NEW ATTEMPT TO SEIZE CATHEDRAL

On 6 June 1960, the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. unanimously reversed the decision of the New York Appellate Court, which granted the Metropolitan District the right of possession of St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York City. Thus, the fifteen year lawsuit ended with the acknowledgment of the authority of the Patriarch's appointees to occupy the Cathedral.

The cathedral in New York City was built in 1898-1903 as the seat of the Russian Orthodox Archdiocese in America. For this reason, the cathedral could not be given over to a newly organized "schismatic American Church Group," as they were called by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Russian Orthodox people in America, including many of the schismatics, were always opposed to these futile court battles. It soon became apparent to everyone that the monies expended for these court proceedings could very well have built two new cathedrals.

But the Metropolitan District persisted in its obstinacy. Some impelling evil force—ignoring sound reasoning—forced the leadership of the Metropolitan District to renew their efforts at various juridical levels. The legal staff of the Metropolitan District, numbering five men, concocted political arguments, which heaped false and unfounded accusations upon the American priests of the Exarchate and labeled the Patriarchal Church "an instrument of communism in the United States with each parish being a communistic cell."

In 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the New York Appellate Court's Decision, which awarded the cathedral to the schismatics. But in 1959, the New York Appellate Court, for the same political reasons, ignored the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, and again awarded the cathedral to the schismatics. Subsequently, on 6 June 1960, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered a new and final decision in favor of the Russian Orthodox Church. It would seem that the matter ends here. But, with regret, convincing the Metropolia is no easy task.

On August 2nd of this year, the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., received a new petition from the Metropolitan District, signed by three of her legal advisors. Once again the leaders of the Metropolia attempted to re-open the case. But as was expected the U.S. Supreme Court denied the Metropolia's petition.

An interesting point in this latest Metropolia petition, was an attempt, on their part, to prove that they are not a "schismatic American Church Group;" that they are the canonical Russian Orthodox Church. For this purpose they cite the Greek Orthodox Church and the Patriarch of Constantinople. An old Russian proverb seems appropriate here—"God denies reason to him whom He seeks to punish." The Metropolia used the Te Deum Service, ten years ago, of the newly elected Greek Patriarch,
to prove their validity. The fact that they participated in this non-sacramental service proves nothing. Similarly, the fact that they received an invitation to attend a Conference of Orthodox Bishops at the Greek Archdiocese, can never be considered as proof of the validity of the Metropolia. Lastly, the fact that a list containing all the names of the Orthodox bishops who attended this conference, which includes the name of Metropolitan Leonty, has no bearing whatsoever on the canonical validity of the Metropolitan District.

Do these trifles and insignificant facts demonstrate the canonical validity of the Metropolia? The answer, of course, is negative. The canonical validity of a Church is determined by the recognition of that Church by all of the Patriarchs and Heads of all Autocephalous Orthodox Churches of the world. Such recognition is always concretely expressed by means of an official written declaration called a "grammata." The Metropolitan District does not in fact have this recognition. And even the Greek Church has not given this kind of recognition to the Metropolia. For this reason the U.S. Supreme Court calls the Metropolia a "schismatic American Church Group." The proofs cited by the Metropolia demonstrate an amazing naivete.

The American Metropolia is not an Autocephalous Church, much as many of her bishops would like to believe. Nor can the Metropolia ever hope to become the Autocephalous Church, while she continues to remain in schism. There can be only one solution—reunion with the Mother Church. By reuniting with the Mother Church, the Metropolia would receive broad autonomy within the framework of the Holy Canons and thus would begin to realize the goals of the Russian Orthodox Church in America.

The mission of the Russian Orthodox Church in America, as expressed in the Exarchal by-laws for parishes, is as follows:

"The Russian Orthodox Church in America—not being a national church in the narrow sense, and following the words of our Saviour, 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations,'—has as its objective, the formation of one American Orthodox Church, which will be recognized by all other Orthodox churches."

May the Lord direct our efforts toward a solution to this grave problem.

Very Rev. Peter A. Krohta

C H U R C H  L I F E

READING, PENNSYLVANIA

The Rev. Father Wasily Sidorsky celebrated his first Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Church on the Feast of Holy Dormition, 28 August 1960. Assisting Father Wasily was the Assistant pastor of the Reading church, the Rev. Father Michael Barna. Archimandrite Ignatius is pastor of St. Nicholas Church. The new priest is known to many for he had been in Holy Orders (deaconate) for over 25 years and had