

ST BASIL THE GREAT ORTHODOX CHURCH

205 Highland Avenue
Des Peres, MO 63122

A parish of the
Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

CLERGY

Archpriest Sergii Alekseev, Parish Rector
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich
Priest Thomas Nichols
Deacon Ephraim Galloway



DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY SUMMARY

From October 2-6, 2022, under the chairmanship of His Eminence Archbishop Peter of Chicago & Mid-America, the triennial Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Chicago & Mid-America took place in Austin, Texas.



The clergy of St. Basil's along with some parishioners were able to attend the assembly, pictured on the next page with Archbishop Peter.

NOVEMBER 2022

Schedule of Services

- **Righteous John of Kronstadt**
 - Mon., Oct. 31 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Tue., Nov. 1 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Kazan Icon of the Mother of God**
 - Fri., Nov. 4 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **21st Sunday after Pentecost**
 - "Joy of All Who Sorrow" Icon of the Theotokos
 - Sat., Nov. 5 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 6 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr Demetrius of Thessaloniki**
 - Mon., Nov. 7 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Tue., Nov. 8 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **22nd Sunday after Pentecost**
 - Sat., Nov. 12 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 13 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Great Martyr George**
 - Wed., Nov. 16 Moleben 9 A.M.
- **23rd Sunday after Pentecost**
 - Sat., Nov. 19 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 20 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Synaxis of Archangel Michael**
 - Sun., Nov. 20 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Mon., Nov. 21 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Holy Hierarch John Chrysostom**
 - (Services at House Springs Church)
 - Fri., Nov. 25 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Sat., Nov. 26 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **24th Sunday after Pentecost**
 - **Apostle Philip**
 - Sat., Nov. 26 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun., Nov. 27 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.

Resolution of the Diocesan Assembly, Oct 2-6, 2022

As representatives of the community of prayer which is our diocese and buttressed here by daily participation in the Life-Giving Divine Services of the Holy Orthodox Church, we the delegates of the Diocesan Assembly of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America, with the blessing, and under the guidance of His Eminence Archbishop Peter, give thanks to God for the many blessings He has poured out upon our Diocese in the past four years:

- By the election of our Council of Bishops, we have a new First Hierarch, His Eminence Nicholas, Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York;
- New missions have opened in Lubbock, TX; McHenry, IL; Madison, WI; Portage, WI; Traverse City, MI; Corpus Christi, TX; Lockhart, TX; and Marquette, MI.
- New Church buildings have been built or purchased in Austin, TX; San Antonio, TX; Minneapolis, MN; Ft. Wayne, IN; and Kansas City, KS.
- Nineteen new priests and eight new deacons now serve in our diocese;
- The Pastoral School continues training candidates to serve the Church both in our diocese and other dioceses throughout the world. Of the 49 graduates since its inception, 19 finished their studies in the last four years. More than 100 students are currently enrolled in the Pastoral School;
- Our Diocesan Youth Committee annually sponsors St. Herman conferences and coordinates resources for Church School programs. This year's conference will be hosted by Sts. Peter and Fevronia parish in Kansas City, KS, December 26-30, 2022.
- Our Diocesan Music Committee has been effectively supporting the liturgical singing in our parishes through in-person workshops, remote instruction, participation in St. Herman Conferences and valuable online resources;
- We have passed through the trial of COVID-19 as communities strengthened and unified in Christ;
- The Supreme Court of the United States overturned Roe v. Wade, reducing the presence of the sin of abortion in many of our communities, a legal decision which spurs us to remember our Christian responsibility to serve Christ through care for our neighbors in need, mothers and their children, born and unborn;

We have prayed that the All-Merciful Lord give rest to the soul of our recently-reposed First Hierarch, His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, and to our previous Ruling Hierarch, Archbishop Alyphy, and urge the continued prayers of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ for them and for the clergy of our diocese who have reposed since we last gathered in 2018:

Archpriest Martin Swanson, Hieromonk Nicholas



(Chebotar), and priest Vasily Melnyk.

Echoes of the mourning, fear and lament arising from the current fratricidal war in Ukraine reverberate within our parishes, spurring us to prayers for peace and labors of mercy for those displaced and in hardship. We listened with interest to the report of His Eminence, Archbishop Gabriel, on the conflict and appreciate his participation and responses to our questions. We are grateful to God to learn from Archbishop Peter that the parishioners of our diocese have gathered more than \$88,000 to aid Ukrainian refugees and those suffering in Ukraine, and encourage such efforts to continue on the local and international level. We learned of the current trials of the Church in Latvia and exhort the faithful to pray for Met. Alexander and his flock.

Aware of our great responsibility for the talents collectively entrusted to us by the Lord, we have resolved to attend to pressing needs within our diocese:

- We rededicate ourselves to supporting, nurturing, and investing in the youth of our diocese. On a parish level, this commitment primarily manifests itself in parish church schools, youth groups and choirs. Within the diocese, the annual St. Herman

Conferences and ORPR Camp most visibly carry this torch. We urge each parish to welcome families to worship and to invite youth to serve the church – be it in the altar, the choir, the candle stand or some other way. The support of the spiritual formation of the youth within parish communities must be a conscious and creative act.

- Having been reminded that the Body of Christ as it exists within our diocese is manifest within each local liturgical community, the parishes, and that together these communities support our bishop as well as the diocese as a whole and that the diocese further supports our Metropolitan and the Synod of Bishops, love for God and for our neighbor prompts us to share the gifts generously bestowed to each of us through ungrudging, regular and liberal payment of diocesan dues.
- We have charged the Diocesan Council to review the annual parish assessments, which have not increased since 2018 as well as Archbishop Peter's salary, which has not changed since 2011.
- We appeal to our brothers and sisters in Christ to also donate to the St. John Kochurov Society since it funds the particular needs of the youth, mission parishes and monastic communities.



We rejoice at the presence of Lord's Most Pure Mother with us through the miracle-working, myrrh-streaming Hawaiian Iveron Icon of the Mother of God at the patronal feast of our host parish, the Holy Mother of God Orthodox Church in

Austin (Georgetown), TX. Our Assembly concluded with the festal vigil and hierarchical liturgy, including ordinations to the priesthood of deacon Gregory Solis and to the diaconate of Christopher Morgan.

We are grateful to and appreciate that Presbytera Eugenia Constantinou, Ph.D., has instructed us about the Orthodox phronema, the mindset which Christ imparted to the Apostles and which they passed on to



their disciples and ultimately has come down to us. Just as it has through the centuries, this spring of living water sustains the faithful and has been palpably present in the warm fellowship of our Assembly, for which we earnestly give thanks to Christ the Good Shepherd.

Message to the Youth of the Diocese of Chicago & Mid-America from the Diocesan Assembly 2022

Beloved Orthodox Youth,

We celebrate your growing contributions, and we encourage your continued growth in the life of the Church. In a time of advancing spiritual darkness, the Orthodox Church serves as an anchor of authentic Truth in our Lord, building lives rooted in Holy Tradition, handed down unchanged over two thousand years of Church history. While all Orthodox Christians are called to serve, we recognize that the youth have a particular role in upholding the Faith. We call upon the Orthodox Christian youth of our diocese, with energy and sacrifice, with integrity and love, to make the Orthodox Faith your own, to support each other in your lives as brothers and sisters in Christ, to build Orthodox community together, to stand up for the Faith in every aspect of your lives, and to live full lives within the Church. Our Orthodox Faith is handed down from our Lord Jesus Christ through His Holy and Apostolic Church from generation unto generation, and the youth serve as a vital link in that chain of Faith across the ages, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Orthodox Youth: Embrace the Truth

A SPECIAL COLLECTION

From the diocesan correspondence: *In accordance with the decision of the Diocesan Council and the blessing of Archbishop Peter a Special Plate Collection is to be taken up each year in each parish of the diocese on the Sunday before or the Sunday after the civil Thanksgiving holiday (or another appropriate date chosen by the Rector of the parish, such as the Nativity of the Lord) to benefit the Diocesan Fund for the Assistance of Those in Need.*

The Special Collection for the Diocesan Fund for Assistance of Those in Need will be taken on Sunday, November 20. A basket with the appropriate sign will be held by an altar server as we come to venerate the Cross.

God willing, our ruling hierarch Archbishop Peter will be visiting St Louis on the Thanksgiving weekend: Friday, November 25th, through Sunday, November 27th. On November 26th the Church commemorates the Holy Hierarch John Chrysostom: at St John Chrysostom Church in House Springs, MO, the Vigil will be served on Friday, November 25th, at 6 P.M. and the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning at 9 A.M.

On the feast of Holy Apostle Philip – the day before beginning of the Nativity Fast – Archbishop Peter will be with us at St Basil's for the Vigil on Saturday, November 26, at 5 P.M. and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 27, at 10 A.M. After the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy the parish trapeza will take place with Archbishop Peter and visiting clergy as our dear guests.

ARCHBISHOP PETER TO VISIT ST. LOUIS

To say that the Thanksgiving weekend will be busy for our parish would be quite an understatement. Especially heavy load will be carried by the choir who will be singing at two feasts back to back, or four Divine Services in three days, culminating with the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 27th.

Let us all prepare to participate in the festivities with our ruling hierarch presiding, adhering to the words of Hieromartyr Ignatius of Antioch, a disciple of Holy Apostle John the Theologian: "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church".

FOCUS ON FOCUS

On Sunday, October 9 our parish served the FOCUS Sunday dinner. We fed 46 guests and distributed \$1055 worth of goods from the food pantry and clothing center. Thank you very much to the Sisterhood for preparing the meal and for all of those who helped serve the meal. We look forward to your virtue and faithfulness in the future. Remember, everyone and anyone is welcome to come and help!

We will serve the FOCUS Sunday dinner again on Sunday, **December 11**. If you are interested in helping, either by providing food for or helping cook it with the Sisterhood, or by distributing the meal and pantry items at Archangel Michael parish in the city, please notify Fr. Sergii, Joseph Steineger, or Constantine Stade.

In addition to the Sunday, October 9 meal, our parish supplied many jars of peanut butter and jelly, boxes of saltine crackers, and cans of stew for the October pantry collection. Again, thank you for your faithfulness. As noted in previous newsletters, those in charge of FOCUS will inform us each month what we need to provide for donations. No one can predict in advance which foods or clothing items will be chosen from the pantry, so it has to be monitored on a weekly basis. For the month of November, we have been asked to supply **hygiene kits** for the FOCUS pantry.

Fr. Sergii has sent out an email to the parish with instructions for how to provide the items we need for the hygiene kits (e.g., soap, deodorant, razors, etc.). His email includes a link to a shared sign-up sheet so that everyone can see what (and how much) everyone else is donating. Please donate your selected goods in the large plastic container in our parish coat closet **before November 20**.

WEDDING AT ST. BASIL'S

William and Xenia Ross were married on October 12 at St. Basil's. The happy couple chose Dmitry Johnson and Zinaida Harney as their sponsors. May God grant them many years!



PROSTRATIONS DURING THE DIVINE LITURGY

For many of us the word 'prostrations' is associated with Great Lent, when prostrations are numerous.

However, we make prostrations outside of Great Lent, too. We may make prostrations at our homes whenever we wish. In church, on the other hand, where everything should be done "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40), we - men and women, children and the elderly - try to worship as one body.

Most of us know that we do not make prostrations from Pascha till Pentecost and on Sundays, unless it is a Sunday when the Church honors the Precious Cross. On all other days, Monday through Saturday, during the Divine Liturgy we do make prostrations: five, to be exact.

When do we make them?

1. When the priest exclaims: "Let us give thanks unto the Lord".
2. During the epiclesis: when the priest prays to the Holy Spirit to come upon the Gifts, and he concludes this invocation by saying "Amen Amen Amen", as the choir sings: "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks unto Thee, O Lord".
3. At the end of the praise of the Theotokos ("It is meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, the ever blessed and most pure Mother of Our God..." or a hymn that replaces it).
4. When the Holy Gifts are brought out for the communion of the faithful and deacon or priest exclaims: "With the fear of God and love draw nigh".
5. When the gifts are transferred from the Holy Altar Table to the proskomedia table and the priest exclaims, lifting up the Holy Chalice and facing the faithful: "Both now and ever and unto the ages of ages". Those who have communed do not make a prostration at this time.

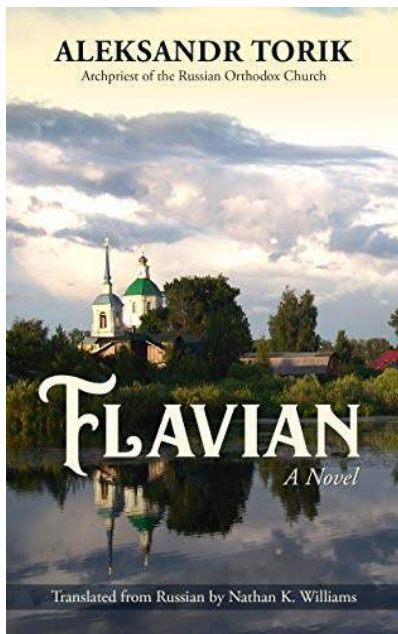
Flavian is a 200-page novella written by archpriest Fr. Alexander Torik and endorsed by the Publishing Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was originally published in Russian in 2004 and has since been translated into many languages. Three sequels have been written to date, with two of them already translated into English and easily available for purchase online.

Plot Summary: The novella tells the story of Alexei, an ordinary man holding down a management job in modern-day Moscow. One day he happens to meet an old university classmate who, in the intervening years,

FLAVIAN: A BOOK REVIEW BY ADAM STILLER

had become a priest. The classmate-turned-priest, Fr. Flavian, invites Alexei to visit him in his rural parish. Although initially uninterested, before long Alexei finds himself pushed to quiet desperation by the circumstances of his worldly life and decides to accept Fr. Flavian's offer. When he does, the stage is set for a powerful work of God.

Theology via Story: Christ taught deep spiritual truth to simple people, in part by relying on story more



(The book is available in our book kiosk)

than argument. In *Flavian*, Fr. Alexander Torik follows our Lord's example. The author provides rich instruction on a wide array of theological topics: repentance, relics, demons, confession, the role of good works in our salvation, apophatic theology, and others too numerous to list here. But the learning happens almost accidentally as we follow the stories of a cast of interesting characters.

This approach makes the book's lessons accessible to anyone. Many of the stories—some joyful, other chilling—are deeply memorable. Most are woven from Fr. Alexander's thirty years of pastoral experience in the Russian Church. The character of Fr. Flavian himself, for example, is based on rural parish priest Fr. Vasily Vladishevsky (1936-1996), who served as the author's spiritual father.

Some reviewers have criticized the book for including many supernatural events, and for thereby suggesting that God's activity is always quick and tidy, with a

happy ending for everyone. But this occasional setting aside of external realism is intentional. Like an icon, *Flavian* is stylized, symbolic, pared down to the essence, for the sake of depicting spiritual reality with clarity and power.

An Outside Perspective: The story of Alexei and Fr. Flavian takes place mostly in rural Russia. This is natural, since the author served there as a priest, but it is also intentional. With charming detail, Fr. Alexander shows the strong, wholesome life of the devout in a time and place untouched by modern Western errors. A variety of such common errors are deliberately called out and rejected within the narrative, from callous busyness to over-indulgence in rich food. There is some tendency to romanticize Orthodox life in the Russian countryside, but maybe this can still be helpful--if it sometimes idealizes, it also succeeds in painting vividly a high ideal of what it means to follow Christ. The result inspires the reader to struggle toward greater faithfulness, rather than settling for what our culture considers a normal, 'decent' Christian life.

Readers in search of gritty realism or polished literary elegance should look elsewhere; sometimes the text is wordy, and God's action in the world is accepted with simple faith. But for those who want to hear the wisdom of an experienced priest as he teaches gently on many subjects of importance to those striving to enter the Kingdom, *Flavian* is an excellent choice.

Parish Prayer List

 **Add to your prayer list**

Archpriest Martin Swanson — Repose
Katherine Swanson — Health
Archimandrite Seraphim — Health
Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health

Photini Mills — Health
Tatiana Zyryanova — Health
Gloria Pappas — Health
Julianna Campbell — Health

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them, in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Sergii to have yourself or your loved ones added to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals do not notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

Praying for Catechumens

Praying for catechumens is a very important responsibility of an Orthodox Christian. So important, that a special litany or series of petitions in the Divine Liturgy is completely dedicated to asking the Lord to have mercy on all catechumens preparing for illumination. "*Let us the faithful pray for the catechumens, that the Lord will have mercy on them.*"

Let us fulfill the words of the litany and pray for our fellow brothers and sisters:

Alexander

Alexander

Rob, Melinda and family