



Archbishop of San Francisco & Western America
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Dear Fathers-Concelebrants, Brothers and Sisters – faithful children of the
Western American Diocese!

The year 2014 was a year of many important and joyful events in the life of our Church and Diocese. In June and July the Western American Diocese hosted the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the XIII All-Diaspora Youth Conference; the episcopal consecration of Bishop Nicholas (Olhovskiy) of Manhattan took place here as well. The 700th anniversary of the birth of St. Sergius of Radonezh and the 50th anniversary of the glorification of St. John of Kronstadt were also celebrated on a diocesan level this past year. At the same time the internal life of the Diocese continued: the work of the parishes and schools, ordinations, the consecration of a new church in Salt Lake City, benevolence, pastoral retreats, the Sts. Herman's West Youth Conference, the Sts. Cyril and Athanasius Institute's annual symposium, visits of the Kursk Icon to the parishes of the West, visits by numerous pilgrims to the relics of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, the work of the diocesan center and office, the publication of our diocesan journal, "The Spiritual Spring," concelebrations with representatives of the Church in Russia and Local Orthodox Churches...

At recent meetings of the Diocesan Council it was noted how responsive our clergy and flock are: how timely and generously they give towards all Church needs (for example, our Diocese collected more than half the total sum collected by all the other dioceses together for the 2014 Council of Bishops) and those in need; with what joy and brotherly love our diocesan clergy serves; the trust and goodwill our parishioners have in regard to the diocesan administration; notwithstanding the different conditions of life and backgrounds of the flock, with what church awareness it labours in the parishes and monastic communities scattered throughout the vast West of the United States.

By God's mercy the Western American Diocese is entering into the 81st year of its existence. As 2014 comes to an end I would like to personally thank all of you, my dear fathers-concelebrants and brothers and sisters, for your generosity, support, obedience, trust, prayers and dedication to the Holy Church of Christ and our common Church goals. I am extremely grateful to God for the clergy and flock with which He has entrusted me.

Allow me to conclude my brief archpastoral letter with the words of the holy Apostle Paul to the Christians in Thessaloniki, words which are close to my heart:

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father... For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy." (I Thess. 1, 2-3; 2, 19-20)

Thank you!

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

With love in Christ



OF SAN FRANCISCO & WESTERN AMERICA

December 11/25, 2014
St. Herman of Alaska