

**Resolution of the Houghton, MI Clergy Retreat
September 22-24, 2005
Diocese of Chicago & Detroit
ROCOR**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

We the clergy of the Chicago & Detroit Diocese have gathered for a pastoral meeting in Houghton, MI, on the northern-most frontier of our diocese. Gathering here we also celebrate the feast day of Sts. Sergius & Herman of Valaam at the only parish in the Russian Church Outside of Russia named in honor of these great ascetics of the Russian North. This gathering also marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of this mission. On this occasion we thank Almighty God for all the great mercies that He has bestowed upon our diocese since our last clergy meeting in Chicago last March.

We have much to thank God for! We have been blessed to be together, and to commune of the Holy Mysteries under the omophorion of His Grace, Bishop Peter of Cleveland. Our spiritual Abba, Archbishop Alypy, continues to pray for us, while Bishop Peter is our acting ruling bishop. We rejoice at Archbishop Alypy's ability to actively take part in the 75th anniversary celebrations of Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY earlier this month. Our diocese is growing in the number of parishes and faithful, especially in our mission parishes like the one we gather at today. We commend the faithful of the Sts. Sergius & Herman Mission for their diligent and God-pleasing work in not only maintaining the parish that has been entrusted to them, but in attracting new converts to the faith despite having no permanent priest.

We also thank God for the establishment of our Diocesan Pastoral School and for the first class of students that began their studies this fall. Glory to God, students from almost every diocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia are registered in our school. We are forever grateful to His Grace, Bishop Alexander of Buenos Aires for his assistance in establishing the school, and for allowing us to share in the rich resources that he so diligently and tirelessly worked to compile. We ask the prayers of all the faithful of our diocese for the repose of the soul of Bishop Alexander, one of the most eminent theologians of our Church, who left this life on August 30/September 12, 2005. May his memory be eternal!

We are encouraged by the continued positive dialogue between our Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the Russian Orthodox Church in the homeland (Moscow Patriarchate), and by the Commission's Reports, which have recently been promulgated throughout our church. His Grace Bishop Peter discussed the latest developments in the work of the bilateral commission, and kindly shared his views with us. We call the faithful of our diocese to continued prayer for the reconciliation of the fullness of the Russian Orthodox Church in love and mutual understanding!

In view of the tasks facing us, we humbly request our hierarchs' blessing to implement in our diocese the custom blessed by Sts. Patriarch Tikhon and Archbishop John of Shanghai & San Francisco – to sing at the end of regular Divine Services the third irmos of the feast of the Presentation of our Lord:

“O Lord, the firm foundation of those that put their trust in Thee, do Thou confirm the Church, which Thou has purchased with Thy precious blood.” Tone III

We resolve to return to our parishes and prayerfully prepare our flock for the important decision of electing lay representatives, whose names are to be submitted to the Diocesan Authority before the feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple this year. The names of two of these representatives will be chosen by lot on that day at the Diocesan Protection Cathedral as our diocesan lay representatives to the All-Diaspora Council to be held in San Francisco, CA in May 2006.

Finally, we ask the prayers of our flock for God’s blessings on our Archpastors, that through His Grace and divine direction they may continue to shepherd us all, leading us to our Heavenly Homeland.

+Bishop Peter
Igumen Ioann
Archpriest John Shaw
Archpriest Eugene Gruchetski
Archpriest Andre Papkov
Archpriest Paul Bassett
Priest Martin Swanson
Priest Victor Trotskyy
Priest Thomas Kulp
Deacon Basil Gilliland
Priest Gregory Joyce, Diocesan Secretary