



ST. TIKHON'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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OFFICE OF THE RECTOR

July 31, 2012

To the members of the Administration, Faculty, Staff, Board of Trustees, Alumni and Seminarians of Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary:

Christ is in our midst!

Since 2005, I have served as the Rector of the Orthodox Theological Seminary of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, a position that has given me the great blessing of participating in the sacred work of preparing young men for service in the Orthodox Church. At the same time, I have also served as the ruling hierarch for the diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, which is likewise a rewarding, yet very demanding, position. Both the Diocese and the Seminary are important institutions within the Orthodox Church in America and each has unique and demanding pastoral and administrative needs.

While I have felt great joy in fulfilling my responsibilities in both the Diocese and the Seminary, it has become increasingly apparent to me that the changing and growing administrative needs in each institution were making it more difficult for one person to adequately address those needs. In prayerfully considering many factors, I have come to the conclusion that it is not possible for me to serve both the Diocese and the Seminary without compromising the stability and integrity of each institution.

Therefore, after much prayer and consultation, I wrote a letter on April 25, 2012, to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah, and to the Holy Synod of Bishops in which I submitted my resignation as Rector of St Tikhon's Seminary. This letter was reviewed by the Holy Synod during its Spring Session (May 7-10, 2012) and, with the concurrence of all the hierarchs, Metropolitan Jonah accepted my resignation, effective August 1, 2012.

The single and fundamental reason for my decision is the reality of the full time work required within the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. The issues faced in this diocese, like other dioceses, are very complex and they require my full time attention as diocesan hierarch. Since the position of Rector of the Seminary is likewise a full time position, I have felt for some time that I could not devote the time and attention that both the Seminary and the Diocese required. Therefore, it seemed clearly evident to me that I needed to withdraw from one of the institutions in order to focus exclusively on the other.

My choice to withdraw from the Seminary was based solely on the needs of my diocese and does not arise from any sense of frustration with, or disappointment in, anyone on the Board of Trustees, Administration, Faculty or Staff of the Seminary. Although there have been, and continue to be, many challenges and difficulties facing the Seminary, none of those is the reason for my decision and none of them take away from the joy that I have felt in serving as Rector of the Seminary.

Historically, the position of Rector of the Seminary has been filled by the Bishop of Philadelphia. However, while the governing documents of the seminary call for the involvement of the Bishop of Philadelphia as a member of the Board of Trustees, they do not mandate that he serve as the Rector. Although I am resigning as Rector, I will continue on as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary and am in no way cutting off my personal or hierarchical relationship with St Tikhon's Seminary or any seminary of the Orthodox Church in America; nor am I severing the very positive relationship that the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania has with the Seminary.

I believe that my decision is a disinterested one that will be beneficial to the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania and St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary and I am grateful to the Holy Synod for their trust in me during the years I have served as Rector. On July 5, 2012, Metropolitan Jonah appointed His Grace, Bishop Michael as Interim Rector for Saint Tikhon's Seminary and this appointment was confirmed by the other hierarchs. I have offered my assistance to His Grace during the next few months of transition but I am confident that his previous service to the Seminary as its Dean and as Professor will make this a smooth transition and will be greatly beneficial to the Seminary Community. Please give him your full support and cooperation as we approach the new academic year.

In conclusion, I would like to ask forgiveness of every member of the St Tikhon's Seminary Community for any way that I have hurt or offended you and for all my weaknesses as Rector. I look forward to continuing my support of Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, to developing the good relationship I have with the members of the Administration, the Faculty and the Board of Trustees and to offer my encouragement to all the Seminarians, both those currently enrolled and all the alumni and graduates. May the Lord Jesus Christ continue to strengthen you in your labors, your ministries and your studies within our sacred theological institution.

Asking the Lord to bless each of you and assuring you of my love and prayers, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+TIKHON
Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania