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## Statement on Bishop DEMETRI

### Metropolitan's Statement Regarding Bishop Demetri

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**Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese**  
OF NORTH AMERICA  
358 MOUNTAIN ROAD  
ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07631-3798  
201 871-1355 FAX: 201 871-7954

LOS ANGELES CHANCERY  
454 S. LORRAINE BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CA. 90020-4730

TOLEDO CHANCERY  
2656 PEMBERTON DRIVE  
TOLEDO, OH. 43606-2903

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1599 N. WOODLAWN  
WICHITA, KS. 67208-8429

July 14, 2003

Beloved Hierarchs, Clergy, Trustees and All Faithful of our Archdiocese:

We are deeply saddened and disturbed to learn of the incident involving Bishop Demetri Khoury in Traverse City, Michigan, that reportedly was caused by his use of alcoholic beverages.

Many people from all walks of life suffer problems with alcohol. The experts tell us that most will never seek help until something tragic happens. In this case, Bishop Demetri has acknowledged that he has a problem with alcohol, that perhaps combined with various medications he has been taking for serious health problems, may have contributed to his actions in Traverse City, which he truly regrets. He, as many others afflicted by that illness, believed that he could handle it on his own without professional counseling. He now knows that he cannot do it alone.

I have directed Bishop Demetri to seek professional help. He is willing to do that and has already made arrangements for inpatient treatment at a well-recognized facility. Once he receives the permission of the civil authorities, he will be entering a ninety-day treatment program. I have also directed Bishop Demetri not to preach or preside at any liturgical service during the time that he is under treatment, or while this matter is under investigation.

Tragic situations such as this require from us a Christian response. We will not abandon Bishop Demetri, who is both a brother and a friend. We must show that Christian love and support required of us, and offer our prayers for him. At the same time we must remember in our prayers those who were directly affected in Traverse City by Bishop Demetri's actions, as well as the faithful, especially those in the Midwest and throughout this Archdiocese, both clergy and laity, who have been deeply surprised, hurt and disappointed.

While we know that his acts are uncharacteristic of him, and were influenced by his consumption of alcohol, at the same time we also know that individuals must be accountable for their actions. Our Board of Trustees of this Archdiocese adopted in June 1999 "Policies and Procedures" that govern our response to some of the allegations in this incident. Those rules apply to all clergy, deacons, priests and bishops as well as lay workers in this Archdiocese. We will be following those "Policies and Procedures" in this matter.

We ask all of you to remember Bishop Demetri in your prayers

Yours in the Merciful Christ,

Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate  
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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