



Bishop Irénée enthroned to See of Ottawa and Canada

Bishop Irénée, who had been serving as Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada, was elected by the Holy Synod of Bishops on October 21, 2014. Three weeks earlier, he had been nominated by clergy and lay delegates at the Extraordinary Archdiocesan Assembly held in Gatineau, QC.

Concelebrating with Metropolitan Tikhon and Bishop Irénée were His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and Romanian Episcopate; His Grace, Bishop Alexander of Ottawa and Upstate New York, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America; His Grace, Bishop Ioann Cassian of Vicina, Romanian Patriarchate; His Grace, Bishop Job of Kashira, Vicar of the Moscow Diocese, Administrator of the Parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in Canada; His Grace, Bishop Michael of New York and New Jersey; and His Grace, Bishop David of Sitka and Alaska. Mitered Archpriest Ihor Kutash represented His Eminence, Metropolitan Yuri of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada. Archpriest Anatoly Melnyk, Archdiocesan Chancellor, and 26 clergy representing the OCA, Romanian, Ukrainian, Russian and Antiochian Churches also served.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the presence of the Wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God, “Abbess of the Holy Mount Athos,” and the relics of Saint Gabriel of Mount Athos.



“On behalf of the holy Synod and all the clergy, monastics and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, I wholeheartedly congratulate you on your election and enthronement as the ruling Bishop of the See of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada,” Metropolitan Tikhon told Bishop Irénée in the exhortation he offered upon presenting the archpastoral staff at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. “Through the mystery of the All-Holy Spirit and the election by the Holy Synod, our Lord has bestowed on Your Grace the apostolic grace to strengthen you in your Episcopal labors. Your election comes at a time when the faithful of the Archdiocese are in great need of a good pastor and capable shepherd who knows his people, and is known by them.”

[See the complete text of Metropolitan Tikhon’s exhortation, as well as the homily he delivered during the Divine Liturgy, below.]

A festive banquet followed the Divine Liturgy and Enthronement in the undercroft of the cathedral. Mr.



Nikita Lopoukhine, Archdiocesan Treasurer, served as Master of Ceremonies.

Homily delivered by Metropolitan Tikhon during the Enthronement Divine Liturgy

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

By God's grace, we have gathered here at the Annunciation Cathedral for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy to formally enthrone His Grace, Irénée, as Ruling Bishop of the See of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada. This is a momentous event, not only for the Archdiocese of Canada, but for the entire Orthodox Church in America, represented here by several of the bishops of our Church and those of other jurisdictions.





Today, all of us acknowledge that the past several years have been difficult for the Archdiocese, but with this recognition, we likewise offer our appreciation for the fatherly oversight that has been provided to the Archdiocese by His Grace, Bishop Irénée, and by those who worked closely with him during his tenure as Auxiliary Bishop and Administrator. Because of his pastoral guidance and wisdom, we can now give thanks to God, not only for the historic event of his enthronement, but for the wonderful opportunity the Church now has to move forward and to expand the spiritual health and apostolic vitality of this venerable Archdiocese.

The Epistle and Gospel that are providentially appointed for today take us back to the basics of the faith we share. They put our past troubles and present task in perspective and call us to the simplicity of the Gospel message.

In his Epistle, Saint Paul addresses the Galatian community, which is being troubled by teachers who are confusing everyone about the clear message of the Gospel. In one sentence at the beginning of his letter, Saint Paul reminds them, “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.” In other words, the message is all about Christ. Christ, Who delivered Himself up for our sins, makes possible a new way of life shaped not by the present age, but by the grace and peace that He pours out on all who follow Him as His disciples.



Saint Luke’s Gospel takes this a step further. If we follow Christ humbly, freely, joyfully, like little children, as babes, then the Lord will give us the faith we need to “tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the powers of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt us.” Elsewhere, Jesus said that “unless you become



like little children you cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” And in today’s Gospel he says, ““I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was Thy gracious will.”

Bishop Irénée’s task is to ensure that this simple Gospel message that Saint Paul and Saint Luke proclaimed and lived in the first century is also at the heart of every priest’s preaching and every parish’s life in the Archdiocese of Canada in the 21st century. And in doing this he must stay focused on Christ, regardless of whether this makes people happy or not. As Saint Paul said in today’s epistle, “Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.”

When he was consecrated as a bishop here in Ottawa five years ago, Bishop Irénée spoke these words in front of everyone: “I promise to visit and watch over the flock which is now entrusted to me, after the manner of the Apostles, so that they remain true to the Faith and true in the performance of good works. I will show special concern for the priests. I promise to inspect with diligence, to exhort and to restrain, in order that schisms, superstitions and unholy venerations may not arise, and customs contrary to Christian teaching of piety and good morals may not injure the Christian way of life.” Later on that same day we prayed that his episcopal ministry would be stamped with the image of Christ the Good Shepherd: “Lord, make this man also, who has been proclaimed a steward of the Episcopal Grace, to be an imitator of Thee, Who art the True Shepherd, who laid down Thy Life for Thy sheep. Grant that he will be a leader of the blind, a light to those in darkness, a reprover of the unwise, a teacher of the young, a lamp to the world. Grant also that he, having perfected the souls entrusted to him in this present life, may stand unashamed before Thy Throne, and that he may receive the great reward which Thou hast prepared for those who have fought with valor for the preaching of the Gospel.”



May the Lord fulfill our prayer for Bishop Irénée. May the Mother of God, who is present with us today through the Wonderworking icon “Abbess of Mount Athos,” shelter and protect him under her omophorion, and may the intercessions of all the saints enable all of us – as the faithful flock of Christ, and the Holy Synod of Bishops as his brothers – to support him, work with him and care for him, so that not only he, but every one of us, might truly become servants of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, Who is worshipped together with His Father, Who is without beginning, and the Most Holy and Life-Giving Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Exhortation by Metropolitan Tikhon at the Conclusion of the Enthronement Liturgy

It is a great blessing for all of us to be gathered here, from near and far, for this joyous event; to have served with so many clergy from the Archdiocese of Canada, together with the faithful of the region; and to welcome clergy and faithful of other dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America and other jurisdictions.

I am grateful to the members of the Holy Synod who have concelebrated with us today – His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate; His Grace, Bishop Michael of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey; His Grace, Bishop David of Sitka and the Diocese of Alaska – as well as our guests, His Grace, Bishop Alexander of Ottawa of the Antiochian Archdiocese; His Grace, Bishop Job of Cashira, Moscow Patriarchate; and His Grace, Bishop John Cassian of Vicina of the



Romanian Archdiocese.



It was a great honor for me to serve as the Locum Tenens for the Archdiocese over the past year. I am sure that I speak for all the clergy and the faithful in expressing the deep appreciation for Bishop Irénée's willingness to serve as Auxiliary and Administrator of the Archdiocese over the past five years, as he labored to bring the Archdiocese to a place of stability and solidity, to a place where today's event, the Enthronement of a new father and Archpastor for the Archdiocese was made possible.

To His Grace, the newly elected Bishop Irénée, I offer these few words on behalf of the Holy Synod and all the clergy, monastics and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America: I wholeheartedly congratulate you on your election and enthronement as the ruling Bishop of the See of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada.

Through the mystery of the All-Holy Spirit and the election by the Holy Synod, our Lord has bestowed on Your Grace the apostolic grace to strengthen you in your Episcopal labors. Your election comes at a time when the faithful of the Archdiocese are in great need of a good pastor and capable shepherd who knows his people, and is known by them.

My dear brother, I pray that Our Lord will grant you good health and an abundance of spiritual gifts, so that you may in peace and love nourish the people of God and be a witness to all those who are searching and seeking for the truth as offered by our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. From my heart I wish you inexhaustible energy, peace and joy as you undertake this awesome ministry as a Bishop of Christ's Church.



To the clergy, we offer our congratulations and great thanks for the great number of you who have come here today to serve with us and to participate in this great event. I exhort you to prayerfully and with love offer your support and encouragement to your new Archpastor and to learn from him as he leads you and guides you in your pastoral ministries.

To the faithful of the Archdiocese, I also ask you to offer your prayers for Bishop Irénée, so that his ministry might truly bear fruit a hundredfold and that he, working together with all his clergy, lead all of you in the direction of the heavenly Kingdom and into the glory of God.

Biography of Bishop Irénée

Born in Montréal, Quebec on December 25, 1948, Bishop Irénée received a BA in Slavic Studies from the University of Ottawa in 1971, after which he began studies at Holy Trinity Seminary, Jordanville, NY. He was accepted as a novice at Holy Trinity Monastery and placed under the spiritual guidance of Archimandrite Kiprian. In 1974, he was tonsured a Rassophore monk. The following year, he was tonsured a Stavrophore monk with the name Irénée, in honor of the sainted hieromartyr of Lyons.

In 1978, he was blessed to serve in France. In May of the same year, he was ordained to the diaconate in Brussels, Belgium, and in August to the priesthood in Geneva, Switzerland. He continued to serve in France until 1982, at which time he returned to Canada to serve Montréal's French mission. He and the mission's faithful were received into the OCA in 1986.



In 1992, Hieromonk Irénée was elevated to the dignity of Igumen by His Grace, Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa, to care for the French language monastics in Québec. He also served as a supply priest to the parishes in Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto and Québec City.

In April 2009, the Holy Synod of the OCA elevated Igumen Irénée to the dignity of Archimandrite and elected him as an Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Canada with the title of Bishop of Québec City. In October 2009, ten bishops participated in his consecration to the episcopacy at Ottawa's Annunciation Cathedral. On October 1, 2010, the Holy Synod appointed Bishop Irénée as Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada.