June 29, 2008
Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

To the Venerable Pastors, God-loving Monastics and Devout Faithful of our Diocesan Family:

Christ is in our midst!

On the last two days of the month of June, we celebrate the feast of the Chief Apostles Peter and Paul and the Synaxis, or gathering, of the Twelve Apostles. These two feasts remind us that, although each of the Apostles labored in their own personal way, it is as a community that they were “sent” to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven. And, although they each labored in different parts of the world, it is together, in unison, that their words have gone out into all the ends of the world (Psalm 18:5).

As the Orthodox Church in America prepare for the 15th All American Council in November, our prayer should be that our own gathering, our synaxis, would take place with the same spirit of unity and conciliarity as those first councils of Apostles. Our own times are not so different from theirs: we still face temptations and struggles as they did, and yet we also share in the same gift of the grace of the Holy Spirit which was given to them at Pentecost.

And so, in order to face those temptations and to receive that grace, each of us must labor, not only for our own salvation, but for the salvation of our brothers and sisters. This means that we must pray for one another and with one another. We must communicate with one another and share with one another. We must love one another and so fulfill the law of Christ.

As a means of doing just this, our Diocese will hold an extraordinary Diocesan Assembly on Saturday, August 9th at St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Philadelphia. This will be an opportunity for us, not only to consider resolutions for the All American Council, but to pray together and to share our thoughts and concerns as a Diocesan family. Another opportunity for such sharing will be the Town Hall Meeting which is to be held at St. Nicholas Church in Bethlehem on Saturday, July 19.

I will be present at both of these gatherings and I encourage you to participate in them as well, through your attendance or through your prayers on those days. Without our work together and our prayer as a community, none of our efforts will ever come to fruition. And above all, let us remember the Holy Apostles and become imitators of them, even as they also are of Christ (I Cor. 11:1).

With the love of Christ,

+Bishop Tikhon
Holy Trinity Church in Pottstown celebrates 80th Anniversary

On June 22, the feast of All Saints, Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Pottstown, PA celebrated its 80th Anniversary. His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, celebrated the Divine Liturgy together with the current Rector of the parish, Archpriest David Mahaffey and former pastors of the Church, Archpriest Nicholas Yuschak and Archpriest Michael Slovesko. Also serving was Protodeacon Peter Skoog who is assigned to Holy Trinity. Following the Divine Liturgy, His Grace presented a Diocesan Grammata to Mrs. Martha Mossner in recognition of her selfless and sacrificial service to the parish, to St. Tikhon’s Seminary and to the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. A festive banquet was held at a local banquet facility with many guests, including State Representative Thomas Quigley and Mr. Vincent O’Donski, representing Congressman Charles Dent. Mr. Paul Boris acted as Toastmaster and greetings were offered by Ms. Rebecca Hyunyan, Parish Council President, Mr. Charles Staso, the event chairman. The event was

Wilkes-Barre Deanery hosts farewell dinner

The Wilkes-Barre Deanery hosted a dinner on June 3rd in honor of Priest James Weremedic who is leaving his parish assignment at Holy Annunciation Church in Berwick in order to pursue an internship in the field of hospital chaplaincy. Our prayers and best wishes to Father James, Matushka Lisa and their children, James and Victoria as they continue to do

Diocesan clergy attend continuing education conference

Clergy from the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania were joined by clergy of other dioceses for a Clergy Continuing Education Conference held on June 17-19 at St. Tikhon’s Seminary. The topic of the conference was “Parish Management, Renewal and Growth” and the presentations were offered by the V. Rev. Archpriest Alexander Atty of the Antiochian Archdiocese.

On June 15, the feast of Holy Pentecost, St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Jeromy inaugurated its centennial year celebrations with the dedication of a new hand-carved archway for the cemetery. His Grace, Bishop Tikhon, celebrated the service for the blessing of the archway, together with the Rector of the parish, Archpriest John Kowalczyk. In memory of all the departed faithful of the parish, Father John also served a Memorial Service. Many of the faithful, as well as local residents, attended the events of the day which were covered by the local television and print media.
Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, MacAdoo

On May 18, His Grace, Bishop Tikhon made a pastoral visit to Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in MacAdoo. During the Divine Liturgy, which he concelebrated with Archpriest Claude Vinyard and Deacon Adam Sexton, His Grace tonsured Gregory Kurtz to the rank of reader. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, Diocesan Grammotas were presented to Gregory and Michael Kurtz, Rosella Gardecki and Kimberly Ann Pyle in recognition of their contributions to the life of the parish and the diocese. A luncheon was served at a local restaurant.

St. Tikhon’s Seminary mission choir visits the relics of St. John Maximovich

It was on June 14, 2008 - the day before Pentecost - that the St. Tikhon’s Seminary mission choir sang the entire Divine Liturgy that morning at the ROCOR church on Geary St. in San Francisco, where the incorrupt relics of St. John (Maximovich) the Wonderworker of Shanghai and San Francisco lay enshrined. The church is called Joy of All That Sorrow Cathedral. After the service, with everyone still there in the church, the assistant priest, Fr. Peter, explained how this was an historic moment, since no group from the OCA had ever sung in their cathedral before. And after speaking about the need for everyone in the parish to think about the Church’s need for good priests and bishops, he urged them to be generous in contributing to a special collection for our Seminary - in the collection, they raised $555. Afterwards our Seminarians were guests of honor at a very nice meal served in the Church hall. The choir was led by Fr. Sergius (Bowyer), and its members were Fr. Seraphim Majmudar, Kyrill Williams, George Sharonoff, Patrick Burns, Aleksei Schmidt, Adam Nixon, Patrick Henre, and Nicholai Breckenridge.

Looking forward:

July 6-12
St. Tikhon’s Summer Camp

July 11-12
Annual Picnic, All Saints Orthodox Church, Olyphant

July 19
Town Hall Meeting, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Bethlehem

July 25
Due date for resolution proposals for All American Council

July 30
Akathist to St Panteleimon, St Basil’s Orthodox Church, Simpson, 7 p.m.

Aug. 9
Special Diocesan Assembly (St. Stephen’s Cathedral, Philadelphia)

Sept. 1
Census revisions due

September 21
100th Anniversary
St. Michael’s, Mt. Carmel

Correction of last month’s article: Reader Jon Black of Holy Trinity, Pottstown, retired as choir director after eight years. It was his father (Reader John Black) who took his place at Holy Trinity as choir director (not his son).