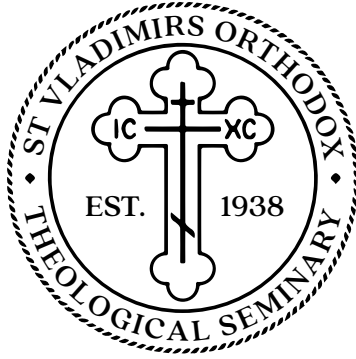




ST. VLADIMIR'S



ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



2026



COMMENCEMENT

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026



2:30 PM





Commencement Exercises

During the Procession: The Troparion of Pascha

Opening of the Commencement Exercises

THE MOST BLESSED TIKHON, Archbishop of Washington,
Metropolitan of All America and Canada, Orthodox Church
in America, President of St. Vladimir's Seminary

Welcoming Remarks

DR. IONUȚ-ALEXANDRU TUDORIE, Dean

Salutatory Address

THE REV. JOHN REAVIS

Commencement Address

CHARLES AJALAT, J.D., Hon. J.C.D.

Conferral of Degrees on the Graduates of the Class of 2026

DR. IONUȚ-ALEXANDRU TUDORIE, Dean

Conferral of the St. Macrina Award

SUBDEACON EMIL PRISQUILAS PETER, President of the
Student Council

Valedictory Address

THE REV. NATHAN JEKEL

*Please silence all mobile phones
and other electronic devices.*

Thank you.



Hymn to the Theotokos—“It is truly meet...” Valaam Chant,
arr. B. Sheehan

Koinonikon of Pascha—“Receive the Body...” by E. Azeev
St. Vladimir’s Seminary Chorale,
directed by Zachariah Mandell

Closing Remarks

THE MOST BLESSED TIKHON, Archbishop of Washington,
Metropolitan of All America and Canada, Orthodox Church
in America, President of St. Vladimir’s Seminary

Closing Prayer: “Shine, Shine, O New Jerusalem”

Recessional: The Troparion of Pascha

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian

The valedictorian, who delivers the valediction, or parting words, at commencement, is normally the student who has earned the highest grade point average, with consideration also being given to performance in all other aspects of seminary life.

The salutatorian, who delivers the salutation, or greeting, at commencement, is normally the student who has earned the second-highest grade point average, with consideration also being given to performance in all other aspects of seminary life.

Commencement speakers must have completed at least forty-eight credits at St. Vladimir’s Seminary as full-time degree candidates. Neither the valedictorian nor the salutatorian is required to write a thesis.

A reception follows.

*The SVS Press Bookstore will remain open
after the Commencement Exercises.
Directions are posted on campus.*



St. Macrina Award for Excellence in Teaching

Established in 2013, the Saint Macrina Award is an honor given each year to a professor elected by the student body to recognize his or her effort and excellence in teaching.

Past Recipients:

- 2013: The Very Rev. Dr. Alexander Rentel
- 2014: Dr. Paul Meyendorff
- 2015: The Rev. Dr. George L. Parsenios
- 2016: Hierodeacon Herman (Majkrzak)
- 2017: The Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield
- 2018: Robin Freeman
- 2019: The Rev. Dr. Varghese M. Daniel
- 2021: The Rev. Dr. Bogdan Bucur
- 2022: Dr. John Barnet
- 2023: The Rev. Dn. Dr. Vitaly Permiakov
- 2024: Dr. Ionuț-Alexandru Tudorie
- 2025: Dr. Michael Legaspi

Commencement Speaker



CHARLES AJALAT, J.D., Hon. J.C.D., is among the most prominent Orthodox Christian lay leaders and philanthropists in North America. A former trustee of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Dr. Ajalat also served as the Chancellor of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. He is the founder of multiple Orthodox organizations and initiatives, including International Orthodox Christian Charities; the Ligonier First Conference of all North American Orthodox Bishops; the transition to the multi-jurisdictional Orthodox Christian Mission

Center; and the Orthodox Vision Foundation, one of the nation's largest church foundations, which he co-founded with his wife Marilee. He served as Consultant to the Russian Parliament on Laws of Church and State and as a speaker in their Conference on Freedom of Religion in the Modern World, Vice-Moderator of the Secretariat for the World Council of Churches Central Committee, and as a member of the Orthodox Study Bible Oversight Committee.

An attorney by background, Dr. Ajalat graduated with a B.A. from Harvard magna cum laude, and received his J.D. from the law school at the University of California at Berkeley. He also holds an honorary doctorate in Canon Law granted from St. Vladimir's Seminary. Dr. Ajalat was given the honor of being a law clerk to Chief Justice Donald Wright of the California Supreme Court and has represented a sitting President of the United States and many of the world's largest corporations. He has been involved in a number of historic cases in the Courts including the U.S. Supreme Court. Dr. Ajalat was a professor at USC Business and Law Schools for many years in addition to practicing in a law firm he formed. He was also a visiting lecturer at the law schools of Harvard, Berkely, Stanford, and UCLA.

He has received numerous secular and church honors, including the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and the highest honor of both the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese and the Orthodox Church in America.

Over the years Charles, his wife Marilee, and their children and grandchildren have raised and donated significant sums and helpful ideas to Orthodox causes. Their generosity has extended to St. Vladimir's Seminary, where they supported initiatives including the initial Seminary capital campaign up to current efforts to aid the Seminary in the challenges it faces with respect to Church growth. Charles and Marilee's son Richard is an alumnus of the school ('13) and also served on the Board of Trustees as the President of the Alumni Association. Among other endeavors, he financially initiated the successful audio-book program for St. Vladimir's Seminary (SVS) Press.

The Class of 2026

Candidates for the Master of Divinity Degree

THE REV. NICHOLAS AULTMAN

MR. CHARLES CASSIS

MR. BEN GALITO (*magna cum laude*)

*When Does My Suffering Become Compassion for My Neighbor?
Creation, Job, and Wisdom*

DR. MICHAEL LEGASPI, advisor

THE REV. JARROD HUFFMAN (*summa cum laude*)

*Happily Never After: Understanding Orthodox Christian
Deconversion Narrative*

THE VERY REV. DR. SERGIUS HALVORSEN, advisor

SUBDEACON MATHEW JACOB

THE REV. NATHAN JEKEL (*valedictorian of the class of 2026;
commendation for service to the community*)

MR. ALEXEI LISTVINSKY (*summa cum laude; commendation
for service to the community*)

*And Visit This Vine: The Hierarchical Liturgy and the Theology
of the Episcopacy*

THE VERY REV. DR. ALEXANDER RENTEL, advisor

THE REV. SERGIO LÓPEZ

THE REV. DN. ARIN PARSANIAN (*commendation for service to
the community*)

SUBDEACON EMIL PRISQUILAS PETER (*magna cum laude;
commendation for service to the community*)

Divine Liturgy: Lex Vivendi

THE RIGHT REV. DR. VASILY (PERMIAKOV), advisor

THE REV. JOHN REAVIS (*salutatorian of the class of 2026; summa
cum laude; commendation for thesis; commendation for service
to the community*)

*"God after God": Justice, Asceticism, and Theosis in
Patristic Thought*

THE VERY REV. DR. BOGDAN G. BUCUR, advisor

THE REV. DN. JOHN (CALEB) REXFORD (*commendation for
service to the community*)

SUBDEACON AKIN SUNNY

THE REV. DANIEL WERNER

Candidate for the Master of Arts Degree

MOTHER MELANIA MIKHAIEL

Candidates for the Master of Theology Degree

MRS. NAOMI BIALSKY, NÉE DEHAAN (*commendation for thesis*)

*“This is the Most Blessed Sabbath!” Meeting God in the Tomb
on Holy Saturday*

DR. PETER BOUTENEFF, advisor

MR. MIHAIL GOLIC (*commendation for thesis*)

Degree awarded December 2025

*Logos and the Theology of Virtue: Godmanhood and the
Gnoseological Principles in the Thought of Justin Popović*

THE VERY REV. DR. BOGDAN G. BUCUR, advisor

THE REV. DR. DANIEL YORK

Mary in Israel’s Scriptures

DR. MICHAEL LEGASPI, advisor

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Dean

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THE VERY REV. DR. J. SERGIUS HALVORSEN

THE VERY REV. DR. ALEXANDER RENTEL

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of the Orthodox Church in America

Appointed Alumni Association Representative

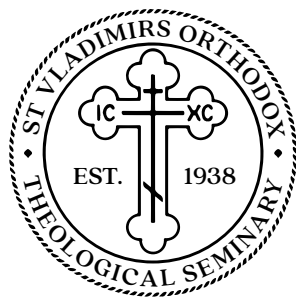
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