

MESSAGE TO ALL ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA
Adopted by the All American Church Council of the
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
October 20 thru 22, 1970
South Canaan, Pennsylvania

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In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We the Bishops, clergy and laity of the Orthodox Church in America, united in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at our All-American Church Council, address this message to all our brothers in the Orthodox Faith in America.

The grace and the mercy of God be with you. Time has come for us to fulfill Christ's prayer, "that all may be one...that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). Our witness to the truth of our Orthodox Faith on this continent, where we Orthodox are a minority, lies in our perfect and total unity. How can the world accept and believe our claim to be the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of having kept in its fulness the Orthodox faith, if we ourselves are divided? We have the same Faith, the same Tradition, the same hope, the same mission. We should then constitute one Church, visibly, organically, fully. Such is the requirement of our Orthodox Faith and we know that always and everywhere the Orthodox Church has existed and exists as one Church. There can, therefore, be no excuse for our jurisdictional divisions, alienation from one another, and parochialism. The removal of such divisions and the organic unity of all Orthodox in America is the goal of our Church and we invite you to become a part of that unity.

But we also know and fully acknowledge that we have come from different backgrounds and have been nourished by various traditions within the same and unique Orthodox Tradition. We firmly believe that this variety constitutes the richness of American Orthodoxy and that whatever is true, noble, inspiring and Christian in our various customs and practices ought to be fully preserved and, if possible, shared. Therefore, although we insist that the One Orthodox Church here must be the home of all, we equally stress that there must be no loss of our respective national and cultural heritages and certainly, no domination of any group by any other but a full equality, total trust and truly Christian brotherhood. As we send you the peace and love of our first Council as the Orthodox Church in America, we assure you that we understand ourselves first and foremost as the servants of the full unity of the Church in the freedom, love and mutual respect of all churches and dioceses of our Orthodox Church in the World and in this blessed land of America.

Glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto ages of ages. Amen.