



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### Archives of the Orthodox Church in America

#### Introduction

The Archives of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) is the official repository for the inactive records of the Central Church Administration, documenting the work of the All-American Councils, the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, dioceses, monasteries, seminaries, parishes, clergy, departments, boards, and commissions; as well as a variety of external and internal matters affecting the Church.

#### Objective

The Archives of the Orthodox Church in America is currently stored in the basement of Westwood, the building that houses the Metropolitan's Residence and OCA Chancery in Syosset (Oyster Bay Cove), NY.

With the impending sale of the Westwood property, the OCA is looking for a permanent home for its Archives, where the collections would be protected, preserved, and accessible to the OCA Administration, dioceses, parishes, institutions, clergy, and laity, as well as to other researchers, particularly academic scholars.

#### The Archives

The OCA Archives is, above all, the official institutional guardian of the inactive records of the Central Church Administration. For this reason, it is only these inactive administrative records of the Chancery that can be properly called, in a technical archival sense, the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America. The records of the Central Church Administration, which include primary source material dating back to about 1845, are organized into the following 20 series (sections):

- I. Communications with Central Church Administration in Russia (pre-1922)
- II. General Correspondence
- III. Records of the Holy Synod of Bishops
- IV. Records of All-American Sobors/Councils
- V. Records of the Metropolitan Council
- VI. Records of the Treasurer

- VII. Records Relating to Departments and Commissions
- VIII. Records of Departments and Commissions
- IX. Records Relating to Official Church Publications
- X. Records of Official Church Publications
- XI. Records Relating to Church Institutions
- XII. Records of Church Institutions
- XIII. Records Relating to Dioceses
- XIV. Records Relating to Deaneries
- XV. Records Relating to Parishes
- XVI. Records of Clergy (from 1859 on)
- XVII. Records Relating to Other Churches
- XVIII. Records Relating to Current Matters
- XIX. Records of the Office of the Chancellor
- XX. Records of the Office of the Metropolitan

However, our repository also preserves other complementary historical collections, which are inextricably linked to the official records; they often provide indispensable additional material for research and reference not available in the official files. These collections include thousands of photographs, films, videos, audio recordings, periodicals, church directories, anniversary and other historical publications from throughout the world, as well as some historical artifacts.

Most significantly, there is a manuscript division consisting of nearly one hundred collections of the personal and organizational archives of various hierarchs, clergy, lay leaders, and church-related organizations. The largest of these personal archive collections is the papers of Metropolitan Leonty, contained in over eighty archival boxes. New collections are constantly being received. Collections received since the beginning of this century include the papers of former OCA Primate Metropolitan Theodosius and several other prominent deceased OCA hierarchs; Fr. John Meyendorff, dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary and world-renowned Byzantinologist; Alexander Bogolepov, St. Vladimir's Seminary professor and canonical scholar; Ivan M. Czap, Orthodox lawyer and church activist on many fronts; and other smaller collections. These rich and unparalleled historical collections include original documents handwritten by the North American Orthodox saints, as well as documentation chronicling the history of Orthodox Christianity in North America dating back to the Alaskan mission in 1794.

Although a large part of the texts is in English, much of the archival material is in Russian. This is an aspect that any interested institution should carefully consider. Other languages found in the archival material are French, Romanian, Albanian, Arabic, and others.

## **Requirements/Conditions**

**OWNERSHIP** – When transferred for preservation to an institution willing to house the OCA Archives, these collections will remain property of the Orthodox Church in America, which will retain full ownership rights of all archival materials.

**STORAGE** – The repository willing to house the OCA Archives must have adequate secure storage space with state-of-the-art climate (temperature and humidity) controls, according to archival standards, in order to protect and preserve the most fragile portions of the collection. The OCA records must be kept as a single unit. No part of the collection may be deaccessioned, transferred, or disposed of without being offered back to the OCA.

**STAFFING** – The repository willing to house the OCA Archives must provide staff with requisite professional skills to work alongside the OCA Archivist in preserving the varied collections of the OCA Archives according to archival standards.

**ACCESS** – The OCA Archives has always maintained a policy of open access for researchers—both scholars and non-academics—to all of its historical materials (with very rare exceptions of confidential, mostly legal papers). Archives staff routinely respond, usually by email, to a multitude of historical inquiries. Archives staff must also be able to provide materials from the collections and/or document historical analysis to the Church Administration, sometimes on very short notice.

**DIGITIZATION** – As part of preservation of the collections, the repository willing to house the OCA Archives must resume a grant-funded outsourced digitization project of media (audio & video) that was interrupted by the pandemic. Ongoing digitization efforts of other collections within the OCA Archives must be strategically planned and undertaken in a prudent manner either internally or by outsourcing.

**RESEARCH AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS** – Preference will be given to an institution willing to help organize seminars and/or establish and fund a fellowship program to assist scholars wishing to use the collection.

## **Selection Process**

Preference will be given to institutions able to fulfill all of the requirements presented above. However, the OCA is willing to work with institutions only partially able to fulfill the requirements, to examine potential supplemental capabilities.

## **Contact Information & Deadline**

Interested institutions may direct any questions to Priest Alessandro Margheritino, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America ([secretary@oca.org](mailto:secretary@oca.org)). The deadline to submit a proposal is July 20, 2021.