

UA1980.34

## Catholic Church Extension Society

### Subgroup 2: Administration

### Series 3: Russian Apostolate, St. Procopius Abbey

### Lisle, IL, Records

**Dates:** 1917-1959 (bulk 1933-1944)

**Creator:** Catholic Church Extension Society (1906-)

**Extent:** 2 linear feet

**Level of description:** folder

**Processor & date:** Chris Barbuschak, November 2011

### Administration Information

**Restrictions:** none

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**Citation:** Loyola University Chicago. Archives and Special Collections. Catholic Church Extension Society, Subgroup 2: Administration, Series 3: Russian Apostolate, St. Procopius Abbey Lisle, IL, Records Box #, Folder #.

**Provenance:** The Catholic Church Extension Society Records were gifted to Loyola University Chicago on June 13, 1967 by Vice President and General Secretary Rev. Joseph A. Cusack.

**Separations:** None

**See Also:** Catholic Church Extension Society Records

### Administrative History

From the beginning of his Pontificate in 1922, Pope Pius XI called for action on behalf of the unfortunate peoples of Russia. In response, His Holiness established the Pontifical Commission for Russia in hopes of studying and treating more thoroughly the spiritual welfare of the Russian people. For some time, the Pope desired to initiate an apostolate for the Russian people in the United States. He commissioned the Most Reverend Bishop Francis-Peter Bucys of Rome to travel to the United States and study the situation of the Russian immigrants and commence a work of spiritual assistance on their behalf.

In 1934, the Pope and Apostolic Delegation of the United States agreed that a permanent Russian Apostolate should be formed. Its goal called for the conversion of the Russian Orthodox people to Roman Catholicism. The Board of Catholic Missions and the Catholic Church Extension Society were recruited to assist the new Apostolate. A committee was established to further the Apostolate consisting of the following members: George Cardinal Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago; Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York; Most Reverend Michael J. Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore; Most Reverend John J. Cantwell, Bishop of Los Angeles and San Diego; Most Reverend William O'Brien, President of the Catholic Church Extension Society, and the Right Reverend Valentine Kohlbeck, Abbot of St. Procopius Abbey. According to Bishop

William O'Brien, the Russian Apostolate became "simply a body of an Archbishop, a Bishop and an Abbot whose province it is to look into the status of clergymen who claim they are authorized priests of the Roman Catholic Church."

The Russian Commission headquarters was assigned to St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois. The abbey was originally founded in 1885 by the Benedictines. The Catholic Russian Mission was left under the direction of each Bishop in his particular diocese and assisted by this committee who met at St. Procopius Abbey. The Very Reverend Procopius C. Neuzil, was appointed as the Secretariate of the Committee. As secretary to the Russian Apostolate in the United States, he was charged with writing up the Russian Catechism and distributing pamphlets and books. After a long association with St. Procopius Abbey, he was elected abbot on July 5, 1937 receiving a papal blessing from Archbishop Amleto Cicognani, the apostolic delegate to the United States. Neuzil had previously founded St. Procopius College, which later became Benedictine Illinois College, and then Benedictine University.

The Most Reverend Vladimir V. Alexandrof was immediately considered to help conduct the Missionary work for the Apostolate. Originally, Alexandrof was an archbishop for the Russian Orthodox Church of America, in which he served for over 37 years. On January 28, 1933 Alexandrof, who was then the chief of the Archdiocese of Pacific Coast and Alaska, was visited by Bishop Bucys of Rome. Bucys recruited Alexandrof to join the Catholic Church because it required his services to minister to his fellow Russians. Bucys, acting entirely on his own authority, promised to continue his monthly salary for the remainder Alexandrof's life, the continuance of his hierarchal title, a house and chapel in New York, and other promises that he never fulfilled.

On July 4, 1933, Alexandrof entered the Catholic Church. After suffering many health problems, Alexandrof bitterly and loudly caused problems for several years within the Church petitioning even the Pope to have his salary and other promises fulfilled. Fearing that irreparable harm would hurt the work of the Russian Apostolate and possible public scandal, Apostolic Delegate Amleto Cicognani scrapped funds together to appease Alexandrof. Alexandrof scoffed at the idea of living at St. Procopius Abbey and viewed it as an insult to his character. He never was employed in a work of importance for the Russian mission and died in 1945, shortly after his financial case was concluded.

### **Scope and Content**

The Russian Apostolate St. Procopius Abbey Lisle, IL, Records consists of 2 linear feet spanning the years 1917-1959 (bulk 1933-1944). The collection consists of correspondence, telegrams, reports, business card, meeting minutes, photos, newsletters, magazine, news articles, bank statements, checking account book, and notes. The main subjects are Catholic Church Extension Society, Russian Apostolate, and Vladimir V. Alexandrof. The collection is organized alphabetically.

### **Series**

#### **Series 1: Historical, 1940-1943, Box 1**

This series consists of a business card; reports; statistics; meeting minutes; photos; and newsletters. Subjects include Vladimir V. Alexandrof, Russian Apostolate, and St. Andrew's Russian Catholic Church in Los Angeles.

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1933-1959, Boxes 1-2**

This series includes letters and telegrams. Subjects include the Vladimir V. Alexandrof case, founding of the Russian Apostolate, and finances. Correspondents include Vladimir V. Alexandrof, Bishop William O'Brien, Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Very Rev. John F. Fenlon, and the Very Rev. Procopius C. Neuzil among others.

**Series 3: Financial, 1934-1949, Boxes 3-4**

This series includes a checking account book; bank statements; balances; and notes. Subjects include financial information of the Russian Apostolate.

**Series 4: Publications, 1917-1957, Box 3**

This series includes news articles; a magazine; and a pamphlet. Subjects include articles on the Russian Apostolate's founding, Vladimir V. Alexandrof, Catholic Church Extension Society, and a Unitas magazine.

**Series 5: Photographs, 1934-1942, Box 3**

This series consists of photographs depicting Vladimir V. Alexandrof and Rev. Peter Bucys.

**Subjects:**

Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir V.  
Bucys, Rev. Peter  
Catholic Church Extension Society  
Cicognani, Cardinal Amleto Giovanni  
Crummey, Bishop James Christian  
Curley, Archbishop Michael J.  
Fenlon, Very Rev. J.F.  
Furay, John B.  
Fumasoni-Bionidi, Cardinal Pietro  
Lardner, Very Rev. John J.  
Neuzil, Most Rev. Procopius C.  
O'Brien, Bishop William David  
Ondrak, Rt. Rev. Ambrose L.  
Pope Pius XI  
Prince George of Russia  
Ryder, Rev. John H.  
St. Andrews Russian Catholic Church  
Stritch, Cardinal Samuel  
St. John, Rev. R.R.  
Tisserand, Cardinal Eugene

**Accession No.: UA1980.34**

**Creator: Catholic Church Extension Society (1906-)**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
<i>Series 1: Historical, 1940-1943</i>			
1	1	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir letter head and business card`	N.D.
1	2	Investigating Committee Report on V. Alexandrof	N.D.
1	3	Number of Orthodox Parishes in Latin Dioceses	N.D.
1	4	Russian Apostolate Minutes	1942-1943
1	5	St. Andrews Russian Catholic Church - Los Angeles, California	1940-1942
<i>Series 2: Correspondence, 1933-1959</i>			
1	6	Abrantovitch, Mons. F.	1934
1	7	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir	1933-1941
1	8	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir concerning allowances	1940-1944
1	9	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir correspondence with Archbishop Cicoganani	1941-1943
1	10	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir correspondence with Bishop William O'Brien	1940-1941
1	11	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir - health condition doctor correspondence	1938,1941
1	12	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir - monthly allowance settlement	1944
1	13	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir - telegrams	1941
1	14	Alexandrof, Most Rev. Vladimir to Samuel A. Stritch	1942
1	15	Bucys, Bishop Peter - on Alexandrof case	1933
1	16	Cicognani, Amleto Giovanni - Apostolic Delegate Archbishop	1934-1944
1	17	Cicognani, Amleto Giovanni - on Alexandrof case with Bishop O'Brien	1934-1944
1	18	Crummey, Bishop James Christian	1933-1934
1	19	Curley, Rev. Michael J. - Archbishop of Baltimore on Alexandrof case	1934
1	20	Fenlon, Very Rev. John F. - Alexandrof case	1934-1939
1	21	Fenlon, Very Rev. John F. on Alexandrof checks	1937-1942
2	1	Fumasoni-Biondi, Cardinal Peter to Alexandrof	1933
2	2	Furay, S.J., John B. - Russian Catechism	1935
2	3	Lardner, Very Rev. John J. on Alexandrof payments	1935-1939, 1944
2	4	Mattern, S.J., Emile - on Father Neuzil's book	1935
2	5	Nakhatovitsch, Dmitri I.	1934
2	6	Neuzil, Very Rev. Procopius	1933-1945

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2	7	Neuzil, Very Rev. Procopius	1934
2	8	Neuzil, Very Rev. Procopius - on Alexandrof case	1934-1936
2	9	O'Brien, William D.	1934
2	10	O'Brien, William D. - Cuneo Press Russian book	1942-1943
2	11	Ondrak, Rev. Ambrose - Unionisitic Congress at St. Procopius Abbey	1956-1959
2	12	Prince George of Russia to His Holiness Pope Pius XI	1937
2	13	Russian Apostolate account correspondence	1934
2	14	Ryder, S.J., Rev. John H. on St. Andrews Catholic Russian Church	1942
2	15	Stafford, Mons. J.G. on Alexandrof	1938
2	16	Stritch, Archbishop Samuel A.	1942-1943
2	17	Tisserand, Cardinal Eugene	1944
 <b><i>Series 3: Financial, 1934-1949</i></b>			
2	18	Russian Apostolate - Continental Illinois National Bank Statements	1935-1939
2	19	Russian Apostolate - Continental Illinois National Bank Statements	1941-1949
2	20	The Russian Apostolate Funds and Balances	1934-1945
3		Russian Apostolate Check Book	1934-1949
 <b><i>Series 4: Publications, 1917-1957</i></b>			
2	21	"Local Priest New Russian Archbishop" Seattle-Post Intelligencer article on Alexandrof	August 3, 1924
2	22	O'Brien, William "Church Extension Grows Up"	1942
2	23	"Pontiff Permits Byzantine Rite in New World Apostolate" NY World Telegram	August 26, 1933
2	24	"Russian Church Receives Americans S.F. Priest Preaches in Petrograd" Alexandrof news article	July 2, 1917
2	25	<u>Unitas</u> Autumn 1957 Vol IX No. 3	1957
 <b><i>Series 5: Photographs, 1934-1942</i></b>			
2	26	Bucys, Rev. Peter - Roman Bishop	1934
2	27	Vladimir V. Alexandrof photo	April 3, 1941
2	28	Vladimir V. Alexandrof photo	September 16, 1942