

The Self-Ruled
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
of North America



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

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Metropolitan PHILIP's Pastoral Letter on Autonomy, June 27, 2002

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June 27, 2002

TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT

Brother Hierarchs,

Beloved Clergy,

Esteemed Members of the Board of Trustees

And all Faithful members of our God-protected Archdiocese:

Greetings and best wishes in the spirit of this Holy season of Pentecost.

I have just returned home, together with my delegation, after a very successful journey to Syria and Lebanon. We were extremely busy participating in the meetings of the Holy Synod of Antioch. And we bring to all of you the blessings and best wishes of our Father-in-Christ, His Beatitude, IGNATIUS IV, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. In the September issue of the WORD Magazine, you will read a full account about our entire trip.

We have very good news. The Holy Synod of Antioch has blessed and recognized the autonomy of our God-protected Archdiocese, not "in theory" as it was wrongly reported, but in reality.

The following is the translation of the Synodal decision which was adopted unanimously on Thursday, June 13, 2002:

SYNODAL DECISION

"The Holy Synod of Antioch, at its regular meeting, held at the Patriarchate in Damascus, Syria, from June 11 to June 14, 2002, and having reviewed the plea of the General Assembly of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, which was adopted in Los Angeles, CA, July 26, 2001, and has been submitted to His Beatitude, Patriarch Ignatius IV and the Holy Synod blesses the wish of its children in the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, and recognizes their Archdiocese as autonomous.

This will render their witness more powerful and more effective, as they identify with the civilization of North America; and in order to express the canonical and pastoral factors of this renewed Archdiocese, which will affect the basic law of the Patriarchate, on the one hand, and the constitution of the Archdiocese on the other hand.

Therefore, the Holy Synod decided to establish a committee, composed from six to eight persons, appointed equally by His Beatitude and His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip, to propose a constitution for this autonomous Archdiocese, to be presented to the Holy Synod of Antioch, in order to acquire its final canonical status.

The first meeting of this committee will be held in the coming fall."

The above decision was authored by Metropolitan George Khodre of Mount Lebanon, and the translation was approved by him.

In the near future, I will appoint the members of our Archdiocesan delegation which will meet with the Patriarchal delegation either in Europe or in the Middle East to discuss the canonical details of our autonomy.

Finally, may the All Holy Spirit guide us to do what is pleasing to His holy Church.

Your Father in Christ,

Metropolitan PHILIP

Primate

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

of North America

"...the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch!" ACTS 11:26

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