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Right: His Grace, Bishop Nikon leads the opening service of prayer for the **Diocesan Assembly**. Holy Resurrection Church's portable iconostasis is visible at left.



Diocesan Assembly 2010

Rev. Joshua Mosher

Holy Trinity Church, Springfield, Vt., and Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, N.H., together hosted the 47th Assembly of the Diocese of New England, Oct. 29-30. The Assembly opened in Springfield with a Service of Prayer celebrated by His Grace, our Bishop Nikon on Friday morning. The service and the first day's sessions were held in a hotel hall, with Fr. Andrew Tregubov of Holy Resurrection providing a stunning portable iconostasis.

The first plenary session began with His Grace's report. He spoke first of how moved he was by "the outpouring of prayers, letters, cards and support from both clergy and laity alike as I was addressing personal medical issues." He thanked Diocesan Chancellor Fr. John Kreta, saying, "I was especially moved when he volunteered to go to rally since I was unable to make that trip this year to spend

some time with our Rally-ers. It was a surprise to receive a call from the chapel on a cell phone. ... It actually brought tears to my eyes. I asked Father to stop by on the way home to fill me in on the rally activities and over lunch perhaps I heard the most moving words that came from him. He looked at me with a gleam in his eye and said, 'We have a bishop that can't hear and can't talk... it doesn't get any better than that!'"

Bishop Nikon also spoke of the first Episcopal Assembly held last June in New York. He emphasized that the Episcopal Assembly's work of achieving unity will be painstaking and complex. He mentioned as first steps the creation of a registry of canonical bishops in America, followed by one of clergy.

His Grace noted that the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America remains a fraught concern. Some Orthodox leaders have

Pan-Orthodox Gather, Celebrate, Learn

Eva Vaniotis

The Fellowship of Orthodox Churches of Connecticut (FORCC) held its 17th Annual Dinner at Holy Trinity Church, Bridgeport, Conn, on Oct. 3. The membership of the FORCC consists of 31 Orthodox churches in Connecticut of all jurisdictions. Scholarships were awarded to six high school graduates entering college for the first time, who must exhibit outstanding academic achievement as well as service that expresses their faith.

FORCC President Nina Kosowsky, also detailed the other pan-Orthodox efforts of the organization: holding regular coordination meetings; sponsoring a religious education seminar and a children's talent show; advertizing the Pascha season; communicating the Orthodox calendar to public schools; and for the first time writing letters to Orthodox parents encouraging them to resist the encroachment of school activities into Sunday mornings.

This year's Guest Speaker was Fr. Justin Mathews from FOCUS North America—the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to

Serve. He spoke eloquently of what this organization is accomplishing and how rewarding it is to support the needy. Their mission is to “restore living icons” by serving the neediest in our communities. FOCUS directs its attention to immediate needs of food, clothing and shelter, building bridges with families to help them achieve stability and sufficiency through counselling and training. FOCUS also works with already existing Orthodox ministries to share information and resources. He appealed to FORCC to support this work, to enable greater outreach to the needy of New England.

High praises were given to the deceased George Hallas, a founder of FORCC. The remembrance of George echoed throughout the banquet hall when a scholarship award was presented to his granddaughter Leah Hallas. Tom Hallas (a cook by trade), in honor of his father's memory, donated his efforts to prepare, cook and serve the dinner for this occasion and it was absolutely delicious. †

Below: The Secretary of the Albanian Archdiocese, Father Joseph Galick, attended the Assembly of the Diocese of New England, and had the opportunity to report on recent activity within the Archdiocese.



Assembly from 1

suggested that the OCA ought to reinterpret its autocephaly as “maximal autonomy” to make it equivalent to the rest of the Orthodox jurisdictions in America. Bishop Nikon stated firmly, “It is very important to note that our ultimate goal is to achieve full administrative unity of all Orthodox Christians in North America, so that the Church would conform to the Holy Canons. Should there be any change to the formal status of the OCA it would be done to make this

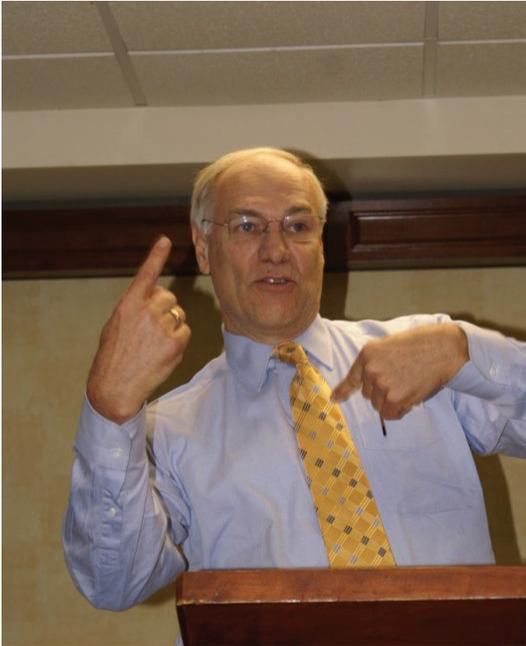
dream a reality, and it would necessarily involve bishops, clergy and laity.”

In order to clarify the purpose of the OCA's autocephaly, the Holy Synod has published a working draft on this question:

“1. The OCA understands itself to be a local, indigenous, multi-ethnic, missionary Church, continuing to bring Orthodoxy to Americans.

“2. The OCA affirms that it is historically derived from the Russian Orthodox Church as a historical reality: as the heir to the Russian Mission of 1794, the Diocese in Sitka, 1843; the Diocese in San Francisco 1870, and its relocation to New York in 1907, and the Autocephaly of 1970.

“3. The OCA is a functionally autocephalous Church, electing her own bishops and Primate, without confirmation by any other Synod, maintaining inter-Church relationships with all other Churches; and consecrates its own chrism, according to the Tomos.



Above: Assembly guest speaker **Joe Kormos** making an animated presentation on the Diocese of the Midwest's efforts at parish revitalization.

"4. The autocephaly will be fulfilled when the OCA is merged into a united Autocephalous American Church, recognized by all, and including all.

"5. A united American church is being cast in terms of the Chambesy protocols. The OCA is prepared to work within the Episcopal Assembly in order to realize this goal."

His Grace reviewed a number of other areas important to the life of the diocese. He honored clergy who left the service of our diocese and welcomed new pastors of several parishes, most recently Fr.

Patrick Burns, who has been assigned as rector of Three Saints Church, Ansonia, Conn. He celebrated several ordinations and the centennial of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Boston. He spoke of the reality of sexual misconduct and that every parish council needs to understand and follow the OCA guidelines. He concluded by reminding the diocese of our purpose: "Today, we are [Christ's] disciples, we are given the same responsibilities as [the apostles]: to teach, to preach and to care for the poor. But we have the same responsibilities because we have received the same great gift, for we experience the same awe, the same glory, and the same salvation in the Broken Body and Spilled Blood of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The Assembly also welcomed Joe Kormos, Parish Health Coordinator of the Diocese of the Midwest. He engaged the participants in a lively and forthright presentation on how his own diocese has wrestled with the challenges of restoring parish health. He bluntly challenged our own diocese: he is not sure that what the Midwest is doing is what New England should do, but seeing the statistics of New England, we must take action to turn our downward slide around. We must be good stewards of the region entrusted to us.

In the Midwest, the position of Parish Health Coordinator was instituted in the context of decline: almost as many parishes

declining as growing, and a large net loss of membership. The diocese decided to begin a Parish Health Ministry, using \$100,000 in unspent diocesan funds to start the program. Afterward, the diocese agreed to a \$10 per person additional assessment to pay for the ministry to continue. Its goal is to stimulate parishes to take some action toward "*Living* as the Body of Christ; *Sharing* the Gospel with all in their locale; *Preparing* to do the work of Christ in the world."

The Parish Health Ministry pursues this goal through several directions:

1. A newsletter with parish leadership information, meant for parish council members and lay leaders of ministries; designed to provoke a desire to improve the current quality of ministry.

2. A website with a depth of material freely available to everyone (even those outside the diocese).

3. Hosting web-based seminars and physical conferences.

4. Field trips to allow parishes to see ministry in action.

5. Benchmarks for healthy activity. Created a Parish Council Leadership Covenant to set expectations of roles, responsibilities, behaviors of those in leadership. This was developed in a workshop at a failing parish.

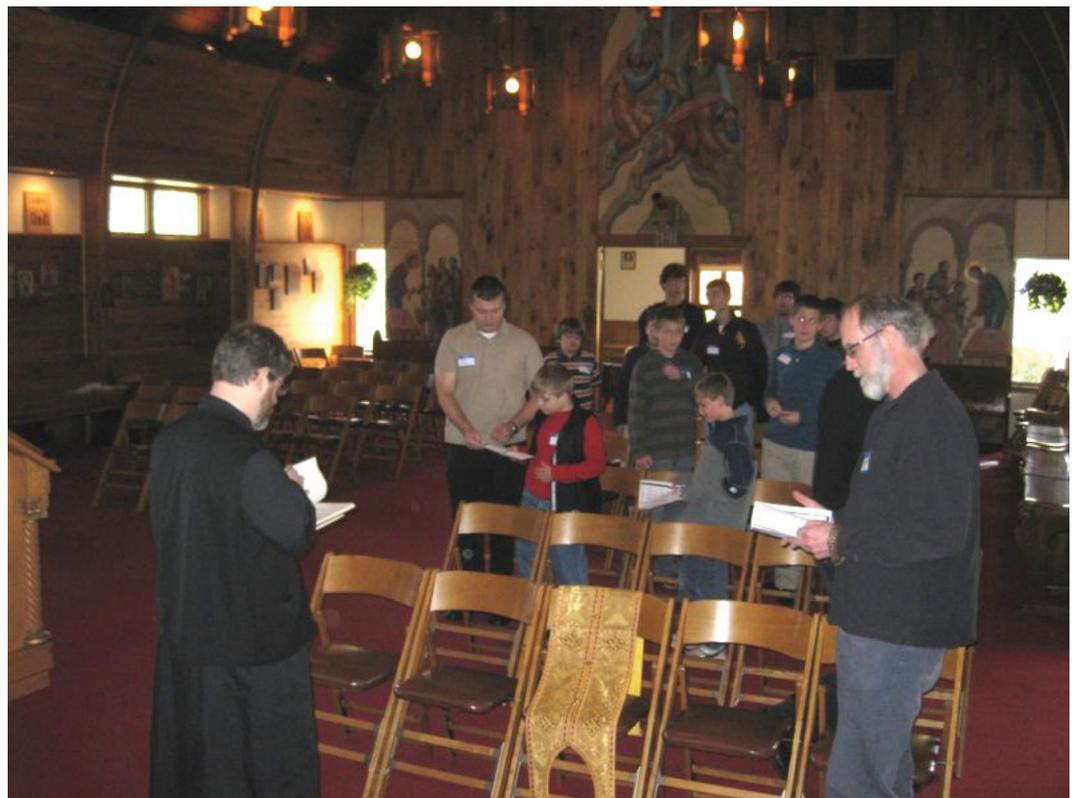
6. An annual Parish Health Summit.

7. A Parish Health Inventory. The Book of Acts describes exactly what a healthy parish does, and when a parish is healthy, the Holy Spirit provides growth. This is not some proprietary information or method. The Inventory is a long PDF document (available on the website) designed to help a parish identify where it is falling short in parish health, and then identify *one* area to work on this year. It is designed to be challenging but clearly Orthodox in thought.

8. Grants given out each year for worthy parish projects that promote health. The projects have not always been successful, but the grant program inspires accountability. From these grants, one parish developed a "Greeting Inquirers" course, teaching how to welcome and introduce new folks to Orthodoxy. Another developed Parish Financial Audit Guidelines, in response to a lack of

Connecticut Deanery altar server retreat

On Saturday, October 16th an **Altar Server Retreat** was hosted by Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church, Terryville. Fr. John Hopko was the retreat leader.





Holy Trinity Church, New Britain, Conn.

Arlene Potter

We all know what happens when you do a good job: you get to do it again! A small cluster of hardworking individuals at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church turned unwanted donated items and delicious pastry and home-style meals into money that will be used for the refurbishment of our church. The second Annual Food Festival & Tag Sale was successfully held in New Britain. The turnout and support from the community continues to improve with each passing year and many are looking forward to this event next year.

Two beautiful babies have been baptized and welcomed into our church. We wish Michael James Ahern and Benjamin Mark Burrill many years of health and happiness and may they become strong in their faith and exemplify the teachings of our Lord and Savior.

Fellowship meant a day out to the UConn game with members of our church and the Terryville parish. The sun shone bright and the sky smiled as UConn easily triumphed over its opponent. It was a "touch-down" kind of day both on and off the field.

Our choir can certainly say that practice can be a picnic. Christopher Dresko, our choir director held a picnic/practice

session at the home of Ellen Santoro. Even though it was necessary to sing for our supper, we were more than delighted to sing for our dessert too! Chris was surprised with a birthday cake and we all joined in with a well-tuned "Happy Birthday" song. God grant Christopher many, many, years!

The Sisterhood of the Protection of the Theotokos is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year! Generation after generation has participated in plenty of good works, and the Sisterhood continues to play a vital part in our church community. Many contributions made in the name of the Sisterhood help sustain our parish. May God grant our Sisterhood of the Protection of the Theotokos many years! †



Claremont, N.H., sings praises in the parking lot Scott and Susan Brown

Some people say Orthodoxy is one of America's best kept secrets. Well, the cat's out of the bag now in Claremont, NH, since a group of parishioners from Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church set up shop, so to speak, at a popular Fall Festival in early October. Father Andrew Tregubov explains the thinking behind this unusual venture:

"Our New Englanders in general have a peculiar inhibition about visiting any established churches. They never have a chance to "taste and see" what is inside an Orthodox church building. So, our parish brought a small sample of Orthodox worship outside for all to see and hear."

That's right: nestled between booths for a local bank and a dealer of fine knick-knacks was probably the most unique spectacle Claremonters had ever seen at one of these events. Choir director Mat. Margaret Powell describes the scene:

"It was amazing to see our assigned parking lot space transformed by a square, white covered tent under which we set up Father Andrew's portable, candlelit icon corner, a table offer-

ing pamphlets, books and prayer ropes, and an empty chair or two welcoming whoever might desire to step inside to converse with us. It was a joy to be in this new place, in the midst of arts and crafts and food vendors, ready to offer ourselves to the crowd with a genuine smile of kindness, a compassionate response to a question, or with hymns of praise and thanksgiving!"

While the large icons certainly offered some new sights for the fair-goers, it was our hourly singing that really had heads turning (and sometimes mouths dropping). We sang selections from Vespers and Matins, introducing the unique sounds of Orthodox worship to the crowd as they shuffled by on their way to the chili tasting. Children were the most openly fascinated by our singing, making no attempt to hide their astonishment at what they were hearing. Adults had mixed reactions; some would stop and listen, others would walk by pretending nothing was happening.

The reactions of the crowd were interesting to observe, but did not really affect us one way or another, for we were there simply to offer our presence and to give glory to God. Father Andrew elaborates, "This was not a gimmick. This was not a success oriented missionary program designed to make converts. We simply provided a chance for passersby to have a moment of encounter with the church. In the middle of a crowded market place we were raising our voices in songs of praise. And hopefully we had some success in our Lord's eyes."

Now that we have stepped out of our comfort zones and found we had a wonderful time doing it, we are looking for the next local event at which we can pitch our tent and demonstrate our love for our life-giving faith. †

Below: Members of Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, N.H., stand before their tent at the local Fall Festival.



Three Saints Church, Ansonia, Conn. Barbara Ann Dixon



Above: Ansonia Participants in the **Walk for Water**. L-R: Nina Kosowsky, Julia Jimenez, Mary Jimenez, and Delores Carangelo.
Photo: Delores Carangelo

Below: Fr. Vladimir Aleandro with Mary Adam.
Photo: Barbara Dixon

Right: Ansonia's new pastor, Fr. Patrick Burns with Christine Ratushnik at our Food and Craft Fair. Fr. Patrick was "Kielbasa Chef."
Photo: Delores Carangelo



On Aug. 22, Fr. Steven Voytovich blessed the lap robes that our ladies knitted and crocheted for the Griffin Hospital, its Cancer Center and the Children's burn unit at Bridgeport Hospital. Since January we have donated about 300 lap robes and shawls.

On Saturday, Aug. 28, Nina Kosowsky coordinated the Orthodox Christian Mission Center and the Fellowship of Orthodox Christian Churches (FORCC) sponsored Walk for Water for Turkana (Kenya, Africa) to raise funds for wells. The Turkana people face a daily struggle for survival that is fueled by cyclical draught and extreme poverty. Parishioners and friends walked from 0.1 mile to 3.5 miles and raised \$2,350.

On Tuesday, Sept. 21, the senior group held a farewell potluck luncheon for Mary Adam who has moved to New Jersey to be closer to her family. We will miss our label sewing person. Fr. Vladimir Aleandro said prayers for Mary's safe journey and we sang Many Years.

On Oct. 1, a special council meeting was held to meet potential new pastor and his family, Fr. Patrick and Popadia Mara Burns and infant daughter Bridgid. Father Patrick shared his spiritual preparation that led to his conversion to Orthodoxy seventeen years ago. Since that meeting, His Grace, Bishop Nikon has assigned Father Patrick to our parish.

A native of Michigan, Fr. Burns served as a Prison Chaplain and a Nursing Home Chaplain. A graduate of St. Tikhon Orthodox Seminary, South Canaan, Penn, he was ordained to the Priesthood in May 2009 and served as Pastor of the Holy Annunciation Macedono-Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church in Steel-

ton, Penn. His first service at Three Saints was Vespers on Saturday, Nov. 13.

On Sunday, Oct. 17, the Senior Group held a bake sale. Thanks to all who participated and helped to make this a great success. On Sunday Oct. 24, we celebrated the 115th Anniversary of the founding of our parish. Chad McNeil, his wife Diana and son Thomas prepared and served a delicious prime rib dinner. Approximately 80 parishioners attended. Nina Kosowsky, Council President reminded us of events that transpired the years since our 100th anniversary. Fr. Steven Voytovich (interim pastor) and Fr. Nichols Timpko (pastor emeritus) spoke of their experiences as members of Three Saints Church.

Our annual Food & Craft Fair was held on Nov. 12-13. Our new pastor, Fr. Patrick, arrived with his family on Friday morning and, after moving in, joined us in the evening for the first day of our Fair. Saturday morning, Fr. Patrick joined our chefs in the kitchen and helped with cooking kielbasa. Thanks to all who volunteered their time and energy for the fair. Fr. Patrick served his first Parastas followed by Vespers service. On Sunday following liturgy we had a potluck luncheon to welcome Father Patrick and family. It was a joyous celebration and we wish Father Patrick and his family MANY YEARS!

Our sincere thanks go to Fr. John Pawelchak, Fr. Steven Voytovich and especially Fr. Vladimir Aleandro for attending to our very many needs. May God bless you and may He grant you Many Years. †



All Saints Church, Hartford, Conn. Archpriest William DuBovik

It was with great joy that we joined in a procession at All Saints Church, Hartford, for the blessing of an icon of St. Kassiane and the new meditation area outside the Church.

The new icon and area gives persons an opportunity to pause for some quiet time and offer prayers at any time they desire, in an outdoor setting reflective of God's Creation.

St. Kassiane is venerated for her dedication to God, her contributions to the music of the Church and her outspoken defense of Orthodox beliefs and iconography. The ninth century nun once said, "I hate the fool who acts the philosopher. I hate silence when it is time to speak."

Her outspokenness led to the rejection of the saint by the heir to the throne Theophilus, who was troubled by her intellect. She then became a nun and founded a monastery in Constantinople in 843.

St. Kassiane is the only woman whose hymns--23 of them--have found a place in the liturgical life of the Church. She composed the hymn sung on Holy Wednesday recounting the story of the sinful woman and her redemption (Luke 7:36-50). Well known to worshippers

is her irmoi from Matins of Holy Saturday and Pascha: "Do not lament me O Mother of God, seeing me in the tomb for I shall arise." The words as we hear them literally lift us up from beholding Christ in the tomb to seeing the empty tomb, and help us live and taste the joy of the Resurrection

St. Kassiane (whose name also appears Cassiane, Kassia, Kassian, etc.) entered into the Lord's rest Sept. 7 in the year 867.

We are thankful for Phyllis Sturtevant for coordinating this project; her husband, Dr. Richard Simon, for work on the placement of the icon, creating its case, and with Phyllis, the preparation of the area; Dr. Chet Andrzejewski who with Fr. William and Phyllis served on the committee to select the saint. We are also thankful the the Church Council for its support of the project, and the parish for making it possible.

We number St. Kassiane among our intercessors before the Lord, turning to her with our petitions, and inspired by her in her dedication to icons, to hymnography, to our worship and to sacrifice. May her devotion lift us up. Pray for us St. Kassiane. †

Below: Fr. William blesses the outdoor meditation area at All Saints and the icon of St. Kassiane.
Photo: Cathy Vargas



St. Nicholas Church, Norwich, Conn.—95 years



Over the weekend of December 4–6, the faithful of **St. Nicholas Church, Norwich, Conn., celebrated the 95th Anniversary** of their founding.

Vespers and Hierarchal Divine Liturgy were celebrated on Saturday and Sunday. **Above Left: His Grace, Bishop Nikon** presides at the Liturgy. **Above right: Members of the St. Nicholas choir.**

Assembly from 3

confidence in financial accountability within the Church, leading to parish decline.

Members of the Assembly asked a number of questions of Joe Kormos. Asked about signs of numerical growth in the Midwest, he admitted, “Not yet. It took years to get to this critical state, and it takes time to shift momentum. When invited to give advice to the Diocese of New England, he said, “Devote real time to this issue. It’s important to have someone focusing on this problem, travelling to parishes, and this requires real preparation and time devoted to presentation, learning. One single solution will not be found; need an array of approaches. You get what you pay for, and you need ‘skin in the game.’” Later he added, “Learn what healthy parishes do: their members come to church, welcome newcomers, serve others in the community, etc. Read the Parish Health Inventory PDF to learn more. Commit several parishes to do the Inventory. Commit to one *significant* new charitable project in each parish’s neighborhood.”

The other special focus of the Diocesan Assembly was a discussion of the Draft Strategic Plan of the OCA. Fr. Robert Arida, conclud-

ing his term on the Metropolitan Council, led the discussion of the document, which attempts to evoke the vision and immediate goals of the OCA. He commended the Assembly for its constructive criticism last year, which led the Strategic Planning Committee to radically revise their work and resulted in a much more fruitful process.

As the discussion progressed, it became evident that, while the document was generally praised, it was in need of improvement, and there were widespread doubts that the OCA would be prepared to come to consensus around a Strategic Plan in the next year. (The next All-American Council is scheduled for November, 2011.) Many recommended shortening, simplifying, making it more concrete. Many had questions about the Holy Synod’s opinion of the document and their own thoughts on the vision and goals of the Church.

Fr. Andrew Tregubov considered the process invaluable, not for producing a document but for making obvious our own confusion about the nature and direction of the Church. That seemed the common thought: that the Assembly’s own discussion had been thought-provoking and edifying, even if no definite consensus could be achieved.

Assembly to 10



St. Jacob of Alaska, Northfield, Vt., installs new cross on steeple

Priest Caleb Abetti

St. Jacob installed a new hand forged copper cross onto their steeple in October. The cross was fashioned by David Eastman, a parishioner of Holy Resurrection Church in Claremont, NH. The cross was installed by Will Eberly, an across the street neighbor and Fr. Caleb. Will did the most dangerous parts (Fr. Caleb is just outside the photo on the dock where the ladder is protruding from, 50 feet in the air), but allowing Fr. Caleb to be at the controls of the cherry picker for part of the day. The installation took 6 hours as the top of the steeple needed framing and retrofitting of flashing. And yes, Will is tied off with rope, as is the ladder. †

Assembly from 9

The Assembly did come to consensus on two significant initiatives. The primary concern of the Assembly—and the reason for inviting Joe Kormos to speak—was the pressing need to promote health and growth in the parishes of our diocese. After hearing Mr. Kormos's presentation, the Chancellor and Deans proposed a resolution to explore the idea of a Diocesan Resource Coordinator, to strengthen the ministry of our parishes. The Assembly agreed that His Grace, the Chancellor and Deans would come up with a job description and means of funding, if they believe it would be suitable for our diocese. If it seems a workable idea, it will be brought before the next Assembly.

Protodeacon Paul Nimchek proposed another resolution to encourage fresh outreach and charity efforts in our parishes, in order to promote new life. The Assembly approved this resolution, to investigate the usefulness and process of establish outreach ministry grants to award to parishes with constructive new endeavors.

Assembly to 11



Right: On Nov. 14, **Thomas Cyranowski** was tonsured a reader by his Grace Bishop Nikon at Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Springfield Mass.

Below: Choir at Vespers during the Diocesan Assembly: **Holy Trinity, Springfield, Vt.**

Bottom: Little Entrance during the Liturgy at the Assembly: **Holy Resurrection, Claremont, N.H.**



Assembly from 10

If the Diocesan Council finds this grant program promising, it may implement it in 2011, before the next Diocesan Assembly.

In addition to all the business of the Assembly, it remains a crucial opportunity for delegates from around the diocese to unite together in worship and friendship. The participants were refreshed after Friday's work with Vespers at Holy Trinity, Springfield, followed by a relaxing dinner getting to know new faces. On Saturday, Holy Resurrection Church, Claremont, hosted the Divine Liturgy, brunch and the second plenary session.

This year's Assembly seemed especially edifying and engaging. It made clear the seriousness of the work necessary for our diocese to flourish, and elicited the beginnings of new efforts. It will require sustained efforts in the parishes and in coming Assemblies, though, for this initial foray to bear fruit. †



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Upcoming Events

- Jan 31** Deadline for next issue of the *ONE*
- Feb 5** Metropolitan Hilarion to deliver the Annual Father Alexander Schmemmann Lecture at St. Vladimir's Seminary, 575 Scarsdale Rd., Crestwood, N.Y., at 1:30 PM. Free and open to the public.
- Feb 7** English-language U.S. premiere of the St. Matthew Passion by renowned Russian Orthodox composer and churchman Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, in New York City at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 405 West 59th Street. Tickets available from St. Vladimir's Seminary; email <events@svots.edu> or call 914-961-8313 x323.
- Feb 9** Diocesan Council in Springfield, Mass. (Feb. 16 snow date.)