

ANNUNCIATION ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

Archdiocese of Canada - Orthodox Church in America
His Eminence Seraphim, Archbishop of Ottawa and Canada

CATHEDRAL HERALD

February 2010



Services For The Month Of February

Mon. Feb. 1:	7:00 pm Vigil Meeting of the Lord
Tue. Feb. 2:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Wed. Feb. 3:	7:00 pm Daily Vespers
Fri. Feb. 5:	6:00 pm Akathist
Sat. Feb. 6:	5:00 pm Vigil
Sun. Feb. 7:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy Meatfare / Last Judgement
Wed. Feb 10:	7:00 pm Daily Vespers
Fri. Feb. 12	:00 pm Akathist
Sat. Feb. 13:	5:00 pm Vigil
Sun. Feb. 14:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy 2:00 pm Forgiveness Vespers
Mon. Feb.15:	7:00 pm Compline with Canon of St Andrew
Tues. Feb. 16:	7:00 pm Compline with Canon of St Andrew
Wed, Feb.17:	6:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Thur. Feb.18:	7:00 pm Compline with Canon of St Andrew
Fri. Feb.19:	6:00 pm Akathist
Sat. Feb.20:	9:30 am Liturgy (St Theodore) 2:00 pm Unction 5:00 pm Vigil
Sun. Feb.21:	9:15 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy--- Sun of Orthodoxy Vespers TBA
Wed. Feb. 24:	6:00 Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Fri. Feb.26:	6:00 pm Akathist
Sat. Feb.27:	9:30 am Memorial Divine Liturgy
Sun. Feb.28:	9:30 am Divine Liturgy St Gregory Palamas

Contents

Services For The Month Of February	2
Letter from the Dean.....	4
Meeting of Our Lord.....	5
Lenten Fasting	6
Forgiveness Sunday	7
Sunday of Orthodoxy	9
Raphael of Brooklyn	12

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Letter From The Dean

February 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

The Lord has blessed our community and us in so many ways, both with spiritual and material gifts, all for which we need to be thankful. One of these is our temple that we acquired five years ago. Thanks to the prayers, planning and foresight of the cathedral parish leadership then, they braved to move from the tiny facilities on Clarey to where we are now. We have weather the initial move and are now comfortable in these new premises, now seeking what needs to be done next.

The task at hand is two fold; first to maintain the day to day operation of the buildings, secondly the vision for future developments that we now need to be put into action for future planning. To this end we invite you to search yourself and seek if this is the type of gifting and ministry that you may have that you could share with your community. We are calling a meeting on February 10, 7:30 pm for those who are interested and willing to work on this ministry of our parish. The goal is that if we can break up the work load among a number of people, the job of maintaining the building could become manageable. While daily operations continue, future plans like access for the disabled, parking, development of church hall rental need to be investigated and planned.

One of the major projects now before us is to move the administrative offices of the Archdiocese into the church hall area. This means remodelling, creating a front entrance to the basement that will be used by the parish, the Archdiocese, and give easier access for the use of the church hall. Once the plans are in place, the parish will have an opportunity at a meeting to discuss this project.

In the church the Icon of Pochaev Mother of God and of St. Nicholas need to have a permanent place and shrine stands build as well as the iconostas may need some further development. .

All these projects need your prayer and our collective support.

Igumen Alexander

Meeting of Our Lord

Feb.2, 2010

Forty days after Christ was born he was presented to God in the Jerusalem Temple according to the Mosaic Law. At this time as well his mother Mary underwent the ritual purification and offered the sacrifices as prescribed in the Law. Thus, forty days after Christmas, on the second of February, the Church celebrates the feast of the presentation called the Meeting (or Presentation or Reception) of the Lord.

The meeting of Christ by the elder Simeon and the prophetess Anna (Lk 2:22-36) is the main event of the feast of Christ's presentation in the Temple. It was "revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26) and, inspired by the same Spirit, he came to the Temple where he met the new-born Messiah, took him in his arms and said the words which are now chanted each evening at the end of the Orthodox Vesper service:

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for the revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Thy people Israel (Lk 2:29-32).

At this time as well Simeon predicted that Jesus would be the "sign which is spoken against" and that he would cause "the fall and the rising of many in Israel." He also foretold Mary's sufferings because of her son (Luke 22:34-35). Anna also was present and, giving thanks to God "she spoke of Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38).

In the service of the feast of the Meeting of the Lord, the fact emphasized is that Christ, the Son and Word of God through whom the world was created, now is held as an infant in Simeon's hands; this same Son of God, the Giver of the Law, in the darkness as the Giver of the Law. Receive him as a babe now obeying the Law. For he it is of whom the Law and the Prophets have spoken, incarnate for our sake and saving mankind. Come let us adore him!

Let the door of heaven open today, for the Eternal Word of the Father, without giving up his divinity, has been incarnate of the Virgin in time. And as a babe of forty days he is voluntarily brought by his mother to the Temple, according to the Law. And the elder Simeon takes him in his arms and cries out: Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, O Lord, who has come to save the human race -- glory to Thee! (Vesper Verses of the Feast).

The Vespers and Matins of the feast of the Meeting of the Lord are filled with hymns on this theme. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated with the lines from the canticle of Mary forming the prokeimenon and the words of Simeon being the verses for the Alleluia. The gospel readings tell of the meeting, while the Old Testament readings at Vespers refer to the Law of the purification in Leviticus, the vision of Isaiah in the Temple of the Thrice-Holy Lord, and the gift of faith to the Egyptians prophesied by Isaiah when the light of the Lord shall be a "revelation to the Gentiles" (Lk 2:32).

The celebration of the Meeting of the Lord in the Church is not merely an historical commemoration. Inspired by the same Holy Spirit as Simeon, and led by the same Spirit into the Church of the Messiah, the members of the Church also can claim their own "meeting" with the Lord, and so also can witness that they too can "depart in peace" since their eyes have seen the salvation of God in the person of his Christ.

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace! From you shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those who sat in darkness! Rejoice and be glad, O righteous elder; you accepted in your arms the Redeemer of our souls who grants us the resurrection (Troparion).

By Thy nativity, Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb. And didst bless Simeon's hands, O Christ our God. Now Thou hast come and saved us through love. Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians, O only Lover of man (Kontakion).

It is customary in many churches to bless candles on the feast of the Meeting of the Lord.

(Taken from *The Orthodox Faith* by Fr. Tom Hopko available on the OCA website).

Lenten Fasting

A special word must be said about fasting during Lent. Generally speaking, fasting is an essential element of the Christian Life. Christ fasted and taught men to fast. Blessed fasting is done in secret, without ostentation or accusation of others (Mt 6:16; Rom 14). It has as its goal the purification of our lives, the liberation of our souls and bodies from sin, the strengthening of our human powers of love for God and man, the enlightening of our entire being for communion with the Blessed Trinity.

The Orthodox rules for Lenten fasting are the monastic rules. No meat is allowed after Meatfare Sunday, and no eggs or dairy products after Cheesefare Sunday. These rules exist not as a Pharisaic "burden too hard to bear" (Lk 11:46), but as an ideal to be striven for; not as an end in themselves, but as a means to spiritual perfection crowned in love. The Lenten services themselves continually remind us of this.

Let us fast with a fast pleasing to the Lord. This is the true fast: the casting off of evil, the bridling of the tongue, the cutting off of anger, the cessation of lusts, evil talking, lies and cursing. The stopping of these is the fast true and acceptable. (Monday Vespers of the First Week). The Lenten services also make the undeniable point that we should not pride ourselves with external fasting since the devil also never eats!

The ascetic fast of Great Lent continues from Meatfare Sunday to Easter Sunday, and is broken only after the Paschal Divine Liturgy. Knowing the great effort to which they are called, Christians should make every effort to fast as well as they can, in secret, so that God would see and bless their (effort) openly with a holy life. Each person must do his best in the light of the given ideal.

In addition to the ascetic fasting of the Lenten season, the Orthodox alone among Christians also practice what is known as Eucharistic or liturgical fasting. This fasting does not refer to the normal abstinence in preparation for receiving the holy Eucharist; it means fasting from the holy Eucharist itself.

During the week days of Great Lent the regular Eucharistic Divine Liturgy is not celebrated in Orthodox churches since the Divine Liturgy is always a paschal celebration of communion with the Risen Lord. Because the Lenten season is one of preparation for the Lord's Resurrection through the remembrance of sin and separation from God, the liturgical order of the Church eliminates the Eucharistic service on the weekdays of Lent. Instead the non-Eucharistic services are extended with additional scripture readings and hymnology of a Lenten character. In order that the faithful would not be entirely deprived of Holy Communion on the Lenten days, however, the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts is celebrated on Wednesday and Friday evenings.

Even during Great Lent, Saturday (the Sabbath Day) and Sunday (the Lord's Day) remain Eucharistic days, and the Divine Liturgy is celebrated. On Saturdays it is the normal Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, usually with prayers for the dead. On Sundays it is the longer Liturgy of St Basil the Great.

The well-known teaching that Saturdays and Sundays are never days of fasting in the Orthodox Church, an issue emphasized centuries ago when controversy arose with the Latin Church, refers only to this Eucharistic-liturgical fast. During Great Lent, even though the Eucharistic fast is broken on Saturdays and Sundays, the ascetical fast continues through the weekends since this fasting is an extended effort made from Meatfare Sunday right to Easter itself.

Forgiveness Sunday

(Feb. 14th)

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent – the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated – is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ:

"If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses..."
(Mark 6:14-15)

Then after Vespers – after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon: "Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!", after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special memories, with the prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations – we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a "good deed" required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But, the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says:

In vain do you rejoice in no eating, O soul!
For you abstain from food,
But from passions you are not purified.
If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast.

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, Whom He sends to us, so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a return to it, a growth in it that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no "enemies"? Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions, is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true, that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But, the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them -- in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being "polite" and "friendly" we fulfill God's commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize - be it only for one minute - that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual "recognition" which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns we are called to make a spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me - we begin to realize that it is Christ Who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery - and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists - we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year, "opens to us the doors of Paradise."

We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage. Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting – true fasting; our effort – true effort; our reconciliation with God – true reconciliation.

Father Alexander Schmemmann. Introduction to the DRE/OCA 1975-1982 *Forgiveness Sunday Vespers*

Sunday of Orthodoxy

(Feb.21st)

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

Rejoicing today in the triumph of Orthodoxy on this first Sunday of Lent, we joyfully commemorate three events: one event belonging to the past; one event to the present; and one event which still belongs to the future.

Whenever we have any feast or joy in the Church, we Orthodox first of all look back – for in our present life we depend on what happened in the past. We depend first of all, of course, on the first and the ultimate triumph -- that of Christ Himself. Our faith is rooted in that strange defeat which became the most glorious victory – the defeat of a man nailed to the cross, who rose again from the dead, who is the Lord and the Master of the world. This is the first triumph of Orthodoxy. This is the content of all our commemorations and of all our joy. This man selected and chose twelve men, gave them power to preach about that defeat and that victory, and sent them to the whole world saying preach and baptize, build up the Church, announce the Kingdom of God. And you know, my brothers and sisters, how those twelve men – very simple men indeed, simple fishermen – went out and preached. The world hated them, the Roman Empire persecuted them, and they were covered with blood. But that blood was another victory. The Church grew, the Church covered the universe with the true faith. After 300 years of the most unequal conflict between the powerful Roman Empire and the powerless Christian Church, the Roman Empire accepted Christ as Lord and Master. That was the second triumph of Orthodoxy. The Roman Empire recognized the one whom it crucified and those whom it persecuted as the bearers of truth, and their teaching as the teaching of life eternal. The Church triumphed. But then the second period of troubles began.

The following centuries saw many attempts to distort the faith, to adjust it to human needs, to fill it with human content. In each generation there were those who could not accept that message of the cross and resurrection and life eternal. They tried to change it, and those changes we call heresies. Again there were persecutions. Again, Orthodox bishops, monks and laymen defended their faith and were condemned and went into exile and were covered with blood. And after five centuries of those conflicts and persecutions and discussions, the day came which we commemorate today, the day of the final victory of Orthodoxy as the true faith over all the heresies. It happened on the first Sunday of Lent in the year 843 in Constantinople. After almost 100 years of persecution directed against the worship of the holy icons, the Church finally proclaimed that the truth had been defined, that the truth was fully in the possession of the Church. And since then all Orthodox people, wherever they live, have gathered on this Sunday to proclaim before the world their faith in that truth, their belief that their Church is truly

apostolic, truly Orthodox, truly universal. This is the event of the past that we commemorate today.

But let us ask ourselves one question: Do all the triumphs of Orthodoxy, all the victories, belong to the past? Looking at the present today, we sometimes feel that our only consolation is to remember the past. *Then* Orthodoxy was glorious, *then* the Orthodox Church was powerful, *then* it dominated. But what about the present? My dear friends, if the triumph of Orthodoxy belongs to the past only, if there is nothing else for us to do but commemorate, to repeat to ourselves how glorious was the past, then Orthodoxy is dead. But we are here tonight to witness to the fact that Orthodoxy not only is not dead but also that it is once more and forever celebrating its own triumph – the triumph of Orthodoxy. We don't have to fight heresies among ourselves, but we have other things that once more challenge our Orthodox faith.

Today, gathered here together, Orthodox of various national backgrounds, we proclaim and we glorify first of all our unity in Orthodoxy. This is the triumph of Orthodoxy in the present. This is a most wonderful event: that all of us, with all our differences, with all our limitations, with all our weaknesses, can come together and say we belong to that Orthodox faith, that we are one in Christ and in Orthodoxy. We are living very far from the traditional centers of Orthodoxy. We call ourselves Eastern Orthodox, and yet we are here in the West, so far from those glorious cities which were centers of the Orthodox faith for centuries – Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow. How far are those cities. And yet, don't we have the feeling that something of a miracle has happened, that God has sent us here, far into the West, not just in order to settle here, to increase our income, to build up a community. He also has sent us as apostles of Orthodoxy, so that this faith, which historically was limited to the East, now is becoming a faith which is truly and completely universal.

This is a thrilling moment in the history of Orthodoxy. That is why it is so important for us to be here tonight and to understand, to realize, to have that vision of what is going on. People were crossing the ocean, coming here, not thinking so much about their faith as about themselves, about their lives, about their future. They were usually poor people, they had a difficult life, and they built those little Orthodox churches everywhere in America not for other people but for themselves, just to remember their homes, to perpetuate their tradition. They didn't think of the future. And yet this is what happened: the Orthodox Church was sent here through and with those poor men. The truth itself, the fullness of the apostolic faith -- all this came here, and here we are now, filling this hall and proclaiming this apostolic faith – the faith that has strengthened the universe. And this leads us to the event which still belongs to the future.

If today we can only proclaim, if we can only pray for that coming triumph of Orthodoxy in this country and in the world, our Orthodox faith forces us to believe that it is not by accident but by divine providence that the Orthodox faith today has reached all countries, all cities, all continents of the universe. After that historic weakness of our religion, after the persecutions by the Roman Empire, by the Turks, by the godless atheists, after all the troubles that we had to go through, today a new day begins. Something new is going to happen. And it is this future of Orthodoxy that we have to rejoice about today.

We can already have a vision of that future when, in the West, a strong American Orthodox Church comes into existence. We can see how this faith, which for such a long time was an alien

faith here, will become truly and completely universal in the sense that we will answer the questions of all men, and also all their questions. For if we believe in that word: "Orthodoxy," "the true faith"; if for one moment we try to understand what it means: the true, the full Christianity, as it has been proclaimed by Christ and His disciples; if our Church has preserved for all ages the message of the apostles and of the fathers and of the saints in its purest form, then, my dear friends, here is the answer to the questions and to the problems and to the sufferings of our world. You know that our world today is so complex. It is changing all the time. And the more it changes, the more people fear, the more they are frightened by the future, the more they are preoccupied by what will happen to them. And this is where Orthodoxy must answer their problem; this is where Orthodoxy must accept the challenge of modern civilization and reveal to men of all nations, to all men in the whole world, that it has remained the force of God left in history for the transformation, for the deification, for the transfiguration of human life.

The past, the present, the future: At the beginning, one lonely man on the cross — the complete defeat. And if at that time we had been there with all our human calculations, we probably would have said: "That's the end. Nothing else will happen." The twelve left Him. There was no one, no one to hope. The world was in darkness. Everything seemed finished. And you know what happened three days later. Three days later He appeared. He appeared to His disciples, and their hearts were burning within them because they knew that He was the risen Lord. And since then, in every generation, there have been people with burning hearts, people who have felt that this victory of Christ had to be carried again and again into this world, to be proclaimed in order to win new human souls and to be the transforming force in history.

Today this responsibility belongs to us. We feel that we are weak. We feel that we are limited, we are divided, we are still separated in so many groups, we have so many obstacles to overcome. But today, on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we close our eyes for a second and we rejoice in that unity which is already here: priests of various national churches praying together, people of all backgrounds uniting in prayer for the triumph of Orthodoxy. We are already in a triumph, and may God help us keep that triumph in our hearts, so that we never give up hope in that future event in the history of orthodoxy when Orthodoxy will become the victory which eternally overcomes all the obstacles, because that victory is the victory of Christ Himself.

As we approach the most important moment of the Eucharist, the priest says, "Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess...." What is the condition of the real triumph of Orthodoxy? What is the way leading to the real, the final, the ultimate victory of our faith? The answer comes from the Gospel. The answer comes from Christ Himself and from the whole tradition of Orthodoxy. It is *love*. Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess . . . confess our faith, our Orthodoxy. Let us, from now on, feel responsible for each other. Let us understand that even if we are divided in small parishes, in small dioceses, we first of all belong to one another. We belong together, to Christ, to His Body, to the Church. Let us feel responsible for each other, and let us love one another. Let us put above everything else the interests of Orthodoxy in this country. Let us understand that each one of us today has to be the apostle of Orthodoxy in a country which is not yet Orthodox, in a society which is asking us: "What do you believe?" "What is your faith?" And let us, above everything else, keep the memory, keep the experience, keep the taste of that unity which we are anticipating tonight.

At the end of the first century — when the Church was still a very small group, a very small minority, in a society which was definitely anti-Christian when the persecution was beginning — St. John the Divine, the beloved disciple of Christ, wrote these words: "And this is the victory, our faith, this is the victory." There was no victory at that time, and yet he knew that in his faith he had the victory that can be applied to us today. We have the promise of Christ, that the gates of hell will *never* prevail against the Church. We have the promise of Christ that if we have faith, all things are possible. We have the promise of the Holy Spirit, that He will fill all that which is weak, that He will help us at the moment when we need help. In other words, we have all the possibilities, we have everything that we need, and therefore the victory is ours. It is not a human victory which can be defined in terms of money, of human success, of human achievements. What we are preaching tonight, what we are proclaiming tonight, what we are praying for tonight, is the victory of Christ in me, in us, in all of you in the Orthodox Church in America. And that victory of Christ in us, of the one who for us was crucified and rose again from the dead, that victory will be the victory of His Church.

Today is the triumph of Orthodoxy, and a hymn sung today states solemnly and simply: "This is the Apostolic faith, this is the Orthodox faith, this is the faith of the Fathers, this is the faith that is the foundation of the world." My dear brothers and sisters, this is also our own faith. We are chosen. We are elected. We are the happy few that can say of our faith, "apostolic," "universal," "the faith of our fathers," "Orthodoxy," "the truth." Having this wonderful treasure, let us preserve it, let us keep it, and let us also use it in such a way that this treasure becomes the victory of Christ in us and in His Church. Amen. *Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann*

To Love Is To Remember. Father Alexander Schmemmann Endowment — Chair of Liturgical Theology. NY, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, March 1985. An abridged version was reprinted in the *Orthodox Church*, December 1988.

Raphael of Brooklyn



From OrthodoxWiki

St. Raphael of Brooklyn

Our father among the saints **Raphael of Brooklyn** (November 20, 1860 - February 27, 1915) was born Rafla Hawaweeny in Beirut, Lebanon, to Damascene Syrian refugee parents. He was educated at the Patriarchal School in Damascus, the School of Orthodox Theology in Halki Island, Turkey, and at the Theological Academy in Kiev, Russia. In 1904 he became the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in North America; the consecration was done by Archbishop St. Tikhon of Moscow and Bishop Innocent in New York City. He served as bishop of Brooklyn, New York until his death. During the course of his ministry as an auxiliary bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church in America, St. Raphael founded the present-day primatial cathedral of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (St. Nicholas Cathedral), established : thirty parishes, and assisted in the founding of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.