



Holy Synod of Bishops concludes spring session, the USA

March 15, 2013

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America held its spring session at the Chancery here Tuesday through Thursday, March 12-14, 2013.



In addition to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, who chaired the sessions, other members of the Holy Synod in attendance were His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel; His Eminence, Archbishop Nikon; His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin; His Eminence, Archbishop Alejo; His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek; His Grace, Bishop Michael; His Grace, Bishop Alexander; His Grace, Bishop Mark; and His Grace, Bishop Irene.

“It has been a little over a month since my enthronement in Washington, DC on January 27, and this report will serve as my monthly review for that time period,” said Metropolitan Tikhon in his opening address. “It is still my hope to provide my brother bishops with regular updates on the most crucial matters affecting the Orthodox Church in America in order to increase our level of communication and reduce the amount of time needed to review matters when we meet. In my first address to the Church, I stated that I had ‘no agenda other than that given to the Holy Apostles, no vision other than that set forth in the Holy Gospels, in the writings of the Fathers and in the decisions of the holy and sacred councils.’ I am nevertheless conscious of the high expectations that are placed on the office of the Primate and that these expectations fall to every one of us on the Holy Synod.”

Highlights of the session, according to Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, OCA Secretary, include the following.

- Each diocesan bishop offered an update on the activities of his respective diocese. The Holy Synod discussed vacancies throughout the OCA and the possible assignments of seminarians from Saint Herman’s, Saint Tikhon’s, and Saint Vladimir’s Seminaries.
- Archpriest John Jillions, OCA Chancellor, reported on financial structures within the OCA. Various means of stewardship and ways to revitalize voluntary giving to the Church were discussed. Father John also introduced the newly appointed Coordinator of the Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations, Cindy Davis.
- In response to Father Tosi’s Secretary report, the Holy Synod approved the recommendation of the Metropolitan Council to reschedule the 18th All-American Council [AAC] from 2014 to July



2015. A provisional Pre-Conciliar Commission [PCC] has been appointed. Among the locations being considered by the PCC are Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, and Denver. The Holy Synod directed that there be a youth fellowship component included in the AAC schedule. It is anticipated that the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America will host its convention concurrently. There will be extensive work prior to the Council on finance and Statute revisions. The Holy Synod also considered ways in which the All-American Council will operate to ensure the efficient and productive use of the limited time available for plenary sessions.

- OCA Treasurer Melanie Ringa presented a detailed financial report. Ms. Ringa advised the hierarchs on the recent meeting of diocesan chancellors and treasurers. Her report will be available and posted on the OCA web site in the coming days.
- Archpriest Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs, reported on developments among the Orthodox Churches worldwide.
- The Holy Synod reviewed the work of all departments, and in particular, received a presentation on the [Department of Continuing Education](#) by department chair, Archpriest Ian Pac-Urar. The recently formed department is overseeing the required 20 hours of continuing education program mandated for each bishop, priest and deacon and assisting in coordinating the program with each diocesan bishop.
- The Guidelines for the Ordination, Appointment, and Transfer of Clergy, presented by the Board of Theological Education, were approved with editorial changes, while candidates for ordination to the diaconate through the Diaconal Vocations Program were reviewed and recommendations were approved.
- The Holy Synod reviewed the revised Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct and sent back recommendations for editorial changes and further clarification.
- Clergy awards were discussed and approved.
- The Holy Synod reviewed its Charter for the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee.
- A committee was appointed to review texts for prayers and services for departed pre-born and stillborn children. It will be headed by Archbishop Benjamin and will include a liturgical theologian, a canon lawyer, and a mother.
- The Holy Synod reviewed its upcoming calendar for the remainder of 2013 and set dates for meetings, retreats, and other special events. There will be a Holy Synod retreat in the summer of 2013. The hierarchs will attend the fourth annual Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America, September 17-19, 2013.
- The fall meeting of the Metropolitan Council and Lesser Synod will take place September 23-26, 2013, while the fall meeting of the Holy Synod will convene October 15-17.
- The Holy Synod approved Metropolitan Tikhon's proposal that he and the Secretary, Eric G. Tosi, represent the OCA at the inauguration of Pope Francis in Rome on Tuesday, March 19. It was noted that the OCA had been represented by a bishop and priest at the inauguration of each new Pope since 1970. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity is organizing the participation of official delegations. *[Additional information will be posted at oca.org as it is received.]*

A photo gallery may be accessed on the [OCA web site](#) and [OCA Facebook page](#).

Source: [OCA.org](http://oca.org)