

In the 1820s, **Father John Veniaminov** arrived in Alaska and conducted missionary work. Among his many accomplishments was the translation of Scripture and the liturgical services into the native dialects, for which he also devised a grammar and alphabet.

Around 1840 Father John was elected to the episcopacy, taking the name Innocent. The Church continued to grow among the native Alaskans, but Bishop Innocent also visited California and the Orthodox community at Fort Ross, north of San Francisco. He eventually returned to Russia to serve as the Metropolitan-Archbishop of Moscow. (Several years ago he was canonized as a saint.)

While the Church continued to grow in Alaska, immigrants began arriving in the “Lower 48.” In the 1860s a parish was established in San Francisco – today’s Holy Trinity Cathedral.

Gradually, other parishes were established across the U.S. and its territories. With the great waves of immigrants from Europe and the Middle East in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the headquarters of the diocese was moved to **San Francisco** and later to **New York**.

By the early 1900s almost all Orthodox communities in North America, regardless of ethnic background, were united in this diocese, a part of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In 1917 the Russian Revolution broke out. As a result, communications between the North American Diocese and the Church in Russia ceased. In the early 1920s the Patriarch of Moscow, **[Saint] Tikhon** – who from 1897 until 1907 had served as Bishop of the North



**A 200-year heritage:** *The wonder-working Sitka Icon of the Mother of God, commissioned in the early 1800s by St. Innocent, visited many U.S. parishes in 2009.*

and placed themselves under their respective “old country” Mother Churches. This gave rise to the unfortunate current situation of multiple, overlapping jurisdictions based on ethnic identity rather than on the canonical principle of a single Church entity in a given territory.

In the early 1960s the OCA – at that time it was known as the “**The Metropolia**” – entered into dialogue with the Russian Church in an attempt

American Diocese – issued a decree calling on dioceses outside the borders of Russia [by then the Soviet Union] to organize themselves independently until normal communications and relations with the Church in Russia could resume.

Shortly thereafter, at a **Council of all North American** hierarchs, clergy, and parish lay delegates, it was recognized that the Church in North America could no longer maintain administrative ties with the Church in Russia, especially since Patriarch Tikhon had been arrested (He subsequently died in 1925.)

Concurrently, various ethnic groups that had been an integral part of the diocese organized separate “jurisdictions”

to reestablish canonical ties. In 1970 canonical relations resumed, and the Metropolia was granted “autocephaly.” Not only did this give the Metropolia the right to govern itself without relying on any Church centers abroad, but it served to recognize the fact that after nearly 200 years, the Church in North America had become an indigenous Church for all North Americans, regardless of ethnic origin. At a council of hierarchs, clergy, and laity the same year, the Church adopted the name “**The Orthodox Church in America.**”

Today the OCA, in addition to counting the parishes of the former “Metropolia,” includes the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate, the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese, the Bulgarian Orthodox Diocese, and the Mexican Exarchate. Further, in the past two decades nearly 250 new parishes, almost exclusively non-ethnic in origin and employing only the English language in worship, have been established.

The Orthodox Church in America is a full member of the **Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas** (SCOBA), together with the Greek, Antiochian, Ukrainian, Carpatho-Russian, and other archdioceses and dioceses. Hierarchs and clergy of the OCA regularly concelebrate with clergy of other SCOBA jurisdictions. This is especially evident on the annual Orthodoxy Sunday celebrations on the first Sunday of Great Lent.

As a self-governing Church, the OCA has the right to elect its own Primate, or presiding hierarch, without relying on ratification from any foreign entity. His Beatitude, **Metropolitan Jonah**, the current Primate, presides at meetings of the Holy Synod of Bishops, consecrates Holy Chrism, and carries out other duties appropriate to his office.



**Metropolitan Jonah**, the ruling Archbishop of The Orthodox Church in America with scouts of our parish.

The Orthodox Church in America is fully committed to the unity of **Orthodoxy in North America**. Metropolitan Jonah is an outspoken advocate for administrative unity among the Orthodox Christians in North America according to the canonical principle of a single Church in a given geographic territory.

Orthodox Christianity in North America traces its origins to the **arrival in Kodiak, Alaska**, of eight Orthodox missionaries from the Valaamo Monastery in the northern Karelia region of Russia in 1794. The missionaries made a great impact on the native Alaskan population and were responsible for bringing many to the Orthodox Christian faith.

Today there are an estimated 2 to 3 million Orthodox Christians in more than 2,500 parishes, missions, and monasteries in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

For further information on Orthodox Christianity visit the web site of the Orthodox Church in America at [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org)

*Make our home your home!*

**HOLY TRINITY  
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
369 Green Ave., East Meadow, NY

The Rev. Martin Kraus, Rector

*For more information, visit us at:*  
[www.htocem.org](http://www.htocem.org)  
516-483-3649 | [htocem@hotmail.com](mailto:htocem@hotmail.com)

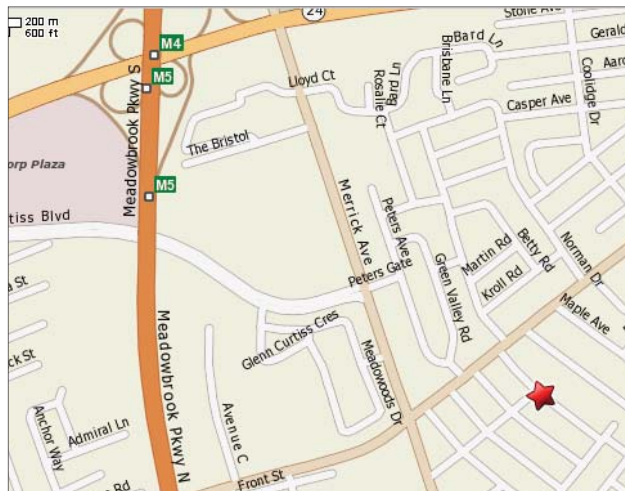
**Saturday Evening**

6:00 PM Great Vespers and Confessions.

**Sunday Morning**

9:30 AM Liturgy, Fellowship, and Education for all ages.

Please call 516-483-3649 to register as a member of the parish; to arrange Baptisms, Weddings, Memorials, Conversions, Visitations, etc.; and for additional information on Orthodox Christianity in general and our parish in particular.



# THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

## An Introduction



**Holy Trinity Orthodox Christian Church**  
East Meadow, NY  
Orthodox Church in America  
Diocese of New York & New Jersey