

Tonsure of Reader Hunna Abraham

ON PALM SUNDAY, His Grace, Bishop Auxentios tonsured Hunna (John) Abraham (Abraham) to the rank of Reader at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a parish of the American Exarchate of our Church. Reader Hunna's grandfather, Protopresbyter Raphael Abraham, Dean of the Exarchate, and his father, Father John Abraham, serve at St. John's Church. Reader Hunna was trained by his uncle, Reader Jameel Abraham, who was in turn trained by Father Raphael and Father's venerable father, the late Reader (and gifted Chanter) Abraham Abraham (Abraham Abraham).

The parish in Cedar Rapids was one of two Antiochian communities in the city, separated over the years by the division in the jurisdictions of the Patriarchate of Antioch (then often called the Syrian Orthodox Church) in America under Archbishop Michael (Shaheen) of the Archdiocese of Toledo (to which St. John's belonged) and Metropolitan Phillip (Saliba) of the Archdiocese of New York. In 1975, the two jurisdictions were reconciled, but St. John's Church placed itself under several jurisdictions, before becoming a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.



Reader Jameel Abraham, newly-tonsured Reader Hunna Abraham, and His Grace, Bishop Auxentios

Shortly after the union of our Synod with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, in 1994, St. John's Church petitioned to be released to our Bishops, since it followed a Greek typikon. This

petition was granted by Archbishop Alypy of Chicago, and the parish has been under our jurisdiction since. The beautiful Church, stunningly adorned in traditional style and insisting on a traditionalist confession and observant ecclesiastical life, has dwindled down to a handful of faithful, mostly the Abraham family.

Nonetheless, St. John's has survived as a firm witness to Orthodox spiritual tradition, which has been handed down for generations from father to son and mother to daughter. With the sacrifices and oversight of Father Raphael and his wife, Presbyteria Vasilissa, and Father John and his wife, Presbyteria Xenia, the Abraham family has formed and guided its offspring, in the face of lamentable challenges, in that Orthodoxy which, when compromise, betrayal, and politics have subsided, survives from within the Church's core as its seed for a positive future.

“Many Years” to Reader Hunna.

