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# Tomos of Autocephaly

by the Mercy of God,  
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

For a number of years, the Russian Orthodox Church has observed with maternal love and concern the development of the Orthodox Church which she planted on the American continent. In the last few decades she has sorrowfully witnessed the unfortunate appearance there of a pluralism of ecclesiastical jurisdictions, a temporary phenomenon, and by no means a permanent norm of the canonical organization of the Orthodox Church in America, since it is contrary to the nature of Orthodox canonical ecclesiastical unity.

The Holy Russian Orthodox Church, striving for the good of the Church, has directed her efforts toward the normalization of relations among the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions in America, particularly by negotiating with the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, concerning the possibility of granting autocephaly to this Church in the hope that this might serve the good of the Orthodox Church in America and the glory of God.

In her striving for the peace of Christ, which has universal significance for the life of man; desiring to build a peaceful and creative church life, and to suppress scandalous ecclesiastical divisions; hoping that this act would be beneficial to the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ and would make possible the development among the local parts of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of such relations which would be founded on the firm ties of the one Orthodox Faith and the love that the Lord Jesus Christ willed; keeping in mind that this act would serve the welfare of universal, mutual cooperation; taking into consideration the petition of the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Metropolitanate of North America, which expressed the opinion and desire of all her faithful children; acknowledging as good for Orthodoxy in America the independent and self-sustaining existence of said Metropolitanate, which now represents a mature ecclesiastical organism possessing all that is necessary for successful further growth. Our Humility together with the Sacred Synod and all the venerable Hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, who have signified their agreement in writing, having examined the said petition, in sincere

love grant autocephaly to the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, that is, the right of a fully independent ordering of church life in accordance with the divine and sacred Canons and the ecclesiastical practices and customs of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church inherited from the Fathers; for which purpose this Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos is directed to His Beatitude, IRENEY, Archbishop of New York, Primate of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America, Metropolitan of All-America and Canada, by which we announce:

1. The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in North America is confirmed and proclaimed an Autocephalous Church and named "The Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America";
2. By "autocephaly," which is confirmed in this decision, it is understood that the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America shall:
  - a. be independent and self-governing with the right of electing her own Primate and all her bishops, without confirmation or the right of veto over such elections on the part of any other church organization or representative of the Eastern Orthodox or any other confession;
  - b. firmly and inalterably preserve the divine dogmas, being guided in her life by the sacred Canons of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Church of Christ and governed in accordance with her own Statute as accepted, augmented or amended from time to time by her own highest legislative and executive organ;
  - c. maintain direct relations with all other Churches and confessions, Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike;
  - d. enjoy all the authority, privileges and rights usually inherent in the term "autocephaly" in the canonical tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church, including the right of preparing and consecrating Holy Chrism.
3. The following are excluded from autocephaly on the territory of North America:
  - a. St. Nicholas Cathedral and its possessions, located at 15 East 97th Street in New York City and the accompanying residence; and also the immovable possessions in Pine Bush, New York, together with buildings and edifices which might be constructed in the future on this land;
  - b. Parishes and clergy in the U.S.A. which at present are in the Patriarchal Exarchate and which desire to remain in the canonical and jurisdictional care of the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and

All Russia - these parishes, desiring to remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and excluded from the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America are the following:

1. St. Nicholas Church, Brookside, State of Alabama
2. St. Demetrius Monastery, Bellflower, State of California
3. Christ the Savior Church, Berkley, State of California
4. St. Nicholas Cathedral, San Francisco, State of California
5. Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, San Francisco, State of California
6. Our Lady of Kazan Church, San Diego, State of California
7. Resurrection Church, Chicago, State of Illinois
8. Dormition Church Benld, State of Illinois
9. Holy Trinity Church, Baltimore, State of Maryland
10. St. Elias Church, Battle Creek, State of Michigan
11. St. Innocent Church, Detroit, State of Michigan
12. St. Michael the Archangel Church, Detroit, State of Michigan
13. Church of St. Andrew the First-Called Apostle, East Lansing, State of Michigan
14. Holy Trinity Church, Saginaw, State of Michigan
15. St. John Chrysostom Church, Grand Rapids, State of Michigan
16. House Chapel of St. Seraphim of Sarov, Westtown, State of New York
17. St. Demetrius Church, Jackson, State of Michigan
18. St. Nicholas Church, Bayonne, State of New Jersey
19. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Elizabeth, State of New Jersey
20. Three Hierarchs Church, Garfield, State of New Jersey
21. Holy Cross Church, Hackettstown, State of New Jersey
22. Sts. Peter and Paul Church; Passaic, State of New Jersey
23. St. John the Baptist Church, Singac (Little Falls), State of New Jersey
24. St. Olga Church, Somerset, State of New Jersey
25. St. Mark Chapel, State of New York
26. Church of St. George the Great Martyr, State of New York
27. Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, on the estate of Pine Bush, State of New York
28. St. John the Baptist Chapel, Bronx, State of New York
29. Church of All Saints Glorified in the Russian Land, Amsterdam (Wolf Run), State of Ohio
30. St. Stephen Church, Lorairi, State of Ohio
31. Nativity of Christ Church, Youngstown, State of Ohio

32. St. Nicholas Church, Chester, State of Pennsylvania
33. St. Nicholas Church, Edinboro, Pageville, State of Pennsylvania
34. St. Nicholas Church, Reading, State of Pennsylvania
35. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Mount Union, State of Pennsylvania
36. St. Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre, State of Pennsylvania
37. St. Andrew the Apostle Church, Philadelphia, State of Pennsylvania
38. St. Michael the Archangel Church, Philadelphia, State of Pennsylvania
39. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Scranton, State of Pennsylvania
40. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Burgaw, State of North Carolina
41. St. Gregory the Theologian Church, Tampa, State of Florida
42. Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Manchester, State of New Hampshire
43. Church of St. George the Great Martyr, Buffalo, State of New York

c. All parishes and clergy in Canada, which presently constitute the Edmonton, Canada Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate (they all desired to remain in the jurisdiction of the Most Holy Patriarch).

4. St. Nicholas Cathedral and its possessions and residence, and also the property in Pine Bush, New York, shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia through a person representing him in the rank of Presbyter.
5. Parishes and clergy in the U.S.A. which remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia through one of his vicar bishops; not having a title of the local American Church, especially appointed for this, and until such time as these parishes express their official desire to join the Autocephalous Church in America in the manner described below.
6. Parishes and clergy which at this time constitute the Edmonton, Canada Diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate and remain in the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, shall be governed by the Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia through one of his vicar bishops not having a title of the local American Church, especially appointed for this, and until such time as these parishes express their official desire to join the Autocephalous Church in America in the manner described below.
7. The Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America shall have exclusive

- spiritual and canonical jurisdiction over all bishops, clerics and laymen of the Eastern Orthodox confession in continental North America, excluding Mexico, and including the State of Hawaii who are presently part of the Metropolitanate, or who shall later enter the Metropolitanate; and over all parishes which now belong or later shall be accepted into the Metropolitanate, excepting the entire clergy, possessions and parishes enumerated in Paragraph 3, points a,b,c.
8. The Moscow Patriarchate shall not lay claim to either spiritual or canonical jurisdiction over bishops, clergy and laymen of the Eastern Orthodox confession, or over parishes mentioned in Division 1, Paragraph 7, and by the present yields to the Metropolitanate, all jurisdiction to which she has laid claim on the above mentioned territory (Paragraph 7); excepting the entire clergy, possessions and parishes enumerated in Paragraph 3, points a,b,c.
  9. The changing of jurisdictions by parishes which are in the canonical care of the Moscow Patriarchate after the proclamation of the Metropolitanate's autocephaly shall occur on the initiative of the parishes themselves and after bilateral agreements in each concrete case between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Autocephalous Church in America.
  10. The Moscow Patriarchate shall not receive into its care in North America any clerics without written release or any parishes except parishes from uncanonical ecclesiastical organizations in Canada; and shall not canonically permit clergy and parishes remaining in its care to enter any of the Orthodox jurisdictions but the jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.
  11. The Patriarchate assures the parishes remaining in its care of its readiness to defend their status as parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also defend the enumerated parishes from attempts to change their present status without a free expression of their decision without the written agreement of the Moscow Patriarchate.
  12. The Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Autocephalous Church in America shall maintain sincere fraternal relations, in which they should be guided by the bilateral agreements, signed by His Eminence, Metropolitan IRENEY, and by His Eminence, Metropolitan NIKODIM, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, on March 31, 1970.
  13. The Exarchate of North and South America, together with the dioceses in the U.S.A. and Canada which comprised it, is abolished.

Confirming the Autocephaly of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in America, we bless her to call herself The Holy Autocephalous Orthodox

Church in America; we acknowledge and proclaim her our Sister Church, and we invite all local Orthodox Churches and their Primates and their faithful children to acknowledge her as such and to include her in the dyptichs in accordance with the Canons of the Church, the traditions of the Fathers and ecclesiastical practice.

The newly-established local Orthodox Autocephalous Church in America should abide in brotherly relations with all the Orthodox Churches and their Primates as well as with their bishops, clergy and pious flock, who are in America and who for the time being preserve their de facto existing canonical and jurisdictional dependence on their national Churches and their Primates.

With profound, sincere joy, We announce this to the Fullness of the Church and We do not cease thanking the All-Gracious Almighty God, who directs all in the world by His right hand for the good and the salvation of mankind, for the successful and final formation of Autocephaly, and we entreat the all-powerful blessing of God upon the younger Sister in the family of local Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

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May the Consubstantial and Life-creating and Undivided Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, acting on Its own wondrous providence, send down on the Archpastors, Pastors and Faithful Children of the Holy Autocephalous Orthodox American Church Its heavenly, unfailing help, and may It bless with success all her future endeavors for the good of the Holy Church.

Signed in the city of Moscow, April 10, 1970.

1. ALEXIS, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

**Members of the Holy Synod:**

1. Metropolitan of Krutitsy and Kolomna, PIMEN
2. Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, NIKODIM
3. Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia, Exarch of the Ukraine, PHILARET
4. Metropolitan of Orel and Briansk, PALLADY
5. Metropolitan of Alma-Ata and Khazakstan, IOSIF
6. Metropolitan of Yaroslavl and Rostov, IOANN
7. Archbishop of Irkutsk and Tchita, VENIAMIN
8. Archbishop of Ufa and Sterlitamak, IOV
9. Archbishop of New York and the Aleutians, Exarch of North and South America, IONAFAN

10. Bishop of Kishinev and Moldavia, VARFOLOMEY
  11. Bishop of Tula and Belev, IUVENALY
  12. Bishop of Chernigov and Nezhinsk, VLADIMIR
  13. Bishop of Smolensk and Viazmia, GEDEON
  14. Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan of Tallin and Estonia, ALEXEI
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