

## Concerning the Parish of the Holy Trinity Oxnard, California

**O**N BEHALF of the American Exarchate of our Church, I am pleased to announce, with the greatest possible joy and with gratitude to the intercessions of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco and the prayers of our ailing Metropolitan Cyprian, that our Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Oxnard, California (see photographs of this beautiful Church under Administration/Dioceses/Archdiocese of Etna (California)/Parishes and Churches), was awarded a favorable judgment in the suit brought against it by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA), after the ROCA's decision to unite with the Moscow Patriarchate (thus becoming the ROCA/MP).

Having refused to accept union with the Moscow Patriarchate because of its legacy of collaboration with the Soviet régime and its involvement in the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement, the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church petitioned Metropolitan Cyprian and our Synod of Bishops, in 2007, and was received into the American Exarchate of the Holy Synod in Resistance of the Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Greece, which was a Sister Church of the ROCA/MP before also breaking communion with the latter when it united with Moscow.

Immediately upon the entrance of the Holy Trinity parish into our jurisdiction, The Western diocese of the ROCA/MP filed suit against the parish, in order to confiscate its Church and property, and against the Ruling Bishop of our Exarchate, Archbishop Chrysostomos (for damages in the amount of 2,000,000 dollars); against the Church Warden, Mr. Michael Avisov and his wife, Vivian (for damages in an equal amount); and against the Church Board, accusing all of malfeasance in conjunction with the Board's decision to leave the ROCA/MP.

Though rulings against conservative Episcopalian parishes in California that have broken away from their diocesan structure presented immense concerns for the Holy Trinity parish, by God's Grace, after

two years of expensive and stressful litigation, the complaints against the parish and His Eminence, the Warden and his wife, and the Church Board have been dismissed and, as I said, the court has ruled in favor of the Holy Trinity parish, the property of which is now fully and permanently under its control.

It goes without saying that we are thankful not only to all who supported the parish and His Eminence and the Warden and the Board, but to the founders of the Holy Trinity Church, by whose sacrifices it was built. We are especially thankful to all those who helped to cover the considerable costs for these long and difficult years of litigation. It also goes without saying that no one at all holds ill feelings towards those who initiated the suit.

I speak for the Archbishop, our Church, and the parish, I am sure, when I say that we feel great regret that differences in convictions and views led to such a circumstance as this. May peace and love prevail and, as the Apostle of the Nations wrote to the Corinthians, may the truth one day unite all in “the same mind” and “in the same judgment,” preserving all that in the past was handed down to us from our Fathers and which we have been enjoined, by the same Apostle, to hold in firmness.

Thanks be to God for all things.

† **Bishop Auxentios of Photiki**

Assistant to the Exarch

## **Thanksgiving on the Feast of the Entry Into Jerusalem**

See, below, photographs of the Divine Liturgy and Doxology, or Service of Thanksgiving, on the Feast of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, or Palm Sunday, at the Holy Trinity parish, celebrated by Archbishop Chrysostomos and Bishop Auxentios, Protopresbyter James Thornton, Rector of the parish, Archimandrite Akakios, Abbot of the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery, and the monastery Deacon, Father Nectarios. The Divine Liturgy and Thanksgiving Service were followed by a festal meal in the parish hall, where His Eminence, Archbishop Chrys-

ostomos, expressed appreciation to all who helped to bring about such a positive and God-pleasing resolution to the suit against the parish and the individuals named in that action.



*At left, the clergy following the vesting of the Bishops at the Divine Liturgy; left to right, Archimandrite Akakios, Bishop Auxentios, Archbishop Chrysostomos, Father James Thornton.*

*Below, a group of the faithful at the Doxology, or Service of Thanksgiving, celebrated by Bishop Auxentios after the Divine Liturgy, offering thanks to God for the outcome of the action against the Church.*

*The Divine Liturgy and the Doxology were chanted in English, Slavonic and Greek by the accomplished choir of the Convent of Saint Elizabeth the Grand Duchess in Etna, California, which travelled to the parish from Northern California to help celebrate the Feast and the parish's legal victory.*

