
+Tikhon, Retired Bishop of San
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The Orthodox Church in America
649 Robinson Street
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Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

- In a letter of March 7, 2008, Friday of Cheesefare Week, by letter from the First Hierarch of The Orthodox Church in America, His Beatitude Most Blessed Herman, Archbishop of Washington and New York, notified His Grace, the Right Reverend Nikolai, Bishop of Sitka, Anchorage, and Alaska, The Orthodox Church in America, that he is temporarily removed from his Diocese, is forbidden to serve the Divine Services there, and that a cleric¹ of Most Blessed Herman's Diocese is appointed to administer the diocese *instead of and in the place* of Bishop Nikolai. This constitutes, in an orderly Church, a temporary ***deposition*** of a canonically elected and installed ***Bishop of unquestioned Orthodoxy of Faith.***² This action and letter were immediately published by the Chancery of the same Metropolitan, on the world-wide-web.
- Further, on the same date His Beatitude sent a memorandum to all clergy and faithful of the see of Sitka and Anchorage, i.e., of the Diocese of Alaska, directing them NOT TO COMMEMORATE by name the same Bishop Nikolai in the Divine Services. This action and memorandum were published simultaneously with the above letters and appointment.
- I hereby protest the above cited unlawful and disorderly actions of His Beatitude and the Holy Synod with him on these bases:
 - According to the letter and spirit of the Holy Canons of the Universal and Local Councils and of the Holy Fathers, no Bishop may be deposed, alienated, or suspended from his Bishopric without disciplinary procedures which are the result of stated charges, and their specifications, that the given Hierarch has violated the Holy Canons or taught heresy
 - Every Deacon and Presbyter in The Orthodox Church in America has executed and signed, as a mandatory ***prerequisite*** of his Ordination as such, vows, vows made before his Spiritual Father and before the Holy Gospels and the Life-Giving Cross, to obey his Bishop ***in everything.***
 - Therefore, the actions of the Holy Synod and its First Hierarch, Metropolitan Herman, in “temporarily” deposing Bishop Nikolai, in appointing a Priest to rule the Diocese in his stead and place, and in requiring presbyters to refuse to commemorate their ruling Bishop's name in the Divine Services are unlawful and disorderly actions. I appeal to the entire Orthodox Episcopate-in particular the First Hierarchs of all the Holy Local Churches, to address the problem of the above disorders introduced into the life of The Orthodox Church in America.

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West, The Orthodox Church in America

¹ The Priest named in this decree, Rector of a parish, declined the appointment, and His Beatitude subsequently appointed his Chancellor to administer the Alaskan diocese

² His Beatitude has not cited in these letters or elsewhere any accusation against Bishop Nikolai: he stated, as quasi-justification, only unspecified “complaints” from unspecified instances only.