

Your Grace Bishop Gabriel, Reverend Fathers, Honored Guests, dear Friends.

It is a distinct honor to welcome and address you today on the occasion of Holy Trinity Monastery's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The trip to Jordanville is not an easy one, many of you drove long distances to get here today, and all of us are grateful that you found the time to mark this historic occasion in our lives.

I would like to take the opportunity to share with you a little background of our brotherhood, to understand the history behind this community's establishment here, in the Town of Warren, in Herkimer County.

All good things start small, and such was the foundation of Holy Trinity Monastery.

In 1928 two immigrants from Belarus and present-day Ukraine were in search of a remote parcel of land, far away from any urban centers, where they could devote themselves to a monastic lifestyle, a life of prayer and work. After a short time at St. Tikhon's monastery in South Canaan in PA, they found a 300 acre piece of land in Central New York, and made a \$25 down payment – the area reminded them of their far away homeland. The first years were devoted to provide the essential means to support the foundation of a monastic community here – Fr. Panteleimon Nizhnik had to find outside work to support this cause, which led him to find employment at The Sikorsky Aviation Corporation, which was founded by a Russian émigré, Igor Sikorsky, the inventor of the helicopter, and a friend and benefactor of Holy Trinity Monastery.

Gradually, the small monastic community began to grow, and in 1934 Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko became the first abbot of Holy Trinity Monastery. Vladyka Vitaly was originally from the Pochaev Monastery in Ukraine, where he was well known for his missionary efforts and publishing activities. After the Russian revolution of 1917, it became impossible to continue this kind of work, the print shop was destroyed by the bolsheviks, and Father Vitaly settled in the Carpathian mountains, in Ladomirova, in present day Slovakia. There he established a new print shop and started a small monastery, which became the foundation of many of Jordanville's own traditions and history.

In 1944, as the lines of the front were redrawn at the end of World War II and the arrival of Soviet tanks was imminent, the monks had to evacuate from their beloved Lodomirova, otherwise they would have faced deportation to concentration camps if not a worse fate, which so many Christians faced in the Soviet Union. Their journey took them to Germany, Switzerland, and finally to the U.S., where they were welcomed by the small community in Jordanville. The sudden influx of a large number of monks, that included publishes, printers, academics, and iconographers proved to be just what was needed for Jordanville's monastery to grow into one of the most significant holy sites and spiritual centers of Russian Orthodoxy outside of its homeland.

The print shop of St. Job of Pochaev restarted its activities immediately, and its publications have made their way to all continents since. These were distributed throughout the free world, and often smuggled into the Soviet Union where freedom of speech was but a dream. In fact, Jordanville's print shop became the largest publisher of religious print materials in Russian during the Soviet yoke, and as such, was able to contribute in significant ways to the support of the persecuted Church under Communist rule.

In 1946 the foundation was laid for Holy Trinity Cathedral and it was consecrated in 1950. The monastery was now firmly established and began to flourish. Soon more structures began to emerge – the main living quarters were erected between 1952 and 1957, and included the monastic refectory, the print shop, the monastery's offices as well as quarters for guests and visitors.

As all monastic communities, monks living at Holy Trinity Monastery are assigned obediences. One such obedience, which made Jordanville known across the globe was the icon painting studio, headed by the monastery's iconographer Fr. Cyprian. Under his guidance, several generations of young men and women learned the art of painting icons in the Byzantine style, using such materials as egg tempera and gold leaf. Fr. Cyprian and his apprentices were charged with painting the cathedral's frescos and iconostasis. However, Fr. Cyprian's work can also be found in churches all over the U.S., in Europe, and Israel, where he painted frescos for various Russian churches.

The monks of Holy Trinity soon recognized that if the Church is to flourish in this country, a vision for the future needed to be embraced. Part of that vision included

addressing the need for education, and as a result Holy Trinity Seminary was founded in 1948. A separate building took much longer to build, and the building we find ourselves in today was dedicated in 1971. Holy Trinity Seminary became the only Russian seminary outside of Russia, and its graduates have gone on to parishes on all continents. With growing needs, the Seminary had to find ways to adapt, and in 1979 this building was expanded to include a museum, archives, and more space for the library.

As a center of spiritual life, Holy Trinity Monastery became a safe haven for Orthodox Christians, who fled Communist persecution in their homeland – just as the Israelites in the Old Testament, the Russian people found themselves torn from their Sacred ground, but, here, in Central New York, they were able to find a piece of “Holy Russia.”

Responding to a quick growing number of regular pilgrims, the monastery soon remodeled an old farmhouse into a guesthouse that could accommodate the large numbers of annual visitors. Pilgrims and guests come to Jordanville from all over the world, and thousands of visitors make their way to Holy Trinity annually.

This life continued in relative harmony for more than three quarters of a century, until the monastery was threatened with the appearance of 68 wind turbines, each one taller than the Statue of Liberty. Luckily, Fred Miller at the Preservation League of New York State recognized this threat – he realized the uniqueness of this community and its history, and the importance to preserve and protect it. As a result, the monastery was on the Seven to Save List in 2008.

Soon afterwards, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation stepped in, and through the hard work of Rachel Bliven, the monastery was included on the New York State Register as a Historic Site.

This was followed by the support of Otsego 2000 and in-depth research by Robin Krawitz who prepared the nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places program.

Finally, on July 15 of this year, the director of the National Park Service announced that Holy Trinity Monastery was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

When we consider the historical significance of places such as Holy Trinity Monastery, we often focus on the historical aspect of the background of a community, or on the buildings that are threatened by age, external circumstances, or decay.

Today, in front of this audience, which concerns itself with the importance of the preservation of historical places, I would like to mention also the significance of what is housed in some of these buildings, and stress the valuable asset these materials present to us, and future generations.

As I mentioned before, a library, historical archives, and a Museum of Russian History had been established. Since Jordanville's Russian Orthodox community came to be seen as a cultural and spiritual center for Russian Orthodox faithful, they soon began donating their valuable collections to the Seminary and Monastery. As a result, our library holds thousands of unique titles, which attract researchers and historians alike. The print materials held here span four centuries. Of equal significance are archives, which present the necessary primary sources for any serious consideration of the immigrant communities and histories in this country. And of course, the museum, which houses materials of Imperial provenance, ecclesiastical items, Russian silver works, paintings, military items and other three dimensional objects.

Caring for, restoring, and saving these scholarly and cultural resources certainly plays an important role in ensuring the preservation of our common history. Very often, we think of the monastery and seminary as representative of an exclusive Russian Orthodox island, which is a reflection of pre-revolutionary Russia. While such a view certainly has its basis, this community, which was founded almost a hundred years ago, also represents the history of Eastern European immigrant communities, the history of the Town of Warren, Herkimer County, New York State, and the United States at large.

The preservation of these resources has been made possible by many individuals and foundations, including the Russian Nobility Association of America, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, and the Central Libraries Resources Council.

Over the past six months, with the generous help of the Central Library Resources Council and Fayetteville Free Library, we have been able to embark on a scanning project of a chronological collection of photographs, which provide a perfect narrative of the

history of this monastery and seminary. As a result, hundreds of images have been saved from gradual decay and disintegration. Some of these images have been prepared for you to view today as a photographic history of the early years of Holy Trinity Monastery.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you for joining us today on this joyous occasion. Our gratitude goes out to all who prepared the path for Holy Trinity Monastery to be included on the National Register of Historic Places, and it is our hope that we will continue to preserve this history for both contemporaries and future generations.

Thank you.