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METROPOLITAN THEODOSIUS, RETIRED PRIMATE OF OCA, REPOSES IN THE LORD



His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius (Lazor), the retired Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada of the Orthodox Church in America, reposed in the Lord this morning after an extended illness, reports the official OCA website.

Met. Theodosius was consecrated as the bishop of Alaska in May 1967. In May 1970, he headed the delegation that received the OCA's tomos of autocephaly in Moscow.

In 1972, he was reassigned as the bishop of Pittsburg and Western Pennsylvania. In 1977, he was elected as the primate of the OCA, and served in that capacity until July 21, 2002, when he retired due to poor health.

May his memory be eternal!

Metropolitan Theodosius was born in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania in 1933. After studying at Washington and Jefferson College, he received his Master of Divinity from St. Vladimir's Seminary in New York in 1960. He spent the next year touring the Holy Land, visiting important Orthodox centers throughout Europe and the Middle East, and pursuing additional studies at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland.

Returning to the U.S. in 1961, he took monastic vows and was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood. He served as rector of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church in Madison, IL until 1966, after which he was elected as Bishop of Sitka and Alaska. He was consecrated on May 6, 1967. During his time in Alaska, he oversaw the rebuilding of the historic Archangel Michael Cathedral in Sitka.

In May 1970, he headed the OCA delegation that traveled to Moscow to receive the tomos of autocephaly. That same year, he hosted canonization ceremonies for St. Herman of Alaska, the first North American saint.

In 1972, he was reassigned to the Pittsburgh Diocese, where he spent 5 years. On October 25, 1977, he was elected Metropolitan of All America and Canada. In 1981, the Holy Synod established a new diocese of Washington, D.C. as the seat of the primate.

In 1990, he was the first Orthodox primate to be officially invited by the newly-enthroned Patriarch Alexei II of Moscow, and in 1991 and 1993, he hosted visits of Patriarch Alexei to America. He also hosted Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia of Georgia in 1998 and Metropolitan Sawa of Poland in 2000. Met. Theodosius traveled throughout the world as a guest of national and foreign religious leaders.

He played an active role in inter-Orthodox gatherings, including the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, the forerunner to today's Assembly of Canonical Bishops.

He was called upon to advise Presidents Bush and Clinton, especially after the fall of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and he boldly called upon

President Clinton to end the NATO air campaign during the Kosovo crisis.

During his time as primate, the OCA's current ministry units were established.

Continuing to suffer the effects of strokes he suffered in late 2000 and early 2001, he petitioned the Holy Synod to grant him retirement, which it did on July 21, 2002.

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