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30 March 2005

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Dear Charles and Bob,

Greetings. It has been a long time since we have had a chance to speak and I hope that you both are well.

This letter is written to you in your capacities as chancellors of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, with some questions about the press release dated January 18, 2005 (which I will refer to as the "Press Release") sent by the "Department of Legal Affairs" to the parishes and posted to the web site of the archdiocese. For my part, I am writing to you as a member of the parish of Saint Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church in Souderton, Pennsylvania and former member of the Board of Trustees.

To put the Press Release and these questions in context, some chronology is important. For the purposes of this letter, the significant dates and events are as follows:

May 2001/ July 2001 -- The Board of Trustees of the North American archdiocese learns of the proposal to request "autonomy" from the patriarchate of Antioch and approves submitting a resolution to that effect to the general assembly of the archdiocese. The general assembly passes the resolution, which then is submitted to the Holy Synod of Antioch (the "North American Request").

June 2002 -- The Holy Synod of Antioch receives the North American Request, "blesses the wish of its faithful in North America", and establishes a joint committee to discuss the canonical and organizational implications for the North American archdiocese and the patriarchate of Antioch.

November 2002 -- The joint committee meets once in Geneva, Switzerland, and offers a report to the Holy Synod of Antioch

October 2003 -- The Holy Synod of Antioch receives the Geneva document and gives further consideration to the North American Request. By consensus, the Holy Synod of Antioch reaches agreement on the terms for a change in status for the North American Archdiocese and issues its "Resolution of the Holy Synod Regarding the Status of the Antiochian Archdiocese in North America, Damascus, October 10, 2003" (the "2003 Resolution of the Holy Synod"). The document is officially issued in both English and in Arabic and is signed by all members of the Holy Synod of Antioch.

