



A Proposal to the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America

to Glorify as a Saint

The Very Reverend Archpriest

Alexis Georgievich Toth

(1854 - 1909)



HOLY FATHER ALEXIS, CONFESSOR AND DEFENDER OF ORTHODOXY
IN AMERICA

Rev. Fr. Alexis was born in Carpathia (Hungarian Empire) in 1854. He came from a poor gentry family distinguished for its piety. His father and his brother were priests and his uncle was a bishop in the Uniate Church.

Fr. Alexis was ordained in 1878 after he married Rosalie Michalich, a priest's daughter, and was appointed as a second priest to a Uniate parish. Rev. Father Alexis was highly educated and knew several languages, serving before his priestly appointment as secretary in the Ecclesiastical Administration of the Presov diocese.

However it seems that the Lord planned a different future for Fr. Alexis than to be a bureaucrat or a professor. Soon after his ordination his wife and thereafter their only child died leaving him alone in grief with his parents.

In 1879, he was appointed as secretary to the Bishop of Presov and as manager of the Diocesan Administration. He did not serve long in this capacity; after only two years he was appointed a Professor of the Theological Academy in Presov to teach Church Law and Church History. At the same time he had to fulfill the duties of Director of an orphanage. Then in 1883 the Diocesan Administration assigned him to fulfill the priestly obligations in an Art school in addition to his other responsibilities.

In October of 1889 Fr. Alexis was appointed as a missionary to North America to be the pastor of a Uniate parish in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Upon his arrival in Minneapolis in December, he went to introduce himself to the local Roman Catholic Archbishop, John Ireland, since the Uniates were part of the Roman Catholic Church. The Archbishop did not want to have any parishes of non-Roman rite in the United States and was outraged by the arrival of Fr. Alexis, a widowed Uniate priest, for that parish. Bishop Ireland disregarded all agreements which had been made by Rome with the Uniates and refused to acknowledge or allow any differences from the Roman Rite. As a result there was a heated discussion between Ireland and Fr. Alexis and he was denied jurisdiction in his parish.

The views of Archbishop Ireland were shared by other Catholic bishops in America. This meeting between Ireland and Fr. Alexis was typical of the reception given to other Uniate priests by Roman Catholic Bishops throughout America. The Catholic hierarchy also had problems in North America with Roman Catholics who were Poles, Czechs, etc. and not Irish or Anglo-Saxon. It was not a misunderstanding but systematic resistance of the Irish Bishops to petitions from these people for parish clergy of their own nationality, to keep their national identity within the Church. Some of these groups formed their own Catholic Dioceses, independent from the American Catholic Church, which were and are directly administered from Rome or built their independent Unions such as the Old-Catholic Churches in America.

Until the time of the arrival of Fr. Alexis in America, the Catholic Church in

the United States had been the beneficiary of European assistance. The church in the United States was not in a strong financial position and depended on great donations that came from even such exotic sources as the Russian princes, the Golitsyns, who became Catholic missionaries in America. In 1908 Pope Pius X removed the United States from the missionary jurisdiction of the Congregation of Propaganda and incorporated the American Church into the ordinary administration of the universal Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman Pontiffs and the Curia had the idea of uniting all Christians around the Roman Pope and as a result made various agreements with the Greeks, Eastern European and Middle Eastern Orthodox, and other Christians. The Catholic Bishops in America did not have the same plans and therefore a long process of disagreements began between them and the Roman Curia.

Fr. Alexis was not an ordinary priest. He knew his rights as a Uniate, he was a natural leader who was more educated than other priests who came from Carpathia, and he had a knowledge of Church history and law.

Before Fr. Alexis' arrival in Minneapolis, his parishioners had already built and blessed their church (without permission from Bishop Ireland). After his meeting with the Bishop, Fr. Alexis tried to work within the terms of the agreement between the Uniates and the Roman Catholics and the rules established by Rome concerning his ministry in America. In 1890 he called a meeting of Uniate priests in America in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. There were at that time 10 Uniate priests in the United States and 8 of them came to the meeting. Fr. Alexis was elected as their chairman. The meeting dealt mainly with answering the challenges faced by the Uniate Church in America. Fr. Alexis was instrumental in bringing together the Uniate priests in America but neither the Uniate Bishops in Carpathia nor Rome came to their assistance, heard their suffering or sent a Uniate Bishop to administer the parishes in North America. Fr. Alexis had great plans for his people in America and in 1890 alone he traveled from Minneapolis to visit Uniate immigrants in distant places including Chicago and Streator, Illinois; Cleveland, Los Angeles, Galveston, Ensley City(?) (Alabama), Saint Louis, Gurly(?) (Dakota), Ashland (Wisconsin), and several places in Canada. He called upon the people to form fraternities, to build churches. He wished to unite all fraternities into one Mutual Aid Society.

At the same time Archbishop Ireland continued his attacks against Fr. Alexis and his parishioners. In Catholic churches condemnations were read; parishioners were told not to listen to or even contact Fr. Alexis. Fr. Alexis and his people did not know what they should do in these circumstances; they had a meeting and came to what Fr. Alexis called "something that was long in my heart". Fr. Alexis and his parishioners decided to seek a way to return to the jurisdiction of an Orthodox Bishop rather than a Roman Catholic or Uniate Bishop. It is important to emphasize, that this first return to Orthodoxy by an entire parish and its pastor occurred without any influence from the Orthodox

Church Administration, which was unaware of these people in America, but was in accordance with the decision of the parishioners themselves. They came from a territory that was part of Kievan Rus'; they had never been part of the Moscovite Rus' and they had been Uniates. This petition was completely unexpected by the Russian Orthodox Church and it took a long time before the Russian Synod accepted this parish into the diocese. But after the first Uniate parish was reunited, it became a mission to attract other parishes and that was where Fr. Alexis was instrumental.

It is obvious that Fr. Alexis was not a "revolutionary" or a priest who disobeyed his Church authorities. He was appointed by his Bishop to go to America and to give spiritual guidance to people from his homeland; but his right to do that was disregarded and denigrated by a local Bishop not even of his jurisdiction. A Union meant that Roman Catholics and Uniates were able to keep their differences as they were before the Union and the only condition was that both groups would be under the spiritual guidance of the Pope in Rome. Therefore Bishop Ireland and other American Bishops were in disagreement with the Papal Church and Administration and not Fr. Alexis. Fr. Alexis, in spite of all his difficulties, would not return to Carpathia abandoning his own people, violating his (and other clergy's) belief in the right of Unia and of the equality of Eastern and Western Rites in the Church. Father Alexis followed his own conscience as to the best way to preserve the faith; the only way he found was to reunite, with his parish, to Orthodoxy rather than to continue to be misinformed, dominated and fooled by his supposed equality with Roman Catholic priests.

After the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, the life of the Carpathian people, including those in Galicia which had been added to the Empire after the Polish partition, was barely tolerable. The Austrian Emperor was crowned King of Hungary and the Hungarian government treated all of those in their territory as Hungarians and Roman Catholics. Previously, there had been difficulties with Roman Catholic clergy, who sought to force the Uniates to accept Western traditions and newly introduced Roman Catholic doctrines. After the establishment of an independent Hungarian government with authority over the Carpathian regions, the civil authorities attempted to enforce these changes. Many other problems within the Hungarian Kingdom encouraged people to emigrate. Czechs, Slovaks and Carpathians all wished to have autonomy in their political and cultural lives and there were also economic difficulties.

It has to be noted, that a large percentage of people from Carpathia came to the United States. Many villages lost half of their population or most of the young people due to emigration to North America. Only about one third of the people over 14 years of age who emigrated to the United States were literate. Many of these literate people were not well educated, and therefore needed not only spiritual but cultural guidance that they could receive only from their

own priests. Uniate bishops sent priests to North America for their people for these needs.

Many of these people had the opinion that they were Orthodox, as was the case with Mr. Mlinar, who was delegated by the parish in Minneapolis to go to the Russian Orthodox Bishop Vladimir in San Francisco. Bishop Vladimir sent him to the Roman Catholic Bishop who sent Mr. Mlinar back to the Orthodox Bishop. As a result poor Mr. Mlinar wrote to Rev. Fr. Alexis asking him "What kind of a faith do we have? I have never heard of Uniates. All priests told us that we were Orthodox Christians!!!"

After Mr. Mlinar returned to Minneapolis, Fr. Alexis went to meet Bishop Vladimir and there in the Cathedral in San Francisco was reunited with the Orthodox Church. In March of 1891, the Bishop came to Minneapolis and reunited the parishioners with the Orthodox Church. It was not until July 14, 1892 that the Russian Synod decided to accept Fr. Alexis and his parish into the Aleutian Diocese and to give Fr. Alexis a salary like that of other Orthodox priests in North America. Before that Fr. Alexis worked in a bakery, at the same time fulfilling his clergy obligations. The acceptance into the Orthodox Diocese was a great relief for Fr. Alexis and his people, who had suffered all kinds of vicious accusations and threats. After this event there were, however, other accusations of Fr. Alexis for "selling his people and religion to the 'Moscovites'". Rumors were spread of the astronomical sums that he had received from Moscow. In reality Fr. Alexis was living without financial support from anyone including his parish in Minneapolis which was at that time very poor.

After being accepted into the Orthodox Diocese, Fr. Alexis called upon all Uniates and their clergy, that he visited before in North America to join him and to reunite with the Holy Orthodox Church. He became instrumental in the return and formation of 17 Orthodox parishes in North America. He helped not only Carpathians, but also Russians, Galicians and other Orthodox people to establish parishes. As a result of his call to the Carpathian people, during the next several decades many more thousands of Carpathian Uniates returned to Holy Orthodoxy, the Faith of their fathers, forming more than 300 parishes across North America. Fr. Alexis became their first and most effective missionary and they called him "Bat'ko" - Father. There were after him many other Orthodox missionaries in North America but only one was called "Bat'ko" by the Carpathians.

Fr. Alexis was a highly educated priest, but in his teaching, he used language and subjects that his people could understand. He simplified his theological teaching for these people since they were not prepared to go into dogmatic details. He received from the Orthodox Diocesan Administration the assignment to go to different places and to teach Orthodoxy and unite people into parishes. In one of his letters to another Orthodox priest who was in the Administration, Fr. Alexis wrote that there is so much that he himself has to

learn and he tries, but he has to spend all of his time for missionary work.

It is possible that Fr. Alexis made some errors in his sermons and his teaching, but it seems that they were neither many nor great. As Fr. Hopko wrote in his book "The Orthodoxy": A heretic brings disagreement and damage into the Church, he acts intentionally. Fr. Hopko wrote: even in the teachings of the Holy Fathers there are things that were later accepted as inexact or false, but these Holy people are not counted as heretics. As the Holy Orthodox Church teaches, only God does not make errors and is infallible. Fr. Alexis even if he did make mistakes in his teachings made them unintentionally.

Rev. Bishops Vladimir and Nicholas were Christ's Bishops, representing Him in America, and therefore Fr. Alexis, receiving a direct order to go and teach people in all places where there were Carpathian people, had to obey their orders. Fr. Alexis did not respond, that he is not ready to do this work or that he wishes to do something else. It often happened that receiving a mission, people found, like Moses did, all kinds of excuses, but that was not the case with Fr. Alexis. For all the results of his missionary activity he has to be accepted as the greatest Orthodox missionary in North America among the East European immigrants.

Fr. Alexis had a vision of all Orthodox people of all nationalities in North America united around one Orthodox Bishop, with equality among these national groups who would "in this free country be able to glorify the Lord in their own language". When asked by Bishop Tikhon to express his opinion about how the Orthodox Church should be registered in its charter, Fr. Alexis wrote a long report examining all possibilities. He proposed a "Greek-Catholic Church of America standing under the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the Holy Governing Synod of Russia", but as he pointed out, according to the American judicial view the members should be then only Greeks and Russians. As the only good solution he suggested "Orthodox Church in America, since its members were not only Greeks and Russians but Arabs, Syrians, Serbians, Slovaks, Hungarians, Americans, and Indians".

From the beginning of his mission Fr. Alexis wrote articles in local immigrant publications. He defended Orthodoxy, pointed out the misguided position of the Roman Catholics who followed the new dogmatic teaching of Papal infallibility; he accused them of not fulfilling their obligations to all Uniates and especially those in America. He called upon Orthodox people to use Orthodox terminology such as Pascha, not Easter and Nativity of Christ instead of Christmas. Christmas, he pointed out, is a Roman Catholic name, coming from Mass to Christ, but Orthodox people do not have a Mass but a Liturgy. Besides that Christmas is only the word in the English language; in other countries this holy day is called differently.

His publications appeared in different languages. For example in a Slovak newspaper he published an article in Slovak "How we should live in America".

In this article he tells that this is a land of freedom, but people should live here according to local laws and standards. He suggests that people should change the behavior and habits that they used in the old country. He tells that people should keep their houses clean, wash their children and clean the windows, even in poverty people can live cleanly. He compares the Slavs with English people and suggests to parents that they send their children to school instead of sending them to work in mines or other places. Fr. Alexis especially warns people of the danger of alcoholism, especially when young people start to drink alcohol. He instructs that people should not sing, shout or holler in the streets. He taught them "to hold on to your faith teaching and do not attack the faith of others". Respect other people... read good religious and national books, especially on Sunday, instead of drinking. "Read a good newspaper, those will teach you how to be a good Christian and a good nationalist, read "The Life of Jesus Christ", "The Virgin Mary", and other books..." "Apply for and take citizenship papers if you wish to live here". He taught how women should be treated in America, that they should be dressed decently, and not go barefoot in the street, dressed in peasant costumes etc.

Right after he became pastor first in Minneapolis and later in Wilkes-Barre, Fr. Alexis started local church schools where he and his assistants taught religion, language and other subjects. He was instrumental in the opening of schools in other Orthodox parishes. He also taught adults, not just children.

It was his idea that it was important for the Orthodox Church in America to have a publication. As a result of his correspondence with Bishop Nikolai, "Svet" (Light) began publication and Fr. Hrushka, a former Uniate priest and friend of Fr. Alexis became its editor.

Fr. Alexis' most famous and influential book "Where to Seek the Truth" was written by the end of 1893. It was directed to Slavic people from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was written in a simple question and answer format. It gave the readers basic information about the origin and place of Christianity, how it spread, the Ecumenical Councils, heresies and schism and the reasons for them. Fr. Alexis indicates that the mission of the Church is the guidance of people to salvation. In his book Rev. Fr. answered such questions as "Can we call the Pope Christ's successor? Did Christ, the Apostles, the Holy Fathers, or the Ecumenical Councils teach or write anything about infallibility?" The book explained the basic differences and origins of Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Unia, but indicates that the only true way of salvation is through Orthodoxy.

This book of Rev. Fr. Alexis was written in simple and understandable language for people who came from villages in Carpathia, Galicia and Bukovina. It was accepted by these people with joy and influenced many at a time when there was no other available and easily understandable religious literature. Therefore Fr. Alexis' work was unique and has great merit to the

Church as a labor of Enlightenment and preaching of the Gospel

A comment has to be made that in his writings and sermons Fr. Alexis expressed his devotion to the Russian Church, Russia and its Czar. He defended all of them because he believed that they were the only protectors and supporters of other Orthodox people around the world. His love for Russia was not in conflict with his loyalty to his new country, the United States. He spoke many times, that it was only because of the freedom here in the U.S., that he and his followers enjoyed and were able to fulfill their wish to become Orthodox.

Fr. Alexis had his unique methods of preaching. For example after receiving an order from the Most Holy Synod in Russia concerning acceptance to the Aleutian Diocese, he tells the parishioners in his sermon: "Orthodox Christians! ...we were detached for 244 years from our Mother Church... the Church of Christ, the only Holy Ecumenical and Apostolic Church... We suffered much here being Uniates from those who told us that we were one of a whole with them... I have informed you about the Church's teaching... and now you have to live with goodness, peaceful Christian lives, in love to the Lord and His Church proving that not only in words but in your hearts and deeds we are true children of the Orthodox Church,- God and the Orthodox Church will not leave us, and the Lord's love will be among us forever! Amen..."

In another sermon he tells people that the Holy Virgin was always the Protector of Orthodox Christians. She protected cities from attacks by infidels, for example the city of Azov. Almost every city glorifying the Theotokos had its own icon; many of them were known as miraculous. He spoke about the special bond between the Orthodox people and the Theotokos, of many holy days and many churches that are dedicated to Her glorification.

In another sermon to the people of Old Forge, Pennsylvania, on the occasion of their return to the Orthodox Church, Fr. Alexis spoke about people suffering for the Orthodox Faith in Austrian and Hungarian Kingdoms and about the faults of Unia. He told people to hear what the Orthodox Church preaches and not what others tell about Orthodoxy; for example, that the Orthodox people do not believe in the Holy Trinity or the Theotokos.

In his sermons Fr. Alexis told the Uniates, that the Uniate Church is not Roman Catholic nor Orthodox, but that it became a mixture of both, that the people are now ashamed of. Hear the Orthodox teaching. told he, "this is the teaching of the Christian Orthodox Church, this is the teaching of your forefathers, your fathers, this is your faith, through which all of us will come to salvation. Hold to it! Amen."

It seems that Fr. Alexis was guided by the Lord; he came at the right time and right place to the defense and mission of Orthodoxy in America, becoming its champion. His teaching has influenced not only people here in America but also in the Carpathian homeland. The return to Orthodoxy spread there also.

For this reason it can be said that Fr. Alexis had the virtue of service to the Fatherland.

Fr. Alexis had many other virtues, such as those of self sacrifice and unselfishness. As an example, for years he asked the Bishop's permission to go for a visit to his mother in Hungary, but he stayed each time when the Bishop indicated how much there was to be done for the Church and its people. When he was offered the leadership of his people in America as a Bishop, with humility he pointed out that this responsibility should be given to a younger and healthier man than he, who would be more effective to the Glory of God.

The doors to Fr. Alexis' house were always open to anyone who was looking for assistance and advice. His limited funds were shared with other clergy and given to needy people. In his "Last Will", he wrote: "Let my funeral be simple, without pomp and wreaths, and the casket as cheap as possible. Eulogies need not be said; otherwise, let every one pray for my soul which stands in fear before God's Judgment Throne. Wealth I have none..." Father Alexis' life insurance and savings covered only part of his debts. To his relatives and friends he left very little, only small things as mementos. He left a little fund for prayers for his parents. His entire estate was determined at \$5498.45 against \$6529.84 of claims against his estate.

He spent much of his income for the defense of the church from the Uniates and Roman Catholics in Wilkes-Barre, and then, after the church burned down, for building a new one on the same place. He donated for the education of seminarians in Minneapolis and to schools. He helped many people in every way that he could.

When Fr. Alexis was offended or fooled by other people, in his love he forgave them and always asked his Bishop to forgive him his omissions and mistakes.

He helped much in building Orthodox churches in America, giving his advice in different parishes, and helping to collect funds for the church buildings.

In conclusion I think that Fr. Alexis' teaching was in accordance with the Orthodox Ecumenical Councils and Church canons. In some instances there can be found his national pride but that can be excused since it was done by him in conjunction with the defense of the Church. It has to be remembered that he taught in language common to the time and the meaning of some words have changed since then. Secondly of course was the fact, that many of his comments were responses to unfounded accusations of Orthodoxy and the Mission in North America by people who used much stronger language than Fr. Alexis and unethical methods of discrediting them; a lack of tolerance, rude behavior and threats against his people. Fr. Alexis may in fact only be commended, for his restraint. It also should not be forgotten that many of Fr. Alexis' strong comments appeared only in private correspondence with the church administration. Some people that he wrote about were indeed, as the future

showed, revolutionaries. Fr. Alexis was not wrong in his evaluations about their plans against the Church.

As described above, Fr. Alexis had merits to the Orthodox Church in America, he has been a defender of the Orthodox Faith, his mission was not only in North America but spread even to his own Homeland by the people returning there; he helped to build churches, he had a lot of patience, and sacrificed much for the Church, he was unselfish, humble and loved other people, he was a laborer of Enlightenment to his people, a theologian, a teacher and preacher. Fr. Alexis endured such suffering and persecution from Uniates, a hostile press, enemies of the Church and representatives of the Hungarian Empire, that he might even be considered a martyr for the Faith. Fr. Alexis for his exceptional merits of service to the Church was awarded by the Most Holy Synod with an epigonation, a Miter and Archpriestship. At that time those were quite rare awards given by the Church only to exceptionally distinguished priests. From civil authorities in Russia he received also 2 orders of each St. Ann and St. Vladimir 4th and 3rd class for his services for the Red Cross in Japan, for Fraternities, in the Mutual Aid Society, in orphanages, for the newspaper, parish libraries and education in America. In his memory and in veneration, right after his death an orphanage in Vermont was dedicated in his name and members of the Orthodox Church of America ordered a splendid mausoleum built in his memory in the Saint Tikhon monastery. His death did not stop the spreading of his achievements and his work was continued by such dedicated workers as Rev. Fr. Peter Kohanik and others, who said that they were continuing what Fr. Alexis began.

The grounds for canonization of saints has varied during the history of the Holy Orthodox Church, since in each particular case of glorification specific reasons might be found which depended both on the feat performed by the zealot for salvation and on those spiritual requirements which the Orthodox Church deemed necessary to make for the sake of the goodness and salvation of her believers in different periods of history. Glorification varied in different Orthodox national Churches also. The Church in any case has considered the feat performed and then pronounced its decision. They studied the life, miracles and labors performed by the zealots proposed for canonization. Their various deeds of spiritual perfection illuminate a path for salvation for the present day Orthodox people.

The Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios and the Greek Archdiocese are interested in Fr. Alexis' achievements. The Carpatho-Russian Diocese holds him in great veneration. Two seminars were recently planned by this diocese on the life and work of Fr. Alexis. A cleric of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile recently requested AARDM to quote the cost of printing 1000 copies of Fr. Alexis' book in the original language for distribution in Carpathia.

Fr. Alexis was a member of the Church that has become the Orthodox

Church in America; he worked to build this Church and he shared the vision of "One Holy Orthodox Church", guided in this country by one Pastor, for all ethnic groups. Fr. Alexis' is with this Church today; his life and achievements are clearly visible. The story of Fr. Alexis' life reads like a story of a true Apostle, endless traveling, labors, great sacrifices and constant persecution from the enemies of Orthodoxy. Therefore the honor for his glorification as a Saint obviously belongs to the Orthodox Church in America.

Why is there such a great interest in Fr. Alexis? The reason, as His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios indicated, "because the Uniate problem has brought difficulties to our sister Churches" after political changes in Eastern Europe. Bishop Nicholas from the Carpatho-Russian Diocese in North America said that : as before, at the time today when faith is being tested in the crisis of religious tensions and in contemporary society the Orthodox Church needs help from above and leadership such as came from Rev. Fr. Alexis, to face challenges of secular values. Fr. Alexis shows how it was possible to reflect our precious Orthodox Faith and share it with others.

As this seems to be a paradox many Uniates today consider Fr. Alexis also responsible for the existence of the Uniates here in North America pointing out, that Fr. Alexis was responsible for permission for the Uniates to have their own Bishop here, and thus the prevention of a complete assimilation by the Roman Catholic Church. But this is their own belief; it is not relevant to the Orthodox Church.

All information for this proposal was obtained from four volumes "Archpriest Alexis Toth, letters, articles, papers and sermons" 1978-88 and a 5th unpublished volume and from a collection of papers, which are located in the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America.

If the Holy Synod requires additional information about the work and teaching of Archpriest Alexis Toth, it would be an honor for me to reply to the request of the Church.

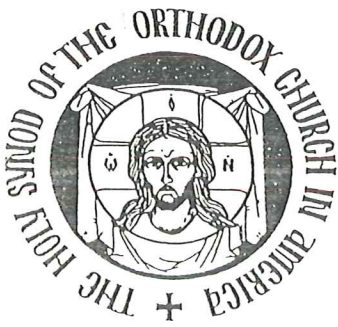
Respectfully submitted,

9-15-1993



George Soldatow

Member of the Canonization Commission



The HOLY SYNOD
of the
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

PROCLAMATION
OF THE HOLY SYNOD
OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
ON THE GLORIFICATION OF
THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS ARCHPRIEST ALEXIS TOTH

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

To the beloved priests, deacons, monastics and faithful flock
of the Orthodox Church in America

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God the Father
and from the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Amen

The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, having reviewed the recommendations of the Canonization Commission, agreed at its session of March 29—April 1, 1994 to number the ever-memorable Archpriest Alexis Toth among the saints for veneration by the faithful. Mindful of the apostolic injunction to “remember your leaders” (Heb. 13:7), we give thanks to God for His great mercy toward us in raising up in our midst a faithful pastor filled with zeal for the glory of God, and for the salvation of his own people. The return of Archpriest Alexis Toth to the Orthodox Faith of his forefathers is a milestone in the history of the Orthodox Church in North America. The missionary labors of Archpriest Alexis Toth, his steadfastness and his leadership in bringing thousands of souls back to the Orthodox Church, manifested by his words and deeds among his own Carpatho-Russian and Galician people in America, offer significant guidance and direction for the missionary outreach of the Orthodox Churches today, many of which are now encountering adverse conditions similar to those he experienced.

Thus, with one mind and one heart we resolve:

1. That Father Alexis Toth be numbered among the saints.
2. That his honorable remains be considered as holy relics.
3. That a special service be composed in his honor.
4. That his feast be celebrated on May 7, the day of his blessed repose, and on the Feast of All Saints of North America—Second Sunday after Pentecost.
5. That holy icons be prepared to honor the newly-glorified saint according to the canons of the Seventh Ecumenical Council.
6. That his life be published for the edification of the faithful.
7. That the name of the new saint be made known to the primates of all sister Churches for inclusion in their calendars.
8. That his glorification take place on May 29—30, 1994 at St. Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

We summon the faithful to remember him at Memorial services or Litanies for the departed when appropriate until the time of his glorification.

Through the prayers of His newly-glorified saint, may the Lord grant His mercy and blessing, to all who seek his heavenly intercession with faith and love. Amen

HOLY FATHER ALEXIS, CONFESSOR AND DEFENDER OF ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA
PRAY FOR US!

PROCLAMATION OF GLORIFICATION OF
THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS ARCHPRIEST ALEXIS TOTH

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America



+ THEODOSIUS
Archbishop of Washington,
Metropolitan of All America and Canada



+ KYRILL
Archbishop of Pittsburgh and Western
Pennsylvania and the Bulgarian Diocese



+ PETER
Archbishop of New York and New Jersey



+ DMITRI
Archbishop of Dallas and the South and the
Exarchate of Mexico



+ HERMAN
Archbishop of Philadelphia and
Eastern Pennsylvania



+ GREGORY
Bishop of Sitka and All Alaska



+ NATHANIEL
Bishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate



+ JOB
Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest



+ TIKHON
Bishop of San Francisco and the West



+ SERAPHIM
Bishop of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of
Canada

Oyster Bay Cove, New York, March 31, 1994

METROPOLITAN
THEODOSIUS
PRIMATE



P.O. BOX 675
SYOSSET
NEW YORK
11550
L.I.C.

ACT OF GLORIFICATION

We, the undersigned members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America together with hierarchs of the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow as well as the Orthodox Church of the Czech and Slovak lands have on May 29-30, 1994, celebrated the glorification of our Holy Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America as a saint of the Holy Orthodox Church, during liturgical services presided by His Beatitude Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. These services were conducted with the participation of numerous clergy and the presence of a great multitude of the faithful at the Monastery of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

May 30, 1994

- + Metropolitan Theodosius
- + Archbishop Nikolaj
- + Archbishop Viktorij
- + St. Makary
- + Bishop Nikola of Johnston, Pa.
- + Archbishop Pyril
- + Archbishop Domitri
- + Archbishop Herman
- + Bishop Creeds
- + Bishop Seraphim
- + MARK
- + Bishop Job
- + Bishop Paul

**HIERARCHS WHO PARTICIPATED IN
THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF THE GLORIFICATION OF
ST. ALEXIS, CONFESSOR AND DEFENDER OF ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA
AND SIGNED THE ACT OF GLORIFICATION**

- His Beatitude, the Most Blessed THEODOSIUS, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA)
- His Eminence, the Most Reverend NICHOLAS, Archbishop of Presov, Slovakia - Autocephalous Orthodox Church of the Czech and Slovak Republics
- His Eminence, the Most Reverend VICTORIN, Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America - Patriarchate of Romania
- His Eminence, the Most Reverend MAKARY, Archbishop of Vinnitsa and Bratslav, Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Patriarchate of Moscow
- His Grace, the Right Reverend NICHOLAS, Bishop of Amisos (Johnstown, PA) - American Carpatho-Russian Greek Catholic Church - Patriarchate of Constantinople
- His Eminence, the Most Reverend KYRILL, Archbishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania and the Bulgarian Diocese (OCA)
- His Eminence, the Most Reverend DMITRI, Archbishop of Dallas and the South (OCA)
- His Eminence, the Most Reverend HERMAN, Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania (OCA)
- His Grace, the Right Reverend GREGORY, Bishop of Sitka and All Alaska (OCA)
- His Grace, the Right Reverend SERAPHIM, Bishop of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada (OCA)
- His Grace, the Right Reverend MARK, Titular Bishop of Bethesda (OCA)
- His Grace, the Right Reverend JOB, Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest (OCA)
- His Grace, the Right Reverend PAUL, Bishop of Zaraisk, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the United States - Patriarchate of Moscow

May 7
St. Alexis
Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America

Great Vespers

Kathisma 1 - "Blessed is the Man...."

"Lord I call. . ."

Tone 6

Come, all who love the saints,
Let us honor the new Man of God,
A fruitful branch of Christ the True Vine,
A defender of the Orthodox Church,
The thrice-blessed priest Alexis,
Our Father and Teacher.

Zealous for the Law of God,
King Josiah taught Israel to serve only the Lord.
Our divinely-wise Father Alexis
Guided his people to the Orthodox Faith,
Teaching them to cry aloud,
"O Lord, have mercy on us."

Our holy Father Alexis,
Guided by the Spirit of Truth,
Exposed the error of ignorance
And lead his people to the True Faith.
In humility concealing his virtues from others,
He thereby received a heavenly crown.

Today the Church celebrates a feast of great joy,
For the Holy Priest Alexis
Guides his sheep back to the knowledge of the Truth,
Watering them with the ever-flowing fountain of his teachings,
And instructing them to sing,
"Glory to God for His great mercy."

The Righteous Priest Alexis
Appears as a radiant star.
He shines with the light of holiness
As he nourishes his flock with the Word of God.
And having embraced the Orthodox Faith,
That flock in thanksgiving still cries aloud with joy,
"Glory to God for His great mercy."

The worthy Priest Alexis,
That teacher of true doctrine and piety,
Instructed his people with fatherly counsels.
He led them to the Ark of Salvation
And casting off the yoke of a false union, they cry aloud,
"Glory to God for His great mercy."

Tone 6

Glory. . .

Come, O Orthodox faithful,
Let us praise Alexis the new Man of God,
Who shone forth as a radiant lamp,
Dispelling the gloom of ignorance,
Proclaiming the Truth to those deceived by error,
And restoring to them their blessed inheritance —
The Orthodox Faith of their fathers.

Now and ever. . .

(from the Pentecostarion)

Entrance

Prokeimenon of the Day

Readings from the Old Testament (3)

Reading 1

The Reading from Proverbs (*Composite - Ch. 10, 3, 8*)

The memory of the righteous is with praise and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Blessed is the man who has found wisdom and the mortal who has understanding, for it is better to purchase her than treasuries of gold and silver. She is more precious than precious stones and all that is precious is unworthy of her. For length of days and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are riches and glory. Out of her mouth proceeds righteousness and she bears law and mercy upon her tongue.

Hear me, O child, for I will speak noble things. Blessed is the man who keeps my ways, for my ways are the ways of life, and in them is prepared favor from the Lord. Therefore, I pray you, and utter my voice to the sons of men: For I, wisdom, have dwelt with counsel and knowledge and I have called upon understanding. Counsel and safety are mine, understanding and strength are mine. I love those who love me and those seeking me shall find grace.

Understand craftiness, O you who are simple, and imbibe knowledge, you who are untaught. Hear me again, for I will speak noble things: I will open *my mouth* and from my lips *shall come* what is right. For my throat shall meditate truth; false lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing in them that is twisted or perverse. They are all straight to him who understands and right to those who find knowledge.

I shall instruct you in truth, so that your hope will be in the Lord and you shall be filled with the Spirit.

Reading 2

The reading from Wisdom of Solomon (*Composite Prov. Ch. 10; Wis. Ch. 6, 7, 8, 9*)

The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom; the lips of the wise man know grace. The mouth of the wise speaks wisdom, and the truth delivers them from death. If a righteous man dies, hope is not, for the son of the righteous is born to life, and in his own good things he acquires the fruit of righteousness. There is always light for the righteous and they obtain grace and glory from the Lord. The tongue of the wise is a good sister-in-law, and in their hearts rests wisdom. The Lord loves the hearts of the holy, and acceptable to Him are all the undefiled in the way.

The wisdom of the Lord illumines the faces of the wise. For she takes hold of those desiring her by making herself first known to them. She is easily seen by those who love her. He who rises early to seek her shall have no difficulty, and those keeping vigil for the sake of her shall quickly be without sorrows. For she goes about seeking those worthy of her, and graciously reveals herself in the pathways. Against wisdom evil does not prevail.

Therefore I was a lover of her beauty; I loved her and sought her out from my youth. I desired to make her my bride, and even the Master of All loved her. For she is an initiate in the knowledge of God, and a discoverer of His works. Her labors are virtues, for she teaches temperance and prudence, justice and courage; nothing in life is more necessary for men than these. And if anyone desires much knowledge, she knows the things of old, and beholds things to come; she understands turns of speech and the solution of riddles; she has foreknowledge of signs and wonders and the outcome of times and seasons. She is a mediator of good things for all, for immortality is in her, and glory in the company of her words.

Therefore I appealed to the Lord and prayed to Him, and said to Him with all my heart, "O God of *my* fathers and Lord of mercy, Who hast made all things by Thy word, and by Thy wisdom hast fashioned man that he should have dominion over the creatures made by Thee, that he should rule the world in holiness and righteousness: Give me wisdom that sits by Thy throne, and cast me not away from among Thy children, for I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid. Send her forth from the heavens, from Thy holy abode, and from the throne of Thy glory, that she may be with me, and instruct me in what is pleasing to Thee. And she shall guide me in understanding, and preserve me in her glory. For the thoughts of mortals are miserable, and their intentions likely to fail."

Reading 3

The Reading from Wisdom of Solomon (*Composite Ch. 4, 6, 7, 2*)

When the righteous is praised, the people rejoice: For his memory is immortality, since it is known both by the LORD and by men, for his soul was pleasing to the LORD. Therefore love wisdom, O men, and live. Desire her and be instructed: For her beginning is love and the keeping of her laws. Honor wisdom that you may reign forever.

I will tell you and not hide the mysteries of God from you. For He is the Guide of wisdom, the Corrector of the wise and the Artisan of all thoughts and deeds. Wisdom will teach with all understanding: For in her is a Spirit, intelligent and holy, the Radiance of the Everlasting Light and the Image of the Grace of God.

She fashions friends of God and prophets. For she is more beautiful than the sun and above all the order of the stars. Compared with the light she is found to be first. She delivered from infirmities those pleasing her and guided them on the paths of righteousness. She gave to them understanding to be holy and to preserve them from those who would ensnare them, and she granted them strength in struggles, so that all might understand that the most powerful of all is piety, and that evil might not prevail against wisdom, nor judgement pass away without convicting the wicked.

Having reasoned unrighteously, they said to themselves, "Let us oppress the righteous man and not spare his venerableness, nor let us be ashamed of the gray hairs of the old man of many years. But let our might be our law and let us seize the righteous, because he is inconvenient to us and is opposed to our deeds; he reproaches us for apostasy against the law and divulges the sins of our training.

"He declares to us to have knowledge of God and calls himself a child of the LORD. He became to us a reproof of our thoughts; the very sight of him is a burden to us, because his life is unlike that of others, and his ways are very different. We are considered by him to be an insult, and he avoids our ways as unclean; he calls the end of the righteous blessed.

"Let us see if his words are true; let us test him to see what will happen to him. Let us torment him with revilement and tortures, that we may understand his meekness and test his guilelessness. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to his own words, he shall be respected."

Thus they reasoned, but were deceived, for their wickedness blinded them. They did not know the mysteries of God, nor did they discern that Thou alone art God, having the power of life and death: Who savest in times of affliction and delivereth from every evil; Who art compassionate and merciful, granting Grace to His venerable ones, and opposing the proud with His arm.

Litiya

Tone 6

Come, all who love the Feasts,
Let us sing together with all the angels and saints!
Today the laborer rests from his work
And the earthly voice of the teacher is stilled.
Today our Father Alexis commends his soul to God
And becomes a citizen of heaven.

Today Wilkes-Barre rejoices with Minneapolis
Celebrating the most radiant festival of Saint Alexis.
Exalt him, O bishops! Praise him, O priests!
Be illumined by his teachings, O people!
He now stands before the throne of God
Entreating Him to save our souls.

A new star has appeared in the heavens,
Illumining the spiritual darkness of our times,
Guiding us on the paths of righteousness,
Away from the abyss of error.
Therefore let us offer hymns of praise to Saint Alexis
And venerate his holy icon (*or grace filled relics*).

Glory. . .

O glorious wonder!
A new saint is revealed in America.
Those who fulfill the Gospel teaching of Christ
Are seen to receive great gifts from God
And attain the heavenly Kingdom.

Now and ever. . .

(from the Pentecostarion)

Aposticha

Tone 2

Come, all you lovers of piety,
Let us praise our Father Alexis in hymns.
He is the adornment of priests and boast of the faithful:
A fearless defender of the Orthodox Faith
And our heavenly intercessor.

VERSE: Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy
(Ps. 132:9).

Rejoice, O people of America,
Let us make a joyful noise to God.
Sing a new song to the Lord, O Minneapolis,
Exalt him, O Wilkes-Barre,
From you the sound of our Father Alexis went forth,
His words have put the hard of heart to shame,
Showing all where to seek the Truth.

VERSE: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall give understanding (Ps. 49:3).

With what wreaths of victory
Shall we crown our most wise teacher Alexis?
What words can suffice to tell of his love for Christ's Church?
As a shepherd he protected his flock
From all foes, visible and invisible.

Glory. . .

Tone 6

Fleeing the harm that comes from vanity and pride,
You strove to hide your virtues from the eyes of others
And patiently endured trials and afflictions.
Therefore the Lord who sees all things
Has glorified you, O our Father Alexis.

Now and ever. . .

(from the Pentecostarion)

Blessing of the loaves

Troparion

· Tone 4

O righteous Father Alexis,
Our heavenly intercessor and teacher,
Divine adornment of the Church of Christ
Entreat the Master of All
To strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America,
To grant peace to the world
And to our souls great mercy.

Matins

“God is the Lord. . .”—Tone 4

Troparion - Tone 4

O righteous Father Alexis,
Our heavenly intercessor and teacher,
Divine adornment of the Church of Christ
Entreat the Master of All
To strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America,
To grant peace to the world
And to our souls great mercy.

Kathismas:

*Following the first Psalter reading, the Kathisma Hymn from the Pentecostarion is chanted.
Then following the second reading from the Psalter, the Kathisma Hymn in Tone 3 is sung.*

Kathisma Hymn - Tone 3

O our holy Father Alexis,
Standing now before the throne of the life-creating Trinity,
Whom the angelic hosts unceasingly glorify
And whom you proclaimed in America,
Pray fervently that he deliver from eternal torment
Those who in love honor your holy memory,
Granting them remission of sins.

Polyeleion

Magnification

We magnify,
We magnify you, O holy Father Alexis,
And we honor your holy memory
For you led your people back to the Orthodox Faith,
And you pray to Christ our God for us.

VERSE: Hear this, all peoples; give ear all inhabitants of the world. (Ps. 49)

Sessional Hymn—Tone 8

Like a diligent bee, O blessed Alexis,
You wisely searched the meadows of the Holy Scriptures
And the works of the holy Fathers.
From these Orthodox blossoms
You collected pure and sweet nectar,
Making honey for those in America
To taste and see that the Lord is good.
You led your people to the wellspring of the True Faith.
Therefore in faith we cry out to you:
Intercede with Christ our God
That those who lovingly honor your holy memory
May be granted remission of sins.

Prokeimenon—Tone 4

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

VERSE: What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?

Gospel: John 10:9–16

Canon

Ode 1—Tone 6

IRMOS: When Israel passed on foot over the sea as if it were dry land, and beheld their pursuer, Pharaoh, drowning in the sea, they cried aloud unto God: Let us sing a song of victory.

REFRAIN: O holy Father Alexis, pray to God for us.

Come, all who love the saints, let us rejoice and keep festival with the angels. Let us sing praises to Saint Alexis: the unshakable pillar of the Faith, the divinely-wise teacher of the Church, the all-virtuous shepherd of the flock of Christ, the boast of priests and the joy of all America.

O radiant beacon of piety shining forth in America, you enlightened us with your teachings and encouraged us by your example. Through your prayers, O holy Father, deliver us from the darkness of sin and the gloom of ignorance.

Leaving your native land, you passed over the sea to the New World. There, by the grace of God, you were led to the Orthodox Faith and proclaimed its saving teachings to all. We celebrate your memory and cry aloud: "This is the Faith of the Fathers which has established the universe."

Ode 3

IRMOS: There is none so holy as You, O Lord my God, who has exalted the power of Your faithful, O Blessed One, and has established us upon the rock of Your confession.

You exulted in the Lord, O Father, and He in turn blessed you and multiplied your talents. He sent you forth among the people to nourish them with spiritual food, and they received it and were filled. We celebrate your feast with joy and sing praises to God who glorified you.

Christ gave you strength to defend His Church and wisdom to refute false teachings that his flock might not be led astray. Entreat Him to preserve us steadfast in our confession of the Orthodox Faith and grant our souls great mercy.

You met with Bishop Vladimir and told him of your heartfelt desire to enter the Orthodox Church with your flock. Therefore he traveled to Minneapolis and gathered in a harvest of souls, the first-fruits of your apostolic labors.

Ode 4

IRMOS: Christ is my power, my Lord and God! The venerable Church sings, befitting God, with a pure understanding, feasting in the Lord!

Placing all your trust in God, you went forth among the people, tending your flock in a God-pleasing manner. In your humility you concealed your virtues from others, but Christ has openly rewarded your labors, O righteous Father.

In your love for God and neighbor, you fulfilled the chief part of the Law and the Prophets. You were endowed with power from on high and traveled this land sowing the seeds of piety. Therefore, the Lord of the harvest has called you His good and faithful servant.

Many have attained salvation without uttering prophecies or working miracles, but none may enter the heavenly Bridal Chamber without humility. O holy Father Alexis, pray that we too many acquire humility, the foundation of all virtues.

Ode 5

IRMOS: Illumine with Your divine light, O Good One, the souls of those who keep vigil in love, so that they may know You, O Word of God, as the true God who recalls them from the darkness of sin!

When you cried out to your flock: "Come, O children, and hear me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord," they knew your voice and followed you, for you were a true shepherd, leading them to the pasture of Christ.

When the wolves attacked your flock, O Father, you were quick to act as their guardian. You defended them with the shield of your ministry and repelled all foes in the name of the Lord.

Fear and trembling fell upon your enemies, O victorious champion of Christ, when they heard you proclaim the Orthodox Faith and expose their false teachings. O defender of Orthodoxy in America, entreat the Lover of mankind to protect His Church from every assault.

Ode 6

IRMOS: Beholding the sea of life surging with the storm of temptations, and taking refuge in Your calm haven I cry unto You: Raise up my life from corruption, O greatly Merciful One.

Tossed about by the storms of life, you hastened to the calm haven of Christ's Church. You accomplished great things, O Father, but refrained from vainglorious boasting. "Whatever I have achieved," you said, "has been done with the help of God."

You inspired your flock with your love for Christ and His Church, O God-pleasing Alexis, but your enemies were alarmed by your zeal and courage. With your words and writings you exposed the errors of the impious who follow after vanity and lies and you confirmed the faithful in truth and godliness.

When the Prophet Jonah was sent to Ninevah, his preaching led many to repentance. Your teaching, O righteous Father, brought thousands back to the Orthodox Church. They embraced their ancestral Faith with joy and glorified God for His great mercy.

Kontakion—Tone 5

Let us the faithful praise the priest Alexis,
A bright beacon of Orthodoxy in America,
A model of patience and humility.
A worthy shepherd of the flock of Christ,
He called back the sheep who had been led astray
And brought them by his preaching
To the heavenly Kingdom.

IKOS: What praise, what worthy thanks can we offer you, O most holy Father Alexis? When you turned to the Orthodox East while laboring here in the West, you brought yourself and your flock as an offering to Christ. Through trials and tribulations you trod the narrow path, proclaiming your fear of God alone and not the threats of men. Therefore in love we cry with joyful voices: Rejoice, O Alexis, boast and glory of the Orthodox faithful in America, for you brought us by your preaching to the heavenly Kingdom.

Ode 7

IRMOS: An angel made the furnace cool with dew for the godly youths, and God's command to burn Chaldeans made the tyrant cry, "Blessed are You, O God of our fathers!"

Uninstructed souls were led astray, but you brought them back to the True Faith. You were a leader of your brethren and the pride of your people, for through your labors they learned to sing: "Blessed are You, O God of our Fathers."

You became a teacher of many, revealing through your books and sermons the spiritual treasures of the Orthodox Faith. Now you ceaselessly intercede for those who with faith honor you and cry to the Lord: "Blessed are You, O God of our Fathers."

The supporters of a false union led your people astray with their erroneous doctrines, O holy one of God, but you freed them from an oppressive yoke, leading them to the True Faith and teaching them to cry aloud: "Blessed are You, O God of our Fathers."

Ode 8

IRMOS: You made dew flow from the flame for the godly youths, and the sacrifice of a righteous man You consumed with water! You make all things, O Christ, as You desire! We exalt You throughout all ages!

You consecrated yourself to God and instructed His people. As Josiah abolished the delusion of idolatry and proclaimed the newly-discovered Law, so you ended erroneous belief and instructed your flock in true faith and piety.

O holy Alexis, zealot of piety, adorning churches with holy icons, through spiritual counsel and fatherly admonition, you taught your flock to glorify God in the Orthodox manner.

Though accused of converting for material gain, you lived in poverty, "having nothing yet possessing all things." You relieved the suffering of others but yourself endured hunger, thirst, and fatigue. You were faithful to the Lord, so He has given you a crown of life.

Ode 9

IRMOS: It is not possible for men to see God, upon whom the Ranks of Angels dare not gaze. But through You, O All-pure One was the Word Incarnate revealed unto men: whom magnifying, together with the Heavenly Hosts, we call You blessed.

No one can draw near to God except one who separates himself from the world. You rejected the fleeting joys of this world and endured earthly sorrows with heavenly joy. You regarded insults as praise; disrespect as honor. Therefore Christ has given you that joy which cannot be taken away.

O thrice-blessed Father Alexis, you showed yourself a vigilant shepherd of Christ's flock, not a hireling who flees from danger. You drove away the wolves from the Church and refuted every soul-destroying heresy. Intercede for those who celebrate your Feast with joy and beseech the Lord to save our souls.

Though unable to praise you fittingly, we celebrate your joyous festival with love. You are an unshakable pillar of the Church and the support of the faithful. Intercede with our merciful God for the salvation of our souls.

Exapostilarion*Tone 8*

With illumined hearts let us the faithful
 Praise the new Man of God Alexis, who has arisen in our midst.
 For through his wise teachings he has dispersed the darkness of error,
 Leading those who sat in its bonds back to the light of truth,
 And proclaiming that there is no other foundation save Christ our true God.

The Praises

Tone 6

Today the memory of holy Alexis shines forth
And illumines the hearts of the faithful.
Let us celebrate his Feast with spiritual songs
For he is our father and teacher,
Our guide to the heavenly Kingdom
Who entreats Christ God to save our souls.

We venerate your holy icon (*holy relics*), O Saint,
And glorify God who glorified you.
You taught us how we should live in America,
And showed us where to seek the Truth.
May we always confess the Orthodox Faith with your courage and zeal
And stand firm in the tradition of the Fathers.

O trumpet of the Spirit
Producing harmonious hymns of heavenly theology,
You exposed the error of false doctrines
And spoke the truth in love.
You taught us to worship God in spirit and truth.
Therefore we honor your holy memory.

You did not look back on your accomplishments, O Saint,
But willingly accepted new challenges.
Your missionary labors bore fruit in abundance
And added countless souls to the Church.
Your zeal increased as you drew nearer to the prize:
A crown of glory from the Savior Christ.

Glory. . . Now and ever. . .

(from the Pentecostarion)

Great Doxology

Usual ending for Festal Matins.

Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Troparion—Tone 4

O righteous Father Alexis,
Our heavenly intercessor and teacher,
Divine adornment of the Church of Christ
Entreat the Master of All
To strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America,
To grant peace to the world
And to our souls great mercy.

Kontakion—Tone 5

Let us the faithful praise the priest Alexis,
A bright beacon of Orthodoxy in America,
A model of patience and humility.
A worthy shepherd of the flock of Christ,
He called back the sheep who had been led astray
And brought them by his preaching
To the heavenly Kingdom.

Prokeimenon—Tone 7

The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and trust in Him.

VERSE: Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation.

Epistle: Galatians 1:11–19

Alleluia—Tone 6

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who delights greatly in His commandments.

His descendants will be mighty on earth.

Gospel: John 10:1–9

Communion Verse

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance,
He shall not fear evil tidings.

SERVICE TO ST. ALEXIS,
CONFESSOR AND DEFENDER OF ORTHODOXY IN AMERICA
MAY 7

READINGS AT VESPERS:

- 1) Proverbs 10, 3, 8 (composite)
- 2) Proverbs 10, 6, 7, 8, 9 (composite)
- 3) Wisdom 4, 6, 7, 2 (composite)

TROPARION - TONE 4

O righteous Father Alexis,
Our heavenly intercessor and teacher,
Divine adornment of the Church of Christ
Entreat the Master of All
To strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America,
To grant peace to the world
And to our souls great mercy.

KONTAKION - TONE 5

Let us the faithful praise the priest Alexis,
A bright beacon of Orthodoxy in America,
A model of patience and humility.
A worthy shepherd of the flock of Christ,
He called back the sheep who had been led astray
And brought them by his preaching
To the heavenly Kingdom.

MAGNIFICATION

We magnify,
We magnify you, O holy Father Alexis,
And we honor your holy memory
For you led your people back to the Orthodox faith,
And you pray to Christ our God for us.

sel. Ps. (49): Hear this, all peoples; give ear
all inhabitants of the world.

MATINS PROKEIMENON - TONE 4

Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of His saints.

What shall I render to the Lord
for all His benefits toward me?

MATINS GOSPEL:

John 10: 9-16

LITURGY PROKEIMENON - TONE 7

The righteous shall be glad in the Lord,
and trust in Him.

Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation.

EPISTLE:

Galatians 1:11-19

ALLELUIA VERSES - TONE 6

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
who delights greatly in His commandments.

His descendants will be mighty on earth.

LITURGY GOSPEL:

John 10:1-9

COMMUNION VERSE:

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance,
he shall not fear evil tidings.

Akathist Hymn to
our Holy and Righteous Father
Alexis of Wilkes-Barre
Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America

Kontakion 1

O chosen confessor and defender of the Faith, our Father Alexis, we offer this song of praise honoring your struggles, patience, and great sufferings. They revealed you as a new Man of God leading your people back to the true Faith. As you have boldness in prayer before God, free us, your children, from every adversity, that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Ikos 1

In Austria-Hungary, you were raised by your God-loving parents. Though poor in worldly possessions, you became rich in divine knowledge. You learned to distinguish truth from falsehood. Standing now before Christ together with the ranks of angels and all the saints, you have been glorified in heaven and on earth. Therefore, we who have been enlightened by you cry out with joy:

Rejoice, blessed one raised in the fear of God.
Rejoice, for you inscribed the Law of God in your heart.
Rejoice, for you sought the Discerner of the human heart.
Rejoice, for you found the One whom you desired.
Rejoice, lover of the truth.
Rejoice, enemy of falsehood and lies.
Rejoice, teacher seeking the source of divine wisdom.
Rejoice, warrior following Christ the Commander.
Rejoice, new wise man, following the star in the East.
Rejoice, new apostle to us in the West.
Rejoice, bulwark of the faith.
Rejoice, vanquisher of heresy.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 2

Envious of your God-pleasing life, the enemy of mankind sought to ensnare you, O long-suffering father. But like Job of old, you patiently endured the test. Losing both wife and only child, you continued to seek the Lord, in humility singing to Him: Alleluia.

Ikos 2

Deprived of an earthly family, you became a father to orphans and a teacher for those seeking the truth. Acquiring heavenly knowledge, you surpassed your own teachers in wisdom and zeal. Therefore we offer to you who were made wise by God such praises as these:

Rejoice, for you taught that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.
Rejoice, for your words were confirmed by your deeds.
Rejoice, for you kept the commandments of the Lord.
Rejoice, for from childhood you committed yourself to serve Christ alone.
Rejoice, for you loved Him more than all else.

Rejoice, for you sought His voice in Holy Scripture.
Rejoice, for you meditated on how He cared for His church.
Rejoice, for you were zealous for divine order in all things.
Rejoice, adornment of Presov.
Rejoice, boast of Carpathian Rus'.
Rejoice, new blossom of the Orthodox Church.
Rejoice, joy of the Orthodox in North America.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 3

The power of divine grace and your own good will, O blessed one, enabled you to grow like a cedar of Lebanon, planted in the courts of the Lord. Before every new obedience and cross set before you, you bowed your head, singing to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 3

Like a new Abraham, you left your country, kin and father's house to journey to a distant and foreign land, for God desired you to cultivate a great nation of Orthodox believers. Wherefore we, your spiritual children, rejoice at your selfless obedience and cry out to you:

Rejoice, for you left behind the homeland of your fathers.
Rejoice, for you inherited the heavenly city.
Rejoice, for you ran the long and difficult race to salvation.
Rejoice, for you abandoned worldly honor and glory for the sake of the Kingdom of Christ.
Rejoice, for you went to save others and saved yourself as well.
Rejoice, for you were obedient to the voice of God in your heart.
Rejoice, for you escaped the nets of error.
Rejoice, for you made your way to the Light of Truth.
Rejoice, faithful pastor who cared for his flock.
Rejoice, meek sheep following the Good Shepherd's voice.
Rejoice, otherworldly pilgrim on this earth.
Rejoice, apostle to our land.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 4

Undaunted by a storm of persecution which threatened you and your flock, you continued your journey toward Christ. No threat or action of your superiors could prevent you from giving thanks to the Lord, calling out to Him: Alleluia.

Ikos 4

Hearing about your courageous stand before those who claimed authority over you, all were amazed. How could a simple priest dare to stand against them so firmly for that which is true? Steadfast in the faith, you strove to protect your sheep from the ravening wolves. Wherefore, marvelling at your divine boldness, we cry out to you:

Rejoice, good shepherd who would lay down your life for your sheep.
Rejoice, for the howling of wolves could not make you leave your flock.
Rejoice, new David armed to fight Goliath.
Rejoice, new Gideon trusting in God against all odds.

Rejoice, new Elijah of unquenchable zeal.
Rejoice, new Paul, whom no skillful speaker can dispute.
Rejoice, new Moses undaunted by Pharaoh's mighty hosts.
Rejoice, new Samuel hearing God instead of man.
Rejoice, new Jeremiah suffering with your people.
Rejoice, new Job never imputing folly to the Lord.
Rejoice, new defender of the Faith willing to endure all for the truth.
Rejoice, new confessor with a never-silent tongue.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 5

For your people, you were a divinely-ordained star, leading back to the Orthodox East, and your flock did not abandon you in adversity, for they knew that you were their shepherd who had taught them to sing: Alleluia.

Ikos 5

Thirsting for the Orthodox Faith, your flock blessed you on your journey to far-off San Francisco where you were joined to the Church of your forefathers. Wherefore we cry to you:

Rejoice, merchant in search of fine pearls.
Rejoice, for you found the pearl of great price.
Rejoice, for you broke the yoke of oppression.
Rejoice, for you brought your people back to the Faith of their heart.
Rejoice, glory and boast of the Orthodox Church.
Rejoice, joy of the North American faithful.
Rejoice, dove flying toward the ark of the Church.
Rejoice, for you took refuge under the heavenly Eagle's wings.
Rejoice, for you embraced the Faith that established the universe.
Rejoice, for you drank from the fountain of divine wisdom.
Rejoice, for you found the faith of your fathers.
Rejoice, for with it you enlighten us all.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 6

What ineffable joy entered your God-loving heart when you and your flock were reunited to the Church of your fathers. And your flock, prepared by your divinely wise preaching, glorified God for His great mercy, proclaiming to all: Alleluia.

Ikos 6

From this new Triumph of Orthodoxy, you shone with the grace of God, which was not bestowed on you in vain. Thus strengthened, you prepared yourself for the cross before you. Wherefore we cry out to you:

Rejoice, for you were persecuted for righteousness' sake.
Rejoice, for you were the object of slander and lies.
Rejoice, model of patience who endured afflictions and sorrows.
Rejoice, for you did battle in the depths of your heart.
Rejoice, for the Lord enabled you to cast down the powers of darkness.
Rejoice, for you ceased to be the disdained servant of a harsh master.
Rejoice, for abuse did not cool your God-loving heart.

Rejoice, for in all things you glorified the Lord.
Rejoice, for your enemies called you an impostor and fraud.
Rejoice, for your flock recognized you as a guardian of the truth.
Rejoice, lover of the people of God.
Rejoice, their preservation from destruction.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 7

Your one desire was to please God, O heavenly rod of Christ the Lord. Disdaining hardships, you led your children out of bondage to Pharaoh into the green pastures of the heavenly Kingdom, where you now cry to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 7

Like a householder bringing out of his treasure things new and old, so you brought forth divine teachings, O scribe of the Kingdom, divinely wise Alexis. And we, fed by your teachings together with your newly-illuminated people, call out to you with such words as these:

Rejoice, for your eyes were ever turned to the spiritual East.
Rejoice, for you taught your people to look to the East for the truth of the Orthodox Faith.
Rejoice, for you pointed Eastward where the True Faith is preserved.
Rejoice, for the Sun of Righteousness illumined your soul.
Rejoice, for Christ's light and beauty captured the hearts of your flock.
Rejoice, for He is the Pillar of fire you followed by night.
Rejoice, for you proclaimed that He alone is the Head of the Church.
Rejoice, for you stood upon the Rock of the divinity of Christ.
Rejoice, for you taught the infallibility of God, not man.
Rejoice, for you exposed falsehood by the divine Light of Christ.
Rejoice, radiant lamp shining your light before men.
Rejoice, enlightener of our land.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 8

You were a stranger and sojourner in this land, ever looking toward the heavenly Kingdom, O Father Alexis. Working to earn your own bread you shared it with the poor while teaching them to sing: Alleluia.

Ikos 8

Wholly caught up in your love for Christ and His most pure Mother, you taught your spiritual children that nothing could separate them from the love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Wherefore, trusting in your intercessions and with love for you we cry out:

Rejoice, faithful servant of the God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Rejoice, fulfiller of His divine commands.
Rejoice, for His grace-filled words were sweeter than honey in your mouth.
Rejoice, for His humility was ever before your eyes.
Rejoice, for His love for sinners was the model for your own.
Rejoice, for you embraced His zeal for the House of the Lord.
Rejoice, for you loved the purity of the Orthodox Church.
Rejoice, for you despised all human innovation.

Rejoice, for you ever honored the heavenly Queen.
Rejoice, for she protected you in your struggles.
Rejoice, for you taught that she was a child of Adam yet gave birth to
God.
Rejoice, for she was your consolation and hope.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 9

All were amazed at your courage in battle, O valiant athlete, our Father Alexis, for you were undaunted by the threats of your enemies. Your actions themselves revealed that you feared God alone and not man. Wherefore, we cry to you: Alleluia.

Ikos 9

The most eloquent of orators are unable to praise your great struggles worthily, O divinely wise Alexis. Living in poverty, robbed by thieves, stoned by your enemies, you endured all and forgave all, O blessed one. And we sinners, instructed by your life, cry to you:

Rejoice, confessor suffering at the hands of impious men.
Rejoice, for you forgave those who cast stones at you.
Rejoice, for you were slandered for the sake of the Faith.
Rejoice, for you were led before magistrates and courts of law.
Rejoice, for the false witnesses could not agree.
Rejoice, for your good life shone brighter than their lies.
Rejoice, for you always had the name of God on your lips.
Rejoice, for you called on the Lord and refused to despair.
Rejoice, for you trusted in the help of the Mother of God.
Rejoice, for you were not disappointed in your hope.
Rejoice, for you were condemned by men, yet saved by God.
Rejoice, for in dying, yet you live.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 10

Your sojourn on this earth proved a good example of how we should lay down our lives for our friends, O faithful laborer in the American vineyard of Christ, for thousands of Galicians and Carpatho-Rusyns returned to Orthodoxy through you. Wherefore with them, we your children here on earth cry to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 10

You were a wall and haven and treasury of loving-kindness for your people, O righteous Father Alexis, adornment of the Church of God. Teaching them the commandments of Christ, you worked with them until the faith of Christ took root in them. Wherefore, we who are also instructed by your teachings, cry out to you:

Rejoice, instructor of the love of God.
Rejoice, teacher of abstinence and self-control.
Rejoice, lover of the lives of the Saints.
Rejoice, for you suffered the little ones to draw near to the Lord.
Rejoice, for you taught us to love one another.
Rejoice, for you kept your people from judging others.

Rejoice, for you taught that the Faith is spread more by example than by argument.

Rejoice, for being tolerant, you never compromised the Truth.

Rejoice, for you taught us how to control the tongue.

Rejoice, for you always spoke the truth.

Rejoice, for you were all things to all men.

Rejoice, for through you, many were saved.

Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 11

Foreseeing your approaching death, O saint favored by God, and having completed the task that God appointed for you, you humbly declined the office of bishop. Instead you prepared yourself for your last journey from earth to heaven, where you unceasingly cry to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 11

Your death, O holy Alexis, was a rest from unceasing struggles and sufferings; a passing over from the worse to the better. Archbishop Platon praised you as the Father of the Russian Church in America. And we too join him in singing to you:

Rejoice, glorious founder of the Church in Wilkes-Barre.

Rejoice, new apostle traversing our land.

Rejoice, first priest of Minneapolis.

Rejoice, wise instructor who shows all where to seek the Truth.

Rejoice, first pilgrim to the Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk.

Rejoice, preserver of Slavic piety.

Rejoice, planter of Orthodoxy in Pennsylvania.

Rejoice, nurturer who feeds all the faithful.

Rejoice, beacon of Bridgeport.

Rejoice, lamp illumining the ends of our land.

Rejoice, golden trumpet of the Gospel of Christ.

Rejoice, uniter of those who were divided.

Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 12

Your holy relics, O Confessor of the Faith, our Father Alexis, are shown to be a vessel of grace given to us by Christ our God. We earnestly have recourse to them and, through your intercession, receive remission of sins, crying out to God with all our heart: Alleluia.

Ikos 12

Praising the struggles of your much-suffering and most wondrous life, O new Man of God, our Father Alexis, we praise, glorify and bless you with heartfelt love as our heavenly protector and defender. And now, O holy one, with the grace given to you from on high, continue to sanctify, enlighten and instruct us, your sinful children, that uncondemned, we may cry to you:

Rejoice, shepherd who took the lost sheep on his shoulder.

Rejoice, priest who offered those same sheep to the Lord.

Rejoice, for the son who was dead is now alive.

Rejoice, for the one who was lost is now found.

Rejoice, sower sowing the good seed of the Word.
Rejoice, tireless laborer in the vineyard of Christ.
Rejoice, unmercenary physician of the sick.
Rejoice, good comforter of the suffering.
Rejoice, gracious encouragement of the despondent.
Rejoice, intercessor for our souls.
Rejoice, guardian of the Holy Orthodox Faith.
Rejoice, protector of our land.
Rejoice, O Father Alexis, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America.

Kontakion 13

O holy and righteous Father Alexis, apostle to our land and defender of our Faith, accept this our hymn of thanksgiving. Entreat the all-good God to increase His mercy toward us, to make us steadfast in true faith and piety and to preserve us from all misfortune, that through you we may be accounted worthy, as children with their father, to sing to God forever: Alleluia.

This Kontakion is chanted three times. Then Ikos 1 and Kontakion 1 are repeated.

Prayer 1

O great favorite of God and teacher of piety, our righteous Father Alexis! During your earthly life you were a loving father to your flock, shining forth upon the American land as a radiant beacon, planting in the souls of your people the wheat of true doctrine and uprooting the tares of falsehood and ignorance. Falling down before your grace-filled relics, we praise and glorify God, who has given us such a fervent intercessor for our souls. Since you possess great boldness before God, we entreat you to pray that He will not judge us according to our iniquities, but rather deal with us according to His great mercy. From you we have inherited the holy Orthodox Faith as a priceless spiritual treasure. By your prayers, preserve us from soul-destroying heresies and schisms, and grant that we may stand steadfast and unshaken in the traditions of our fathers. Pray for our hierarchs and priests so that they in turn may pour forth ceaseless prayers for the salvation of the flock which Christ has entrusted to them. By the grace given to you by God, grant to all who beseech your aid everything that is good and profitable for their salvation. Heal the sick, encourage the faint-hearted, console the sorrowful, strengthen the weak, help those who are suffering any sort of distress or affliction. O father of Orthodoxy in America, beseech the Lord to send down His rich mercy upon all who honor your holy memory and who with faith and love have recourse to your heavenly intercession. May we always remember your wise counsels and imitate your God-pleasing virtues so that we may be granted the heavenly Kingdom of Christ our God, to whom is due all glory, honor and worship, together with His Father, who is from everlasting, and His all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer 2 (before his holy relics)

O holy and righteous Father Alexis, great favorite of Christ and new Man of God, you now stand in heaven before the throne of the all-holy Trinity. Bending the knees of our heart and falling down before the holy shrine of your precious relics, we unworthy sinners praise, bless and magnify God who glorified

you and showed us, through you, His great mercy. With contrite hearts and tears of repentance, we entreat you to intercede before our merciful Master that we may be granted remission of our many sins and remain steadfast and uncompromising in the true Faith. You strove in your earthly life to enlighten those in darkness and the shadow of death with the light of the Holy Orthodox Faith. You sought to instruct all to do the will of God. So now also entreat the Lord to illumine the eyes of our hearts that we may grow in faith and piety; to kindle the flame of true prayer in the hearts of the faithful of this land; to instill in His pastors divine zeal to care for the flocks entrusted to them; to grant wisdom and grace to our right-believing hierarchs that they might protect the faith of our fathers which you so earnestly sought out; to strengthen us all to bear the Cross set before us; and to grant us divine grace to endure all and forgive all. O holy Father Alexis, entreat the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, to dispel the storm of passions which beset us and to direct our gaze from this transitory life to the heavenly and eternal one. Cease not, O blessed Father, to pray for the Orthodox faithful of this land. Delivered from temporal and eternal misfortunes, may we magnify you, our helper and intercessor, and glorify our Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, to whom is due all glory, honor and worship, together with His Father who is from everlasting, and His all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer 3

O holy Father Alexis, pillar of Orthodoxy and chosen vessel of the Truth of Christ, we come to you as one who received special grace from God. You put to shame the tyrant's deceptions by your wisdom and trampled demons underfoot by your virtuous life. Entreat God that we also may be granted this same wisdom and love of virtue. By your intercession, illumine our darkened souls that we may receive the light of Truth and remain steadfast in the Faith. As you once proved foolish the wisdom of this world, so now incline our hearts to the fear of God that we may begin to learn true wisdom. As you once dispelled impiety with the example of your blameless life and refused to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, so now teach us to live piously and to walk in the way of the Lord. As you once returned to the bosom of the Orthodox Church and partook of the Fountain of life, so now help us to guide those gone astray and give drink to those in this land who are thirsting for the water of life. O holy confessor Alexis, beseech the Lord that He look down with mercy on our Orthodox faithful and water with His grace the seed which you planted, that it may continue to flower and bring forth fruit a hundredfold. May we, having been counted worthy of blessings in this life, be vouchsafed the blessings of heaven; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.