



October 30, 2015

No. 10/038

To the Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of the Diocese of the South,

Christ is in our midst!

With this letter, I am providing an update to the Diocese of the South concerning the status of Archimandrite Gerasim following upon the most recent Fall Session of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America on October 20-24, 2015.

As you will recall from my letter of March 21 of this year, the Holy Synod, during its Spring Session on March 17-20, decided that, rather than proceeding directly to a canonical election of Archimandrite Gerasim, it would appoint him as Administrator of the Diocese of the South as part of the established process for vetting episcopal candidates. This action was to be reviewed at the Fall Session of the Holy Synod.

I can report that the Holy Synod did, in fact, review this matter last week and that Fr. Gerasim was in attendance at our sessions. I presented an update on the Diocese of the South with particular emphasis on the good work that Fr. Gerasim has been doing as Administrator. I highlighted his effectiveness in administrative matters, his balanced handling of difficult pastoral matters, his faithfulness in visiting the parishes and institutions of the Diocese as well as his regular contact with the *Locum Tenens* throughout all of these activities.

The Holy Synod received my report and also heard an update on some other aspects of the on-going assessment of Fr. Gerasim. The Holy Synod has asked for some more time to review this material and did not proceed to an election at this time, Nevertheless, Fr. Gerasim remains under consideration for this

position by the Holy Synod and will remain as Administrator of the Diocese of the South so that he will have some more time to work within the diocese and make himself better known to the bishops of the Holy Synod.

I realize that some in the diocese may question this further delay in proceeding to an election when Fr. Gerasim has been legitimately and statutorily nominated by an Assembly of the Diocese. Although the nomination from the local diocese is a key element of the process of electing a diocesan bishop, it is good to remember that any diocesan bishop must function within the context of the unity of the Holy Synod of Bishops.

Especially in light of recent difficulties that have brought about the need for canonical or disciplinary actions in relation to our own bishops, we are concerned to implement the measures necessary to preserve this brotherly unity and consensus. As such, the Holy Synod also reviewed the process for vetting bishop candidates as a further step to maintaining the integrity of the Holy Synod.

As *Locum Tenens*, I am committed to keeping this process moving in a timely manner. I have full confidence in the ability of Archimandrite Gerasim to continue to guide the Diocese and I will continue to work with him and the Holy Synod to this end. I ask all the clergy and faithful of the diocese to pray for Fr. Gerasim and offer your support to him to further the mission and the work of the Diocese of the South

On behalf of the entire Holy Synod, I thank you for your patience and your faithfulness to Christ and His Holy Church.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a cross symbol followed by a stylized, cursive name that appears to be 'TIKHON'.

+TIKHON  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada  
*Locum Tenens* of the Diocese of the South