

**Exhortation of His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel
Senior Hierarchy of the Orthodox Church in America to
His Beatitude, Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington
on the occasion of his Enthronement as Metropolitan of All America and
Canada**

January 27, 2013 Saint Nicholas Cathedral, Washington, DC

Your Beatitude, dearly beloved Brother and Concelebrant of the Holy Things:

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

In my Opening Address at the November 2012 All-American Council held on the feast of that great liturgist and homilist, John the Golden-Mouth, I stated, "Our gathering today has one purpose: to glorify our Father in heaven as members of His Christ, Who is the head of this Body, the Church, the assembly of those called out from the world to bear witness in the unity of the All-Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit," one God.

Today, on the feast of the Translation of the Relics of that same saint, John the Golden-Mouth, our gathering has the same purpose: by the grace of the All-Holy Trinity, to bear unified witness — hierarchs, clergy, faithful and monastics — to the fruit of that Council, that is, to the choosing, the election, the affirmation of the First of the Hierarchs, the Presiding Officer of the Holy Synod of our Holy and God-Protected Church in North America. "Where the Bishop is there is the Church." Today all the bishops of our Holy Synod are here, and thus the entire Church iconically is present "to give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy is without end! Alleluia!" Our thanks for His goodness toward us in enlightening us at the Council, and for His mercy, [by which] we ask that He strengthen the Church in peace and stability on her journey toward the eventual meeting with her eternal Bridegroom.

The choice was made; the journey begun. Today, the Church is gathered here, in this blessed cathedral, under the patronage of another great and powerful hierarchy, Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra, to concelebrate the Divine and Holy Liturgy during which, in unity, we receive the Holy Body and Precious Blood of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Although we are geographically scattered across the North America continent, we are ever one, and we are unified in our reception of the Eucharist. It is primarily during the Eucharistic celebration [that] each hierarchy elevates the name of the Primate as an external sign of the oneness of our Church: "First of all, remember, O Lord, His Beatitude, Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada!"

Today is also the occasion on which we gather in Eucharist in your new cathedral Church. Although you will serve in many and various churches and chapels and institutions and places, this is the first of cathedrals and shrines, not because of size or location, but because it is where the Primate of our Church has his cathedra as Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada. "Where the bishop is, there is the Church!"



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I reiterate what I wrote in that same letter, of November 13, last year before the election: "The prayer offered at the ordination of a deacon, priest and bishop is the same; there is no special prayer for the election of a Primate. The office of the Primate is an office of service, a symbol of unity among the hierarchs, and through and with the hierarchs it affirms the unity of the whole body of Christ. The Metropolitan is not a shepherd of shepherds, nor a super-shepherd over the entire Church. His role is that of a symbol of unity as one who has the support of his fellow hierarchs. 'He enjoys primacy, being the first among equals; he is ex-officio Chairman of the Synod'" [*OCA Statute*].

In my exhortation to the 17th All-America Council, I referred to the words of Saint Cyprian of Carthage: "God is one and Christ is one, and His Church and faith are one, and the people joined together with the glue of concord into the unbroken unity of a body." And further he reminds us: "The Lord said: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I grant to you' [John 14:27]. He gives us this inheritance. He promises all the gifts that He has pledged, and His rewards, on condition of the preservation of His peace. If we are heirs of Christ, let us abide in Christ's peace. If we are the sons of God, we ought to be those who make peace. 'Blessed,' he says, 'are the peacemakers since they themselves shall be called the sons of God' [Matthew 5:9]. The sons of God ought to be peacemakers, gentle in heart, guileless in their speech, agreeing in purpose, holding together amongst themselves faithfully in the bonds of one mind" [Saint Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Universal Church*].

Almost ten years ago, you were given the shepherd's staff of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, which although presently widowed, still rejoices in your election. Now, as the brotherhood of hierarchs of the Holy Synod, in behalf of the pastors, faithful and monastics of the entire Church, we present you with the primatial staff of the Orthodox Church in America.

Be a peacemaker. Be gentle in heart. Be guileless in your speech. Be one in purpose. Hold together the Holy Synod and the Church in the bonds of one mind. In my letter to the Council, I quoted the pastoral words of His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri of thrice-blessed memory: "All of us come together... with a deep and abiding love for Christ and the vine He planted with His right hand from His holy dwelling place, here in this land." This we also have done this day.

May our Lady of Sitka, the Patroness of this land, of this North American continent, cover you with her mantle of love and protection, of joy in taking up the Primacy, of service to her Divine Son, the Great and Good Shepherd of our souls!

Your Beatitude, receive the Primatial staff given with love and great hope.



+ Nathaniel
Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate