



His Beatitude Metropolitan Jonah comments on results of meeting of Orthodox Church in America Holy Synod of Bishops

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, led by its Primate, His Beatitude Jonah, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada, met for a pre-Lenten retreat from February 22-24, 2011, at Santa Fe, New Mexico.

During the retreat it was agreed to grant His Beatitude Jonah's request for a period of 60 days as a time 'for a personal retreat and spiritual renewal'. Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit was charged with temporary administration of the Orthodox Church in America. The Holy Synod also accepted the resignation of Archpriest Alexander Garklavs as Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America and appointed Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh as interim Chancellor.

On February 27, 2011, the Sunday of the Last Judgment, His Beatitude Jonah celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas's in Washington, after which he made the following comments on the above-mentioned decisions of the Holy Synod:

"As many of you know, in line with the longstanding tradition in the church of an intensified prayer life during Lent, I as a diocesan bishop, requested from my brothers on the Holy Synod to set aside a period of time for myself during the Great Fast to spend in personal reflection and renewal... Since my becoming Metropolitan, this will be the first extended period of rest that I have taken in quite some time. I am extremely grateful to my brothers for granting me this request, and for taking on the burden of added responsibility to their already busy schedules: Bishop Tikhon is now the locum tenens of the Diocese of the Midwest, and Bishop Nikon is now the locum tenens of the Diocese of the South.

I had intended, and still plan on doing so, to rest as much as possible during the Great Fast, spending time with loved ones and celebrating and attending the Divine Services at my Primatial Cathedral of St Nicholas in Washington.

However, due to inaccurate reporting on the Internet stating that I had been deposed, that I had resigned, that I am on a leave of absence, rumors that have spread worldwide and have caused great concern among many. I owe you the faithful of this diocese clarification of the facts.

I am still your Metropolitan. I am still your diocesan bishop. I am still the active primate of the Orthodox Church in America. The reports are not true. I am merely taking a retreat, a time for reflection.

I have requested a time of rest. In line with the Holy Canons, the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, and the good order of the church, no major decisions will be made without my knowledge and consent. His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel will be assisting the officers of the church in day-to-day operations. His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek has been kind enough to offer his support in the role of interim Chancellor of the OCA. In line with the Statute of the OCA, I am postponing the official Spring meetings of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council until the period of time after Pascha. The members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America have been informed of this postponement.

As the Lord said in the midst of His disciples, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' I love you, I thank you for your continued support and prayers, and look forward to celebrating the Great and Holy Fast with you as we make the journey to the Pascha of Our Lord. Now, let us forget about what lies behind and push forward to what lies ahead. May the Lord bless all of you".

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