

MOST REVEREND
METROPOLITAN PHILIP
PRIMATE

RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP ANTOUN
AUXILIARY

RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP JOSEPH
AUXILIARY

RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP BASIL
AUXILIARY

RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP DEMETRI
AUXILIARY



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

OF NORTH AMERICA

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June 10, 2003

Beloved Clergy and Esteemed Members of our Parish Councils:

We greet you in the spirit of this Holy Pentecost season.

As you will recall, two years ago at the Archdiocese Convention which was held in Los Angeles, California, a resolution, which was adopted by the Board of Trustees seeking autonomy for this Archdiocese, was presented to you at the General Assembly. After consideration, the vote in favor of this resolution was 97.7% .

Last June, 2002, I traveled with a delegation to the Middle East and presented your resolution to the Holy Synod of Antioch which blessed your wishes and called for the appointment of a Joint Committee from the Patriarchate and this Archdiocese to meet and work out some of the details of this autonomy.

In November of 2002, His Beatitude, the Patriarch of Antioch, appointed a Patriarchal Committee chaired by His Eminence, Metropolitan Elias Audi of Beirut and I appointed a committee chaired by His Grace, Bishop Basil. His Eminence, Metropolitan Georges Khodr of the Archdiocese of Mount Lebanon was appointed by His Beatitude, Patriarch Ignatius IV, as Chairman of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee met in Geneva, Switzerland and after two days of deliberation, approved the enclosed statement.

This statement was slightly amended and endorsed by the Board of Trustees of our Archdiocese on May 30, 2003, by an overwhelming majority, with the addition of Item (a) to Paragraph 4 and the deletion of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. We want you, beloved children, to read this statement carefully and come to the convention prepared to vote on it and adopt it as the official position of the entire Archdiocese.

May the All-holy Spirit who descended on the disciples like a mighty wind, permeate your hearts to do what is pleasing to His holy church.

Paternally yours,

Metropolitan PHILIP
Primate
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
of North America

AS AMENDED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

(PROPOSED) RESOLUTION OF THE HOLY SYNOD OF ANTIOCH

1. Autonomy and Jurisdiction. The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (hereinafter referred to as “the Autonomous Archdiocese”) is hereby declared, and shall remain, autonomous and, within its present jurisdiction (the United States and Canada), constitutes one unified ecclesiastical body.
2. Governance. The Autonomous Archdiocese is governed by the Holy Scriptures, the Sacred Tradition, the Holy Canons, the Constitution of the Church of Antioch to the extent the said Constitution is not inconsistent with this Resolution and by its Constitution and By-laws, as may be amended from time to time and by its own legislative, executive and disciplinary organs.
3. Recognition of Diocesan Bishops and Local Synod. The present auxiliary bishops of the Archdiocese, Bishop ANTOUN, Bishop JOSEPH, Bishop BASIL, and Bishop DEMETRI shall become the first diocesan bishops of four of the existing regions of the Autonomous Archdiocese, upon the adoption of this Resolution, and their titles shall be amended accordingly. They will constitute, together with the Metropolitan, the members of the Local Synod of the Autonomous Archdiocese, which will be its governing authority. The local synod shall determine the number of dioceses and their boundaries.
4. Procedure for Election of Diocesan Bishops. The autonomy of the Autonomous Archdiocese includes, of course, the ability to nominate, elect, consecrate and enthrone its own diocesan bishops in accordance with this Resolution.
 - a. After having been nominated by the Archdiocese General Assembly, the one, two or three nominees will travel to Damascus to seek the prayers and blessings of His Beatitude, the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East.
 - b. The diocesan bishops shall be elected by the Local Synod of the Autonomous Archdiocese from among up to three candidates nominated by the General Assembly, or if the dioceses later, by an amendment to the Archdiocesan Constitution, have diocesan assemblies, then the nomination of the bishops shall be by the then created diocesan assembly.
 - c. The election of the diocesan bishops shall be approved by the

~~Metropolitan Primate. The diocesan bishop shall be blessed by the Patriarch of Antioch on behalf of the Holy Synod of the Church of Antioch.~~

~~(Alternative 1: after his consecration. The praxis of the diocesan bishops shall be issued by the Metropolitan Primate.)~~

~~(Alternative 2: before his consecration. The praxis of the diocesan bishops shall be issued by the Patriarch and co-signed by the Metropolitan.)~~

- d. The consecration and enthronement shall be accomplished in North America by the Metropolitan Primate and the members of the Local Synod.
5. Procedure for Election of Metropolitan Primate & Synod Memberships. The Metropolitan Primate of the Autonomous Archdiocese shall be nominated by the General Assembly and the Local Synod of the Autonomous Archdiocese pursuant to its Constitution and By-Laws. Three names of nominees for Primate shall be submitted to the Holy Synod of Antioch for election by it of one of the three nominees as Primate, which election shall occur within forty days of submittal. The metropolitan shall be a member of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate as well as the Local Synod of the Autonomous Archdiocese.
 6. Commemoration, Chrism, Right of Appeal and Synaxis. The Metropolitan shall commemorate the Patriarch of Antioch in the divine services and shall receive the Holy Chrism from the Patriarch. Bishops of the Local Synod of the Autonomous Archdiocese have the right of appeal to the Patriarch of Antioch, who shall be the final judge along with the Holy Synod of Antioch. The Bishops of the Autonomous Archdiocese are also entitled to attend the gatherings or synaxis of Antiochian bishops which may be called by the Patriarch of Antioch.
 7. Decisions of the Holy Synod of Antioch. The decisions of the Holy Synod of the Church of Antioch shall be binding on the Autonomous Archdiocese on matters in doctrine, liturgy, sacraments, relations with autocephalous Orthodox Churches outside North America, and ecumenical policy with regard to other Christian and non-Christian bodies.
 8. Amendment and Translation. The Autonomous Archdiocese and the Patriarchate of Antioch shall each amend its Constitution in accordance with the above. Each of the Arabic and English texts of this Resolution shall have equal force and validity.