

**ST. TIKHON ARCHDIOCESAN STEWARDS**

# **THE STEWARD**

**SPRING 2015**

**1940**



**2015**

**SEVENTY FIVE YEARS AS A DIOCESE**

**THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA.**

**OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA**

# WELCOME.

In 2006 a number of people from around the Archdiocese got together to talk about the future of the Church here in Canada, especially in relationship to its administration. What came out of their conversations was an alternative way in which the Administration of the Archdiocese could be supported.

Church administration isn't necessarily a hot button topic that generates wide spread interest. But providing a level of financial stability for it, can bring about greater blessings in its work of manifesting the Lord's life saving victory.

In the same way that the faithful have an opportunity to financially contribute in the support of their home parishes, there is now an opportunity to directly contribute to the work of the Church through a financial commitment to the St. Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards program (STAS). And by this continue the work of the Saints known and unknown who laboured in this land.

STAS is a tangible way to directly support the work of the Church in addressing its current and more importantly its future needs, whether it be the Episcopacy, Missions, Education, and Seminary funding.

STAS has the possibility, to positively affect our Archdiocese: an Archdiocese with real needs, and with the potential of real solutions, through your support.

And for this we ask that you consider your participation in supporting the witness of the Church in this country. Please contribute what you can, with joy and thanksgiving.

Priest Gregory Scratch, Priest Andrew Applegate.  
Presidents of STAS.

## SEVENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

2015 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of what is now our Archdiocese. The granting of a territorial diocese in 1940 marked a coming of age for the Orthodox Church in Canada.

The establishment of this diocese brought home the responsibility of managing and cultivating, evangelizing, and witnessing the saving love of the Lord and His Church. The Archdiocese has been built upon the experience of living out the life of the Liturgy for fifty years, and having a local episcopal presence since 1916, with the assignment of Canada's first resident Orthodox bishop.

Given the adversity and challenges that at times have seemed insurmountable and interminable, any anniversary this Archdiocese celebrates is reason to offer thanksgiving to God for providing a stable Church. Through Revolutions and wars, poverty and division, to distance and climate, our Church has not only survived but has grown.

This growth might seem insignificant in the light of super-sized mega Churches, or even in the context of Churches with a strong cultural connection, but it is the kind of growth that lasts, that changes from the inside, bringing mercy and grace to the world around.

Given that many Orthodox Churches are facing declining numbers, or large parish memberships but empty churches, our little (in numbers) diocese has grown, with healthy men and women, healthy parishes, priests, deacons, and healthy leaders and witnesses to the Lord's saving love.



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## SEVENTY FIFTH...

Just in the last five years we have received or ordained ten priests, seven deacons, and planted one mission, and have provided priests for two other mission stations. This is not to say that our Archdiocese has not had challenges, or setbacks. Clearly we have. There have been challenges that have brought us to our knees, pleading for the Lord to help and save us. Yet it has been these tempests that have brought about a clearer focus of our mission: to baptize this nation. It is the same missionary vision that those pioneers from Ukraine, Russia, and Romania brought with them when they settled this country, the same mission that our bishops and priests were witnesses too when they preached the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the same mission that insured that our faith would be more than just history, with the raising of another generation of Orthodox Christians offering thanksgiving and glory to our God.

We, too, including our work and dedication and stewardship, are a part of this story and history. Since 2007 the St. Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards program has provided the opportunity for the faithful of this Archdiocese to contribute directly to the support of the Archdiocese above and beyond the financial support they directly offered to their parish. It has been a process in which a lot of people have been contributing a little bit every month, to great effect.

Part of the growth and health of this Archdiocese is directly related to these men and women, professionals, students, clergy and faithful, who have offered the Lord far above and beyond what would normally be expected in the support of His Body, the Church.

The work of STAS is not done, and we ask that if you are not a current member, prayerfully to consider a pre-authorized contribution, or a yearly gift in support of a growing Church. If you are a current member, we ask that you consider increasing the amount you contribute in support of the Archdiocese. As well, we thank you for your dedication and stewardship. Asking that the Lord bless you with His love and mercy, may the Lord bring us through the next 75 years, and more.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES, SAME VISION

Since 2006, the St. Tikhon Archdiocesan Stewards program has offered opportunities for the faithful men and women of this Archdiocese to contribute in a meaningful way to the support of the Archdiocesan administration. Through their work with STAS a few have offered considerable amounts of time and energy, facilitating the vision of a Church in this country that can focus on building up the Faith, without distractions.

Throughout the brief history of STAS, many people have worked to help this program become the largest financial contributor to the Archdiocese of Canada. Mark Petasky, Deacon Jesse Isaac, Priest Matthew Francis, and Peter Ewanchuk, previously had all generously all lent their time and efforts, but it was the work offered by Subdeacon Jeremy Scratch that provided a stable and workable system that has helped STAS meet its goal of providing stable funding for the Archdiocesan Secretary.

Subdeacon Jeremy, who stepped down last year, had almost single-handedly seen to the day-to-day business of STAS, insuring that new members were registered and processed, addressing any issues regarding deposits, being the local liaison with ADEC, and, more importantly, making sure that funds were collected twice a month. This is not to omit mentioning his insight into marketing and communications that helped STAS better articulate its vision. Beyond these thankless tasks, Jeremy offered an unmatched level of enthusiasm for this Archdiocese. From the conception of this program, through its development, promotion, from its growing pains and challenges to its current successes, Jeremy's desire to serve the Lord and His Body, the Church, in the Archdiocese has inspired not only myself but the many contributors to STAS.

It is not an exaggeration to state that without Subdeacon Jeremy's vision, determination, work and insight, STAS would not have been a successful and lasting enterprise, granting stability to the Archdiocese in very unstable times. His passion and love for the Lord and His saints will be greatly missed. May the Lord grant him many years of service!

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## **NEW PERSPECTIVES...**

Subdeacon Jeremy's departure highlighted the need to have more people involved in the administration of this program, so as not to overwork and stretch out already thin resources.

Into this situation stepped Fr. Andrew Applegate. He is the rector of St. Aidan of Lindisfarne in Cranbrook British Columbia, and a member of the Archdiocesan Council.

Fr. Andrew was born in Calgary in 1954, and graduated from James Fowler in 1972. He married Sonia in 1976 in Fort McMurray. Together they embarked upon a spiritual search, attending various evangelical, charismatic, and mainline Protestant churches until coming "home" to the Orthodox Church in 1983. They attended St. Peter the Aleut Parish. Fr. Andrew has worked in various fields and has started up a number of businesses in Calgary. He was ordained to the diaconate by Bishop Irénée on July 15, 2012 and to the holy priesthood on March 3, 2013. Fr. Andrew and Sonia have one son Michael (spouse Katherine and son John Matthew, and daughter Elisa). Fr. Andrew continues his studies at the St. Arseny Institute.

Fr. Andrew brings a vast amount of business experience to STAS, as well as a practical perspective. More importantly he brings a genuine desire to see this country baptized, coming into communion with our God through a life in the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.



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## NEW PERSPECTIVES...

Although Father Andrew's presence in the administration of STAS greatly helps, many more people are needed to insure that this program is able to communicate and facilitate the unique and growing needs of our Archdiocese. That is where you come in. Each member of STAS, each reader of this article has the possibility to lend their hands to the building up of our Church.

Whether your way is by helping in the administration, or speaking for STAS in your community, or mentioning it to your friends and asking them to become members, and especially by praying for our Church, it all helps immeasurably.

By the prayers of St. Tikhon and Archbishop Arseny, may we all offer to the Lord our work in building up the Church in Canada to the glory of our loving Lord. Let us all, with gratitude, look towards our tenth anniversary, and beyond.

Pr. Gregory Scratch.  
STAS Co-president

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gregory Scratch", written in a cursive style.

## THE BEGINNING OF HOLY APOSTLES MISSION STATION.

On a snowy November afternoon, I had just returned to my office in Edmonton when I got the voicemail that the Holy Apostles Mission Station had been established by His Grace, Bishop Irénée, to serve the community of Chilliwack, British Columbia. A month earlier I had been in Chilliwack – my hometown in the Fraser Valley, 100km east of Vancouver – for a job interview and to meet with the local Orthodox faithful. Thirty-five of us – including 15 children – had met in the living room of one of the local families, praying for the guidance and wisdom of Almighty God. It was our conviction that if the Lord opened the door, and I were offered the job – then it would be wise to walk through that door. The next afternoon, in the Abbotsford airport Boarding Lounge, I was offered the job. The first thought that came to mind was, “God, help me!” I called Matushka Krista back in Edmonton, and said, “well, it looks as though the door has opened.”

Over the next weeks and months we took the steps to leave Edmonton – our home for over thirteen years – and make a missionary move, to follow our Lord Jesus Christ back to my ‘homeland,’ in Chilliwack. The official letter of blessing came from the Bishop, and the name was assigned to the newly established Mission Station – Holy Apostles – commemorating the Holy, Glorious, All-Laudable Apostles, both the Twelve (June 30th) and the Seventy (January 4th).

“...I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith.”

This phrase from the 4th-century Nicene Creed expresses some of the unique hallmarks of the Church. One word in particular, Apostolic, often needs some explaining, as does our status as a “Mission” Church. “Mission” means that we, as Christians, have been sent out by Jesus Christ into all the world, to bear witness to the Good News of the Kingdom of God. The Church, in this sense, is an apostolic continuation of the Incarnation of God. The word apostolic, or apostle, from its Greek roots, means sent. As the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, when He appeared to His Disciples after His Glorious Resurrection: “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20.21)

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## THE BEGINNING OF HOLY APOSTLES MISSION STATION.

We carry on the faith of the Apostles insofar as we ourselves respond to the call of Jesus Christ to carry his life to the world in which we live. We have been sent to bear witness to the Good News here in Chilliwack, the Fraser Valley, in Canada, and to the ends of the earth!

As a community that claims the Holy Apostles, both the Twelve, and the Seventy, as our heavenly patrons, we ask for their prayers that God will strengthen us to faithfully share His love in the world.

So, with those 82 Holy Apostles' bold prayers to lift us up, Matushka Krista, our six-year-old son Basil, and I made the big move over the Rockies, to serve a new Mission outpost here in the Archdiocese of Canada. Encouraged and blessed by our beloved Bishop, Vladyka Irénée, Archpriest Michael Fourik, Dean of British Columbia and the Yukon, the St. Herman's Sobor family in Edmonton, and so many others, we began our first regular services February 7-8th. The First Divine Liturgy of the Holy Apostles Mission Station, Feb. 8, 2015

We are just beginning this journey, and it began on the cusp of Great Lent. In a way in it is fitting that our life together as a community begins with a journey of repentance, for it is the basic character of our life in Christ – always turning to Him.

Please join in prayer for the new Holy Apostles Mission Station, that we might faithfully bear witness to our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ!



*Father Matthew Francis is the priest in charge at the Holy Apostles Mission in Chilliwack and a current member of STAS.*

## **ARCHBISHOP JOASAPH (SKORODUMOV).**

In the history of Orthodoxy in Canada, no one event has had more impact than the Russian revolution, and although the politics, passion, and issues that divided communities and families have healed, the current situation of our many Orthodox jurisdictions is still with us, even a hundred years latter.

One such effect is the presence of both the Orthodox Church in America OCA (known at first as the Russian Mission and afterwards as the Metropolia) , and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia ROCOR (known at first as the Karlovtsy Synod, or simply the Synod).

Although much has been written about the history and the relationship between these two parallel jurisdictions, the first half of the last century could be summarized as having been adversarial and combative, with bishops suspending other bishops, churches locking out their clergy, and court cases about the ownership of church properties.

But even during those unsettled days of disunity, there were moments in which ideologies and politics were put aside in order to serve the faithful of Canada. The consecration of Bishop Joasaph (Skorodumov) and his assignment to Canada is one of them.

Ivan Skorodumov was born in 1888, into a priestly family, in the village of Rebovichi, in the Novgorod diocese and province. He was educated at the Monastery in Tikhvin, making his way to the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy. He was tonsured into monasticism (taking the name Joasaph) in 1912 and shortly afterwards he was ordained to the priesthood. He was elevated to be an archimandrite in 1920.

With the defeat of the White Army in 1921, much of the Russian Church hierarchy took refuge first in Constantinople (Istanbul), and then in Serbia, forming a synod of bishops independent of the Moscow Patriarchate.

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## **ARCHBISHOP JOASAPH (SKORODUMOV).**

By 1930, this Synod had formed in North America a jurisdiction separate from the established Russian Mission, fracturing Orthodoxy as a result. To help bring order to the schism, Archimandrite Joasaph was invited to Canada at the request of a friend, and with the blessing of Archbishop Apollinary (Koshevoy) (who had previously served as a ruling bishop between 1924-25 before leaving to the Synod in 1929). Soon afterwards, Archimandrite Joasaph was obliged to return to Yugoslavia, where he was ordained to be the Vicar-Bishop of Montréal, for the Karlovtsy Synod.

This was a desperate time for the Church in Canada, with general ill will and hostilities, but under the leadership of Metropolitan Theophilus (Pashkovsky), a working relationship was developed between the two jurisdictions. One of the benefits was that, without an extended delay, Canada received a bishop to replace the beloved Archbishop Arseny who had retired in 1937. Bishop Joasaph was appointed to be bishop in Edmonton.

Under this blessed arrangement, Bishop Joasaph strived to solidify the life of the Church in Canada. With no salary or stipend, he was able to continue the work started by his predecessor Archbishop Arseny, often traveling alone to see parishes and families (at times on foot, carrying his own bags for miles), as well as working with his hands, repairing and building houses and temples.

It was recalled that people would gravitate to both his cathedral, and the small monastic community (Holy Protection Skete in Bluffton, AB), regardless of whether they were Ukrainian, Romanian, Slovak, Serbian, or Russian. People were amazed at Bishop Joasaph's genuine love and care for those who were around him, and his willingness to do whatever was needed to solve a problem.

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## **ARCHBISHOP JOASAPH (SKORODUMOV).**

This is not to say that his time was free from controversy. A number of times Metropolitan Theophilus was asked to smooth out the relationship between Bishop Joasaph and his clergy. But throughout his time of service the Church grew, and within 10 years, there were 40 parishes and a monastic community under his omophor. His hard work (in the context of very few resources) saw further development, along with further immigration, and 20 more parishes were eventually added to his responsibility.

In 1940, requests were made to have a second bishop in Canada, and although Bishop Joasaph was opposed to this, it seemed proper that he be given the rights and responsibilities of administering a diocese, (and not simply an auxiliary territory). With that, our present Archdiocese was officially created.

In 1943 at a clergy conference in Edmonton, a petition was made to elevate Bishop Joasaph to be an Archbishop. The request was granted a few years later along with the elevation of the diocese to Archdiocese.

In 1946, the period of co-operation between the Synod and the Metropolia ended, leaving the Church in crisis yet again. Unwilling to accept a canonical (yet independent) relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate, Archbishop Joasaph left the Archdiocese he helped bring into existence, and strongly resisted any attempts at future reunion with the Metropolia. In 1950, he accepted a request to become the bishop for the Russian community in Argentina. With the same dedication and love he had applied in Canada, he brought order and stability to the Church in Argentina. Already in bad health, Archbishop Joasaph's general condition did not improve with his move to a more temperate climate, and he reposed in the Lord on Nov. 26, 1955.

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## **ARCHBISHOP JOASAPH (SKORODUMOV).**

In the years since Archbishop Joasaph's assignment as our first formal diocesan bishop, his departure and blessed repose, the politics that shaped his actions have faded away, allowing us a better perspective by which to understand him as a servant of the Lord, and not of certain ideological and political beliefs. So much of his life was in contrast to the vision that would lead to the establishment of the Orthodox Church in America, and yet the time that he offered to the Lord on behalf of our Archdiocese brought about great fruit. In the same way that Archbishop Arseny is venerated and prayed for by our Archdiocese, the ROCOR diocese of Montreal and Canada also venerates and prays for Archbishop Joasaph, giving him the title "Enlightener of Canada".

Although the face of our Church might bear the scars of those difficult days, they nonetheless reveal the love and mercy of those who sought to serve the Lord as best as they could. Archbishop Joasaph is one of those.



Pray to God for us Archbishop Joasaph.

## THE STAS COMMITTEE

The STAS committee facilitates the financial support of the administration of the Archdiocese of Canada, through communicating, mobilizing, and promoting the participation the faithful members of this diocese. The committee is made up of Archdiocesan Executive committee (ADEC):

- His Grace Bishop Irene, Ruling Bishop
- Archpriest Anatoliy Melnyk, Chancellor
- Archpriest Nazari Polotakio, Secretarty
- Nikita Lopoukhine, Treasurer
- Priest Gregory Scratch, Co-President
- Priest Andrew Applegate, Co-President

For more information about the STAS, please visit our new website.  
[www.CanadaSTAS.com](http://www.CanadaSTAS.com)

Or about the Archdiocese of Canada please visit  
[www.Archdiocese.ca](http://www.Archdiocese.ca)

**ST. TIKHON ARCHDIOCESAN STEWARDS**  
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