



The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil
(The Basilian Fathers - The Society of Saint Basil)
(of The Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church)
At Holy Innocents Orthodox Church (HOC-AJ, OCCA, AOC)

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April 16, 2002

We are Most Rev. Lee S. Mc Colloster, S.S.B., known within The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil (the Order) as Metropolitan Archbishop Paul, and Most Rev. John J. Lehman, S.S.B., known within the Order as Archbishop John, and Most Rev. John A. Corcoran, S.S.B., known within the Order as Archbishop Augustinus. Together we comprise three-fourths of the Synod of The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil, more commonly known as The Basilian Fathers, and here often referred to as the Order.

The Order is the remains of the American Orthodox Church formed under the direction and order of the Patriarch and Synod of Moscow in the early 1900's, with Metropolitan Archbishop Aftimios as head of the American Orthodox Church. The Order was formed under the direction of Metropolitan Archbishop Aftimios, to serve those who wished to worship using the Gregorian or Western (Latin/Roman) form of the Divine Liturgy. This first attempt to form an American Orthodox Church eventually failed, and the American Orthodox Church was received into the Antiochian Orthodox Church. However, the Antiochian Orthodox Church intentionally did not receive The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil, leaving the Order autocephalic or self governing, as explained by the then Archbishop Athenagoras in correspondence to Roman Catholic Cardinal McIntyre, during the year 1957.

We three firmly believe all the Jurisdictions of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church, and the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church and its related Eastern Rite Churches, must reunite, must be in communion one with each other, and with those other Churches with Apostolic Succession such as the Coptic and Armenian Churches. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them: that, they may be one, as we also are one. I in them, and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one: and the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them, as thou hast also loved me.* (John 17:21-23)

In our consideration of these and other factors, we conclude it is best for the Orthodox Church that the numerous small Orthodox Jurisdictions in North America, including our Order, cease to function independently and unite with one of the larger Jurisdictions. In our own situation, our Order was formed for the purpose of providing Gregorian Divine Liturgy within the Orthodox Church. We also realize the Western Rite has never been well received amongst most Orthodox clergy.

We have also carefully considered the differences between the Orthodox and Roman Churches. We do not find the Filioque Clause to have been proclaimed as dogma by Rome, and note it is not used by many of the Byzantine Churches in communion with Rome. We also note that the proclamation by Rome, of Papal infallibility, has been practiced in a manner of consultation with the Bishops and consideration of the tradition, history, and dogma of the Church, and that such is basically the form by-which Rome traditionally proclaimed matters as dogma after determination in true Counsel. Though many American Orthodox would disagree, we find ample support in the tradition of the Orthodox Church, for the Doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

These factors, considered in conjunction with our fervent belief the Church must reunite, and our belief

that there is no dogmatic barrier which prevents reunification of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, lead us to seek reunification with the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, on behalf of The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil, and each of us collectively and individually. We hereby transmit this heartfelt desire to officials of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church.

If members of the Order are not inclined to the Roman Catholic Church, then such members should feel free to enter another Jurisdiction, and we urge such individuals to immediately join one of the major Orthodox Jurisdictions.

We also fully realize the action we here initiate will place each of us in uncertain circumstances. We do this placing our trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, this 16th day of April, 2002 A.D.

/S/
Most Rev. Lee S. Mc Colloster, S.S.B.

/S/
Most Rev. John J. Lehman, S.S.B.

/S/
Most Rev. John A. Corcoran, S.S.B.



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