

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon on the Great Feast of the Nativity

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

To the Honorable Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord,

It is my joy and privilege to greet all of you on the radiant feast of the Nativity of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. In some 700 communities large and small sprinkled across the North American continent, from Canada, to the United States and Mexico, we gather together to celebrate the wonder of God's entry into human history. For many in our society this message is still as foolish as it was in the first century. But we continue to stand with the saints beside the manger, the Cross and the empty tomb to proclaim God's sacrificial love for us and for His Creation. As we sing on Christmas Day:

*I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart;
I will make all Thy wonders known.*

In the company of the upright, in the congregation great are the works of the Lord!

They are studied by all who have pleasure in them!

His work is glory and beauty, and His righteousness endures forever.

—Christmas Day, 1st Antiphon (Psalm 111:1-3)

Truly, "Great are the works of the Lord!"

He sees a world filled with suffering and He Himself voluntarily suffers to make a path to healing.

He sees a world dying and He Himself dies to bring resurrection and unending life.

He sees a world in darkness and He Himself enters that darkness to bring a divine light that can never be extinguished.

He sees a world in bondage to the forces of evil and He submits Himself to that evil in order to destroy it forever.

The God Who is "ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible and eternally the same" empties Himself of power and divine privilege. He becomes a weak, fragile human being in order to share fully in our broken existence and in so doing offers the possibility of a life in communion with Him, with each other, and with all creation.

May our Lord bless each of you, your communities, and your families as you celebrate His Nativity and serve Him.

With love in the New-Born Christ,
+ Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

■ **FULL STORY:** <http://oca.org/holy-synod/statements/his-beatitude-metropolitan-tikhon/nativity-of-our-lord-2015>



Join the Stewards of the OCA now!

SYOSSET, NY – Since its establishment in 2013, the "Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America" has attracted some 300 individual and parish members.

"With the new year upon us, we are renewing our invitation to join the Stewards," said Raymond Boyd, OCA Stewardship Assistant. "We hope to increase the number of Stewards to 500 while raising \$50,000.00 to help 'expand the Mission' of the OCA."

To this end, a redesigned "Become a Steward" page to encourage on-line donations made its debut in mid-December.

"The Stewards aims at expanding a sense of voluntary giving to provide financial support for the OCA's departments and ministries, which have been seriously underfunded," said Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor. ■ **DONATE ON-LINE:** <http://oca.org/become-a-steward>

Desk calendar available

SYOSSET, NY – The OCA 2016 Desk Calendar is now available and may be purchased for \$20.00 per copy, which includes postage and handling. To order, send a check payable to the "Orthodox Church in America" to PO Box 675, Syosset, NY 11791. Credit card orders may be made by contacting Barry Migyanko directly at 516-922-0550, x133.

The calendar includes space for memos; a directory of OCA ministries, commissions, boards, diocesan chanceries, and seminaries; and key liturgical commemorations and significant dates. The calendar's theme – "Facing Forward As We Expand The Mission" – is highlighted in a dozen quotes from OCA missionary clergy.

■ **FULL STORY:** <https://oca.org/news/headline-news/2016-oca-desk-calendar-now-available>

OCA represented at celebration of Ecumenical Patriarchate's patronal feast of St. Andrew

ISTANBUL, TURKEY – At the invitation of His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and with the blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Archpriest Dr. Alexander Rentel, Assistant Professor of Canon Law and the John and Paraskeva Skvir Lecturer in Practical Theology at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Yonkers, NY, represented the Orthodox Church in America at the celebration of the Feast of the Apostle Andrew on November 30, 2015. At the conclusion of the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy, at which he concelebrated, Father Alexander conveyed to Patriarch Bartholomew personal greetings on behalf of Metropolitan Tikhon.

■ **FULL STORY:** <https://oca.org/news/headline-news/oca-represented-at-celebration-of-feast-of-st.-andrew-in-constantinople>

Metropolitan Tikhon attends Georgetown University peace gathering

WASHINGTON, DC – His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, was among representatives of the Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Sikh traditions who gathered at Georgetown University here December 16, 2015 for an "Interfaith Event for Peace, Inclusion and Understanding" in the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, CA.



In his opening reflection, Donald Cardinal Wuerl, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington, noted that the gathering was about refusing to remain silent and condemning intolerance. Offering closing words was US Vice President Joe Biden, who said that "when we turn our backs on the victims of persecution, we abandon everything we say we're about." Also present was US House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.

As the only Orthodox Christian leader present, Metropolitan Tikhon delivered the closing prayer, during which he prayed, "Enable us to love others with the sacrificial and self-emptying love that we see in your Servant Jesus Christ, Who comes to us in extreme humility."

Through the Orthodox Christian Fellowship [OCF], Orthodox Christianity has maintained a visible presence on the Georgetown Campus for three decades under the OCF's chaplain, Archpriest Constantine White. ■ **FULL STORY:** <http://oca.org/news/headline-news/metropolitan-tikhon-attends-georgetown-gathering-for-peace>

Judge E. R. Lanier named OCA General Counsel

SYOSSET, NY – Judge E. R. Lanier of Monticello, GA assumed duties as the General Counsel of the Orthodox Church in America on December 1, 2015.

For the past three decades, Judge Lanier has been active in a variety of leadership and legal positions at the parish, diocesan, and national levels, culminating more recently in his service over the past six years as Chair of the Legal Committee of the Metropolitan Council. He served as Lay Vice-Chair of the All-American Councils in Seattle, Parma, and Atlanta and as a member of the Task Force charged with revising the *Statute of the Orthodox Church in America* as adopted by delegates to the 18th All-American Council in July 2015.

Judge Lanier will have oversight responsibilities for legal matters in the OCA's central administration. ■ **FULL STORY:** <https://oca.org/news/headline-news/judge-e.-r.-lanier-named-oca-general-counsel>

A monthly digest highlighting news and features from the web site of the Orthodox Church in America <http://oca.org>, published with the blessing of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon.

Parishes are asked to duplicate and distribute **OCAreview** monthly, especially to those without internet access who desire printed highlights of OCA web site postings.

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Board continues Parsonage Designation Declaration for retirees

SYOSSET, NY – At its December 14, 2015 meeting, the Orthodox Church in America's Pension Board approved continuation of the Parsonage Designation Declaration for clergy receiving pension benefits. Retired clergy may be able to exclude a portion of their benefits from income tax.

Maureen Ahearn serves as Pension Plan Administrator. Pension Board Trustees include His Grace, Bishop David, Episcopal Moderator; Priest Gleb McFatter, Chairman; Archpriests Matthew Tate and John Zdinak; Theodore Bazil, Matushka Mary Buletza Breton, and Barry Gluntz. ■

DECLARATION INFO: <http://oca.org/cdn/files/boardscommissions/pen-parsonage-designation-2016.pdf>

In Memoriam

● **Archpriest Gabriel N. Seamore**, who in retirement was attached to St. George Church, Hesperia, CA, fell asleep in the Lord December 2, 2015.

■ **FULL STORY:** <https://oca.org/in-memoriam/archpriest-gabriel-n.-seamore>

● **Matushka Barbara Stashkevetch**, wife of the late Deacon Theodore, fell asleep in the Lord in Baltimore, MD December 2, 2015. ■ **FULL STORY:** <https://oca.org/in-memoriam/matushka-barbara-stashkevetch>