

the *Presbyter*

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Letter From The President

My brothers in Christ:

I greet you during this wonderful time of year as we have offered our thanksgiving to God on the occasion of the American celebration of this holiday and we now prepare for the Nativity of our Lord and Savior. It will be a busy time for all of us in our ministries. May God give us strength, both spiritual and physical, as we serve His flock, making the coming holidays more meaningful as we focus on Christ and the holy day of His birth, "the reason for the season."

Those of us who gathered in Florida for the National Clergy Retreat had an uplifting time! Many brothers who had registered for the retreat when it was scheduled to take place in September were unable to attend the rescheduled retreat, which had to be postponed for more than a month as a result of the horrific September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Those able to attend were grateful for the presence His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and His Grace Bishop Alexios. Their words offered strength and hope

during these very difficult times. The theme of our retreat was "The Well-Being of the Priest and His Family," a vital topic for the clergy of our Archdiocese. All of us need to take advantage of every opportunity to learn how to better care for ourselves and our families. Our vocation to serve God and His people is a challenging one! In the pages of this issue of "*the Presbyter*", you will find a report on the presentations that were made at our retreat, the wonderful fellowship that was shared, and some photos of our time together.

An opportunity to evaluate the retreat was given to the participants and I want to share the results. The majority favor an October date for three nights. The responses were equally divided for going to a retreat center or a resort setting. (We chose The Registry based on the price of \$125 per room, which could be divided by two priests sharing a room. The retreat centers that we checked out were actually more expensive and the rates were per person.) Florida was a preferred location, with a more central location next. Various themes and speakers were suggested, which will be helpful in

organizing our 2003 gathering. Other recommendations were for worship time, discussion groups, informal dress and a group outing.

The next APC meeting will take place in March at St. Paul's Church in Irvine, CA. If you have any concerns you want discussed, please convey these to your diocesan representatives.

I wish each of you a truly blessed celebration of our Lord's Nativity and Theophany, and meaningful time with your loved ones during this joyous season!

—Rev. Nicholas Bacalis
President, Archdiocesan Presbyters Council
Dean, Ss. Constantine & Helen Cathedral
Richmond, VA



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The Pension Fund: A Report

The Investment Committee of the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee is charged with the responsibility of investing the monies of the clergy pension fund as well as the disability fund. The Investment Committee is chaired by Fr. Stephen Kyriacou and consists of the following people: Fr. Costa Pavlakos, vice-chairman; Katherine L. Peters, secretary; Alex Anagnos, Michael Marks, Peter Vlachos and Alex Zagoreos. In addition, Fr. Michael Kontogiorgis, Fr. James Moulketis, Fr. Constantine Sitaras, Fr. Savas Zembillas, John Barbagalo, Michael Jaharis and Tom Monfried serve as ex-officio members and advisors.

The plan program for the investment of the pension fund aims at reaching the position where 40% of our assets are in fixed income instruments and 60% are in equities. The ratios are positioned so as to maximize the upswings in the market and minimize the downswings. In 1999, the market performed in a way that impacted our pension fund in an extraordinary manner, fueled by the explosion of internet and other tech stocks. The reverse was true in 2000 and in the first three-quarters of 2001, both before and after the devastating impact of the September 11th attacks. Fortunately, our decision to reduce our position in Essex-New Discovery and to liquidate our holdings in Vega Partners softened the impact of the markets' fall, the likes of which have not been seen since 1971-1972.

Again, fortunately for us, when the market began to decline during the summer months and especially following the events of September 11th, about one-half of our fund was invested in fixed assets and cash.

Our third quarter figures show the market value of our pension fund, as of September 30, 2001, to be \$46 million (\$20 million in equities, \$25 million in fixed income and \$1

million in cash), as compared with \$49 million at the end of the first quarter of 2001. However, we have been assured by our advisors that the picture is by no means bleak. The prospects of a turnaround in the market are good and we are encouraged by the long term investment results of our funds. Annualized for five years (9/30/96-9/30/01), our return has been 9.1%; and for three years (9/30/98-9/30/01) it is 8.5%, right on target with our actuarial assumption.

Our disability fund is governed by a trust agreement and is in a CD with PNC Bank, now earning 3% interest. The value of the fund stands at \$939,000 as of 9/30/01.

On related pension, disability and other non-health insurance items, please note that during 2000 we had a total of 517 participants in our program. During 2000, 10 participants died, 15 retired and 27 reached the age of 70 and continued to work. (As an added benefit, those participants in our pension plan who reach the age of 70 automatically begin receiving their pension even if they continue to work.) As of September 30, 2001 we had 481 participants. In addition, 274 retired participants, including retired priests and presbyteres, are receiving pensions.

Participants in the pension program of the Archdiocese also receive the following benefits:

Basic Life Insurance:

This basic life insurance consists of two times remuneration as demonstrated by the 21/2% contribution to the pension plan, to a maximum of \$150,000. At age 65, or upon retirement, this drops to \$30,000, then decreases by \$2,000 per year to age 74, leveling off at \$12,000 for the remainder of the participant's life.

Long Term Disability:

This LTD is occupation specific. That is, should a clergyman no longer be able to function as a clergyman, as documented by a physician, he will receive 60% of his remuneration, to a maximum of \$5,000 per month, after an elimination period of 180 days.

Accidental Death/Dismemberment:

This policy provides for a flat \$200,000 benefit in the event of accidental death and benefits for dimemberment as outlined in our policy.

Travel Accident Insurance:

This policy is provided to participants and spouses accompanying participants while performing priestly duties and provides five times remuneration to a maximum of \$300,000.

Confidential Assistance Plan

(available at 1-800-531-0200) provides for assistance, including rehab and mental health facility referral. Presently, this enjoys an 8% utilization rate among plan participants.

For the management of the affairs of the Investment Committee, I cannot emphasize enough the contributions of its members and in particular the lay members of our committee who, by agreement, do not personally handle any of the investments of our pension fund or our disability fund. To them we owe a debt of gratitude, for record rates of return in the recent past and for staving off what could have been catastrophic this year. As a result, both our funds are sound and poised to meet the needs of our plan participants, who always remain the primary focus of our concern.

—Rev. Stephen H. Kyriacou
Chairman, ABC Investment Committee
Dean, The Annunciation Cathedral
San Francisco, CA

Conciliarity and Hierarchy: An Ecclesiological Vision

The Orthodox Church claims to be the church of councils. This claim is clear enough in its negative connotations, when directed against Roman papalism or Protestant individualism. But what does it mean as a positive affirmation?

"conciliarity" belongs to the very essence of the Orthodox concept of the Church

To realize the difficulties in answering this question, we must remember that although there seems to exist a basic agreement that "conciliarity" belongs to the very essence of the Orthodox concept of the Church, an obvious uneasiness appears when it comes to applying this general principle to life. Tensions, conflicts and controversies indicate a fundamental confusion as to the real meaning and practice of "conciliarity." We see this confusion in the constant tension between priests and parish councils, in the rising tide of various laymen's organizations, youth movements, etc., all claiming the right to take an active part in church government and to limit what seems to them an unjustified clerical monopoly. This confusion calls for a constructive rethinking of the very principle of conciliarity, for its truly Orthodox definition and interpretation. We need a theology of councils as a general foundation and framework for the practice of conciliarity.

The Trinitarian nature of the Church

To achieve this we must, first of all, overcome the one-sided, yet usual, tendency to approach the problem exclusively from the point of view of church government. The first question is not "Who are the members of a council?" or "How much power has a council?" Rather, the first question is: "What is a council and how does it reflect the conciliar nature of the Church herself?" Before we understand the place and function of the council in the Church, we must first see the Church herself as a council. For she is indeed a council in the deepest meaning of this word because she is primarily the revelation of the Blessed Trinity, of God and of divine life as essentially a perfect council. The Church is Trinitarian both in "form" and "content" because she is the restoration of man and his life as an image of God who is Trinity. She is an image of the Trinity and the gift of Trinitarian life because life is redeemed and restored in her as essentially conciliar. The new life given in Christ is unity and oneness: "that they may be one as We are" (John 17:11). Being council in "content," the divine gift of life, the Church is therefore council in "form," as institution; for the purpose of all her institutional aspects is to fulfill the Church as perfect council. And it is this conciliar ontology of the Church in her essence and life that constitutes the framework for the function of the council in church government.

The Church is conciliar and the Church is hierarchical.

There exists today a tendency to oppose these two qualifications of the Church or at least to emphasize one over the other. On the "clerical" side, conciliarity is viewed as contained within the hierarchical principle, as limited to the hierarchy. A council here is primarily a council of the hierarchy itself and, ideally, the laity ought to be excluded from it. Many a priest considers the participation of the laity in various church councils as a regrettable compromise with the spirit of our time, a compromise to be disposed of when the clergy recovers sufficient "control" of the Church.

The perfect "council," the Blessed Trinity, is a hierarchy and not an impersonal equality



On the “lay” side, we see the opposite trend. Here it is the “hierarchy” that must ultimately submit itself to “conciliarism,” to become the executors of decisions taken by councils of which the laity are an integral, if not the leading, part.

It is truly tragic that these two tendencies are accepted today as the only alternatives, for both are wrong. They are the result of a deviation from the truly Orthodox concept of conciliarity, which excludes the “clerical” as well as the purely “democratic” interpretations and that is neither opposed to the hierarchical principle nor diluted in it. The truth is that the hierarchical principle belongs to the very essence of conciliarity, as the latter is revealed and understood in the Church. The perfect “council,” the Blessed Trinity, is a hierarchy and not an impersonal equality of interchangeable “members.”

The Trinity is the perfect council because the Trinity is the perfect hierarchy. And the Church, since she is the gift and manifestation of the true life, which is Trinitarian and conciliar, is hierarchical because she is conciliar, hierarchy being the essential quality of conciliarity. Sobornost is unity of persons, who fulfill their personal being in “conciliarity” with other persons, who are council in as much as they are persons, so that many are one (and not merely “united”) without ceasing to be many. And this true conciliarity, the oneness of many, is by its very nature hierarchical, for hierarchy is, above everything

else, the total mutual recognition of persons in their unique personal qualifications, of their unique place and function in relation to other persons, of their objective and unique vocation within the conciliar life.

The principle of hierarchy implies the idea of obedience but not that of subordination, for obedience is based on a personal relationship whereas subordination is, in its very essence, an impersonal one. The Son is fully obedient to the Father, but He is not subordinated to Him. He is perfectly obedient because He perfectly and fully knows the Father as Father. But He is not subordinated to the Father because subordination implies imperfect knowledge and relationship and, therefore, the necessity of “enforcement.” Hierarchy, thus, is not a relationship of “power” and “submission,” but of perfect obedience of all to all in Christ, obedience being the recognition and the knowledge of the personal gifts and charisms of each by all. Whatever is truly conciliar is truly personal and therefore truly hierarchical. And the Church is hierarchical simply because she is restored life, the perfect society, the true council.

Ordination

To ordain someone to a hierarchical function does not mean his elevation above the others, his opposition to them as “power” and “submission.” It means the recognition by the Church of his personal vocation within the Ecclesia, of his appointment by God, who knows the hearts of men and is, therefore, the source of all vocations and gifts. It is thus a truly conciliar act, for it reveals

the obedience of all: the obedience of the one who is ordained, the obedience of those who ordain him, i.e. recognize in him the divine call to the ministry of government, the obedience of the whole Church to the will of God.

For this reason, all contemporary attempts to limit the “power” of the clergy or to give the laity a share in this power are based on an incredible confusion. “Clergy” are, by definition, those whose special ministry and “obedience” is to govern the Church and whom the Church has recognized as called to this ministry. This confusion can only be explained by the complete secularization of the very idea of church government and the Church herself. The partisans of lay participation in church government do not seem to understand that the “spiritual power” which they acknowledge in the clergy – the power to celebrate the sacraments, to preach, to confess, etc – not only is not different from the power to administer the Church, but that it is the same power. Those who edify the Church through Word and Sacrament are those who govern it and vice versa, those who govern it are those whose ministry is to build it by Word and Sacrament. The real question concerning church government, and more specifically its conciliar nature, is not whether laity should or should not be given a share in the “power” of the clergy. In this form, the question is a nonsensical one, for it implies confusion between clergy and laity alien to the whole tradition of the Church, to the very foundations of Orthodox ecclesiology. The real question is: “How does the hierarchical

principle fulfill the Church as council?" The unfortunate competition between clergy and laity obscures this real question that, if properly understood and answered, solves at the same time the "clergy-laity problem."

Bishops and Presbyters

The government of the Church operates on three distinct levels: the parish, the diocese and supra-diocesan entities such as the metropolitan district, the autocephalous church and, ultimately, the Church Universal.

In the early Church, every "parish" was in fact a "diocese"

But before we analyze each one of them from the "conciliar" point of view, we must briefly acknowledge a very important difference that exists between our present situation and the early Church. In the early Church, every "parish" was in fact a "diocese," if by parish we mean a local ecclesia – a concrete, visible community – and by diocese a church governed by one bishop. As is well known, there existed at the beginning no "parish priests" and each local community was normally headed by a bishop. All definitions and descriptions of church government in classical canonical definitions are given, therefore, in reference to the normal bearer of ecclesiastical power, i.e. the bishop. This means that in order to elucidate the basic structure of church government, one must begin with the "local church" in its early and classical expression.

Several recent studies in early ecclesiology stress – and rightly so – the central and unique position of the bishop in the ecclesia. The trend is still to defend the "monarchical" episcopate. And yet, brought to its extreme, this trend may lead to a distorted picture. In fact, the term "monarchical" is scarcely a happy one when applied to the early episcopate. All available evidence points to the very real importance of the presbyterium in the local church, the college of presbyters or elders being precisely the council of the bishop and an essential organ of church government. Long before their transformation into heads of separate communities, the members of the "second order" existed as a necessary collective complement of the bishop's power and early rites of ordination point to the "gift of government" as the principal charism of presbyters. From the



very beginning the government of the Church was truly conciliar, and it is precisely the relationship between the

unique function and ministry of the bishop, on the one hand, and the government of the presbyters, on the other hand, that reveals to us the basic contents of "hierarchical conciliarism" or "conciliar hierarchy" as the organic unity of the conciliar and hierarchical principles within the Church.

early rites of ordination point to the "gift of government" as the principal charism of presbyters

This relationship reveals, first, the true nature of church government. Here again the term "sacramental" may be used. On the one hand, the presbyters really govern the Church, i.e. take care of all the immediate needs of the community both material and spiritual. But, on the other hand, it is the function of the bishop, his unique ministry or leiturgia, to refer all these acts of church life to the ultimate purpose of the Church and he does this primarily through his function as proistamenos, the president of the eucharistic assembly, which is the sacrament of the Church in which all gifts, all ministries, all vocations are indeed united and sealed as acts of the "same God who works in all" (1Corinthians 12:6).

"Government" and "administration" are thus revealed to be not just autonomous areas within the Church, but an integral part of the Church as sacrament of the Kingdom.

The gift of government is a charism and the presbyters are not simply “advisors” to the bishop, but in ordination they truly receive this charism as their charism. Their government is real and yet they can do nothing without the bishop, i.e. without his recognition of all their acts as acts of the Church, for he alone has the “power” to unify and express the life of the community as the “new life” of the Church of God. The government of the Church is thus truly hierarchical and truly conciliar. The presbyters or “elders” are the leading members of the ecclesia, those in whom the Church has recognized the gifts of wisdom, justice, teaching and administration. They are not opposed to the laity but are its true representatives, for they express and manage all the real needs of the people and this is why they are presbyters. Their government is conciliar because their plurality is transformed into and sealed as oneness by the bishop whose specific charism is to “fulfill” the Church as one, holy, catholic and apostolic. If the presbyters were mere “subordinates” of the bishop, delegates of his power, executives of his orders, the bishop would have nothing to “transform,” nothing to express, nothing to fulfill. The Church would cease to be a council, a body, a hierarchy, and would become no more than “power” and “subordination.” She would no longer be the sacrament of the new life in Christ.

The Presbyter, the Parish and the Parish Council

We must simply acknowledge the fact that today the immediate, concrete expression of the Church is no longer the visible gathering of the faithful under the bishop, but the parish. A Christian knows the Church and lives in the Church as a member of his parish, which to him is the only visible ecclesia. The diocese is for him a more or less abstract administrative echelon, not a living reality.

One cannot be a priest, teacher and pastor by “delegation” and there can be no “delegated charism.”

Parishioners see the bishop on certain solemn occasions or appeal to him when a crisis arises in the parish. Because of this real situation, all attempts simply to return to the “episcopal experience” of the Church in its second or third century forms (episcopus in ecclesia et ecclesia in episcopo) will remain the domain of academic wishful thinking as long as we ignore the reality of the parish and the position of the priest in it. We must admit that many of the characteristics of the early “episcopal” community have been assumed by the parish, just as the priest has been given many of the bishop’s functions. Today, the priest is the normal celebrant, pastor and teacher of the Church, all functions which in the early Church were fulfilled by the bishop.

This transformation raises two important questions. First, the bishop/priest relationship. To explain the change in the priest’s status only in terms of “delegated power”, to reduce the priest to the position of the bishop’s delegate, is simply impossible. The presbyter is ordained to the priesthood and not to be a “delegate” and this means that he has the priesthood of the Church in his own right. One cannot be a priest, teacher and pastor by “delegation” and there can be no “delegated charism.” The very transformation of his status over the centuries was possible because, from the beginning, the presbyter was a priest and shared in the priestly functions. But then if he is now in a real sense the head of a community, if his ministry is to fulfill it as “Church,” the second question, that of the conciliar aspects of his power, must of necessity be raised. From this point of view, the ideas of the parish council and the parish meeting emerge, not from a source alien to tradition, but in spite of all possible and actual deviations, from the deep instinct of the Church.

the true hierarchical principle is not naked “power” but a deeply spiritual and pastoral concern for the Church as family

The tragedy is that on both sides, the “clerical” and the “lay”, this conciliarity is understood within a narrow juridical framework, and is expressed in terms of “rights” and “duties” and other purely secular categories.

This conciliar principle, which has been “forced” on the parish, need not be either rejected or “limited” by the reinforcement of “clericalism.” This means, on the one hand, that the clergy must accept the true hierarchical principle, which is not naked “power” but a deeply spiritual and pastoral concern for the Church as family, as oneness of life and manifestation of spiritual gifts.

*the clergy themselves
contribute to the
secularization of the
laity by limiting their
initiative*

Not only must the priest not be afraid of conciliarity, but he must encourage and seek it, he must help every member of the Church discover his or her particular gift and vocation within the life of the Body and unite all these gifts in the “edification” of the Church. On the other hand, this means a slow process of lay education, the overcoming of the laity of their defensive reflexes and attitudes. And this will take place only when the laity understand that the priest really needs them, that he needs not their votes but their talents, their advice, their real “council” or, in other terms, their real participation in the life of the Church. True conciliarity is neither expressed nor achieved in the purely formal and abstract “right to vote.” One must realize that there is, in fact, nothing to vote upon in the Church, for all the issues that may arise in the life of the Church are related to Truth itself and Truth cannot be a matter of voting. Yet to reach

this truth, to “apply it to life,” requires an effort of mind and heart, conscience and will, and in this effort all can and must participate and help, all have a voice: this is true conciliarity. If indeed the “power of decision,” the final responsibility, belongs to the priest, in the process of reaching that decision as truly ecclesial, he needs the help of all, for his power is to express “the mind of the Church.” The mind of the Church is Christ’s mind in us. It is the obedience of free children and not that of slaves, an obedience based on love, knowledge, understanding, participation and not on blind subordination.

All this means that the parish council properly understood is not a committee of practical and business-minded men elected to “manage” the “material interests” of the parish, but the real and genuine “council” of the priest in all aspects of church life. There should exist a special rite of appointing those elected to the parish council that would express and emphasize the spiritual dimensions of their ministry. And there is a real need for retreats and sessions at which active laypersons would be guided to understand the mystery of the Church. All this, however, will remain wishful thinking as long as the clergy themselves contribute to the secularization of the laity by limiting their initiative in the life of the Church to “finances” and “fundraising” and by ignoring the Orthodox concept of the *laos tou Theou*, the People of God. And if the conciliar principle is not restored on the parish level, its other expressions will remain meaningless and inoperative.

The Diocese

Of all the levels of church government, the diocese is probably the most “nominal” today. It is somehow squeezed between the reality of the parish and that of the supra-diocesan power – the patriarch, the synod, etc. There exists a double problem: that of the relationship between the diocese and the parish, and that of its place within a wider grouping of churches. We have stated already that the “parish” has acquired many characteristics of the early “episcopal” church and is, in fact, the actual form of the local church. It is highly significant that during the Christianization of the Roman Empire, as Christian communities increased in number, the office of bishop, which we know to have been the essential office of the local church, was not multiplied accordingly but remained attached only to principal churches. The attempt to introduce into the Church the so-called chorepiscopoi, or rural bishops, failed. There must have been a reason within the Church herself, within her own “logic” that made her prefer the dislocation of the local church into parishes to the multiplication of bishops. To find this reason is essential for the proper understanding of the diocese/parish relationship in our own situation.

It is well known that, during the first three centuries, the Church remained almost exclusively an urban phenomenon and the expansion of Christianity began with the great metropolitan centers of the Greco-Roman world. The local church, in its

earliest form, did not correspond to or express a natural community as an organic and pre-existing society, but was the *ecclesia*, the gathering of people belonging to a great variety of backgrounds, social positions, etc. Not being identified with any class, group, district or “way of life,” the early local church had a natural catholicity, an all embracing quality, so that being absolutely free from any “organic” connections with “this world,” she could truly represent the whole of it and be *open* to all. All early evidence, beginning with St. Paul’s epistles, supports this. The Church was *in* Rome, but not yet *of* Rome.

The conversion of the empire meant, from this point of view, a progressive identification of each local church with a natural community, with an organic local “society” finding in the Church the religious expression and sanction of its existence. But a natural local community is never truly catholic. It is, in its very essence, self-centered and limited in its own interests and needs. It is ontologically “selfish.” It was this danger of “naturalization,” of a complete identification with the natural community, that the Church faced beginning with the fourth century – the danger of losing the catholicity of her life. The only way to counteract this danger was to keep the “local churches” within a wider ecclesiastical framework, thus preventing them from being completely identified with “local life,” with all its inescapable limitations and self-centeredness. The acceptance by the Church of the diocesan

structure – the bishop remaining in the “metropolis” and the priests becoming heads of parishes – was thus not a compromise with the imperial administrative structure but, on the contrary, a reaction of the ecclesiastical organism to the danger of being “absorbed” by natural society.



What was true centuries ago remains true – *mutatis mutandis* – today. A parish is still essentially conditioned by its environment and, therefore, naturally limited in its catholicity. It may be a “middle-class,” or a “worker,” or a “missionary,” or a “suburban” parish. Therefore, it is from the diocese that a parish receives its catholicity, i.e., the constant challenge to transcend itself as a self-centered and self-sufficient community, to identify itself not only with its own “people” and their local “religious needs” but with the *Church*. Catholicity is the identity of each church with the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. And for each community to be “catholic” means to be “in accord with the whole,” to live not only *together* with all other communities but also *towards* an ultimate goal which transcends all local

limitations, for it is nothing else than the Kingdom of God. The bearer, organ and minister of this catholicity is the bishop. It is his charism and duty to give the Church *direction* and *purpose*, to call each parish and all of them together to fulfill themselves as movement, as pilgrimage towards the Kingdom, to *edify* the Church. The diocese is thus parishes together, united in the bishop, who by his “episcopacy” – supervision, guidance, teaching, organizing – transforms their separate existences into one life which is indeed the life of the Church.

But here again the very nature of the diocese requires the full restoration of the conciliar principle. The diocese, if understood only in terms of “central administration,” becomes a mere bureaucracy with the bishop as head not so much of the Church but of various administrative organs. To be the living center for all parishes, the real organ and unity of their common life, the bishop must be in a conciliar relationship with all of them, and this must be achieved through the bishop’s council, i.e., the *presbyterium*. The priest is the organic link between the bishop and the parish, not only in terms of “subordination” and “delegation of powers” but precisely in terms of “conciliar unity.” The priests *together* with the bishop are the living image of the diocese as *Church*, for in each priest his whole parish is truly “re-presented,” made present, just as in the unity of the bishop with all his priests the catholicity of the Church is made present to all parishes. The *presbyterium*, i.e., a corporate unity of priests with a

bishop, must be restored, complementing the actual individual relationship between the bishop and each priest. This is the only organic diocesan council, organic because rooted in the very nature of the Church. Here not only are all the affairs of the diocese discussed but the very *direction* of the Church's life is shaped and acknowledged. The decisions of the bishop are then no longer "executive orders" but organic decisions of the Church herself. Modern means of communication, the whole modern way of life, would make it easy for the "presbyterium" to meet with the bishop regularly – three or four times a year. This would give the diocese a reality that it often lacks today. The conciliarity of the parish would find its organic fulfillment in the conciliarity of the diocese.

Conclusion

Hierarchy is the very form and condition of conciliarity. It really *belongs* to the bishops to express the *whole* life of the Church, to be the true *representatives* of her fullness. However, the actual structure of our clergy-laity councils creates the impression that each "order" of the Church has its specific "interests," so that the laity, for example, has needs and interests different from, if not opposed to, those of the clergy. Clergy become representatives of the clergy and laity those of the laity. But then the "conciliarity" of the Church simply ceases to exist and is replaced by a "balance of power." In fact, however, it is the very essence and purpose of the clergy to express and fulfill the real "interests" and needs not of the "laity" as opposed to the clergy,

but of the laos – the People of God, the Church of Christ. No one in the Church has interests or needs different from the Church herself, for it is the very life of the Church to unite all of us in grace and truth. If the true conciliarity of which we speak here is restored to each level of the Church, if every member of the Church fully participates in her life according to his calling, gifts and position; if, in other words, the Church is fully and truly council in all her manifestations, there is simply no need of anything else as the ultimate expression of this conciliarity but the council of bishops – the very image and fullness of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

This does not mean that the council of bishops has to be a secret, closed meeting of "executives." It can and must be open to the participation, advice, interest and comments of the whole Church. "Public opinion" in its truly Christian form – as concern for the Church, as an active interest in her life, as free discussion of her problems, as initiative – is another and most welcome form of conciliarity and the fear of it, the tendency of our hierarchy to act by means of *faits accomplis*, without any previous discussion of ecclesiastical matters with the body of the Church, is indeed a dangerous tendency, a misunderstanding of the true nature of power in the Church.

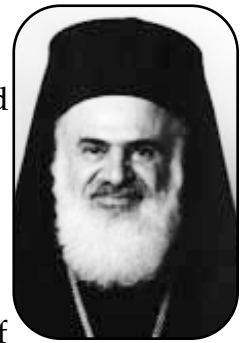
The Church is hierarchical because it is conciliar. The Church fulfills herself as council by being hierarchical. This fundamental truth is the starting point for a truly Orthodox theology of councils.

—*The Very Reverend Alexander Schmemmann (1921-1983)*
was the longtime dean and professor of liturgical theology at St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, New York. This article is excerpted from his book, Church, World, Mission (SVS Press, 1979) and was originally entitled "Towards a Theology of Councils."



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Εἰς Πολλὰ Ἐτι, Δεσποτά!



'The Presbyter'

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Reflections on the National Clergy Retreat - Naples, Florida - October 29-31, 2001

I had been looking forward to the National Clergy Retreat ever since it was first announced: both Stephen Muse and Archbishop Demetrios are people whom I wanted to hear, and I looked forward to the opportunity to be with other clergy.

Bishop Alexios, the host hierarch, opened the retreat Monday evening by welcoming us and speaking briefly about the centrality of prayer in our life as pastors. Fr. Nick Bacalis then presided over three reports: the dilemma of health insurance from the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee (Fr. James Moulketis); "Come, Receive the Light" radio ministry (Fr. Christopher Metropulos); and the involvement of the Archdiocese in the wake of September 11th (Fr. Savas Zembillas).

The retreat leader, Dr. Muse, is a psychotherapist whose ministry is devoted to pastors. His presentations, covering both Tuesday & Wednesday mornings, addressed the theme of "Clergy Well-Being" through the acronym "VIPS," standing for:

| | | |
|--------------|-----|----------------|
| Vocation | vs. | Visitation |
| Intimacy | vs. | Isolation |
| Presence | vs. | Power |
| Spirituality | vs. | Secularization |

In exploring these, Dr. Muse drew upon the resources of faith (Scripture, sayings and examples of glorified saints, exemplary modern Christians, rabbinic tradition), the discipline of psychotherapy, his wide experience in working with pastors, and his own life. His approach was imbued with deep compassion, striking analysis, breadth of understanding, good humor, ecumenical openness, and fidelity to the Orthodox Tradition. I thoroughly enjoyed not just the substance of what he offered, but the discussion he stimulated among us clergy.

On vocation, Dr. Muse cautioned us about going through ministry alone, depending on our own energy and resources, and not depending on God. Growing in vocation means staying in touch with the well-spring of life (God), knowing our own limitations, and learning both the conscious and unconscious forces that are part of our sense of calling. On this last point, he cited a riveting case where a pastor had gone into the ministry in order, unconsciously, to save his father (who had a devastating affair when the pastor was a teenager), only to find himself burned out years later and not knowing why.

On intimacy, Dr. Muse began by stating that we must acknowledge and care for our own legitimate human needs for intimacy and nurturance. And in order for us to develop as healthy priests, he could not stress enough our need for a spiritual father. Important elements in our health also include: physical exercise, good friendships, a strong sense of personal calling to the priesthood, a high quality of family life, and not being burdened financially. Isolation leads to burn out; true intimacy by contrast leads to theosis.

Then, due to our interest, Dr. Muse inserted a brief overview of depression. He cautioned us about two dangers: either spiritualizing depression or medicalizing it. The resources of faith, through the life of the Church, and the resources of science, through the practice of medicine and research, can complement one another and need not compete. Stress, in whatever form it takes, depletes the body of essential chemicals. And maintaining the inward focus of our mind and heart on Christ and

the Kingdom requires that we protect periods of stillness, quiet, prayer, reading, and reflection. Refreshment must also be built into our busy lives, following on the Old Testament commandments of sabbath observance and the jubilee year. This last point raised a question in my own mind: how many of us not only take at least one full 24-hour day off from work each week, along with our full vacation time each year, but also the 3-month sabbatical for every 6 years of continuous service provided by the Archdiocesan clergy compensation guidelines?

Then, Dr. Muse returned to the theme of "VIPS" by examining presence vs. power. Essentially, our inner health determines whether we are exercising our priesthood in terms of the presence of Christ or the power of the world. Just as Job's close friends overpowered him during his suffering, we, too, may wish to overpower (or perhaps just run away from) the troubling reality of someone whom we cannot truly bear. Our faithfulness is not so much in what we say, but who we are (our *being* or *presence*) and our sensitivity to the direction of the Holy Spirit. In this regard, everyone is encouraged get to know his own *shadow* through therapy. Our failure to bring our wounds to Christ and to care for ourselves can only result in denial, addictive compensations (e.g., alcohol, sex, nicotine, caffeine, food, consumer spending), and the abuse of power. Stephen cited an important fact: a lot of people going into ministry were indeed wounded in childhood.

In the heart of the retreat, we welcomed, heard from, and broke bread with the Archbishop. His Eminence decided to address the retreat theme in an indirect way by focusing on faith as power.

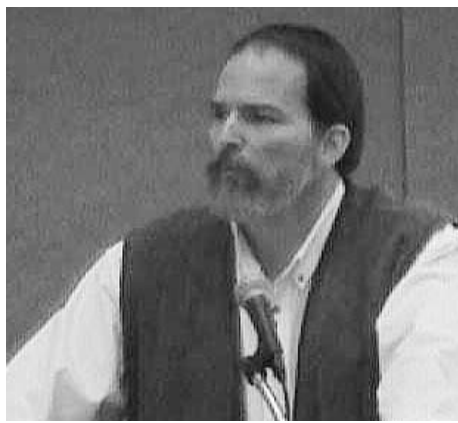
Humans have always been concerned with power, and our age is no less consumed by striving for power in politics, the military, science, athletics, art, and economics. Indeed, since September 11th, the U.S. and the world have been shattered by the struggle for power that evokes both terrorism and retaliation. The Archbishop pointed out that faith as power is radically different from all other forms of power. And if faith produced fruits of life beyond what is merely human in the Old Testament, faith became revolutionary in the New Testament, with unprecedented dimensions of renewal, forgiveness, grace, and the resurrection through Jesus Christ. The power of this shattering faith in Christ has led to many transformations: simple fishermen became dynamic apostles; unseemly sinners became saints (e.g., Mary of Egypt); ordinary persons became heroic martyrs (e.g., the adolescents Paraskeve and Barbara); educated intellectuals became church fathers (e.g., John Chrysostom and Basil the Great).

In applying the lessons of faith power to our life here and now, the Archbishop challenged us in three ways:

Our response to September 11th and its aftermath, so tied to the problem of power, must derive from trust in God to stand up to and face reality in all its starkest forms;

Our personal growth and self development as clergy must include overcoming existential barriers, such as anxiety, guilt, and pain, by accessing the resources of faith in God;

Our relationships in our families and communities must create appropriate connections with people, even if we would rather avoid some.



Dr. Stephen Muse

Afterwards, the Archbishop fielded questions concerning September 11. In general, he noted that history shows the Church has always lived through periods of great difficulty and distress. Our response must spring from our personal and communal identification with the pain and suffering of humanity, whether fellow Americans in New York City, or Palestinians in the Middle East. Our unquestioned security as a nation, while shattered, was never real in the first place. Now we are called to solidarity with those who hurt. As clergy, we can teach our people how to live by avoiding two dangers: returning to



Fr. Savas Zembillas & Bishop Alexios of Atlanta

daily life as "business as usual," yet also not letting outside events block normal activity. As an example, he cited St. Nicholas church across from the World Trade Center towers. From its complete destruction as a humble parish church there are developing plans to rebuild it as a monument to memorialize the victims, honor their surviving loved ones, and serve as a perpetual shrine of Christian faith, hope, and love.

Following his presentation, we celebrated a banquet honoring the Archbishop on the recent occasion of the 2nd anniversary of his enthronement as Archbishop of America. The informality was accentuated by the lack of a head table. Following our fellowship over the wonderful meal, a number of clergy arose to offer a tribute to His Eminence from their personal experience spanning more than 50 years. The Archbishop then offered gracious thanks for the sharing that took place.

In the end, since we were already past our scheduled stopping point, I had to leave abruptly to catch a flight before I could hear Dr. Muse's final point on spirituality vs. secularization. However, on the plane home I read through most of the book that I purchased at the retreat: *Beside Still Waters: Resources for Pastors*. Edited by Dr. Muse, it contained an article written by him on VIPS. Thus I was able not only to read the rest of his thesis, but other articles, by him and others, which were helpful. In all, I left with deep gratitude for the opportunity to come together with fellow clergy for 2 days of retreat, relaxation, refreshment, and inspiration!

—Rev. Harry S. Pappas
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Archbishop Demetrios with Fr. Anastasios Gounaris

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