

**Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of North America**

Manual of Hierarchical Duties and Responsibilities

Governing the Duties and Responsibilities of
the Metropolitan Archbishop and the Diocesan
Bishops

Version 1.0 - Adopted June 4, 2004

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

358 Mountain Road

Englewood, NJ 07631

archdiocese@antiochian.org

www.antiochian.org

(201) 871-1355

Introduction

On October 9th, 2003, the Holy Synod of Antioch unanimously passed a resolution that granted the status of self-rule to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. At a Special Convention of the Archdiocese held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on July 16th, 2004, the General Assembly of the Archdiocese approved the amended Archdiocesan Constitution that implemented this self-rule status.

One critical aspect of the implementation of the self-rule status is the creation of Dioceses, instead of Regions, and the granting of the title of Diocesan Bishop to the former Auxiliary Bishops. In conjunction with this, the Diocesan Bishops assume new and expanded duties and responsibilities.

This Manual of Hierarchical Duties and Responsibilities specifies those duties that are assumed by the Diocesan Bishops, and those that remain with the Metropolitan. The current Version 1.0 was approved by the Local Synod of the Archdiocese at its duly convened meeting of June 4, 2004. All future changes to this document will be approved by the Local Synod of the Archdiocese.

1 The Duties and Responsibilities of the Metropolitan

1. The Metropolitan is the chief shepherd of the self-ruled Archdiocese of North America. He will administer and preserve the unity of the Archdiocese and its close ties to the Mother Church of Antioch. He will also serve as the official liaison to the civil authorities of the United States and Canada. He will have direct jurisdiction over the Diocese of New York and Washington, D.C.
2. The Metropolitan exercises his rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Canons of the Holy Orthodox Church, the constitution of the Patriarchate of Antioch, and the decisions of the Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese. At all times he will act in accordance with the Constitution of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.
3. The Metropolitan is the presiding hierarch over the Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese and the Chairman of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees. He is the presiding officer at all regular and special General Assemblies.
4. The Metropolitan will biennially prepare a comprehensive report about the "State of the Archdiocese" which will be presented at the General Assembly of the Archdiocese Convention and made available to all of the clergy and the faithful of the Archdiocese. This report will deal with the spiritual and material status of the Archdiocese. At the same General Assembly, reports will be delivered dealing with the spiritual and financial status of the departments, organizations, and institutions of the Archdiocese.
5. The Metropolitan will preside over the Department of Finance to prepare the budget for the next fiscal year and the annual financial report. Both the budget and the annual financial report will be

submitted for approval to the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, and the Metropolitan's Advisory Councils (for years when there is no Convention), or the General Assembly of the Convention according to the Constitution of the Archdiocese.

6. The consecration of Diocesan Bishops will take place at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Damascus, Syria. The Patriarch of Antioch (or his delegate) will preside over this consecration. After the consecration, the Metropolitan will preside over the enthronement of the newly consecrated bishop in the cathedral of his diocese.

7. To preserve administrative order in the self-ruled Archdiocese, the Metropolitan will grant all official documents such as Certificates of Baptism, Chrismation, Marriage, and Ordination as well as dispensations and restorals to the full sacramental life of the church. Funeral records will continue to be sent by pastors directly to the headquarters of the Archdiocese. In addition, the Metropolitan will approve all amended parish constitutions, to insure conformance with the Model Parish Constitution. To preserve integrity, all records will be stored in the headquarters of the Archdiocese.

8. The Metropolitan will issue the Holy Antimensia, and will distribute the Holy Chrism to the Diocesan bishops

9. The Antiochian Village, all educational institutions, and all monastic centers of the Archdiocese are under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan

10. All matters of "Economy" are solely at the discretion of the Metropolitan.

11. The Metropolitan will commemorate the Patriarch of Antioch, the Holy Synod of Antioch, and the Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese.

2 The Duties and Responsibilities of the Diocesan Bishops

1. The Diocesan Bishop will be enthroned by the Metropolitan in the Cathedral of his diocese, and will assume all of the duties of a Diocesan Bishop specified in this document. The Diocesan Bishop exercises his rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Canons of the Holy Orthodox Church, and the decisions of the Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese. At all times he will act in accordance with the Constitution of the self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.
2. The Diocesan Bishop will consecrate new churches within his Diocese. He will preside over his Diocesan Parish Life Conference and clergy meetings within his diocese and will present a report of his Parish Life Conference and all clergy meetings to the Metropolitan. He will present an annual report on the status of his diocese to the Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese. He will issue pastoral letters to the clergy and laity of his diocese as necessary.
3. The Diocesan Bishop will make pastoral visits to the parishes and missions within his diocese, and shall endeavor to visit each parish and mission at least one time each year.
4. The Diocesan Bishop may petition the Metropolitan in writing for the ordination of priests and deacons within his diocese. Such petitions will be submitted to the Ordination Review Board for consideration. After confirmation by the Ordination Review Board, and the Metropolitan, the Diocesan Bishop will arrange to ordain the priest or deacon at a time and place that he will determine.
5. The Diocesan Bishop may bless subdeacons and tonsure readers within his diocese as he sees fit. He may also elevate members of the clergy to the dignity of Archdeacon or Archpriest. For elevations

of Archdeacons and Archpriests, he will send written notification of these events to the Archdiocese Headquarters.

6. The Diocesan Bishop may make a written request to the Metropolitan for the elevation of a member of the clergy to the dignity of Archimandrite. After confirmation from the Metropolitan, the Diocesan Bishop may proceed with this elevation.

7. Transfer, Release, and Acceptance of Clergy:

a. Transfer Within the Diocese – The Diocesan bishop may recommend to the Metropolitan in writing that a member of clergy be transferred from one location to another within his diocese. After consultation with the Metropolitan, the Diocesan Bishop may implement this transfer. The Diocesan bishop will issue the letter of appointment, and send a copy to the headquarters of the Archdiocese.

b. Release from one Diocese to another – The “releasing” bishop will discuss the potential clergy release with the “receiving” bishop. After they have reached an agreement, they will send a joint written recommendation to the Metropolitan. After consultation with the Metropolitan, the Diocesan Bishops may implement the clergy release. The releasing bishop issues the letter of release to the receiving bishop, with a copy to the headquarters of the Archdiocese. The receiving bishop issues the letter of appointment to the parish, with a copy of the letter to the headquarters of the Archdiocese.

c. Release or acceptance of clergy outside of the Archdiocese of North America - No clergy may be released to, or accepted from another Orthodox Jurisdiction or another Antiochian Archdiocese without the approval of the Metropolitan. All letters of release or acceptance of clergy in this case will be written directly by the Metropolitan. Following the acceptance of a member of clergy, the Metropolitan will assign him to a diocese in consultation with the Diocesan bishop.

8. Initial Appointments of Clergy to a Diocese – In order to maintain proper order within the Archdiocese, the Metropolitan will make all initial clergy appointments to the diocese in consultation with the Diocesan Bishop.
9. The Diocesan Bishop will appoint the Spiritual Advisors for the following organizations within his diocese: The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America (AOCWNA), the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, and Teen SOYO. He will also appoint the priests who will serve as deans over the designated deaneries of his diocese.
10. The Diocesan Bishop will promote the establishment of new missions within the boundaries of his diocese in full cooperation with the Department of Missions and Evangelism of the Archdiocese. Archdiocesan funds for missions will be administered by the Department of Finance of the Archdiocese. Where there are local mission funds established (i.e. a diocesan Missions Council), the Diocesan Bishop will administer those funds.
11. All endowment funds will be invested and supervised by the Department of Finance of the Archdiocese.
12. The Diocesan Bishop is a full voting member of the Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese and the Archdiocese Board of Trustees with all of the duties and privileges accorded to such members.
13. The Diocesan Bishop will exercise the responsibilities of pastoral care and discipline over the clergy and laity of his diocese. The Diocesan Bishop may appoint a committee to investigate disciplinary matters and submit a comprehensive report to the Metropolitan. If necessary, the Metropolitan will convene the Spiritual Court of the Archdiocese.
14. The Diocesan Bishop will approve all plans for construction of new parish facilities, as well as major renovations and expansions to existing facilities within his diocese. He will also approve the selection of iconographers, and iconography within his diocese.

15. The Diocesan Bishop will approve all newly-elected Parish Council members and officers for parishes in his diocese.

16. The Diocesan Bishop will commemorate the Metropolitan and the Local Holy Synod of the Archdiocese.