on diocesan life, please visit; domoca.org.

Diocese of the Midwest Seminarian Ordained to the Priesthood

On the 19th Sunday after Pentecost, and the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, Reverend Deacon Matthew McDonald was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. His Grace Bishop Alexis of Baltimore ordained Fr. Matthew on behalf of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon at the monastery church of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk. Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon Monastery and Archpriest John Parker, Dean of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary were among those who also served at the service. Following the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Alexis offered words of encouragement and guidance to the newly ordained priest of the Church.

Fr. Matthew is completing his final year of seminary at St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary as a seminarian of the Diocese of the Midwest. Upon completion of his studies, Fr. Matthew and his family will return to the diocese and wait for assignment from His Eminence Archbishop Paul.

Matthew was born in 1981 in San Jose, CA. He was raised attending mostly Baptist and Pentecostal churches. He first encountered the Orthodox faith in college, when he was brought by a friend to a Vespers service. He did not begin attending the Church at that time, but a year later began to become more fixated on the idea of a historical Christianity. This led him to St. Thomas,

Springfield, MO, and he began attending at that time. After he was married, both he and his wife were baptized and chrismated in 2005 by Fr. Andrew Moore. Matthew and his wife, Christine, have three children.

Axios! and may God grant Priest Matthew and his family many years.



Please join me in welcoming our new parishioners! We're happy you're here!

Jake Muscaro Peter Hritsko
Judy Hritsko

Next Spring:

Theodore, Stacy, Sophia, Emmanuel,
Stephanos & Eleni Loizos

FOCUS NORTH AMERICA

We all have routines. They make our life manageable and somewhat predictable. From sunrise to sundown, many hours of daily life are scheduled. But this year, things have changed. We have all been affected by workplace reorganization, shopping restrictions, social distancing, and limited access to our places of worship. Kids are attending school on alternating schedules. After school programs are widely canceled. Our neighbors stand a bit further apart and we rarely have the opportunity to shake hands or smile without creasing our face masks. 2020 seems to be the year of erased routines.

However, these disruptions help us remember the special moments in our lives that occur whether we plan for them or not. Our routines have changed, but every day we still have opportunities to reach out to friends, loved ones, and strangers. We are still called to do the work of helping our communities grow stronger in love.

The men and women of the FOCUS community wake up each day with the hope and promise of helping their most needful neighbors. Their schedules are driven by when they can assist another person and their routines are often interrupted by chance encounters. Thoughts, deeds, actions and emerging needs guide what they do and how they act to touch human lives every moment of each day.

Every Member of FOCUS North America's community is blessed to do the jobs that we do from organizing mailers and writing letters to building raised beds for community gardens and sharing meals with those who might not have anything in their pantries at home. We are blessed because people like you (Churches like you) are taking action in your own communities. Extraordinary things can happen by keeping a little extra room in our routines for God's divine love. God is present with us in every moment and it's our job to see it, to embrace Him, and to take action whenever and however we can.

Your brother in Christ,

Kenneth Kidd, Executive Director.

For more information: www.focusna.org