

The Self-Ruled
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
of North America



“ And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. ”
+ Acts 11:26

[Archdiocese](#) [Dioceses](#) [Organizations](#) [Departments](#) [Parishes](#)

[Home](#) » [Orthodox Church News / Pressroom](#) » [Archived News & Press Releases](#) » [2004 - News & Press Releases](#)

SEARCH

Search this site:

His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH Enthroned as The First Bishop of the Diocese Los Angeles and the West

His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH Enthroned as The First Bishop of the Diocese Los Angeles and the West

by Fr. Joseph Corrigan

September 12, 2004, Los Angeles, California.

During the Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Los Angeles, this morning, His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP gave to His Grace, Bishop JOSEPH, the arch-pastoral staff, which heretofore he had carried as Auxiliary Bishop to the Metropolitan. Immediately after this, Bishop JOSEPH ascended the episcopal throne of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Los Angeles as His Eminence prayed the prayer of enthronement. Having been enthroned as the first Bishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West, Bishop JOSEPH's homily spelled out his vision of increasingly effective evangelism with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and deepening pastoral care for all the faithful of the newly formed Diocese.



Metropolitan PHILIP gives to Bishop JOSEPH the Archpastoral staff.



Bishop JOSEPH ascends the Episcopal Throne at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Los Angeles.

In October of 2003, the Holy Synod of Antioch joined His Beatitude, IGNATIUS IV in granting to the Antiochian Christian Archdiocese of North America the status of Self-Rule. At the Special Convention of the Archdiocese in July of this year, the delegates unanimously approved the changes proposed for the Archdiocese Constitution which had been made to reflect our new Self-Rule status by the Chancellors, Charles Ajalat and Robert Koory. The delegates also confirmed the nomination of candidates from which the Local Synod will choose three new diocesan bishops for our Archdiocese. [Read more about Self-Rule here.](#)

“With the enthronement of our brother, Bishop JOSEPH,” said Metropolitan PHILIP, “we take the first step in applying our Self-Rule status. Thus, Bishop JOSEPH's enthronement is truly an historic occasion.”



Metropolitan PHILIP teaches about the responsibilities of one who would bear the Archpastoral staff and explains the historical significance of today's events.

Soon to be followed by His Grace, Bishop BASIL's enthronement on the episcopal throne at St. George Cathedral in Wichita, Kansas and the Bishop of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America, today's milestone sets in motion the eventual enthronement of nine Diocesan Bishops in the nine Diocese that will constitute our God-protected Archdiocese.

Most of the clergy of the newly formed Diocese of Los Angeles and the West were in attendance at St. Nicholas Cathedral, coming from as far away as Alaska, Idaho and Arizona. The cathedral was filled to beyond its capacity with overflow seating with closed-circuit television coverage being projected on large screens in the nearby parish hall. Four chalices were assigned there for Communion. Joining the faithful of St. Nicholas Cathedral were many the faithful from neighboring Antiochian parishes of Southern California, the Board of Trustees and the Governing Council of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch.



Most of the Clergy of the newly formed Diocese of Los Angeles and the West were present for the Enthronement of Bishop JOSEPH.

Bishop JOSEPH was honored by the presence of His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN of the OCA, His Grace, Bishop SYRAPION, of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Los Angeles, and His Grace, Bishop Todd Brown of Orange, of the Roman Catholic Church. Along with them were many municipal and foreign dignitaries, including Farid Abboud, the Ambassador of Lebanon and Hazem Shehabi, the Consul General of Syria.



Honoring Bishop JOSEPH at his Enthronement are Bishop SERAPION of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Los Angeles and Bishop Todd Brown of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Orange

California.



Ambassador Abboud of Lebanon brings greetings to Bishop JOSEPH.



The ballroom was filled to capacity for this special banquet.



Bishop BENJAMIN of the OCA, Bishop BASIL, and Bishop JOSEPH at the Hierarchs' Head Table.



No stranger to such occasions, Fr. Peter Gillquist did a masterful job in "governing the feast."

Following the services, a banquet celebrating Bishop JOSEPH's Enthronement was held in nearby Downtown Los Angeles at the historic Millennium Biltmore Hotel. The Archpriest Peter Gillquist, Director of the Department of Missions and Evangelism for the Archdiocese was the Master of Ceremonies who began the afternoon festivities by introducing the Dignitaries at the Head Table as they entered the Millennium Ballroom: The Protosynkellos, the Right Reverend Fr. Paul Doyle, Dn. Thomas Nassif of St. Anthony Church in San Diego, Hazem Shehabi, the Consul General of Syria, Farid Abboud, the Ambassador of Lebanon, His Grace, His Grace, Bishop Todd Brown of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange, California, His Grace, Bishop BENJAMIN of the OCA, Bishop BASIL, soon to be enthroned as the Bishop of the new Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America, His Grace Bishop JOSEPH, His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, the Rev. Fr. Michel Najim, the Dean of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Los Angeles and his Khouria, Eva Najim, and Mr. and Mrs. John L. Sadd, Jr., St. Nicholas Cathedral Parish Council Chairman and the Chairpersons of the Enthronement Banquet. Although not seated at the head table, Fr. Augustino Hanna, pastor of St. John Coptic Orthodox Church of Covina, California represented Bishop SERAPION who could not attend the banquet.

Following an invocation by His Eminence, and some short introductory remarks by Fr. Gillquist, a luncheon, consistent with the Biltmore Hotel's excellent reputation as one of the best hotels in Los Angeles was served. Those attending had the choice between a filet mignon and an excellently prepared white fish with an apple pie dessert.

Fr. Michel began the final part of the afternoon by speaking of personal remembrances and some historical reflections of the life of Bishop JOSEPH. His remarks were followed by a short video which highlighted some major milestones of his life and focused on his consecration as a bishop in 1991 at the hands of his own mentor, our Patriarch, His Beatitude, IGNATIUS IV.

After some kind greetings and remarks by Farid Abboud, the Ambassador of Lebanon and Hazem Shehabi, the Consul General of Syria, Dn. Thomas Nassif, himself have significant, successful experience and an Ambassador of the United States, read a letter of congratulations to Bishop JOSEPH from California Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Fr. Peter Gillquist then read letters of congratulations from Councilman Michael Antonovich of the Los Angeles City Council, from Congressman Darrel Issa, and from other civil and ecclesiastic officials to numerous to mention.



Dn. Thomas Nassif reads a letter to Bishop JOSEPH from California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Our beloved Metropolitan PHILIP took a few moments to put the glorious events of the day into concise, historical perspective. He underlined the profound historical significance of the events we experienced together. After presenting an exquisite engolpion (The Icon of the Theotokos a Bishop wears as the insignia of his office) to Bishop JOSEPH, Metropolitan PHILIP introduced him as the newly enthroned, first Bishop of Los Angeles and the West. Following a warm and enthusiastic welcome by all those present, Bishop JOSEPH spoke to us, again targeting Orthodox unity, the evangelism of North America by the Holy Orthodox Church and the care of God's faithful in his remarks. The afternoon concluded as Bishop BASIL of Wichita, brought his personal best wishes and best regards to our Bishop JOSEPH.

It was a long day, and it was a glorious one. History is always in the making and most events that end up in history books can be seen as such only in retrospect. Relatively few people can say that they knew they were living in a turning point of history, even as they were happening. This sentiment is summarized in the words familiar to the older among us who remember how Walter Cronkite used to conclude his first television documentary program, *You Were There* :

"What kind of a day was it? A day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our times, except...you were there!"

We were there when it happened. We were there when the Archdiocese took a bold step into the new era of our self-rule and the increasing possibility of the unity of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America.

[Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America](#)

[Printer-friendly version](#)

[Links](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Site FAQ](#)

[User Login](#)

The contents of this webpage are copyright 2000-2008 Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America [[Terms of Use](#)]