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TO: THE FAITHFUL OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

I am writing at this time, because of the general situation in The Orthodox Church of America, and I am asking for your prayers.

Many will be aware that there have been some very significant, and painful, administrative difficulties, and also financial losses. This has, in part, resulted in the recommendation of the deposition of the former Chancellor, the former Protopresbyter Robert S Kondratyck, by the Spiritual Court of the Diocese of Washington and New York. He has appealed this decision, and the Holy Synod of Bishops is in the process of considering the appeal that he presented to the October Session of the Holy Synod. There is progressing an investigation by a special committee of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council, whose first report resulted in the convening of the Spiritual Court just mentioned. We have yet to hear the final results of that investigation, but it is expected, and hoped, that this will come early in the new year.

At the same time, there has been a major re-organisation of the Central Administration of The Orthodox Church in America. This re-organisation is already bearing rather good fruit, it appears. And the repair of the financial environment, with proper electronic accounting systems, which cannot be invaded from exterior computers, and which also keep all records properly current, has already meant that we know always where we stand financially ; and we are also able to keep a balanced budget, and to have properly audited reports.

All this is just news. I am writing to you at this time to express my sorrow that this situation has resulted in a great deal of interpersonal animosity, often because of a sense of betrayal, or disappointment. But understanding why it is there does not make it any more consistent with the Gospel, or with the Orthodox Christian way. It does not excuse it. Repentance, and forgiveness are always the Orthodox way, and if we are really Christians, we must live in this way, following Him, who is the Way. I am, therefore, asking that all the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Canada begin (if they have not already done so) to pray for those who are so affected, that they may find the way to healing ; that they may find the way to forgive ; that they may return to peace in their hearts.

I invariably recommend the way of the Beatitudes, as prescribed by St Silouan, and by Archimandrite Sophrony in such cases : to pray "Lord, have mercy" for the



one(s) who has (have) given offence ; to pray "Lord, have mercy" for all concerned ; to pray "Lord, have mercy" for our own wounds. It is, after all, the Lord Himself who is our Healer, and our Reconciler. We must find the way to admit we cannot do it ourselves.

In addition, I am asking that we all, personally, and parochially, pray the **Payers for the Increase of Love, and the Uprooting of Hatred, and All Animosity**, which is found in the Great Book of Needs, Volume III. Please pray add these prayers, and readings, to the Divine Liturgy on the First Sunday of every month, beginning in December of this year, at least until January of 2009. We should have begun long ago, and I ask forgiveness for not having so requested a year ago. It is fitting that these prayers are provided only as a part of the Divine Liturgy.

The following prayers, which are added to the Great Litany, and to the Litany of Fervent Supplication, may be added to our own personal prayers, as well :

"That we may be cleansed of our sins, and transgressions, which have dried up in us love for Him, and for our neighbour ; and that it may be established by the power, action, and Grace of His Most-holy Spirit, and rooted in all our hearts, earnestly let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be planted, and rooted in us, by the Grace of His Most-holy Spirit, the new commandment of His New Testament, that we love one another, and not merely satisfy ourselves ; but rather, always strive for His glory, and the building-up of our neighbour, let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be uprooted in us hatred, envy, and jealousy, and all other passions, which destroy brotherly love, and that there may be planted unfeigned love, fervently let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be kindled in us the fervent love of God, and our neighbour, by the grace of His Most-holy Spirit, and thus burn out to the very roots the passions of all our souls, and bodies, let us pray to the Lord.

That there may be uprooted in us the passions of self-love, and rooted instead the virtue of brotherly love, by the power of His Most-holy Spirit ; with broken, and contrite hearts, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may not love the world, and that which is in the world ; but rather, have true love for God, and for His glory, ; and that we may love that which is profitable, and for the salvation of our neighbour, so that we may ever gaze on the good things prepared in heaven ; and that we may seek all these with all our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

That truly we may love, not just our friends, and brethren, but also our enemies; and do that which is good to those who hate us, with the power, action, and Grace of His Most-holy Spirit moving us, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may examine ourselves, condemn ourselves, and, ever looking upon our own falls, humble ourselves before God, and before everyone, never condemning our brother, but loving him as our very self, by the power, action, and Grace of His Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may imitate the burning love of the Christians in ancient times, for God, and neighbour ; and that we may be their heirs, and successors, not only in image, but in true action, by the power, action, and Grace of the Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That He may keep us immovable in the True Faith, in peace, and the unity of burning love, increasing in all virtues ; and preserve us unharmed from all soul-corrupting passions, by the power, action, and grace of the Most-holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord."

Epistle : 1 John 3, 10-24 Gospel : John 13, 31-35

"O Lord, our God : In Your mercy, as You are good, look down upon the ground of our heart, in which love has dried up, cruelly over-grown with the thorns of hatred, self-love, and innumerable faults, and transgressions. And, as You are the Source of all good, fervently we entreat You : having released a drop of the grace of Your Most-holy Spirit, richly bedew it, that it may bear fruit ; and make it increase, out of burning love for You, the root of all virtues — the fear of You — as also vigilant solicitude for the salvation of our neighbour, and the uprooting of all passions, evils of various forms, and hypocrisy ; and, as the Lover of Man, quickly hearken, and have mercy.

O Master, Who gave a new commandment to Your disciples, that they should love one another : renew this by the Grace of Your Most-holy Spirit acting in our souls, and hearts ; that we will never become selfish, but always endeavour to please You, and to strive for the salvation of our neighbour, and to pay close attention to that which is beneficial. We pray You, the merciful Giver of all that is good : hearken, and mercifully have mercy.

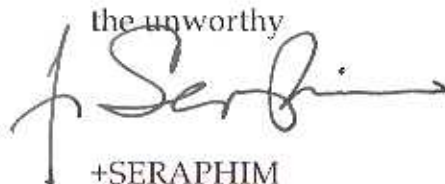
You gave the first, and greatest commandment, that we should love You, our God, and Creator, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength ; and a second, like it, that we should love our neighbour as ourselves ; and that on both of these, hang the Law, and the Prophets. Having taught us to fulfil these commandments in deed, convince all of us, by the Grace of Your Most-holy Spirit, that pleasing You, our Saviour, through the salvation of our neighbour, we may receive Your promised blessings ; for, fervently falling down before You, our Master, and Saviour, we beseech You : quickly hearken, and mercifully have mercy.

That we may be perfected in Your love, O our God, constrain us, by the grace of Your Spirit, O Master, to have sincere love for our neighbour ; for, to suppose that we have love for You, but hate our brother, is a lie, and to walk in darkness . Therefore, O Merciful One, that there be kindled in our souls, and hearts love for You, and for our brother, we pray You : as You are merciful, quickly hearken ; and, as You are compassionate, have mercy.

O All-compassionate Lord : by the Grace of Your Most-holy Spirit, establish in us Your love ; that we may truly love — not only our brethren, and friends — but, according to Your divine command, our enemies as well, and do good to those who hate us, striving sincerely for their salvation ; we pray You, O Well-spring of Good, and

Abyss of Love for Man : quickly hearken ; and, as You are tender-hearted, have mercy."

Giving thanks to God for the effective intercessory prayers of the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Canada in general, and for this request in particular, I remain, with archpastoral blessings, and love in Christ, yours,

the unworthy


+SERAPHIM
Archbishop of Ottawa, and of Canada

