

November 30, 2011

St. Catherine the Great Martyr Church
119017 Moscow
Bol'shaya Ordynka 60/2

To the Starosta, Parish Council and Parishioners:

This letter is to introduce the Archpriest Alexander Garklavs, a priest and a member of the Chancery Administration of the Orthodox Church in America. I have personally blessed and sent Fr. Alexander to Moscow to come to St. Catherine Church to convey to the parishioners and friends of the parish my blessings and best wishes. You are aware of my personal fondness and support for St. Catherine's Church, and I also recall with much joy my visitations to your parish as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. Please therefore know that my love and concern for the welfare of St. Catherine's Church is and will always be fervent and steadfast.

Fr. Zacchaeus (Wood) has been your pastor for the several years, serving also as our Representative to the Moscow Patriarchate. Recent events have necessitated his dismissal from those positions and reassignment to the United States. We acknowledge his years of service at St. Catherine's Church. While his reassignment has caused some distress and confusion within the parish community, I want you to know that all of the decisions that have been made were done so with the best of intentions for the well being of Fr. Zacchaeus and of St. Catherine Parish.

The situation at St. Catherine's Church has been a constant subject of conversation at the meetings of our Holy Synod of Bishops. In the very near future we will be making a decision about who will be sent as our Representative. In the meantime I am grateful to His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill for blessing priests of the Russian Orthodox Church to oversee the pastoral responsibilities at the Parish. I pray that this holy season of the Nativity Fast will be a time of sincere spiritual renewal and peaceful preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Offering to you my heartfelt best wishes and blessing, I remain,

With love in Jesus Christ our Lord,



+JONAH

Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

