

Preservation League of New York State Remarks
National Register of Historic Places Certificate Ceremony
December 3, 2011

Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, Herkimer County

I am almost breathless being here today after the many years of various twists and turns that have been taken by so many of the people in this room, each playing his and her specific role and responsibility to get us to the point of this magnificent celebration.

As Fr. Luke indicated, I am Tania Werbizky, Regional Director of Technical and Grant Programs for the Preservation League of New York State. I am honored to have with me two of my colleagues, Daniel Mackay and Amanda Lewkowicz, who have been part of the process to preserve the Holy Trinity Monastery, most especially Daniel through his public policy work.

I am pleased to bring greetings from our entire Board of Directors and from our President, Jay DiLorenzo.

As many of you in the room know, the Preservation League is a statewide membership not-for-profit group. We serve in all 62 counties, and we work very hard every day to help individuals, organizations and agencies protect the places that matter to them, whether it is a hamlet, a county or the entire state. We support preservation efforts for humble places and remarkable places and certainly the Holy Trinity Monastery has been one of the most remarkable, exciting and challenging place with which we have worked. .

Since 2007, we at the Preservation League have had the honor of working closely with various stakeholders in the Mohawk Valley and Glimmerglass region. They have labored tirelessly to make the case for the protection and stewardship of one of the state's most important landmarks, the Holy Trinity Monastery. Over these four years, we have been most impressed with how diverse groups of people – some of whom do not speak the same language- have come together on behalf of this architectural and cultural treasure.

In 2008, the Preservation League placed the Holy Trinity Monastery on our annual statewide endangered properties list called "Seven to Save". We took this action not only because the property faced threats from unsympathetic industrial scale development proposed less than a mile away to the East of all directions, but also because we were certain of extraordinary significance of this place. We were convinced that with local, state and national attention and resources - the resources that could come with official designation- the Monastery, already internationally renowned as a place of teaching, pilgrimage, publication and worship, could benefit from a new link to and a deeper understanding of its importance to cultural tourism and the positive economic impacts derived from this place for the region's benefit.

Driving in today I suspect that many of you were struck as was I by the setting. Located on a high plain above of the Mohawk Valley and just north of

US Route 20, the Monastery campus and its setting evoke the sense of place of pre-Communist Russia. This is not a coincidence as its founders successfully fled Soviet persecution and made their way to Upstate New York by 1930 to establish a home base in a democratic society. This most American of stories, émigrés putting down roots in a free land while continuing their cultural traditions, its seen and felt with particular power and clarity at the Holy Trinity Monastery. This is in fact the story of my grandparents and parents. This place holds a special feeling for me.

In 2009 a Preserve New York grant from the Preservation League was awarded to Otsego 2000 that helped jump-start the movement to do all of the necessary research, writing, photography, etc. to make the listing in the State and National Registers possible. That is why we are gathered here today. Now, thanks to the listing – which will be described by our next speaker- we have a fuller appreciation the hundreds of acres that define the property, its traditional Byzantine style cathedral, chapels, cemeteries, and working agricultural lands and scenic landscapes and vistas, as well as the benefits that flow with the landmark designation.

This achievement would not have been possible without the very people here today and a few who could not attend. We at the Preservation League are gratified and humbled to be in such good company.

It is my pleasure to turn the program over to Kathleen LaFrank of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, who will make the actual certificate presentation to Fr. Luke. Thank you.