



August 18, 2024
Protocol 08/006

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

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

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

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

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

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

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