

# HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

## Parish RESTON Newsletter

New Parish Center: 20937 Ashburn Rd., #110, Ashburn, VA August 2022

Clearly Covid is not yet finished with us. Nick Nobbe is its most recent host. And PBS News reminds listeners that 500 people a day are dying from Covid. Nevertheless, though we received no formal announcement, word comes the Bishop has vacated all Covid precautions. So normal pieties may return. Communion with spoon will return with the New Church Year. Wearing masks will remain an option. We should all of us be mindful of our comings and goings.

**AUGUST—DAY 13 HOURS, NIGHT 11**

- 6 Sat Transfiguration of the Lord ↓
- 7 Sun<sup>8•VII•Mt8</sup> **Coffee Hour: Belinsky**
- 14 Sun<sup>9•VIII•Mt9</sup> **Coffee Hour: Busenberg**
- 15 Mon Dormition of the Theotokos ↑
- 16 Tue *Remembering Deacon Terry Peet, 1944–2019*

And THANK YOU Fr. Paul for that excellent article by Fr. Hovorun. With love in Christ, Fr. John Vitko



- 21 Sun<sup>10•I•Mt10</sup> **Coffee Hour: Ellmore**
- 28 Sun<sup>11•II•Mt11</sup> **Coffee Hour: Hawkins**
- SEPTEMBER—DAY 12 HOURS, NIGHT 12**
- 4 Sun<sup>12•III•Mt12</sup> **Coffee Hour: Krisa**
- 11 Sun<sup>13•IV•Mt13</sup> **Coffee Hour: Matyuf**
- 14 Wed Elevation of the Cross ↑  
*Ends the Church Year.*



Photos, Pentecost 2018. When Terry joined our community we were still in Lake Anne Hall. With his cancer diagnosis hometown Binghamton called him back in 2000.

Its official: Saturday, November 5, SanktHubertus returns. Maria Hawkins has bagged the venison.





Above: The original townhouse church destroyed on 9/11. [A report in a Greek-Orthodox newspaper said that before the south tower collapsed, part of the airplane's landing gear was seen resting atop the church.] Left: The new St. Nicolas as of March 2022. Her white marble sheath is to glow in the dark.

## The only church destroyed on 9/11 has been rebuilt as a national shrine.

July 5, 2022

New York, NY — The rebuilt Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, now a National Shrine, was consecrated in a historic and emotional ceremony that drew over 1,300 participants to the World Trade Center; including representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the leadership of the Friends of Saint Nicholas, officials of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, and Greek Orthodox faithful from around the United States.

The leader of the Greek Orthodox Archepiscopate of America, Archbishop Elpidophoros, who presided over the consecration service commented, “Today, we consecrate Saint Nicholas as a temple of peace and a house of prayer for all people. We placed the relics of Saint Nicholas in the altar table in solidarity with those who were denied their lives and even a decent burial on 9/11. We consecrate this church and National Shrine to their memory, as a perpetual offering of love and reconciliation.”

Dennis Mehiel, Chairman of the Friends of Saint Nicholas stated, “It has been more than 20 years since we embarked on this journey to rebuild a presence for Christianity on this Sacred Ground. We have had no shortage of challenges, but we are here today bringing to life the

vision that has burned so brightly in our imaginations for these two decades.”

Michael Psaros, the current vice-chairman and incoming chairman of the Friends of Saint Nicholas addressed the faithful in attendance by saying, “Long after we are gone, the generations that follow will worship in the National Shrine, humble themselves before the Justinian Cross on its Dome, and take pride in the faith of their predecessors. The generations that follow will enter the National Shrine and be reminded that in the end, faith, peace and love always triumph.”

Port Authority Executive Director Rick Cotton said, “Today’s consecration of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine is an important and symbolic milestone in the reconstruction of the World Trade Center. The Port Authority is proud to have worked with the Archdiocese and Friends of St. Nicholas on this extraordinary project.”

The St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center will begin a regular schedule of divine services following the installation of the full iconographic project.

**St. Nicholas's rebuilding effort was beset by delays, cost overruns, and claims of financial impropriety.**

The church was expected to re-open in November 2018. However, in December 2017, Skanska U.S.A., the construction company rebuilding the Santiago Calatrava-designed shrine, ceased work at the site in Liberty Park. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America had been unable to pay Skanska's bills, despite receiving \$37 million in donations for the shrine. According to a December 2017 newsletter, \$48,991,760 had been pledged to date, while of that amount \$37,398,316 had been collected, leaving a pledge balance of just over \$11 million. Following the cessation of work, the US Attorney's Office in Manhattan as well as the state Attorney General's Office opened probes into the project's finances and those of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

On May 16, 2018, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America released the results of Phase I of a PricewaterhouseCoopers investigative report regarding the rebuilding of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine (SNCNS). The report concluded that as of December 31, 2017, the Archdiocese owed the SNCNS an aggregate of \$3,504,550, excluding interest. On May 2, 2018, the Archdiocese made a \$1,000,000 payment to the SNCNS thereby reducing the balance due to \$2,504,550.

In July 2018 the Archdiocese closed a deal with Alma Bank for a 10-year, \$5.5-million mortgage to restore monies to the unfinished St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at Liberty Park, however the fresh funding was not expected to be enough to complete the project, whose cost had ballooned to \$80 million. On October 16, 2018, the Special Investigative Committee (SIC) released Phase II of the PriceWaterhouseCoopers investigative report to the Archdiocese, along with a summary communication based on the report. It concluded that there was no evidence that St. Nicholas funds were improperly

paid to any individuals employed by or associated with the Archdiocese, and no evidence or allegation that fraud was committed in connection with the St. Nicholas project. Rather, the cost overruns appear to have been the result of change orders agreed to by Archdiocese decision-makers to address architectural concerns or enhance the design of SNCNS. In addition, the Special Investigative Committee recommended that the St. Nicholas rebuilding effort be spearheaded by a new legal entity, the "Friends of St. Nicholas," which could be affiliated with, but would be independent from the Archdiocese, with separate bank accounts and an appropriately qualified board to do the fund-raising and oversee the project.

In April 2019, reports from New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's office said that he had assembled a team of seven millionaire and billionaire donors committed to putting up the money to complete the project. A keynote address of Archbishop Elpidophoros of America on October 17, 2019 stated that the building of the Church should re-commence immediately with the opening of the doors scheduled by September 11, 2021, the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, as a tribute to those who perished, as well as a lead off to the centenary year of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. New York officials and the Port Authority estimated that the rebuilt church would be the most visited church in the United States. Fundraising and the resumption of the work was slated to start by January 2020. A nonprofit group formed in January 2020 raised \$41.5 million for construction within eight months. However, this work was paused due to a general construction hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City. On August 3, 2020, Governor Cuomo and Archbishop Elpidophoros attended a ceremony that was held to officially resume construction. The marble facade was installed in February 2021.

— Wikipedia



The new church is located in Liberty Park, overlooking the National September 11 Memorial & Museum. Its architecture draws from Byzantine influences, namely the Church of the Savior and the Agia Sophia in Istanbul, as well as from the Parthenon in Athens. In addition to serving as a Greek Orthodox parish, St. Nicholas is officially planned as a "House of Prayer for all people" that will function as a national shrine and community center, incorporating a secular bereavement space, social hall, and various educational and interfaith programs.

## THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN UKRAINE: WAR AND “ANOTHER AUTOCEPHALY”

by Sergei Chapnin

War changes many things, primarily people’s minds, but also the usual flow of time. What takes years or even decades in peacetime takes a few months, or sometimes even days, during war.

On May 27, the Council of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the highest governing body of the church, after much debate, expressed its disagreement with Patriarch Kirill’s support for the war in Ukraine and adopted amendments to the Statute of the UOC, “Testifying to the full self-sufficiency and independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.”

It is beyond the scope of this report to analyze in detail the decisions of the UOC Council—not all of the documents have been published, nor have there been official statements from the hierarchy. My aim is to explain the logic of Metropolitan Onufry’s actions, because I hope that this will allow me to put the decisions of the Council of the UOC into the appropriate context.

It is not surprising that, confronted with a lack of information, commentators are divided into two antagonistic camps. Some believe that the UOC is simply salvaging its reputation, that the distancing from Moscow is insincere and coordinated with the Moscow Patriarchate. Others believe that this is an important step towards the autocephaly of the Church and true independence from Moscow.

From the first days of the war, a number of UOC dioceses refused to commemorate Patriarch Kirill in protest of his anti-Ukrainian stance, and this decision received the tacit support of Metropolitan Onufry. A little later, there were efforts to hold a council to make a decision “about the future of the Church,” which many understood to be the groundwork for a complete separation from the Moscow Patriarchate. Metropolitan Onufry was slow to convene the council, and his inner circle, Metropolitan Anthony (Pakanich) and the oligarch deacon Vadim Novinsky, took an openly pro-Moscow position. It is hard to assess how well Metropolitan Onufry understood the mood of the Ukrainian flock in the initial months of the war. Yet Onufry understood Patriarch Kirill’s position: while during the pandemic the Patriarch called him almost every week, he did not call him even once during the three months of the war. For Onufry, Kirill’s silence spoke volumes.

The situation changed dramatically on May 12. On that day there was a meeting of the Holy Synod of the UOC, whose documents were prepared as usual by Metropolitan Anthony, the Chancellor. There was not a single word about holding a council in these documents. Until that point, Moscow had made every effort to maintain the current status quo and did not approve the gathering of



any council. The first surprise occurred during the gathering of bishops. Metropolitan Onufry demanded that the Synod’s decisions include a response to the calls of the clergy and that a meeting with clergy and laity be held. Thus, the Synod declared:

“In the near future a meeting will be convened with the participation of bishops, priests, monks and laity to discuss the problems of church life that have arisen as a result of the war, which concern us all. At the same time, we emphasize that we must do everything we can so that a discussion on this or that issue will not lead us out of the canonical field and lead to new divisions in the Church.”

The Synod debated this rather vague wording for two hours, and there was resistance among some of the members. Nevertheless, Metropolitan Onufry succeeded in organizing a council that included laity and clergy.

To be sure, some within the Synod sought to remain with Moscow, and they bitterly opposed the proposed Council. To counter their efforts, Metropolitan Onufry took the preparation of the meeting into his own hands and actually removed Metropolitan Anthony, his Chancellor, from preparing the substantive part of the Council. This was the second surprise. This had never happened before.

Obviously, this was a difficult decision for Onufry, but the only possible one. On the one hand, he had absolutely no prepared team to organize such a meeting, and on the other hand, if Metropolitan Anthony and Vadim Novinsky had had access to the draft documents, Moscow would have known the scenario of the upcoming meeting in advance and would have been able to counteract it effectively.

Metropolitan Onufry decided to act quickly and decisively. He scheduled the council for May 27, just 13 days after the decision to hold it. In the interim, he received a significant number of letters from various parishes, which helped him realize the real attitude of the clergy and laity.

The main disadvantage of moving so quickly was that there was no procedure for nominating delegates to the Council. Only two dioceses elected delegates. In the other 50, delegates were appointed by the ruling bishop. And these were not always people with theological training.

None of those assembled on the morning of May 27 had any idea what they would be doing, what the agenda

was, or how to address it. Metropolitan Onufry's grandiose plan was not revealed until midday. At the very end of the meeting, at which the majority of the assembled spoke in favor of the independence of the UOC from Moscow, Metropolitan Onufry announced an emergency meeting of the Holy Synod (a select group of bishops) that, in turn, immediately convened a Council of Bishops, which in turn announced a full Council of the UOC with the participation of clergy and laity.

It must be said that this audacious plan of Metropolitan Onufry worked. Moscow's supporters were confused, and their resistance was not as effective as expected. In fact, the main opponents of Metropolitan Onufry were Vadim Novinsky and Metropolitan Luke (Kovalenko) of Zaporizhzhia.

If at the morning meeting there was about 60% support for separation from Moscow, by the afternoon gathering, which assessed amendments "on independence," there was 70%-80% support. And this is the result of a unique situation within the present-day Orthodox world: for many of those gathered, Metropolitan Onufry's popularity is so high that they are ready to follow him, even if they themselves doubt or oppose separation from Moscow.

At the Council, Metropolitan Onufry himself did his best to avoid using the word "autocephaly." He spoke of "independence," thereby confusing both his opponents and even some of his supporters.

It has been four days since the Council, but the changes to the UOC Charter have still not been published. There are no official comments from Metropolitan Onufry on the results.

I assume that his silence is deliberate. The situation in the Church and in the wider Ukrainian society is so complicated that Metropolitan Onufry wants to see how many supporters he has, what arguments his opponents have, and how many of them are there.

We might note that Metropolitan Onufry's actions were not all successful. He did not use his support at the Council to reconfigure the membership of the Holy Synod. The Synod continues to include some of his opponents. He did not dismiss the odious and openly pro-Moscow Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed), who was the abbot of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

It remains unclear how Metropolitan Onufry will engage the primates of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches in order to communicate this historic series of events and, perhaps, his plan for further steps.

Obviously, the decisions of the Council drastically change the balance of power: internally the UOC, having separated from Moscow, has become stronger, but at the same time it has become significantly weaker. Strictly speaking, the UOC has lost its clear canonical status and is teetering on the verge of a schism. During a major war,

this is understandable, but in the long run, this status should be changed. Given that a re-subordination to the ROC is no longer possible, I see only three ways to establish the long-term situation of the UOC:

1) Joining/uniting with the OCU, which has already acquired the Tomos of Autocephaly from the Ecumenical Patriarch—but judging by the harsh wording of the Council regarding the OCU, this path will be challenging and time consuming; tangible results are likely to take a very long time.

2) Create an Exarchate (or several exarchates under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Ukraine)—but this requires the consent of the Ecumenical Patriarch, above all, and it is not guaranteed that the representatives of Metropolitan Onufry can successfully carry out such negotiations.

3) Obtain de facto recognition of at least some of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches for the existence of a "gray zone"—there is no clear autocephalous status, but local Churches will not break communion, because it would be crazy to push into schism the Church that has 52 dioceses and more than 12,000 parishes, and which itself is not willing to split. This way can be called "ROCOR 2.0," which is very likely what Metropolitan Onufry's main plan is.

One day after the UOC Council, the Moscow Patriarchate responded to Metropolitan Onufry and the entire Ukrainian Church with poorly veiled threats. However, it is clear that Metropolitan Onufry is not afraid of them.

It is difficult to say how difficult and painful the path to UOC autocephaly will be. However, now it is important to help Ukraine's largest religious community acquire a new status. The solidarity of the local Orthodox Churches with the UOC could manifest itself in this. Obviously, in recent years the churches have been rather feeble in showing solidarity. Perhaps the time has come when it is worth showing it?

*Sergei Chapnin is editor-in-chief of «The Gifts», a magazine of contemporary Christian culture, and curator of exhibitions on contemporary Christian art. Previously he was editor-in-chief of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate and deputy editor-in-chief of the Moscow Patriarchate Publishing House.*

*Public Orthodoxy (Greek-American on-line presence at Fordham University) seeks to promote conversation by providing a forum for diverse perspectives on contemporary issues related to Orthodox Christianity. The positions expressed in this essay are solely the author's and do not necessarily represent the views of the editors or the Orthodox Christian Studies Center.*

### **St. Nicholas in DC: Collection for Ukraine**

For over five months, entire regions in Eastern and Southern Ukraine have been zones of active military operations, where living is no longer possible. Civilians (primarily women with children and the elderly) have been forced to resettle in Ukraine's central and western regions, closer to the border with Poland. In most cases, people fleeing the realities of war have only a few hours to pack their belongings and must leave everything behind, running with only documents and a few essential things.

The administrations of the cities and villages where refugees are resettled have turned into points of assistance for people who fled the war regions. Refugees turn to administrations for clothing, hygiene products, medicines, and food. We personally know and work with volunteers in the Zhytomyr and Kiev regions of Ukraine who are helping those in need.

We started a collection of items back in April and have already shipped out over 9,000 pounds of humanitarian aid. We are continuing our collection as the need is growing bigger each day.

Please see the full list of the immediate needs below. You can bring your donations to St. Nicholas Cathedral, preferably on Sundays, when the church is open.

You can also purchase the items via the [Amazon Humanitarian Aid List](#).

For more information, please contact Nataliya (703-200-4818).

#### **List of items to be sent:**

- First aid and first aid kits
- Over the counter medications, *i.e.*, pain and cold medicines, aspirin, antiseptics
- Combat application tourniquets (CAT)
- Tonometers
- Thermometers
- Baby food, formula and diapers
- Educational toys for kids
- Hygiene products (women's products, adult diapers, toothpaste, toothbrushes etc.)
- Winter Clothes and footwear for men/women/children (especially children 10 –16 years old)
- Thermal underwear
- Underwear and socks (must be new)
- Towels and bedding sheets
- Sleeping bags and blankets
- Candles

We also raise money to cover shipping costs to Ukraine by sea (\$0.99 per pound) and air (\$2.89 per pound). You can write a check to Saint Nicholas Cathedral with a note: 'For Ukraine'.

Thank you very much for your support! Ukrainian people need our help now!



# UKRAINE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**Hope and Help in Time of Tremendous Need**


With strong partner relations and long experience across Eastern Europe, IOCC is now addressing immediate and long-term needs in and around Ukraine. Work is ongoing in Poland and Romania to assist refugees and those serving them. Programs are reaching people in need inside Ukraine with food, hygiene supplies, and other basics.

**30<sup>th</sup>**  
YEAR OF SERVICE | 1992-2022

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