

## Archpriest David Brum Autobiography

I was born in Fresno, California, on November 16, 1954, the oldest of three children born to Orville Antonio and Marjory Brum. My family, like the majority of Portuguese-American families in California, gained its livelihood in agriculture. I was raised on a dairy farm in Riverdale, California, a small town of approximately 2,000 people located in the San Joaquin Valley. The life of family farming, now almost disappeared because of the development of the agricultural industry, was a way of life that enabled me to learn the value of hard work as well as faith in God, dependence upon family, and the importance of community.



I attended the local elementary school and graduated from Riverdale High School in 1973. The community in which I was raised was predominantly comprised of Portuguese-American families with many interconnected relationships, most of which were familial ties. The focal point of community life was the local parish church. While my immediate family was not particularly devout, we were all involved in church activities and in community service on various levels. From the age of seven, I served as an altar server and attended the twice-weekly catechism classes that were taught by my mother, aunts, and family friends.

Because of this church involvement as well as my family's tradition of community service, from an early age I felt attracted to church life and believed that I was being called to serve God as a priest. This attraction to church life and the thought of a vocation to the Priesthood was nurtured by members of my family, our local parish priest, and, in some cases, even by my peers. Because I felt called to serve the Lord, possibly as a priest, after high school I enrolled at Saint Patrick's College Seminary, Mountain View, California, with the prayer that my studies and the spiritual life that would be fostered within the college seminary would help me further discern the life to which God was calling me.

It was as part of my history studies, during my freshman year, that I first studied Russian history and also first began to learn about the Orthodox Church. Seeking to learn about Orthodoxy on a personal level, I sought out and began to frequently attend Divine Services at Saint Nicholas Church, Saratoga, California, at that time under the rectorate of Mitered Archpriest George Benigsen. When I first visited Saint Nicholas Church, I did so with some trepidation, but Father George welcomed me and encouraged me to explore Orthodoxy further. He graciously suggested various readings that would deepen my understanding of the Orthodox Faith. These suggested readings were primarily in Church History and the Lives of the Saints. I still treasure the wall Cross which Father George blessed for me.

I also became familiar with Orthodoxy through attendance at other Orthodox churches in the San Francisco Bay area, including Holy Trinity Cathedral and Holy Virgin Cathedral (ROCOR) in San Francisco. I subscribed to and purchased as many English language Orthodox publications

as I could find, including *The Orthodox Church* newspaper. However, in the early 1970's not much was available in English. I also began to read the Church Fathers and tried to integrate what I was learning of Orthodoxy into my regular courses of study.

In 1977, I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities from Saint Patrick's College Seminary, with history, philosophy, and English literature being my areas of specialized concentration. At that time I decided to continue my theological studies and the path to the Priesthood by entering Saint Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, in the fall of 1977.

The priestly formation program at seminary was in flux during the four years I was enrolled as a seminarian. These were still times of change and instability. Great emphasis was placed upon pastoral theology, although we also had the required courses in other areas of theology. Nonetheless, I believe my theological preparation was bolstered by the outside reading that I undertook personally because of my exposure to the Orthodox Church, as well as by my continued study of Church History.

I completed the priestly formation program at Saint Patrick's Seminary and the academic work for a Masters in Divinity in 1981, and was ordained to the Roman Catholic Priesthood on September 19<sup>th</sup> of that same year. I had been ordained to the Diaconate in November 1980. My first parish assignment was only fifteen miles from the town in which I had grown up. Four years later, I was assigned as rector of a parish even nearer my hometown that, while united administratively, was ethnically divided. The charge given me by the bishop at that time was to work to restore peace and unity to the community.

During my college years, looking ahead to possible ordination to the Priesthood, I had known that, if I were eventually ordained, I would probably be called upon to minister to the Portuguese-speaking community in California. Although English was the language spoken at home, having grown up in a largely Portuguese community enabled me to speak Portuguese, admittedly poorly. Therefore, I furthered my knowledge of the language by participating in two consecutive intensive Portuguese language summer programs at the University of California, Santa Barbara. This gave me greater ability to converse in Portuguese as well as the confidence to preach and speak publicly. During the fifteen years I was a Roman Catholic priest, I was often called upon to preach at special ethnic celebrations throughout the state and also served for seven years as state chaplain of a Portuguese fraternal organization which provides academic scholarships to college students as one of its principal works.

Since the Roman Church permits a priest to preside at more than one Eucharistic celebration on Sundays in cases of pastoral necessity, it was not unusual for me to frequently celebrate weekly in three languages: English, Spanish, and Portuguese. The first parish in which I served as pastor was a tri-lingual parish. I believe this helped me come to better understand the nuances, both the benefits and the challenges, that exist when various ethnic communities are able to come together and form one larger overall community.

I can only describe my early years as a priest as both challenging and blessed. These years were challenging in the sense that I felt there was still so much to learn but didn't always feel I was being given good counsel or solid mentoring; they were blessed in the sense that I was allowed

to enter people's lives and share with them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That being said, I constantly felt a tension within myself. I knew that something was amiss in the Roman Church and I felt ill at ease, particularly in regard to the role of the Bishop of Rome. My study of the Fathers and the teachings of the Orthodox Church caused me to question what I had been taught growing up and how I had been instructed during my theological studies. This was during the years that Pope John Paul II was at his highest level of popularity. At that time it was entirely unacceptable to question his role. However, at the time I was afraid to explore the root cause of these tensions within myself, chiefly, I think, because I knew where that exploration would lead and because at that time I didn't feel I was prepared to take the step and leave the Catholic Church.

Having been raised in the Portuguese-American community, knowing that my family and relatives were Roman Catholics and would have a hard time accepting me leaving the Catholic Church (even those who weren't particularly attentive in religious practice identify themselves as such), and having been asked to serve the Portuguese-speaking community specifically because of my language skills, I found it difficult to come to a decision as to how I could leave the Roman Catholic Church, at that time the center of all my relationships, and enter the Orthodox Church.

Even though my questions and doubts regarding Roman Catholicism increased and my commitment to the Roman Church was growing weaker, I continued serving in various parish assignments, as diocesan Director of Vocations, as editor of the Portuguese-language page of the diocesan newspaper, and in various other roles. In 1992, the diocesan bishop asked me to pursue further studies and, in 1995, I completed the academic work and received a degree in canon law (JCL) from the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. My relationship with Orthodoxy continued while engaged in those studies; I attempted to do my assigned research within the context of Orthodox Church councils. During my time in Washington, I also occasionally attended Divine Services at Saint Nicholas Cathedral.

It can be said that canon law is ecclesiology written in juridical terms. The Church's teaching and self-understanding is expressed in the way it governs itself. And the Roman Catholic Church's ecclesiology is firmly expressed in its canon law, e.g., its canon law codifies the Roman belief that the Bishop of Rome is the universal shepherd who governs each part of the church, in all its aspects and institutions, even above and beyond the authority of the local diocesan bishop. I knew this was not part of the Tradition received from the Apostles and their successors. I knew that this was an historical development within the Roman Church and that it is not faithful to Church Tradition. And so, in a sense, it was my study of canon law that impelled me to respond to the call to the Orthodox Faith that I had felt more than twenty years before. I am almost hesitant to admit that it was my study of canon law, so often and by so many considered to be a necessary evil within the Church, that really gave me the impetus and the conviction to follow what I had known was right for so many years.

After I completed my course of studies in canon law, I returned to the diocese and was assigned to the diocesan tribunal as well as to a small mission parish located in a rural setting. At this time, now having to defend and enforce the canons of the Roman Catholic Church, my feelings and perceptions about Catholicism, based upon years of personal experience and re-enforced

through informal and formal study were confirmed. And my deepening understanding of the Orthodox Faith and my growing love and appreciation for the Orthodox Church were increasingly confirmed and strengthened.

Throughout my years of priestly service in the Roman Catholic Church, my interest in Orthodoxy never waned, and I was increasingly convinced that Orthodox Church is the Apostolic Church and that the fullness of the Gospel is proclaimed only by the Orthodox Church. Finally, not knowing where my decision would lead me, now willing to make whatever sacrifices would be necessary, and after much prayer, I decided to petition to be received into The Orthodox Church in America. And I have never looked back.

When I informed my parents that I was going to be received into the Orthodox Church, I recall that my mother told, “We thought you would have done this several years ago.” She also observed that, for the most part, for many years, my religious “art” was made up of icons; the church music I listened to was Orthodox liturgical music; and my spirituality and points of religious reference were increasingly Eastern Christian. I was pleasantly surprised that my immediate family was so supportive and understanding.

Throughout my years of study of Orthodoxy, I had read the history of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in North America, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and The Orthodox Church in America. I had little exposure to the Greek Archdiocese, but I had attended many Divine Services at Holy Virgin Cathedral, the ROCOR Cathedral on Geary Street in San Francisco. And throughout the years I attended the seminary, on many occasions, before he was canonized, I had prayed at the relics of Archbishop JOHN of Shanghai and San Francisco. However, once I had made the decision to seek entrance into the Orthodox Church, I was aware of that there was still a choice to be made concerning which Church or “jurisdiction” I would approach. As a part of this phase of discernment, I concluded that it was within The Orthodox Church in America that I observed the missionary spirit that I had read about in the lives of Saint Herman, Saint Tikhon, and Saint Innocent. The commitment to this land and its people greatly inspired me and attracted me to the OCA. While I now understand that others also have missionary work as a priority and seek to bring the fullness of Orthodoxy to this continent, it was the history and mission of the OCA that was the deciding factor in my request to be received into the ranks of its clergy.

I was vested as an Orthodox priest by Bishop TIKHON of San Francisco and the West, at the Monastery of Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco, on the Saturday of the Praises of the Theotokos, 1997. Upon being received, I had anticipated attending one of our Church’s seminaries. I was initially told that this would possibly be for a semester or two. However, it was decided that, after being vested, I would be assigned to a parish in order to learn to serve the Divine Services. Therefore, I served briefly at Saint Nicholas Church, Saratoga. This was by Divine Providence, I believe, for Saint Nicholas Church was the church in which I had first come to know and experience Orthodoxy. One might say that my initial call to Orthodoxy took place within that church, some twenty-four years earlier. After learning the basics of serving the Divine Services in Saratoga, I was assigned to Saint Paul the Apostle Church, Las Vegas, Nevada, in July, 1997. In August, 1998, I was transferred to the omophorion of His Eminence Archbishop PETER, and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey, where I was assigned as

Rector of Saint Gregory Palamas Mission, Flemington, New Jersey. During my time at Saint Gregory's, I gained a new appreciation for the hard work and special challenges faced by mission priests. Being new to the Diocese and to New Jersey, it was during this time that I also came to better appreciate the supportive role of clergy brotherhoods.

In 2000, I was appointed as Secretary to Metropolitan THEODOSIUS. I must admit that when I was first approached about this appointment, it came as a surprise to me. The years I served in this position were particularly challenging, as during that period Metropolitan THEODOSIUS was increasingly absent from his office. It was during this time that he also requested and received from the Holy Synod a medical leave-of-absence that lasted for a significant period of time. Although I had hoped to return to parish ministry at the time of Metropolitan THEODOSIUS' retirement, I was reappointed Secretary to the Metropolitan by Metropolitan HERMAN after his election as Metropolitan of All America and Canada in July 2002. During my service as Secretary to the Metropolitan, in addition to working in the Metropolitan's Office and fulfilling those duties, I was assigned various tasks relating to preparations required for meetings of the Holy Synod. I also served on several church committees and commissions, including the Canons and Statute Commission, the Legal Advisory Board, and the Canonization Commission. One of my great joys during my years of service in Syosset was having the opportunity to meet and interact not only with our hierarchs, but also with many priests, deacons, and faithful throughout our Church. I was also blessed to accompany several of our hierarchs on various trips to represent the Orthodox Church in America at special events in the lives of our Sister Churches. This gave me a firsthand experience and a greater understanding and appreciation of the catholicity of the Orthodox Church. I will always be grateful for those opportunities.

By early 2005, serving at the Syosset Chancery was becoming increasingly challenging and spiritually difficult for me. The reasons for this are well known. Having had such positive experiences in parish life, I began to long once again for parish ministry, for contact with people outside the arena of church administration. Therefore, in December 2005, I requested and received a verbal blessing to seek another assignment in order to return to parish ministry. Because of my western roots, I desired an assignment in the Diocese of the West and approached Bishop TIKHON who had indicated that he was willing to receive me back under his omophorion. In July 2006, I was appointed rector of Saints Peter and Paul Church, Phoenix, Arizona. Return to parish life has been a wonderful experience and, by God's Mercy, Saints Peter and Paul Church has experienced growth and continues to grow. Also upon my return to the Diocese of the West, I was elected to the Diocesan Council in October 2006. While I hadn't expected a return to any form of church administration so soon, my membership on the diocesan council has enabled me to experience once again the cooperation, shared commitment, and good will that exist between a diocesan hierarch, his clergy, and faithful on the diocesan level.

**Archpriest David Brum**  
Saints Peter and Paul Church  
1614 East Monte Vista Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85006

## **Curriculum Vitae**

### **Education**

1995 Licentiate in Canon Law  
Catholic University of America, Washington, DC

*Dissertation: The Participation of the Lay Christian Faithful in Canonically Established Consultative Bodies*

1981 Master in Divinity  
Saint Patrick Seminary, Menlo Park, CA

1980 Certificate in Pastoral Counseling  
Saint Patrick Seminary, Menlo Park, CA

1977 Bachelor in Humanities / Philosophy  
Saint Patrick College, Mountain View, CA

1973 High School Diploma  
Riverdale High School, Riverdale, CA

### **Language Proficiency**

Spanish and Portuguese	written/spoken
Italian	written

### **Pastoral Assignments in The Orthodox Church in America**

2007- present	Coordinator, Audit Committee, Diocese of the West
2006- present	Member, Diocesan Council, Diocese of the West
2006- present	Rector, Sts Peter and Paul Church, Phoenix, AZ
2000-2006	Secretary to the Metropolitan
1998-2000	Rector, St Gregory Palamas Mission, Flemington, NJ
1997-1998	Assigned Priest, St Paul Church, Las Vegas, NV
1997	Attached Priest, St Nicholas Church, Saratoga, CA

### **Additional Areas of Service**

2005	Preconciliar Commission, 14 <sup>th</sup> All American Council
2003- present	Canonization Commission, The Orthodox Church in America
2003-2006	Statute Revision Committee, The Orthodox Church in America
2002	Preconciliar Commission, 13 <sup>th</sup> All American Council

2001-2006 Recording Secretary, Board of Theological Education  
 2001-2006 Canonical Commission, The Orthodox Church in America  
 2001-2006 Legal Advisory Board, The Orthodox Church in America  
 2001 Staff Assistant, SCOBA National Meeting of Hierarchs, Washington, DC

**Pastoral Assignments and Experience prior to being received into the Orthodox Church:**

1995-1997 Administrator, St Jude Parish, Easton, CA  
 1995-1997 Adjutant Judicial Vicar, Director of the Tribunal  
 1995-1997 Retreat Director, "Engaged Encounter" Retreats  
 1993-1997 Member, Canon Law Society of America  
 1993-1995 Canon Law studies, Catholic University of America  
 1991-1993 Chairman, Catholic Social Services, Merced, CA  
 1991-1993 President, Merced Catholic High School Foundation  
 1991-1993 Pastor/President, Our Lady of Mercy School, Merced, CA  
 1991-1993 Pastor, Our Lady of Mercy/St Patrick, Merced, CA  
 1990-1991 Director, Diocesan House of Formation  
 1989-1991 Directed Retreats for high school students, with emphasis on vocations to marriage, priesthood, and religious life  
 1989-1997 State Chaplain, IDES. (Portuguese Fraternal Society)  
 1989-1991 Regional Coordinator, NCDVD, California & Nevada  
 1989-1991 Vocations Director  
 1986-1989 Pastor, Our Lady of Fatima Church, Laton, CA  
 1984-1997 Member, Diocesan College of Consultors  
 1984-1997 Member/Secretary, Diocesan Presbyteral Council  
 1982-1997 Preacher/Presider at Portuguese religious feasts in California  
 1982-1991 Editor, "Pagina Portuguesa," Central California Register  
 1982-1989 Priest Director, "Evenings for the Engaged"  
 1981-1989 Youth Ministry Coordinator in three parishes  
 1982-1989 Board Member, American Cancer Society of Kings County  
 1982-1986 Associate Pastor, St Brigid Church, Hanford, CA  
 1981-1982 Associate Pastor, Saint Aloysius Church, Tulare, CA

**Personal Information**

Born: November 16, 1954 Fresno, California  
 Baptized: December 7, 1954 St Ann Catholic Church Riverdale, CA  
 Ordained Deacon November 8, 1980 St Ann Catholic Church Riverdale, CA  
 Ordained Priest September 19, 1981 St Aloysius Church Tulare, CA  
 Received into the Orthodox Church and Vested as Orthodox Priest  
 April 12, 1997 St Eugene Chapel Point Reyes, CA