

## A Moving Display of Pan-Orthodox Fellowship

*by Archbishop Chrysostomos*

**W**ith my humble blessing and that of His Grace, Bishop Auxentios, as well as the approval of the Holy Standing Synod and the Acting President of the Holy Synod in Resistance, His Grace, Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, the American Exarchate of our Church has joined with Archbishop Andronik of Ottawa and North America, from our Sister Church, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (under Metropolitan Agafangel), in fostering a pan-Orthodox witness for our two Churches in the U.S. and Canada. The purpose of this jurisdictional, spiritual, and personal effort at commonality in witness and worship is to act, while upholding the ethnic honor and traditions of all of the constituent groups of faithful in our two Churches, as a single Body of Christ in reaching out, in a pan-Orthodox manner, to all traditionalist Orthodox in this country and to those interested in traditionalist Orthodoxy.

The purpose of Orthodoxy is not, in its essence, to preserve the “Greeknness,” or “Russianness,” or any other ethnic or external characteristic of a local or national Church. While the Church, in condescending to human weaknesses and tribal affinity, has brought honor to the many nationalities that have given over their cultures and identities to historical Orthodoxy, the very purpose of this process has always been to spread Orthodoxy universally, in a catholic way, beyond any single nationality or tribe. Ethnicity serves the Church, and not vice-versa. When Orthodox begin to serve ethnic ends, preserving human tradition and not Holy Tradition, and this to the exclusion of their ultimate service to the brotherhood of all men, to the universal Body of Christ which is the Church, and to the “New Israel” of Orthodox tradition, they defile the Church, mock the universal Human Archetype of Christ, and soon bring dishonor upon the ethnic entity which they have foolishly elevated above the Universal Church.

If, in acting as resisters within Orthodoxy to return all of the faithful to a full knowledge and observance of Orthodoxy, in a uni-

tive witness before the erosion of Church tradition by religious syncretism, unbelief, and spiritual malaise of an unprecedented kind, we must rise above our personal sins, we must also rise above the folly and sin of impeding the spread of the Faith through the prideful elevation of ethnicity above the Truth. If forsaking the mother and father of ethnicity is ineluctably bound to the love of Christ and the Church, it is obvious that one cannot serve the resistance without an absolute fidelity to Orthodoxy above country or race. Such is the conviction that has motivated our desire to bring to fruition instances of common worship and joint work, carried out largely by Bishop Auxentios and Archbishop Andronik, with my enthusiastic support, in our Exarchate and in the North American administrative district of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

His Eminence, Archbishop Andronik, has taken the first step in such activities, having celebrated, during this Lenten season, the Service of Holy Unction at our Ascension parish in Rochester, New York, and at our Parish of Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene in Toronto. At the latter church, where more than sixty-five people participated in the Unction Service, His Eminence also celebrated the Presanctified Liturgy for a gathering of faithful from Greek, Russian, Bulgarian, and other ethnic backgrounds, as well as converts to the Orthodox Faith. This wonderful expression of a pan-Orthodox spirit was also evident when His Eminence came to Etna and celebrated the Feast Day of our Monastery, on the second Sunday of the Great Fast, with us. He will shortly visit our Convent of the Protection of the Mother of God, in Bluffton, Alberta, where he will again celebrate an Unction Service together with the married Priest who serves

the convent, Protopresbyter Father Gabriel Lee.

All of these activities should bring us immense joy and great hope for the future, even if, as the Small Flock, our actions before so-called world Orthodoxy may now bring us scorn. Let us hope that in the future our sacrifices, despite our unworthiness, will awaken our Orthodox brothers and bring about unity in the Truth, in Holy Tradition, and most beau-



His Eminence, Archbishop Andronik

tifully in the catholicity of an Orthodoxy that, while honoring its ethnic past, does so with an eye towards oneness in our transformation in Christ, in Whom there is neither Greek nor Jew, male nor female, master nor bondsman.

See the photograph above of His Eminence, Archbishop Andronik, as well as a photograph below of the Unction Service at our Rochester parish, during the reading of one of the Epistles by young Vasilii Bushunow, son of Dr. and Mrs. Peter Bushunow, who are active members, leaders, and supporters of the community.



Service of Holy Unction at the Ascension Church, Rochester, New York



*Left:* Archbishop Andronik at Toronto Parish. *Above:* Archbishop Andronik's accompanying priest, Father Oleg, at Toronto Parish.