



The Diocese of the West  
THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
Most Rev. Benjamin  
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Address to the 2022 Assembly – July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – Baltimore, MD

Welcome everyone to the 2022 Diocesan Assembly of the DOW. I hope to give you the briefest report possible today. But before getting much further into our streamlined agenda, I would like to congratulate His Grace, Bishop Daniel on his election to the See of Chicago Monday evening. I would like to thank him for his exceptional work as our chancellor and wish him every success.

His Grace has been of inestimable help to me since the retirement of Fr. Ian, especially with regard to setting up and implementing the guidelines for parishes concerning our response to the Covid pandemic. His input and help remain greatly appreciated. He has shown himself to be an excellent leader.

I would also like to present him with this cross and panagia set on behalf of the diocese and ask him to remember us in his prayers when he wears them.

Obviously, this means we will need a new chancellor. And I have appointed Archpriest Kirill Sokolov to be the new chancellor. He is obviously in San Francisco and we work together rather well.

I think almost everyone has met Leo Bulannikov, my assistant or, as I like to call him, my schlepnik. Last fall when my Parkinsons was advancing, the diocesan council decided to hire someone to help me travel and do some things around the house. So, who to get? It happened that Leo, one of my godsons, had returned from Russia to the US. And, as he was just making coffee at Starbucks, he was more than happy to come and help me. I have to say I was not keen on the whole idea at first. But Leo has turned out to be a very good addition to my household.

A word about my health. You will see me using a cane or my bishop's walking stick more and more. My balance is not always the best and I have fallen more often than I care to admit. There is a tremor in my right hand that is not the best for giving out communion. And my voice gives out easily. Other than that, I think

things are OK. And as long as I can, I will try to keep up my schedule of parish visits.

We have had some changes in personnel. I would like to welcome Fr. Paul Hamner who is in Las Vegas, Fr. Ignatius Strange who is in Bend, OR, Fr. Anthony Machnee in Colorado Springs, and Fr. Alexander Stavrinides in Hesperia, CA.

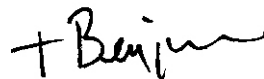
Archpriests John Dresko, Paul Waisanen and John Armstrong retired. We wish them all the best in their retirement.

Protodeacon Averky Davis and Hieromonk Andrew (Letten) fell asleep in the Lord. Memory Eternal.

With the retirement of Fr. Dresko we will need a new dean for the desert deanery. And I would like to appoint Fr. Michael Anderson of the St. John of Damascus parish in Poway dean of the desert deanery.

In addition to the appointment of Fr. Kirill as chancellor, I would like to ask Matushka Theodora to continue as diocesan treasurer and Fr. Damian to continue as recording secretary. I should also make mention of the wonderful help Fr. Andrew Smith provides and would ask him to continue.

I am grateful for the help and council of all of the deans and the members of the diocesan council. Likewise I want to thank you all for your help and patience as I deal with this Parkinson's. I will do my best to carry on. I am not sure how long it will be feasible. But I want to assure you I will do my best to make sure I step aside when my health becomes a problem for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ Benjamin'.

+Benjamin  
Archbishop of San Francisco and the West