

Abbess Ambrosia Tonsured to the Great Schema

On Saturday, May 11, 2008 (Old Style), the Feast of Sts. Cyril and Methodios, the Very Reverend Mother Ambrosia (left, below), Abbess of the Protection of the Mother of God Convent, in Bluffton, Alberta, Canada, was tonsured to the Great Schema by His Grace, Bishop Auxentios of Photike at the Convent of St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess in Etna, California. Mother Elizabeth (below, right), Abbess of the Etna convent served as her sponsor. The tonsure was blessed by Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi, Acting President of the Holy Synod, and Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna.

Mother Ambrosia, a spiritual daughter of both Bishop Sava of Edmonton and Bishop Nektary of Seattle, entered the monastic life at the Convent of Our Lady of Kazan, in Kentlyn, New South Wales, Australia, having been tonsured—along with her mother according to the flesh, Mother Theodora—a Rasophore Nun by the ruling Bishop in Australia, Archbishop Paul of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA). She was later assigned to the Convent in Bluffton (accompanied by Moth-



er Theodora), where she was made Superior and tonsured to the Small Schema in 1993, by the late Metropolitan Vitaly. In 2002, she was elevated to the office of Abbess by Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco.

After the union of the ROCA with the Moscow Patriarchate, Mother Ambrosia and her six nuns, being unable in good conscience to accept what they saw as an abandonment of the historical principles of the Russian Church Abroad, petitioned to be received into the American Exarchate of our Church. Since that time, the sisterhood has grown to eight in number.

Mother Ambrosia, who is a graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, is distinguished by musical and choral skills, as well as—in the monastic estate—by the wise motherly guidance to her nuns, her humility and spiritual sobriety, her uprightness of character, and her fidelity to the spiritual path set out for her by her renowned spiritual Fathers. (*Below, left, Mother Ambrosia enters the Church for the tonsure; at right, the traditional distribution of Jordan almonds [κονφέτα] at the conclusion of the tonsure, reminiscent of the image of the tonsure to the Great Schema as a “second Baptism.”*)

