



August 18, 2024
Protocol 08/006

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (Acts 2:1)

In July 2025, the bishops, clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America will gather in one place for the 21st All-American Council. Our gathering in Phoenix, Arizona, will not be in the upper room where the disciples once received the grace of the Holy Spirit in a rush of wind and in the form of fiery tongues. Yet we, too “have seen the true light; we have received the heavenly Spirit” through holy Baptism and Chrismation. Thus, when we gather as Church, it is the grace of the Holy Spirit that calls us together. On those blazing July days, the Spirit will be no less present in our midst than in the days of the apostles, and we will seek the Spirit’s inspiration and guidance to act in one accord for the sake of the proclamation of the kingdom.

In preparation for that gathering, I am calling on all the communities of the Orthodox Church in America—parishes, missions, seminaries, monasteries, and all institutions—to consider submitting a reflection on this moment in the life of the Church: whence we have come, where we are now, and whither the Spirit may be calling us.

As a Church, we have passed through seasons of inner struggles and, even today, we face any number of difficulties; yet, by the grace of God, the Orthodox Church in America finds herself today in a place of stability and great opportunities. As the Primate of the Church for close to 12 years, I possess the conviction that this is no mere ephemeral phase but rather a firm foundation upon which we can not only weather external storms but, more importantly, build further.

To build further upon this foundation, one key body to which we look is the All-American Council, and hence it is that, prior to the upcoming council, I request that all of your communities join in helping us as Church reflect on the possibilities of the present moment.

According to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, the All-American Council has the authority to “approve and implement Church-wide initiatives with regard to the missionary, educational, financial, and philanthropic activities of the Church.” So that your reflections may contribute to the formulation of an actionable resolution, I ask that they deal with activity in one or more of these four areas: mission, education, finance, and philanthropy.

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Once again, these reflections should be the product of communal effort. Your community's reflection process should be geared to include all members of the Body of Christ, from the youngest child to the most elderly shut-in. I encourage you especially to consider your community's own initiatives and activities that might inspire activity on the part of the whole Church. Here, it is useful to think about the past, present, and future: what has been tried? What is succeeding? What is next?

Your community's reflection can be submitted for consideration via email to grandinvitation@oca.org. Reflections should be submitted on behalf of each community by its rector or equivalent clergy leadership, or, for communities without clergy, by lay leadership. It is my hope that these reflections can become the basis of a major resolution, an invitation to address the life and future of the Orthodox Church in America. In one accord, guided and inspired by heavenly Spirit, let us reflect and discern how God is calling us to use this moment to act as Church for the sake of his kingdom and his glory.

Once again, your community's reflection should be submitted via email to the following address: grandinvitation@oca.org.

I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tikhon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada