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General Forums => Christian News => Topic started by: arimethea on October 01, 2003, 02:35:36 PM

Title: **Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **arimethea** on **October 01, 2003, 02:35:36 PM**

From the website <http://www.antiochpat.org> (<http://www.antiochpat.org>)

To our Antiochian Orthodox faithful living in United States an in the world over.

Many members of our Holy Antiocian Church have been following the issue of Autonomy of our Archdioceses in North America and thousand of people have been asking us about this burning issue to know the reality of the recent negotiations related to this matter. Therefore, we felt that our duty to put all our members on the picture of all realities. The attached letter explains the outcome of the meeting of the special committee that had been taken place in Geneva recently. We are open to receive any comment related to this issue.

Finally, we need to pray more so that our God inspire the members of the Antiochian Holy Synod to take the right decisions of the unity for our Holy See that dates back to the time of Apostles.

Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod

Many Antiochian faithful wrote to us asking about various issues raised by the successive statements and recommendations of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (Spring meeting of the Metropolitan and his auxiliaries designated as "The Eparchial Synod" (April 30, 2003), meeting of the Board of Trustees (May 30-31, 2003) and the Forty-Sixth Convention of the Archdiocese (July 21-27, 2003).

There have also been fraternal exchanges between prelates and a number of laypersons. Unfortunately, some of those exchanges did not dissipate every misunderstanding nor redress every misperception. Regrettably, there were also a few rumors spread. Most preoccupying was a semi-veiled threat asking the Holy Synod to approve the North American recommendations and not "bring schism".

It is likely that such threats are, in the minds of those who made them, impatient attempts aiming at forcing the pace of the Antiochian Synod. We hope and pray that they will be short-lived and will not create a deep rift in the Church of Antioch.

Since the issue of autonomy for the archdiocese of North America was first mentioned there has been an ambiguous use of certain words. These ambiguities are not yet fully dissipated. The North American speeches, articles and resolutions, since 2001, did not get close enough to fully clarifying the "raison d' + Ãfâ€ŠÃ,Ã-tre" of autonomy. They fell short of addressing the range of motivations and issues about which all those concerned Antiochians need to be aware before they are able to make a responsible and ecclesiological informed judgment. They did not disclose a matured dialogue on this issue even from within the North American context.

The Synodal decision of June 12, 2002, receiving the request of the North American archdiocese was drafted in Arabic following a discussion in Arabic. A number of words used such as "blessing the wish of the faithful" and "self-administration" had diverging translations. Even the task of the Committee established was interpreted in two different ways. Members delegated by His Beatitude Ignatius IV came to Geneva (November 22-24, 2002) expecting a first meeting, as indicated by the said decision, initiating a process of

dialogue and discernment. The representatives of the North American Archdiocese seemed to have little patience for a comprehensive dialogue to take its course. They understood their role to be focused on reaching an agreement in the form of a tomos granting autonomy. Their insistence that the Committee works on the assumption that autonomy was granted, and there were a few details only to be worked on, limited the ability of the Committee to engage in a constructive exchange. The patriarchal delegates were displeased by this rush and found themselves, in spite of their insistence on seeing the Committee as one group involved in a collective reflection, moving into a bi-partite negotiations mode. Negotiations were neither their preference nor their mandate.

The Geneva document produced did not account for the whole subject examined. There were many questions that were considered. To be sure, it was as an attempt at establishing the status questionis and searching for convergence on a number of issues. However, it was neither a final nor authoritative word. In North America, the document was given a higher status than intended and not taken for what it was. Disagreements, stated or not, were considered "minor", justifying amendments which, in turn, were labelled "minor". Members of the Committee heard with dismay how the dynamics of the Geneva meeting were described and the status of the drafted document misrepresented to the faithful of the North American Archdiocese. Much of the North American discourse on autonomy became increasingly assertive and combative. It did not speak to/with fellow Antiochians in the "old country" but at them. Regrettably, it did not engage.

Letters received by the Patriarchate, and by members of the patriarchal delegation to Geneva, indicated that reports of the apparent quasi-unanimous enthusiasm in North America blurred a more complex reality. Discussions were less patient, participatory and inclusive than they should have been. The over-stated inter-cultural misunderstanding was explained in terms of simplistic categories. Many thought that the discretion of the Patriarchate and its delegates, instead of being an expression of good faith, was too cautious. It was presented as a sign of confusion or weakness and as a tactical move to gain time. Views of the Patriarch, a number of Metropolitans and other people concerned, were not given the chance to be heard in North America.

To present the report from the Geneva meeting to the Board of Trustees, and to the Convention of the Archdiocese, as if it was the ultimate resolution of the dialogue implies a status for that report that is not consistent with the understanding of those who participated in that meeting. Thus the meaningful continuation of the dialogue process was interrupted by the precipitous move to a juridical process of public acclamation. Such acclamation of a revised text, not yet examined by the Holy Synod, seemed to exert an undue pressure and could not be persuasive.

Seeking a common mind through dialogue, for the common good of the Church, is not less meaningful than reaching an agreement. A genuine and respectful dialogue is, more than ever before, necessary. The negative hue in which the Church of Antioch in the "old country" is sometimes portrayed in the North American Archdiocese does not help this dialogue. Caricatures cripple efforts at mutual understanding.

This situation invites a creative and sustained effort. Those who strive for the unity and renewal of the Church of Antioch will never emphasize enough how much we need each other, across dioceses and continents. Faithfulness to the vocation of Antioch motivates all us to seek mutual empowerment, spiritual and otherwise. This is a challenge and a call.

This is the time to pray for the Holy Synod of Antioch, for all of its members, and for the Patriarch who will lead it, trusting that God is in the midst of his Church, notwithstanding our weaknesses, shortcomings and disagreements

Uh oh, sounds like Antioch is ticked off. This could be bad for Orthodox unity in America.

anastasios

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **Fr. Anastasios** on **October 01, 2003, 09:34:09 PM**

The small amount that there already is.

anastasios

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **Orthodoc** on **October 04, 2003, 09:14:41 PM**

I'm thoroughly confused! Does this mean that autonomy was never granted to the Antiochian Archdiocese as previously claimed? And that the granting of autonomy is still in question?

Orthodoc

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **arimethea** on **October 11, 2003, 12:03:56 PM**

From the <http://www.antiochpat.org/> (<http://www.antiochpat.org/>)

Resolution of the Holy Synod of Antioch

Self rule and Jurisdiction:

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America is and shall remain self ruled within its present jurisdiction (The United States of America and Canada) and shall constitute one unified ecclesiastical Antiochian entity.

Governance:

The Archdiocese is governed by the Holy Scripture, the Sacred Tradition, the Holy Canons, the Constitution of the Church of Antioch and this Synodical resolution and by its Constitution and Bylaws.

Recognition of Auxiliary Bishops as Diocesan Bishops and Eparchial Synod:

Upon adoption of this resolution, the present Auxiliary Bishops of the Archdiocese, Bishop Antoun, Bishop Joseph, Bishop Basil, and Bishop Demetri shall become Bishops of four Dioceses of the Archdiocese and bear their titles. The Diocesan Bishops will constitute under the Metropolitan the Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese which will be its governing authority. The Eparchial Synod shall determine the number of dioceses and their boundaries.

Procedure of election of Diocesan Bishops:

A- The General Assembly of the Archdiocese shall nominate three candidates for a Diocesan Bishop. When Diocesan Assemblies shall be constituted, the nominations shall then be made, by the said assemblies.

B- The Patriarch of Antioch, shall delegate three Metropolitans to participate on behalf of the

Holy Synod together with the Eparchial Synod in the election of the Diocesan Bishops. The Metropolitan shall preside over the electoral assembly.

C- The consecration and enthronement of the Bishops shall be accomplished in North America, by the Metropolitan, the Patriarchal Delegate and the members of the Eparchial Synod.

D- In case of insufficient number of qualified nominees from the Archdiocesan clergy, the Archdiocese shall nominate from the list of nominations kept in the Patriarchal records.

Procedure of election of the Metropolitan Primate.

The Metropolitan Primate shall be nominated pursuant to the Constitution of the Church of Antioch and to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Archdiocese. Three names of nominees for the Metropolitan Primate shall be submitted to the Holy Synod of Antioch for election by it, of one of the three names. The Metropolitan shall be a member of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate as well as of the Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese.

Right of appeal and Synaxis:

Bishops of the Eparchial Synod have the right of appeal of its decisions to the Patriarch of Antioch who shall be the final judge along with the Holy Synod of Antioch. The Bishops of the Archdiocese shall attend the gatherings or synaxis of Antiochian Bishops which may be called by the Patriarch of Antioch.

Decisions of the Holy synod of Antioch:

The decisions of the Holy Synod of Antioch shall be binding on the Archdiocese on matters of doctrine, liturgy, sacraments, relations with autocephalous Orthodox Churches and ecumenical policy with regard to other Christian and non-Christian bodies.

Amendment and translation:

The Patriarchate of Antioch and the Archdiocese shall each amend its constitution in accordance with above. The Archdiocese shall submit its amended constitution to the Holy Synod of Antioch for approval.

The Arabic text of this resolution and its English translation shall have equal force and validity.

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **Thomas** on **October 27, 2003, 12:44:12 PM**

Glory to Jesus Christ!

It seems that the Antiochian Archdiocese, of which I am a member of, has indeed been granted autonomous status after all. From everything that I have read and my friends who read Arabic, it seems that there was a lot of bruhaha about division in Antioch that did not exist.

Why is it that Orthodox People in America are so afraid to follow the steps taken by historic Orthodoxy around the world (i.e. one united national church) as it pursues the goal of a united Orthodox Christian witness to North America?

We have Orthodox Churches and monasteries throughout North America, thriving missions witnessing the Holy Orthodox Church to the people of the US (churched and unchurched) actively going on, we have an array of Saints glorified witnesses of the church in North

America (St. Juvenal, St Peter the Aleut, St. Herman of Alask, St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, St. Raphael, and many others). We now have native born Orthodox Hierarchs, It is time we grow up and become a unified witness to North America.

Forgive me If I offend,
Your brother in Christ,
Subdeacon Thomas

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **Νεκτάριος** on **October 27, 2003, 06:08:13 PM**

Quote

We have Orthodox Churches and monasteries throughout North America

Which North American monasteries are under the jurisdiction of the Antiochian Patriachate?

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **Elisha** on **October 27, 2003, 06:16:07 PM**

Quote from: +ΆφαέςΆ,ΆΥ+ΆφαέςΆ,Ά!+ΆφαέςΆ,Ά!-Άφ'Ε'Ά,Ά=+ΆφαέςΆ,Ά¼-Άφ'Ε'Ά,Ά¼+ΆφαέςΆ,Ά!++-Άφ'Ε'Ά,Ά© on October 27, 2003, 06:08:13 PM

Quote

We have Orthodox Churches and monasteries throughout North America

Which North American monasteries are under the jurisdiction of the Antiochian Patriachate?

Must've been a slip of the tongue - they ain't got none. (And, unfortunately, Met. Phillip actively says that he doesn't/won't support them.)

On second thought - it looks like his thought progression went from an 'us Antiochians' frame of mind to 'North American Orthodox churches'.

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **Νεκτάριος** on **October 27, 2003, 09:34:16 PM**

Too bad Barlaamism is alive and well.

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **arimethea** on **October 27, 2003, 10:28:12 PM**

Quote

Which North American monasteries are under the jurisdiction of the Antiochian Patriachate?

The Skete of St. Paul in Memphis, TN is under the omophorion of Met. Philip and administrated by Bishop Basil (of Wichita). This Skete is a dependent of Holy Dormition (OCA-Romanian) in Rives Junction but is under the jursdiction of the Antiochians.

There was a monk at the Shrine of our Lady of Cicero for a number of years and I know that he was tonsured with the blessing of Met. Philip. There are also a scattering of some priest-monks who are in parishes but are affiliated with monasteries in other jursdictions.

I think part of the reason Met. Philip has been "against" monasticism is the treatment he recieved from monks growing up in Lebanon and the need for priest in parishes.

Title: **Re:Praying for the Forthcoming Antiochian and Holy Synod**

Post by: **Thomas** on **October 28, 2003, 12:24:03 PM**

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Metropolitan Philip actually has said that He is not against Monasticism however, he wants the first formal full monastery in the Archdiocese to be at the Antiochian Village---his autobiography has fond memories of the the role that monastics play in the provision of safe havens for orthodox youth to meet and experience Orthodoxy in a full experience not in the fear that one often sees in the Middle East surrounded by Moslems. My understanding is that Metropolitan Phillip also sees a similar situation with the assailing of Orthodox Youth by the world around them---he advocates the opening of a monastery similar to Our Lady of Balamand in Lebanon where Antiochian Orthodox Children can be provided Youth programs under the spiritual guidance of Orthodox Monks at the Antiochian Village. As I understand it, this is his current focus. Once this is established, he will then focus on opening other monasteries under his omophorion.

From personal knowledge, I know that the Antiochian Bishops encourage those Antiochian members who are seeking a monastic novitiate to go to currently existing Monasteries at present. Many of the Bishops regularly visit monasteries near Antiochian parishes when they make their annual visitations. Their referral to other jurisdictional monasteries have the advantage of more experienced monastics to provide guidance and training than currently exists in the Archdiocese. Like the brother above, I know several monastics serving in parishes as priests, and a few who are anchorites---i.e. monastics living a monastic life style under a spiritual father but living in a parish and serving that parish---I believe the monastic serving at the shrine in Cicero was one of these monastics.

This result of these two issues has been, that those who seek to vilify Metropolitan Phillip and Antiochian Archdiocese have circulated the "rumor" that Metropolitan Phillip hates monasticism, such is not my understanding after reading his writings and speaking with those who know him. His autobiography also addresses this issue somewhat. It seems to be that Metropolitan Philip's vision of Orthodoxy in America allows each jurisdiction currently here to develop specific areas of the "American Orthodox Church" using their own strengths, that will eventually unite bringing expertise in all areas together in a united Orthodox witness.

Your brother in Christ,
Subdeacon Thomas

Edited for grammatical error