

Pastoral Visits to American Exarchate Parishes on the East Coast and in the Midwest

Feast Day of the Ascension Parish in Rochester, New York

IN MID-MAY (New Style), His Eminence, Archbishop Chrysostomos, His Grace, Bishop Auxentios of Photiki, and Archimandrite Akakios travelled to our Exarchate Church of the Holy Ascension in Rochester, New York, for the Feast Day of the parish. They were joined there by His Eminence, Archbishop Andronik of Syracuse, Hierodeacon Father Makary, Archdeacon Father Jov Chemerov, and Deacon Father Anthony Gunin, from our Sister Church, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (under Metropolitan Agafangel), with whom they concelebrated the Divine Liturgy. Also present from our Sister Church was Mother Agapia, from the Convent of St. Nicholas in Cleveland, New York, a longtime friend of the Rochester parish. Accompanying the guest clergy was Mr. Konstantin Preobrazhensky, the well-known Russian author and intelligence expert. (*See a collage of photographs of the Feast Day events in Rochester at the end of this report.*)

At the Small Entrance of the Divine Liturgy, Archbishop Chrysostomos, the chief celebrant, awarded Father Nicholas Chernjavsky, pastor of the Holy Ascension parish, with the purple *kamilavka*, in recognition of his indefatigable pastoral work. Together with his wife, Matushka Christine, he serves what is a truly inspiring Orthodox parish. Though the Church facilities are still under renovation and incomplete, the love among the faithful and their moderate yet firm commitment to Orthodoxy give the parish a sense of solidarity and strength that is remarkable. Its many children and young families also testify to a vibrant future for the community.

Later in the Liturgy, Archbishop Chrysostomos also ordained one of the parish's Readers, Dr. Peter Bushunow, to the Holy Diaconate, the first level of the Orthodox Priesthood. Father Peter, a physician, practices oncology and is Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. He is married and has five sons. His wife, Matushka (Diakonissa) Melissa, president of the parish sisterhood, is deeply involved in the life of the Holy Ascension Church.

In his sermon following the moving Ordination of Deacon Father Peter, Archbishop Chrysostomos spoke of his great enthusiasm for the dual rôle of Priest and physician, which affords a clergyman the opportunity to heal both the body and soul of those entrusted to his care. He also pointed out that "the Ordination of a clergyman is intimately tied to the community of believers, who are called to become 'gods by Grace' through participation in the Mysteries of the Church, which are the medicines that heal the ailing human soul. In the act of Ordination, the clergy are endowed with a special Grace to dispense those Mysteries to the faithful, whom they serve and from whom they are drawn." He concluded his comments by complimenting the congregation, Father Peter's mother, Laura, and his recently reposed stepfather, Yuri Vladimirovich Dmohowski, for having, "through their faith and dedication, produced such a worthy candidate for the Priesthood."

Following the Liturgy, a banquet was held for the some seventy persons attending the Feast Day Liturgy and Deacon Father Peter's Ordination, among whom were several visitors from our two Exarchate parishes in Toronto, Ontario, Canada: the Greek Orthodox Church of Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene and the Holy Archangel Michael Serbian Orthodox Church, which are several hours away from Rochester. We wish the parish, its pastor, the newly ordained Deacon, and the community "Many Years" of fruitful witness in living, teaching, and faithfully preserving, with humility, the traditions of the Orthodox Faith.

Pastoral Visit to Exarchate Parish in Boston, Massachusetts

ON THE SUNDAY following Ascension Thursday, Archbishop Chrysostomos, Bishop Auxentios, and Archimandrite Akakios visited the small Exarchate parish of St. John Chrysostomos in Saugus



(Boston), Massachusetts, on the Feast Day of the Holy Fathers of the First Oecumenical Synod, where they celebrated Liturgy with the parish's pastor, the Reverend Dr. Gregory Telepneff, and Father Dmitry Amelchenko, who is the pastor of a small mission, also in the Boston area, under the jurisdiction of our Sister Church, the Russian Orthodox Church

Abroad. Father Gregory and his wife, Matushka (Presbytera) Maria, hosted a delightful Agape Meal after the Liturgy. Following the meal, the faithful participated in a question-and-answer session, in which the visiting Bishops and Archimandrite Akakios commented on a number of spiritual subjects. The visit was an occasion of joy on the part of all present.

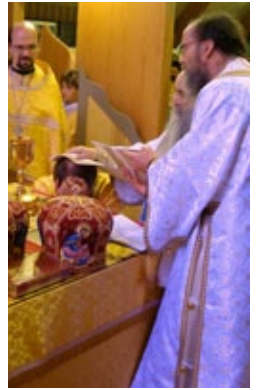
Visit to Saint John the Baptist Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa

ON THEIR RETURN to California by train from Rochester, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts—Archimandrite Akakios having returned to the Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery earlier by air—Archbishop Chrysostomos and Bishop Auxentios stopped for a day at our Exarchate parish in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Father Raphael Abraham, his wife, Presbytera Vasilissa, their son, Father John Abraham, his wife, Presbytera Xenia, and another son, Reader Jameel Abraham, offered them warm hospitality.

(SEE COLLAGE OF ROCHESTER PHOTOGRAPHS BELOW)



Faithful, Ordination moments, and Father Peter with Matushka Melissa





Scenes from the Ordination Banquet.

