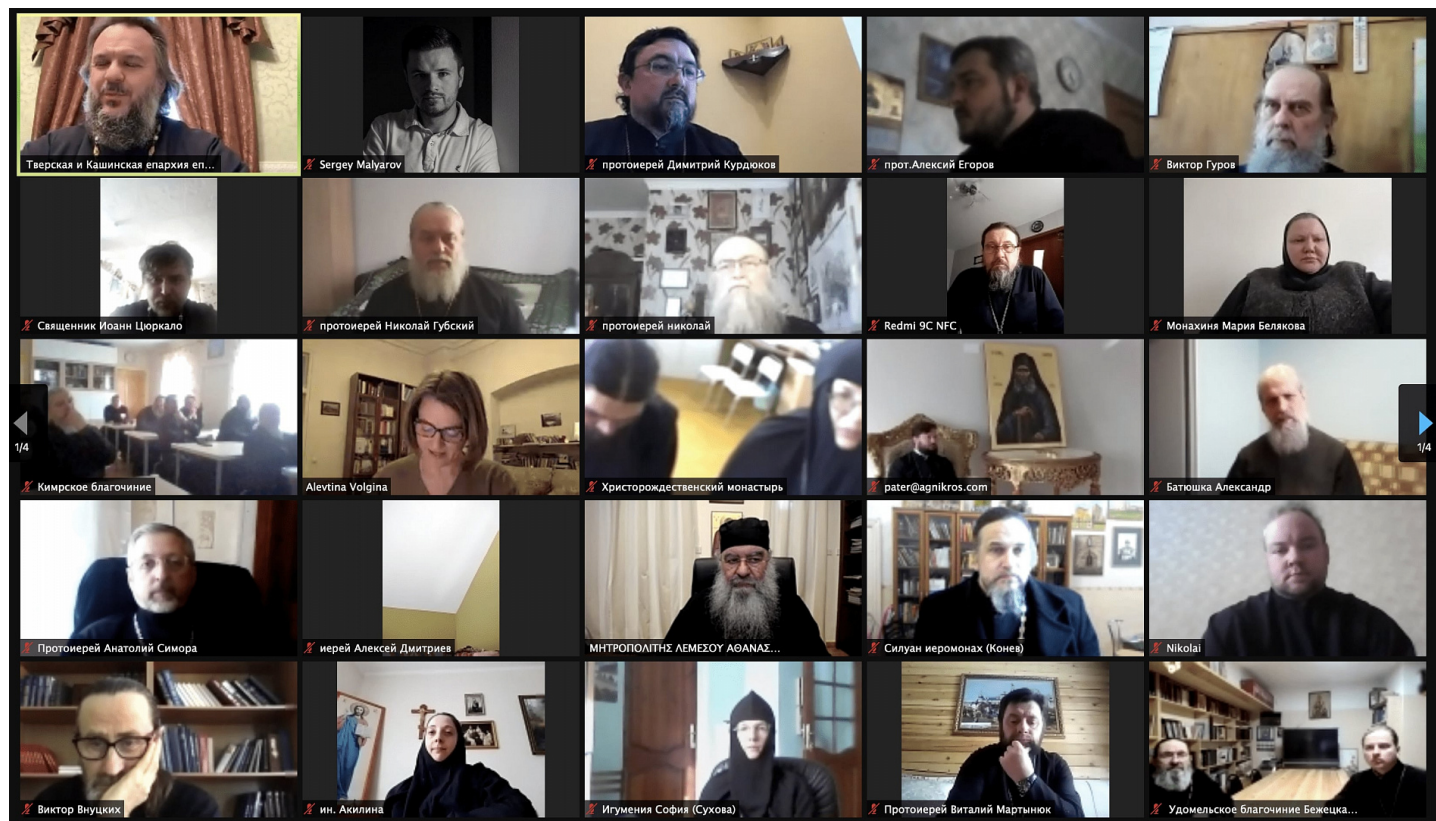




## Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol holds pastoral seminar for clergy of Metropolis of Tver



On March 22, 2021, a second online seminar took place at the diocese of Tver as a part the series of pastoral seminars for the clergy in Tver. Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol, a hierarch of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, acted as the speaker. The theme was 'Ministry and flock: an experience of creative work and spiritual growth. The spiritual growth of a pastor and overcoming pastoral temptations in the context of the experience of elders of the Holy Mount Athos'.

Participating in the conference were Metropolitan Ambrose of Tver and Kashin, Bishop Adrian of Rzhev and Toropets, Bishop Philaret of Bezhetsk and Vesyegonsk, and monks from the dioceses of Tver, Bezhetsk and Rzhev of the Metropolis of Tver. Metropolitan Athanasios answered questions asked in the visual communication and the chat.

The questions were on various topics concerning the devotional and liturgical life of the Church, the Prayer of Jesus, missionary, youth and pastoral ministry, spiritual and family problems in the life of the clergy, protective measures against the coronavirus infection in a church, sports for the clergy and parishioners, the activity of clerical bloggers.

The participants in the seminar were greeted by Metropolitan Ambrose. 'Today we are holding a pastoral seminar in the online mode. It is led by Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol from the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Unfortunately, today we often become witnesses of the clergy speaking about a certain burnout, with some even leaving their ministry and about the presence of many temptations today, including in the Church', he said.

Opening the seminar, His Eminence Ambrose posed a question of what the Athonite elders focus on in their talks with priests. Metropolitan Athanasios spoke about monastic life on Athos and noted in particular that the primary duties of the Athonite hieromonks is to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, to look after themselves, to be virtuous and to be in prayer and communion with God.

To the question of how a monk can overcome temptations in the modern world, His Eminence Athanasios answered, 'Our time differs from the past epochs. Therefore, monkhood cannot preserve the forms of monkhood that existed in antiquity. However, the essence of monkhood has been preserved. A monk is a man who has nothing in this world except Christ. A monk is a man who is outside of the world. He comes to a monastery to fill his heart with love of Christ and to do spiritual work. All this promotes the ascetical mood of our Church'.

Answering the question about parish priests-bloggers, the hierarch of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus noted that it is beneficial to use the internet for educating their flocks; 'however and here too one needs to be reasonable and attentive so that one may not become dependent on the internet. And one should not waste too much of one's resources so that it would not turn out that we are lacking resources for other duties of ours. Those who are married should not forget that they have wives and children to whom they should devote some time as well. If they are in the church all day and sit in the internet all night or talk over phone, then their family life will be destroyed'.

His Eminence Athanasios advised priests to read all the works of St. John Chrysostom for their spiritual growth and parishioners to read the Holy Gospel, Lives of Saints, as well as biographies and works of the saints of our day, such as Paisios of Mount Athos, Joseph the Hesychast, Porphyrios the Kapsokalyvite.

Concerning the situation in Ukraine, Metropolitan Athanasios answered that he adopted a position according to his conscience and canons of the Holy Church.

After the conference, Metropolitan Ambrose thanked His Eminence Athanasios, Archpriest Pavel Povalyaev, rector of the church of St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker in Limassol, interpreter Alevtina Volgina and expressed the wish to see Metropolitan Athanasios personally in the nearest future.

In his response, His Eminence Athanasios thanked the head of the Metropolis of Tver for the invitation to speak at the online conference.

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Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol, a principled supporter of the canonical way of resolving problems of inter-church relations, was on a visit to our Church on several occasions. He is the author of spiritual books and a preacher, a disciple of the Athonite starets Joseph of Vatopedi and Paisios of the Holy Mount Athos; in 1991-1992 by the decision of the Holy Synod he was unanimously elected as Metropolitan of Limassol.

Since 1993, Metropolitan Athanasios has held open talks in churches of the Metropolis of Limassol and the University of Cyprus. More than once, he gave talks in Sankt-Petersburg and Moscow Theological Academies.

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