Thinking about Episcopacy, and the Archdiocese of Canada

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David Goa asked me to reflect on the subject of "Thinking about the Episcopacy" for this session. It is, itself, a large subject. As he reminded me, I wrote a book on the subject "The Bishop in the Church" that was published in 2016. I would say that, nevertheless, that book, long as it be, was simply a pastoral reflection.

Simply put, "episcopacy" is defined in a dictionary as "the government of the Church by bishops". That is truly a western simplification. However, as we shall see, in the Orthodox Way, it means and involves much more than simple administrative activity.

In considering the subject of the Episcopacy in the Orthodox Christian Church, I thought that it would be prudent to begin with addressing the Episcopacy itself. Then, following the prompt of David Goa, I will turn to some examples of bishops who have served in Canada over the past century-and-a-quarter. In advance, I ask forgiveness for what I perceive to be a pedantic presentation.

To begin with, it must be stated that everything about the Episcopacy in the Orthodox Church has to do with Christ Himself.

The presence and activity of the bishops in the Church, and their service, all refer to Christ. They also reflect the triple direction given by Christ to the Apostle Peter, namely "Feed My lambs ; tend My sheep ; feed My sheep". These words applied not only to the Apostle Peter, but also to all the Holy Apostles. It

may be stated at the beginning that perhaps the most obvious application of this direction is visible when, at the Divine Liturgy, the bishop distributes the Holy Mysteries to the Faithful. In fact, the bishop stands in the place of Christ, who, Himself, gives Himself to the Faithful.

It is also to be remembered that, as we see in the Acts of the Holy Apostles, everywhere the Apostles went and preached, they left behind bishops whom they had ordained to shepherd the flock of rational sheep. This is especially clear to us in the establishment of Saints Timothy and Titus as bishops in Ephesus and Heraklion, where the Apostle Paul had established communities, because there are letters written to them as such.

I would say that any thought that bishops are an option in the Church of Christ is not in conformity with Holy Scripture. It is not in conformity with the Holy Tradition in Christ. In fact, whether it be the Orthodox Christian Church, any of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, or the Roman Catholic Church, which have Apostolic origin, there is none that lacks the episcopate.

The image of the bishop as “chief-shepherd”, or “arch-pastor”, is one of the foundational perceptions of what it is to be a bishop, and most particularly within the Orthodox Christian Church. Thus, as a shepherd, a priest is a pastor, and a bishop is an arch-pastor, that is, arch-shepherd. Of course, this responsibility itself refers us to Christ Himself, who fulfils the words addressed by the Prophet David at the end of Psalm 76, “You guided Your people as sheep by the hand of Moses and Aaron”.

This image is repeated at the opening of Psalm 79. “O You, shepherding Israel, give heed : You, leading Jōsēph on the way, just as sheep”. Important here is the element in shepherding that we westerners are mostly unaware of. This element is the fact that in the Levant and other places in the East, a shepherd does not drive the sheep from behind. Rather, the shepherd, who knows the sheep, probably by name (and who know their shepherd), leads the sheep by walking ahead of them to the place to which they are going. They trust the shepherd to keep them safe. Further, in the words of Psalm 22, “The LORD shepherds me, and nothing shall be lacking to me. […] He turned my soul

about ; He led me on the way on the paths of righteousness for the sake of His Name". Indeed, one might as well say that all the words of Psalm 22 refer to Christ, and by extension to the presence and service of a bishop in the Church.

There is another aspect of the meaning of the word, "episcopate", which is derived from its early application. An "episkopos" was a chief-slave, and overseer of a household, one who was responsible for maintaining good, and nurturing order in a household. By extension, an "episkopos" in the ecclesiastical context (a bishop, that is), is the chief-slave of Christ, the one responsible for nurturing good order, and healthy inter-personal relationships amongst the clergy and faithful within the diocesan family. This perception is a development from the relationship between shepherd and sheep, and it is rooted in loving service of the Chief-Shepherd, the Lord, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12).

The Apostles appointed successors, known as bishops, and they in turn appointed other bishops in a process that came to be known as Apostolic succession. However, we find the nature of this succession not in some sort of systematic schema, but more fundamentally expressed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. First, he exhorts us, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ". He follows this immediately with "Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you". Then, a little farther on, he says explicitly that "I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and He said, 'This is My Body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me'. In the same way also, He took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My Blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me' ; for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes".

Thus, as all the Holy Apostles received the living Tradition of Christ, and His Way, so they lived, and so they perpetuated this living Tradition.

The bishops, who are descended from the Holy Apostles, continue their principal service of being pastors. Administration is, of course, necessary for the daily functioning of all the communities under his omophor ; however, the bishop can well find those who have this particular gift to do this work under his blessing. The bishop is not required to be an administrator ; but he must be primarily a pastor, even if he has also the gift of administration.

Difference from western terms

At this juncture, I would like to draw attention to the fact that in the West, generally, the centrality of the image of the shepherd was, to some extent, obfuscated by the political and pagan environment of the Roman Empire in which the Orthodox Christian Faith was spreading. I mean that the pagan inheritance of the Roman Empire included a political understanding of priesthood and high-priesthood that was very different from the image of the shepherd. For pagan Rome, the term used for priesthood was “pontifex”, and for the chief of them, “pontifex maximus” terms which remain in use in the Roman Catholic Church to this day, but rather, as applied to bishops.

The foundational meaning in Latin for “pontifex” may be said to be “bridge-maker”, “bridge-builder” ; and the “pontifex maximus” was simply the greatest pontifex. Derived from the literal meaning of bridge-builder, in pagan mentality, the bridge came to refer to the bridge between human beings and the gods, and the aim was to maintain the peace (good order) of the Roman Empire (or before it, the Roman Republic) through the appeasing of the gods.

The association of the Emperor with “Pontifex Maximus” did not end until Emperor Gratian, after whom Emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the empire. I cannot think of any cases in Orthodox Christian literature in which the Roman Catholic term has been used. However, in the Roman Catholic environment, I can see that the history of the use of this term, and its association with the Emperor, could well have led to the papacy’s development into a monarchy, which it still is. This is but one of the obstacles to clear communication between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics, and to reconciliation.

Further early development

In the earlier times of the undivided Church, over several centuries, five Patriarchates were established to help to organise the Christian world, and four of these ancient patriarchates remain Orthodox today. The one lacking nowadays is, of course, Rome itself. The others remaining are : Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Later, as the Orthodox Christian Faith spread abroad, other autocephalous patriarchates, archbishoprics, and metropolitanates were added to the original remaining four.

For some reason, many do not like this following statement, but it is supported by the canonical and patristic Tradition of the Church, and it is in harmony with the Apostle Paul's words about the Church as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12). This statement is that the bishop is wedded to (married to) the diocese he leads. This assertion arises also through other Scriptural references, which address Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom, and by implication, the Church as the Bride : John 3:29 ; Mark 2:19 ; Matthew 25:1-13 ; Apocalypse 21:2, 9-10.

In fact, when a bishop reposes in Christ, or when he might retire, then the leaderless diocese is described as "widowed" until the successor is found. Indeed, one bishop, who for a time had to serve as the ruling bishop of two dioceses at the same time, joked about himself as being a bigamist, until he was released from one of them. I will not pursue this particular aspect further, but it is useful to be kept in mind.

The bishop as a symbol of unity

If we are correctly to perceive that the bishop is a symbol of unity in the Church, we must first understand correctly the meaning of the word "symbol". Indeed, the correct meaning is very different from what we are usually taught

nowadays. I remember well having had this word clearly explained by Father Alexander Schmemann at Saint Vladimir's Seminary. The usual, western understanding of the meaning of this word, according to dictionaries, is approximately, "A symbol is a mark, sign, or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object, relationship, or mathematical formula. Symbols allow people to go beyond what is known or seen by creating linkages between otherwise different concepts and experiences".

By sharp contrast, the actual meaning of the Greek source of this word (synballein) is, rather, approximately something which is "thrown together", and which requires a certain understanding about how to understand this relationship. One might say that a symbol is something like a metaphor. Following is an extract from Orthodoxwiki's expression of what Father Schmemann was teaching : "There is a necessary spiritual distinction between symbol and sign. A sign only portrays reality. A symbol always qualifies it in a certain way, bringing forth a superior reality. To understand a sign is to translate an indication. To understand a symbol is to participate in the presence. Symbols are not mere illustrations, nor are they a substitute of reality. They have the power and competence of manifesting God to men, signs into the genuine union and knowledge of things eternal and divine".

Saint Ignatius the Great Martyr said that "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be, even as wheresoever Christ Jesus is, there is the catholic church". This is truly an application of the bishop as a symbol of unity. Every bishop has the authority and responsibility in Christ to renew and to increase the Church. Especially at the Divine Liturgy, and other Divine Services, the bishop gives visibility to the presence of Christ in the midst of the Faithful. As he invokes Christ, and as he offers worship to the Father, so comes the Holy Spirit, and the bishop, standing as Christ, feeds the Rational Flock of Christ with the Body and Blood of Christ. In Christ, just as the Holy Apostles, the bishop ordains clergy to assist him in nurturing the Rational Sheep. In Christ, just as the Holy Apostles, the bishop provides Holy Chrism for conveying the Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit at Holy Baptism. In Christ, just as the Holy Apostles, the bishop sanctifies the places where the Faithful gather in unity and loving, mutual support, in order to worship the Lord.

It is the responsibility of each bishop to nurture in Christ, loving inter-personal relationships, harmony, and order. In the context of the exhortation in 1 John 4 that we live in harmonious love with one another, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, exhorted us to do so just as we sing to the Lord in harmonious love and concord in our worship. Further, he exhorted us to flee the evil of divisions, and, that we all "follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and follow the presbytery as you would the Apostles ; and reverence the deacons as being the commandment of God. Let no-one do anything in the Church without the bishop".

There is yet another term that is used to describe a bishop, namely, "high-priest". As Orthodox Christian worship inherits many elements of worship as it was in the Jerusalem Temple, so this terminology comes to us. In our life, a presbyter, the local extension of episcopal service in the Church, is called "priest", and the chief priest is called "high-priest". It is the high-priest who ordains all the priests, deacons, and others who serve in the Church. It is the high-priest who blesses everything necessary for the growth and sustenance of Orthodox Christian life and worship.

In terms of provision for everything needed for the life and growth of the Church, the bishop can be described in various ways. Perhaps the first of these is that the bishop is the guarantor of the inheritance and perpetuation of the authentic Tradition (capital T) of Christ. This is reflected by the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 1:16-18) with regard to the Holy Transfiguration, as follows :

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory : 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased'. And we heard this voice which came from Heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain".

The Apostle Paul likewise confirms this in 1 Corinthians 11:23ff, and 15:3-8 ; in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 ; in 1 Timothy 6:20 ; in 2 Timothy 2:2-33 ; in Titus 2:1. When truly understood, Orthodox Tradition is the Tradition of Christ, not simply mere customs. This fact is revealed further in the solemn questions

given to a bishop-to-be, and the answers that he gives at the service of Confession of Faith before the Service of Ordination. The perpetuation of the Apostolic Tradition is foundational and crucial to the life and work of a bishop. That Apostolic Tradition is rooted in the experience of Christ by the Apostles, and this Tradition continues to nurture everything in the life of Orthodox Christian. Indeed, it is this Apostolic Tradition that helps to detect, and to keep distortions through mistaken thinking away from the Rational Flock of Christ.

The service of a bishop is a fearful responsibility. In the context of shepherding, the shepherd is responsible for the life of each sheep ; for maintaining the flock as a whole ; for the unity of the flock ; for protecting the flock from predators. The bishop has this same responsibility for the Rational Flock. As Saint John Chrysostom wrote in his "Six Books on the Priesthood", 'A man who loses sheep through the ravages of wolves of the attacks of robbers or through disease or some other accident, might perhaps meet with a measure of pardon from the owner of the flock. Even if he is called upon to pay for compensation, the penalty stops at money. But anyone entrusted with men, the Rational Flock of Christ, risks the penalty not of money but of his own soul for the loss of the sheep. Moreover, he has a far greater and more difficult struggle'.

The bishop has his co-workers, the presbyters and deacons, who assist him in his pastoral responsibility, and the bishop has the responsibility for the pastoral care of these co-pastors as well. Nevertheless, the bishop does have the care of every one of the Rational Sheep under his omophor, and he must be approachable by them when the need may arise. One of the liturgical expressions of this approachability is shown when the bishop gives Holy Communion to the Faithful. We see this likewise when a bishop is otherwise amongst the Faithful as they press towards him to ask for and receive a blessing.

Ultimately, it may be said that the bishop, who leads the Rational Flock of Christ, does so by giving the example, himself. The Orthodox Christian believers are called not only to become true human beings themselves, but also to show others by their example the way of life that both nurtures and

expresses this. It is the bishop, above all, who must show the way with such love that the Rational Sheep follow willingly on the path of salvation.

There are several aspects of the episcopal service which I will mention now, but without elaboration, but they are all in imitation of Christ. The bishop is a father to the flock entrusted to him. As Christ, the bishop is a servant of God, and a servant to the flock entrusted to him. The bishop is a builder of the flock entrusted to him. The bishop is a teacher of the flock entrusted to him. In leading the flock entrusted to him, the bishop serves as an example of repentance. Likewise, the bishop shows the flock how to forgive (as the Saviour has directed us) by the manner in which he, himself forgives others in and for the sake of the love of Christ. Likewise, by admitting his own faults and falls, he shows us all how to do this, and how to be honest. By the example of his whole life in Christ, in harmony with the Gospels and Orthodox Tradition, the bishop shows the Rational Sheep entrusted to him what an Orthodox Christian way of life looks like.

The bishop, in the case of his relationship with civil authorities, shows us how we "give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's". By his own example, the bishop shows the Rational Sheep how to worship, how to pray, how to intercede for others. The bishop also leads us in our spiritual struggles by his example in those he, himself, faces. The bishop, in his way of life, re-presents Christ to all those he encounters at all times, and thus, he shows us how to do so in our daily life. The bishop has the responsibility of re-presenting the Church of Christ, which is one of the reasons he is treated as he is liturgically.

Missionary bishops and clergy in Canada

In the wake of this foundational consideration of the Holy Episcopacy, we now turn to the series of bishops who, from the beginning, have had an indirect and/or direct impact or influence on the development of the Orthodox Church in Canada. This consideration is limited to those who served in the so-called Russian Mission and her successors through to the giving of autocephaly to The Orthodox Church in America. It is by far not a detailed consideration, but

it is important to be aware of them. There are many more bishops to whom one could, or ought, to refer in understanding the complexity and variety of bishops who have served in North America since 1794. However, even this limited consideration is so long that it is not likely to get completed in the time available.

We begin with the first missionary bishops in North America. Of course, we must be aware that Bishop Joasaph (Bolotov) had been ordained in 1799 for the sake of giving a lasting foundation to the missionary field in Russian North America (Alaska). However, when the ship carrying him and many other missionary workers and supplies sank before they could arrive at Kodiak, and all were lost, the first indication was seen that North America would be a difficult missionary field. There had been difficulties from the beginning in the tensions between the business interests of the Russian-American Company and the missionaries who had arrived in 1794. This catastrophe set back considerably the development of the mission, but it did not stop it.

We might as well take this opportunity to remember that the missionary Hieromonk Juvenaly (now Saint Juvenaly) and the young convert Aleut Peter (now Saint Peter) both became martyrs of Christ during this period of time.

Eventually, the Priest John Veniaminov was sent to serve on the Aleutian Islands ; and from there, with the love of Christ, he drew very many local people into the Orthodox Church of Christ. It was he who began the work of translating the Scriptures and liturgical texts into the indigenous languages such as Alutiiq, and others. His exposure to other indigenous cultures was extended to the Tlingit People when he was transferred to New-Archangel (now Sitka), for whom he likewise began translations. His travels extended as far south as Fort Ross in California (north of San Francisco).

From 1824 until 1838, Father John continued this work. When his wife unexpectedly reposed in Christ in 1838, while he was in Saint Petersburg, Russia, he was tonsured to be a monk, and then he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in 1840. As Bishop Innocent (Veniaminov), he returned to his labours in North America, with extended work in the Russian Far East and

Kamchatka. Even when he was elevated to become Metropolitan of Moscow, he continued to support the North American Mission as he encouraged the establishment of missionary societies. These societies supplied many practical needs and financial support to parishes, including those in Canada, right up until the revolution in 1917. Of course, he is now a saint.

It must be mentioned that although he was not a bishop, Father Jakob Netsvetov (now Saint Jakob) was an active collaborator in the Alaskan missionary field during many of the same years. Likewise, he was widowed in 1936 (two years before Saint Innocent was) ; and soon, he was given the blessing to do missionary work in the region of the Yukon River and its delta in Western Alaska. This fruitful mission bore much fruit both during his life, and long afterwards. The Yukon River passes through the Yukon Territory in Canada, and there came to be Orthodox Christians in that territory through the missions on the west coast north of Sitka. Kwethluk is in the Yukon Delta region, and this was later the home of Matushka Olga Michael, now known as Saint Olga of Alaska.

It is also useful to keep in mind that both Saint Innocent and Saint Jakob were active in their missionary service and labours while Saint Herman was still alive (his repose was in 1837).

Bishop John (Mitropolsky) was assigned to be Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska just after Alaska was sold to the USA (1867). In the wake of this drastic change, he moved the missionary centre south from Sitka, Alaska, to San Francisco, California, and he initiated the use of the English language in worship services. It was from there that many missions developed in order to help the increasing number of European immigrants who had begun to arrive.

Bishop Nestor (Zakkis) was Bishop of the Aleutian Islands only for four years, but his administrative ability, and his ability to speak English served him well. During his time (1878-1882), the translation of the Holy Gospels into Yup'ik was begun. His episcopate was cut short when he was drowned at sea. His sudden repose caused a six-year gap between resident bishops.

Archbishop Vladimir (Sokolovsky-Avtonomov) (1888-1891) served the diocese from San Francisco, and he continued to promote the use of English. Moreover, he provided many of his own settings of liturgical services in English.

Bishop Nicholas (Ziorov) (1891-1898) served next, and he was the first bishop to have contact with the newly-arriving immigrants in Canada. In this context, in 1892, he ordained to the Holy Priesthood the Hierodeacon Sevastijan (Dabović) (now Saint Sevastijan (Dabović), the first North-American-born cleric and missionary. Vladyka Nicholas encouraged missionary development in Alberta by sending the first clergy from the USA to the Edmonton region in 1897 and 1898, and he provided the first clergy to serve in Southern Manitoba. These clergy arrived via Minneapolis, Minnesota. Under the blessing of Bishop Nicholas, the now Saints Raphael (Hawaweeny), Alexander Hotovitzky, and John Kochurov arrived in the USA to serve. It was also during his archpastorate that there began the conversions of Uniates under the leadership of the priest Saint Alexis Toth. Father Alexis had been received from the Unia into the Orthodox Church in 1891 by Vladyka Nicholas. Bishop Nicholas also transferred the spiritual seminary from San Francisco, California, to Minneapolis, Minnesota. He had a substantial library which he donated to the seminary.

Archbishop Tikhon (Belavin) (now Saint Tikhon of Moscow) followed Bishop Nicholas (Zhiorov) in 1898 as ruling bishop in the North American Missionary Diocese (1898-1907). He was elevated to the dignity of archbishop in 1905. Then he moved the see city from San Francisco to New York, because of the density of Orthodox Christian population in the east, and he initiated the construction of Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York City. In that same year also, he blessed the establishment of Saint Tikhon's Monastery and Orphanage at South Canaan, Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Archimandrite Arseny (Chahovtsov). He made several missionary journeys personally to Western Canada, and he sanctified many Temples in the three prairie provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta) during these visits. He also transferred Father Arseny to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and he blessed him to pursue various missionary labours there. Father Arseny undertook this labour, and he continued until health required his return to Europe in 1910. Until then, he had actively helped many Uniates to enter the Orthodox Church. In 1905,

Vladyka Tikhon established an Ecclesiastical Seminary for the Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Vladyka Tikhon was recalled to Europe in 1907.

Bishop Innocent (Pustynsky) (1903-1909) served as Vicar-Bishop of Alaska under Bishop Tikhon (Belavin). It was he who made a pastoral visit in June and July, 1905, from Sitka, Alaska, to Whitehorse, Yukon, and then to Dawson City, as he travelled by ship on down the Yukon River to its delta, and to the Bering Sea. His recollections about this trip, and his search for any remaining Orthodox Christians in the area after the Gold-rush were published in the "Russian American Orthodox Messenger". He had been made aware that Father Jacob Korchinsky, while he was in Dawson, had purchased land for a hoped-for church there, before he was transferred to Edmonton, Alberta, and became the first pastor there (rural Temples, and Saint Barbara's Church). Vladyka Innocent translated works into Tlingit and Alutiiq languages, and he founded the Orthodox Temperance Society in Alaska.

During all these years, and during the following years as well, the bishops were careful to nurture the Orthodox Christians of every sort who lived in North America. There was no administrative division in North America at that time. Following the words of the Apostle Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), it was understood also that there is but one, all-inclusive human race.

Bishop Raphael (Hawaweeny) (1904-1915) served as a Vicar-Bishop under Bishop Tikhon (Belavin) for what was called the Syro-Arab Mission (which became eventually the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese). Already in 1903, Father Raphael had adopted a semi-nomadic lifestyle, in which he was known to have travelled by foot, by horse, by donkey, and by railway, amongst the poorest of travellers in the USA and Canada. Eventually, he extended his missionary work to Cuba, and to the Caribbean. Bishop Raphael was the first Orthodox bishop to be ordained (1904) in North America. During his travels, he organised his journeys around letters he had received from scattered Orthodox Christians in America. Because of the requests he received, he would perform spontaneous baptisms, marriages, and various blessings as he travelled. Sayidna (i.e. Vladyka, Bishop) Raphael established the first Arabic-

speaking parish in Montréal, Québec, Canada, and he encouraged other missionary outreach in Eastern Canada. Immediately after the first Arabic-speaking parish in Montréal, he was involved also in the establishing of both the first Russian-speaking (Saints Peter and Paul), and the first Greek-speaking (Evangelismos/Annunciation) parishes in that city. He was in the avant-garde of Orthodox periodical publications as well.

Archbishop Platon (Rozhdestvensky) (1907-1914 ; 1922-1934) followed after Archbishop Tikhon as the Archbishop of North America. Vladyka Platon continued all the works established by his predecessors. He continued the work of receiving Uniates into the Church, and he continued the development of seminary education. During his time, the seminary was moved from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Tenafly, New Jersey, and it was renamed as the Saint Platon Orthodox Seminary. Vladyka Platon addressed social needs by founding the Russian Immigrants Home and an Orphanage in New York City. He led an attempt to acquire a Greek-speaking bishop from Constantinople for North America, but this project did not mature. Vladyka was recalled to Europe in 1914, and he returned to the USA in 1922 as a refugee. Soon, he became the metropolitan of the now necessarily self-sustaining Church in North America.

His return occurred during the time of great confusion after the 1917 Russian Revolution and the subsequent Civil War. In the context of the already-active persecution of the Church of Russia, and the consequent great difficulties with communication, all the remaining years of his life were fraught with confusion, poverty, and disturbances. Nevertheless, he persevered in his pastoral leadership, and the Orthodox Church in North America began to stabilise, and to develop a sense of direction.

Archbishop Evdokim (Meschersky) (1914-1917) succeeded Archbishop Platon at the head of the North American Diocese. He strove to organise and link the Church life of the various national groups within the vast diocese. In 1917, he had Archimandrite Aftimios (Ofiesh) ordained to the Holy Episcopate in order to be able to lead the Syro-Arab community in the wake of the sudden repose of Bishop Raphael (Hawaweeny). Vladyka Evdokim actively re-organised many of the institutions of the American Church. This included transferring the

Brooklyn orphanage to the first women's monastery in Springfield, Vermont, and re-opening the orphanage site in Brooklyn as an Orthodox Women's College in 1915.

In his 1916 report to the Most Holy Synod of Russia, he commented that he found that the existing administrative structure of the mission was not adequate. In the context of the obvious need, he reiterated Saint Tikhon's recommendation for a wider autonomy for the Church in America that consisted of many national backgrounds. He also pointed out the many programmes of the mission, and the financial needs of that mission. He returned to Russia in 1917 for the All-Russian Council ; but because of the Revolution that occurred then, he had to remain there. Of course, because of the revolution, nothing could come from his requests for help in North America.

Archbishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) (1909-1916 ; 1916-1922 ; 1917-1922) followed Archbishop Evdokim in 1917 as the next Archbishop of North America. Before this, however, he had served as Bishop of Alaska from 1909 ; and then, he had served as the first resident bishop of the new Diocese of Canada (1916-1917). At that time, he lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and he began to improve the order of life in the Diocese of Canada.

However, at that time, there were developing rapidly several nationalistic movements. One of these, he tried to help, but it became not possible, although it developed into the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada in 1918-1919. Vladyka Alexander was required to move to New York, since he had been elected to be the Archbishop of North America ; but he remained also the Ruling Bishop of the Diocese of Canada until 1922.

In his responsibility as archbishop, Vladyka Alexander faced a host of complications that fell upon the Church in North America as a consequence of the 1917 Revolution. These included the many disabilities involving communication, and the sudden stoppage of all financial support for the North American Church from her Mother Church in Russia (at the insistence or the Communist Party). This was also before any organised synod of bishops in

exile had been developed. Vladyka Alexander left North America for Europe in 1922.

Archbishop Apollinary (Koshevoy) (1923-1924 ; 1925 ; 1927-1932) arrived in North America from Serbia in 1923. He served as Bishop of Winnipeg, Manitoba, for a year, before being assigned to serve as Bishop of Detroit, Michigan, in 1925.

In 1926, he was transferred to San Francisco, California. He served there until 1927, when he left the Synod of Bishops of the North American Diocese (now the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America) and he joined the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. He became, effectively, the first Archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) in North America (the world centre being in Europe).

As an archimandrite, Archbishop Arseny (Chahovtsov) (1928-1936) had lived in Europe after 1910, and he had served as a military chaplain during Word War I and then through the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War. He was saved from being shot by the Communists through miraculous circumstances. Ultimately, he was evacuated through Crimea, and he lived in exile in Serbia from 1920-1926. There, he served in various capacities. Then, in 1926, Archimandrite Arseny (Chahovtsov) was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in Belgrade, Serbia, at the request of Metropolitan Platon (Rozhdestvensky) and the bishops of North America (as well as Canadian parishioners), and he was assigned to serve as Bishop of Winnipeg, and the Diocese of Canada.

As Bishop of Canada (having first arrived there), Vladyka Arseny began actively and intensively to visit the various communities across the whole country, both urban and rural. During his years of service, he faced much more complex situations than during his service as an archimandrite. Of course, this included the great tensions between the Diocese of Canada of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America (ROGCCNA), and the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (UGOCC). By this time, also, other national interests of the Orthodox Church (Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Antiochian, Bulgarian, and others) had divided the Church along linguistic

lines. The children of the Church of Russia (ROGCCNA and ROCOR) were also sometimes of a united, and sometimes of a disunited administration, depending on various factors.

The Holy Ascension Monastery at Sifton, Manitoba, continued to serve the diocese both by sending pastors to serve in parishes, and by preparing priests through the pastoral school that Vladyka Arseny had established. In 1936, however, Vladyka Arseny was in Canora, Saskatchewan, and leading a meeting in the parish house. An extremist shot him in the leg (an injury which left him with a permanent limp). The central administration and Metropolitan Theophilus (Pashkovsky) transferred him to the USA, and ultimately to Saint Tikhon's Monastery, where he had begun his service. In 1938, he founded Saint Tikhon's Theological Seminary at Saint Tikhon's Monastery. A beloved teacher, he reposed in Christ there in 1945.

Bishop Emmanuel (Abo-Hatab) (1927-1933) was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in 1917. As Archimandrite, he served the Syro-Arab Parish of Saint Nicholas in Montréal, Québec, and other such parishes, until 1927, when the American Orthodox Catholic Church was founded by the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America. This new entity was intended to exercise a concentrated missionary activity on the continent amongst Americans and Canadians. The purpose of this entity was to establish a new tradition in America that was separate from any other particular ethnic or cultural traditions. In other words, it was an attempt to make it easier for those who did not have an ancestral connexion with one of the historically Orthodox Christian nations abroad to live in the Orthodox way of life in North America. Thus, Archimandrite Emmanuel was ordained to the Holy Episcopate as Bishop of Montréal. He served faithfully, but the entity into which he had been ordained was not able to persist.

In 1931, Bishop Emmanuel separated from the American Orthodox Catholic Church, and he rejoined the Russian "Metropolia". Then Metropolitan Platon (Rozhdestvensky) of New York assigned him to serve as Bishop of Brooklyn.

At this time, Patriarch Alexander III (Tahan) was negotiating both with the Russian Orthodox Church, and with the "Metropolia" in order to find a way to unite the Syro-Arabic flock in North America.

By early 1933, other complications had been cleared up, and it was agreed that Bishop Emmanuel (Abo Hatab) would be released to the Church of Antioch. However, he fell ill, and he reposed in the Lord before this could happen.

Bishop Jeronim (Chernov) (1936) was principally part of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), and he began his service at a time when the "Metropolia" and the ROCOR were part of the same Holy Synod. He had been transferred from the Levant to the USA in 1935, where he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate. He was assigned to serve as Bishop of Montréal and Canada, where he served for a year. However, he was transferred to the USA itself. He was a faithful and traditional bishop.

Archbishop Joasaph (Skorodumov) (1930-1950) was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in Belgrade, Serbia, and he was assigned to be the Vicar-Bishop of Montréal, of the North American Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (which, at that time, included the administrations of both the Russian Orthodox Outside Russia, and the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America). He was noted for the fact that, whether privately or publicly, he served Vespers and Matins every day for the rest of his life.

The new vicariate had no assets, and no organised parish life. This vicariate was distinct from the Diocese of Canada of the "Metropolia" which was in not much better financial condition. Having come to Canada nearly penniless, Bishop Joasaph had no salary, but he managed to live on donations. He was subjected to hardship and adversity. Nevertheless, he set to work to establish better order in the areas of his responsibility. He established All Saints Parish in Calgary, Alberta, and in other places as well. In 1936, when there was a reconciliation between the "Metropolia" and the "ROCOR" (which lasted ten years), he was assigned as Bishop of Edmonton, where he established another parish. In Alberta, he also established monastic presences at Bluffton (near Red Deer) and Granada (near Wildwood). Besides this, he travelled widely as

he visited parishes throughout the west. Vladyka Joasaph was a different person from Vladyka Arseny ; but they were both Christ-loving arch-pastors who cared for their pastoral charges, and they both encouraged monastic life through their own examples. Vladyka Joasaph continued on in his service until 1950, when he was transferred to Argentina (where he reposed in 1955).

Bishop Antony (Tereschenko) (1947) had arrived in Canada in 1920 as a hieromonk in exile (following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and the Russian Civil War that followed). He had long pastoral assignments in Edmonton, Alberta, and in Winnipeg, Manitoba, until he was transferred to Montréal Québec, in 1941. He had had a very long, and mutually supportive missionary relationship with Vladyka Arseny (Chahovtsov) from the time he arrived in Canada in 1928 as its bishop. They were very much complementary missionaries in Canada. Father Antony was beloved wherever he served. In 1947, during an attempt to develop the Diocese of Canada further, he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate. However, the plans of the Holy Synod for Canada were again delayed, because of the sudden repose of Vladyka Antony in the same year of his episcopal ordination.

Metropolitan Leonty (Turkevich) (1950-1951), a diligent and Christ-loving arch-pastor (of whom it was said that “If Metropolitan Leonty is not a saint, I don’t know who is”), served as Locum-Tenens for Canada at the beginning of his service as Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America. It fell to him to bless what was necessary for the continuing life of the parishes in Canada ; and to pray for and search for suitable candidates to take leadership responsibilities, and perhaps to be ordained.

During this period, it was not at all easy to find viable candidates to serve as priests in Canada, and it was harder yet to find a viable candidate to serve as its bishop. In 1951, Metropolitan Leonty (Turkevich) tried to further the previous plan of triple administration in Canada, with a bishop each for eastern, central, and western regions of Canada.

Always, the Diocese of Canada has suffered on every level because of the vast distances, the difficulties in communication, and from lack of pastoral

attention. The last factor is due to lack of available clergy to serve the parishes, and a lack of suitable candidates (and financial resources) to serve as a missionary bishop.

Archbishop Nikon (de Grève) (1952-1960) served as the Bishop of Canada from Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Toronto, Ontario, and he increased the level of communication and publications in the diocese. He spent a good amount of time strengthening the communities particularly of Eastern Canada. However, the needs of the Church began to take him towards Japan, to where he was transferred in 1960.

Bishop Anatoly (Apostolov) (1961), born in Theodosia, Crimea, was of Greek ancestry, and he had served in the Russian Imperial Army before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. In the 1920s, he was widowed, ordained, and then exiled to Siberia. He had been condemned to death, but when that did not take place, he was sent in exile to Greece. Eventually, he became well-known in Athens, and he was requested to move to the USA. In 1961, he was tonsured to be a monk, and ordained to the Holy Episcopate in New York by Metropolitan Leonty (Turkevich). He was assigned to serve as Bishop of Montréal and Canada. However, before the end of the year, he understood that he could not continue in Canada because of his weak health, and the severity of the Québec winter. He requested to be released ; and when he returned to Greece, he served in Athens until his repose in 1976.

Metropolitan Ireney (Bekish) (1962) served as the administrator of the diocese for a year. This was just after his return from his years of service in Japan.

[Saint John Maximovitch of San Francisco (1962-1966) was not a bishop in Canada nor of Canada, but this well-known and long-suffering holy man had responsibilities in the two ROCOR parishes in Vancouver, British Columbia, and he was similarly loved and respected both by the parishioners of Holy Resurrection Church there, and by parishioners in many other Canadian parishes.]

Archbishop Sylvester (Haruns) (1963-1981) had grown up in Latvia, but he had received his higher education in Paris, France. Eventually, he was tonsured and ordained by Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky), and he was a much-loved pastor. During World War II, he was imprisoned for a time by the Nazi Germans. Later, he was ordained to be the Bishop of Nice, France, where he served until he was requested to be transferred to North America, and to become the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Canada. The transfer occurred, but the Church in France was very reluctant to release him.

Under his leadership in Canada, the building projects at the cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Montréal, Québec, were quickly accomplished ; and for the whole course of the remainder of his life, he was highly respected and loved in this parish (and many others as well). He cared deeply for the Rational Sheep under his spiritual care, and he did his best to nurture the development of the diocese.

Regardless, the diocese had long been in great poverty, and much of the communication within the diocese and its administration was subsidised by the cathedral administration. Vladyka used the printing facilities that he developed in his apartment to produce newsletters that went to all the parishes of the diocese. Because of the financial strictures, he was not able himself to visit the parishes very often, but he did manage to organise some diocesan assemblies. Despite his pleas, he was not able to find enough clergy in the USA who were willing to serve in Canada, and there were not many Canadians who offered themselves for pastoral service. This situation remained much the same in 2026.

It was not long before the Central Administration of the ROGCCNA used his gifts for caring for the parishes in Australia besides those in Canada. He became the Locum-Tenens of the Diocese of New England for a time, and in the later years of Metropolitan Ireney (Bekish), he was administrator of The Orthodox Church in America. In 1977, he hosted the General Assembly of The Orthodox Church in America, which elected Metropolitan Theodosius (Lazor) to succeed Metropolitan Ireney (Bekish) as the First Hierarch (Primate) of The Orthodox Church in America.

He served faithfully until his health required his retirement in 1981. He continued to serve at Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral for most of his remaining years, and he lovingly advised, and supported his successor when he was chosen in 1987. Vladyka Sylvester reposed in Christ in 2000.

Bishop Joasaph (Antoniuk) (1968-1978) served for 10 years as Vicar-Bishop of Edmonton, with Archbishop Sylvester (Haruns). Bishop Joasaph had previously been a longtime parish pastor, last at Stratford, Connecticut, USA (until the repose of his wife), and before that, in Harbin, Manchuria, China (until 1949).

Originally a teacher in Siberia, he had spent time in a Siberian camp after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and after escaping, he had walked all the way to Harbin along the Trans-Siberian Railway, where he married, and where he was ordained.

The embodiment of Christ's love, he served in rural Alberta parishes before he was sent to serve at Holy Resurrection Church in Vancouver, British Columbia. From there, he visited the western parishes (usually by bus). Purity of heart, hospitality, and Christian love describe him well. His daughter was like him. He served faithfully until he reposed suddenly in 1978.

Metropolitan Theodosius (Lazor) (1981-1990) served for a long time as the Locum-Tenens of the Archdiocese of Canada in addition to his responsibilities as head of The Orthodox Church in America. Because of his resources and his authority, Metropolitan Theodosius was able (being aware of the constraints under which Vladyka Sylvester laboured) to reorganise the administration of the diocese, redevelop its financial functioning, and enable the Archdiocesan Council to establish a manageable structure. Next, he undertook a search for a successor who could continue the work of Archbishop Sylvester. The pastoral visiting that he added to his already substantial burdens elsewhere made it possible for this renewal of the foundation to function and to be lasting.

By 1987, in consultation with the Archdiocesan Council, Metropolitan Theodosius identified the Priest Seraphim Storheim as the candidate. Once the candidate had been examined by the Holy Synod and other bodies, and once he had been tonsured a monk at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, he was ordained to the Holy Episcopate in Edmonton, Alberta, at the end of an Archdiocesan Assembly. Bishop Seraphim (Storheim) served as Vicar-Bishop under his direction for three years, during which he was assigned to be administrator of the Archdiocese.

In 1990, Metropolitan Theodosius convened another Archdiocesan Assembly in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, at which the assembly agreed to nominate Bishop Seraphim to become the diocesan bishop. After that, the Holy Synod of Bishops elected him to become Bishop of Ottawa and Canada, and the enthronement took place in Ottawa.

Archbishop Seraphim (Storheim) (1987-2010) served the Archdiocese of Canada first as Bishop of Edmonton, and then as Bishop of Ottawa (later, Archbishop). He was the first of the bishops of Canada not to have been raised from the beginning as an Orthodox Christian. In his service, and in the context of the limitation of his own abilities, he tried to emulate the pastoral service of his predecessor Archbishop Sylvester, as well as that of Metropolitan Theodosius, Bishop Joasaph, and Archbishop Arseny in particular. There were other bishops outside The Orthodox Church in America, whose service he had observed and/or experienced, and who thus influenced him through their examples.

Archbishop Irénée (Rochon) (2009-____) was both the next Vicar-Bishop and the next ruling bishop of the Archdiocese of Canada. Vladyka Irénée was the second bishop of Canada not to have been raised from the beginning as an Orthodox Christian. Moreover, when he was searching for entry into the Orthodox Christian Church, he had some difficulty finding anyone who was prepared to talk with him.

Of a Québec family that had arrived in the very early days of immigration in the seventeenth century, Vladyka Irénée had been raised a Roman Catholic. His entry into the Orthodox Christian Church at age 19 was through the Saint Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral parish in Montréal of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. Having graduated from the University of Ottawa, he gained valuable experience and education at the Holy Trinity Monastery and the Holy Trinity Seminary in Jordanville, New York. There, he was tonsured as a monk. Afterwards, he was sent to Belgium to serve as a subdeacon, and then to be ordained to the Holy Diaconate as a hierodeacon on 19 May, 1978. Soon afterwards, on 20 August, 1978, he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood as a hieromonk at Geneva, Switzerland. Under obedience, he served in parishes in France until 1982, when he was transferred to Canada.

There, he was assigned to serve in the French-speaking mission of Saint Gabriel (ROCOR) in Montréal, Québec. He took secular work in order to support himself, while he worked together with Hierodeacon Mark (Pierre) in the mission parish. Hierodeacon Marc worked as a teacher while he served.

In 1986, they and their mission were received into The Orthodox Church in America by Metropolitan Theodosius (Lazor). In 1992, Father Irénée was elevated to the dignity of Igumen, and he was given the responsibility of overseeing the French-speaking monastics in the diocese.

In 1993, Igumen Irénée (Rochon) was assigned to be the Rector of the Church of Saint-Benoîtde Nursie, a French-language parish in Montréal. In addition, he was given added duties in serving as “supply priest” for the parishes in the regions of Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Québec City. All the while, he continued in the same secular employment. Neither the diocese nor the mission parish had sufficient financial resources to cover living costs.

In 1996, Igumen Irénée (Rochon) was assigned also to be the Administrator of Saint Seraphim’s Russian Orthodox Church and of the Russian Cemetery in Rawdon, Québec, an assignment that he continued until 2007. In 2008, Igumen Irénée (Rochon) retired from his secular employment in Montréal.

On 2 April, 2009, the Holy Synod of Bishops of The Orthodox Church in America elevated Igumen Irénée (Rochon) to the dignity of archimandrite. At the same time the Holy Synod chose and elected him to become Vicar-Bishop for Archbishop Seraphim and the Archdiocese of Canada.

On 1 October, 2009, at the Annunciation to the Theotokos-Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Ottawa, Ontario, Metropolitan Jonah (Paffhausen), together with 10 other bishops, ordained Archimandrite Irénée (Rochon) to the Holy Episcopate. Bishop Irénée (Rochon) was given the title "Bishop of Québec City", and he began pastoral visitations not only in Québec, but also in other parts of the diocese.

On 1 October, 2010, Bishop Irénée (Rochon) was assigned by the Holy Synod of Bishops to be the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Canada. He immediately undertook this responsibility, and he began to make many pastoral visits within the archdiocese. He also accepted the responsibility from time to time of representing the OCA at events in Europe and in the Middle-East. This responsibility has continued thereafter. He often visited, and served at the OCA's Representation Church of Saint Catherine the Great Martyr in Moscow. Many other international visits followed.

At the Spring Meeting of the Archdiocesan Council in Ottawa in 2014, Bishop Irénée (Rochon) was nominated to be a candidate for Diocesan Bishop of Ottawa. Then, at the Archdiocesan Assembly on Thursday, 2 October, 2014, in Gatineau, Québec, following the resolution of the Archdiocesan Council (acting as the Episcopal Search Committee), the assembly voted in favour of presenting Bishop Irénée (Rochon) to the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, as the nominated candidate for canonical election to the vacant Archiepiscopal See of Ottawa and Canada.

On 21 October, 2014, the Holy Synod of Bishops of The Orthodox Church in America, meeting at Oyster Bay Cove, New York, elected Bishop Irénée (Rochon) to become the Bishop of Ottawa and Canada. Metropolitan Tikhon

(Mollard) (the Locum Tenens of the archdiocese) wrote a letter and directed the diocese to begin immediately to commemorate Bishop Irénée (Rochon) as such (the custom is usually to use the title “Bishop-Elect” until the actual installation).

On 30 November, 2014, at the Annunciation Cathedral in Ottawa, Bishop Irénée (Rochon) was enthroned to be the Bishop of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada.

On 20 March, 2015, the Holy Synod of Bishops elevated Bishop Irénée to the dignity of archbishop.

From that time, Vladyka Irénée continued in his pastoral service as he faithfully nurtured the diocese. As a consequence, many new communities were blessed into existence, clergy were ordained, and the diocese itself came at last to a state of fiscal stability. Despite various health complication, he continued to balance his health concerns with the needs of the diocese, and his labours bore much fruit by the Grace of the Holy Spirit to the Glory of God.

This concludes comments about bishops having responsibility for the Church in Canada who are in the line descending from the original 1793-1794 North American Mission.

There are very many more bishops who have cared for and do care for the spiritual flocks of various other national groups, but even this present list is more than enough to try to absorb.

It is a mercy of God that there came into existence the Canadian Conference of Orthodox Bishops which continues to meet annually, and which maintains some sort of communication and co-operation amongst the bishops.

Some References :

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