

Remarks of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon to His Holiness Patriarch Krill
Friday, December 6, 2019

Once again, I congratulate Your Holiness as you continue to celebrate this year the successful completion of 10 years of Primatial ministry and offer my personal prayers for many more years of such steadfast service to Jesus Christ, to the Russian Orthodox Church, and to world Orthodoxy. You labor under the burden of many pressures and I would like to assure you of my personal prayers, as well as the fraternal support of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America.

I also join Your Holiness in remembering your predecessor, Patriarch Alexei II, of blessed memory, whose 11th anniversary of falling asleep was marked yesterday by the entire Russian Orthodox Church and the universal Church. His Holiness was a good friend of the Orthodox Church in America and his visits are remembered with fondness, especially by the current primate who, as a young novice, greeted His Holiness with flowers during his visit to the Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk. May his soul dwell with the blessed and may his memory be eternal.

It was a joy to be welcomed yesterday at the airport by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, the Director of the Department of External Church Relations, and to have the opportunity to converse so soon after his recent visit in October to the United States, where I was pleased to welcome him at the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America. We discussed a number of matters, including our satisfaction with the clergy exchange undertaken through the Sts Cyril and Methodius Institute and our intentions to continue this fruitful work. I look forward to my visit to his Church, dedicated to the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow for Vigil tomorrow evening.

We were also pleased to meet this morning with, His Eminence, Metropolitan Dionysii of Voskresensky, First Vicar to Your Holiness and Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate. It was instructive to hear of the many efforts undertaken by Your Holiness with respect to the founding and building of new Churches throughout Russia and within the city of Moscow to better minister to the needs of the faithful.

Our delegation is grateful to be accompanied during this visit by His Grace, Bishop Clement of Krasnoslobodsky and Temnikovskiy, who has proven to be a most gracious guide, as he was to me during my visit in the year 2013 for the commemoration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'.

The primary purpose of our visit is, of course, the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Church of Saint Catherine-in-the-Fields as the Representation Church of the Orthodox Church in America to the Russian Orthodox Church. This occasion is made most joyous by the participation in these events of two Daniels: Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak, who served as the first Dean and Representative of St Catherine's but also has additionally served honorably as Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, and Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk, the most recently appointed Dean and Representative, who has been laboring diligently, not only in preparation for this celebration, but in overseeing the work of restoration of St Catherine's.

We are grateful to the intercessions of Your Holiness in that work of restoration and for the generous support of the City and Municipality of Moscow. I have reminded Fr. Daniel of the importance of working on this project in close collaboration with the Department of External Church Relations and others, such as Protopresbyter Leonid Kallinin of the Department of Restoration, in whose church I am honored to celebrate this coming Sunday, with the blessing of Your Holiness.

I am appreciative of the blessing of Your Holiness to offer a symposium at Moscow's Diocesan House at the University of St Tikhon as part of my visit this week and to offer a few brief words about the state of the Orthodox Church in America and my vision for its apostolic witness. Our Holy Synod, at its most recent meeting, elected two bishops, one as a auxiliary to myself, and the other as auxiliary to His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel, of the Romanian Episcopate of the Orthodox Church in America. That bishop-elect Archimandrite Andrei, is part of our delegation and will offer a response to my presentation, along with a response from Igumen Joseph of the Valaam podvorie here in Moscow.

As we look forward to the coming year, I am pleased to announce to Your Holiness that the Orthodox Church in America has initiated a number of events by which we hope to mark the historical and visionary action of the Russian Orthodox Church when she granted the Tomos of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America in 1970. Next year, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of that momentous event, as well as the 50th anniversary of one of the first formal acts of the newly established Orthodox Church in America: the glorification of the Venerable Herman of Spruce Island as the first saint of North America.

Since receiving the gift of autocephaly the Orthodox Church in America has continued to hold firm the faith of the Apostles, the faith of the Fathers, the faith of the Orthodox, the faith that makes fast the inhabited world. In our churches, chapels, monasteries, seminaries, institutions, and homes throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico, our communities give glory, honor, and worship to the one God and Father, to our Holy Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Synod oversees Church life, ministering to the flock entrusted to it by the grace of God, with all canonical order and in fidelity to the tradition of the Church. At every level of ecclesial experience, our Church seeks to resolve its internal problems in a conciliar manner with the fullness of the Church according to the tradition it has received.

The Orthodox Church in America gives thanks to God for the great blessings He has given us, and also to the communion he has allowed us to maintain through our common faith with the other local Orthodox Churches. There are a multitude of local diocesan and deanery events that are being planned, as well as three major Church-wide events to be held at the Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk in May, on Spruce Island in Alaska in August, and at the Primatial Cathedral of St Nicholas in November. I look forward to speaking with Your Holiness about the ways in which Your Holiness and the Russian Orthodox might participate with us in these celebrations, which will be a further witness to our good relations.

I pray that this week's celebration will be full of joy and full of the hope that comes from our fraternal concelebrations and continued collaboration on matters affecting the Apostolic Work of Holy Orthodoxy and I ask for your holy prayers for the Church in North America.

