

Monastic Tonsure

ON GREAT and Holy Friday, Novice John, 21, the son of Father Yakov and Presbytera Agnieszka Ferens, who serve our Exarchate parish of St. Seraphim of Sarov and St. John Kronstadt in San Diego, California, was tonsured a Rasophore monk at the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Etna, California, by its Abbot, Archimandrite Akakios. (*See below.*)

He was given the name of the great ninth-century Patriarch of Constantinople, St. Photios the Great, in honor of his “dadyo Vladika” (Spiritual Grandfather and Master), Bishop Photii of Triaditza, Chief Hierarchy of our Sister Old Calendar Orthodox Church of Bulgaria.

Father Photios, whose family emigrated from Eastern Europe to the United States, was reared in the community of the Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Monastery in Jordanville, New York, where his father, an iconographer, was serving. After two years of study at Grossmont College in El Cajon, California, Father Photios enrolled at the University of California, San Diego in 2008.

Several days before the start of classes, Father Photios visited the monastery



for what was to be a rather short stay. On the day of his scheduled departure, he declared, with absolute resolve: “This is how Christians should live—how I want to live.” He never left. He entered the brotherhood and, after completing a short novitiate, fulfilled a commitment that he had already made to live as a monastic. Father Photios, who speaks Russian and English, is distinguished in the brotherhood by his humility and obedience in the monastic calling.

