

## **Proposal to Establish a Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of North America**

Since 1993 the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America have dialogued seeking a way to heal the separation that we have endured for over sixty years. In the first dialogue meeting steps were taken to normalize relations between our two dioceses. This was approved by both our hierarchs and decision-making bodies. Over these past years closer relations were nurtured and encouraged. The members of the Joint Dialogue Commission have now come to a common mind over the issues that have separated the Romanian Orthodox people in North America, and propose the following as a way to reestablish the unity that we once shared under Bishop Policarp.

**WE PROPOSE THAT**, together, we ask the Romanian Orthodox Church to recognize a maximally autonomous, united, Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas made up of the present Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, and the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas, with the following properties:

- I. The Romanian Orthodox Church, as the Mother Church, irrevocably entrusts all care of the Romanian Orthodox faithful in the Americas to the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas. The Romanian Orthodox Church shall not modify or abolish this trust, nor shall it encourage, promote or establish any other jurisdiction within the territory of the Metropolitanate.
- II. The territory of the Metropolitanate shall include North and South America.

### **Purposes**

- III. The Metropolitanate shall preserve, defend and promulgate the Orthodox Christian faith in the Americas, giving special expression to the traditions of its Romanian Orthodox spiritual heritage.
- IV. The Metropolitanate shall use every appropriate means to work in cooperation with other jurisdictions toward the realization of a unified Orthodox jurisdiction in North America, understanding the union of the Romanian Orthodox faithful in America to be a necessary, interim step toward the ultimate administrative unity of Orthodoxy in North America, in particular. As the sole canonical Romanian Orthodox jurisdiction in the Americas, the Metropolitanate shall participate as it elects in Orthodox commissions, bodies, councils and institutions.

### **Governance**

- V. The Metropolitanate shall be totally self-governing, according to its own Constitution, By-Laws, customs and traditions.
- VI. The Metropolitanate shall have its own Synod of Bishops. In all matters, the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan Synod shall uphold the special, maximal autonomy of the Metropolitanate.
- VII. The Metropolitan Synod shall be the highest spiritual and judicial authority in all matters concerning the Metropolitanate, its institutions, clergy, and faithful, exercising its powers in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Metropolitanate. The Romanian Orthodox Church shall assert no privileges of supervision or adjudication in any matters concerning the Metropolitanate, its institutions, clergy, and faithful.
- VIII. The election, ordination and enthronement of hierarchs rest entirely within the competence of the Metropolitanate. The hierarchs of the Metropolitanate, including the Metropolitan Primate, shall be elected by the Metropolitan Congress from among nominees canonically approved by the Metropolitan Synod of Bishops.
- IX. Hierarchs-elect shall be confirmed by the Metropolitan Synod prior to ordination.

X. Prior to his ordination and/or enthronement, the Metropolitan-elect shall be recognized in a timely manner by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. As a sign of communion with the Mother Church, the Patriarch shall present the Grammata at the invitation of the Metropolitan Synod.

XI. Complaints against any hierarch of the Metropolitanate shall be addressed to the Metropolitan Synod of Bishops for adjudication.

XII. The Metropolitan Congress shall be the sole legislative organ of the Metropolitanate, having the right to approve and amend the Constitution and By-Laws of the Metropolitanate.

XIII. The Metropolitan Congress is subject only to the canonical authority of the Metropolitan Synod of Bishops. The Metropolitanate, and its Congress are required to comply with the civil laws of the state or province and country in which it is incorporated and operates. The decisions of the Metropolitan Congress are not subject to approval or ratification by the Romanian Orthodox Church or the government of Romania.

XIV. Notwithstanding Articles I through XIII above, in the case of a canonical issue that the Metropolitan Synod finds itself unable to resolve, the Metropolitan Synod may, after having exhausted all local avenues, invite the Romanian Orthodox Church to assist in mediating that issue. Such an invitation shall not be construed as an abridgement of the autonomy of the Metropolitanate.

#### **Relations with the Romanian Orthodox Church**

XV. The Metropolitanate shall receive Holy Chrism from the Romanian Orthodox Church.

XVI. The Metropolitan alone shall commemorate the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Other hierarchs of the Metropolitanate shall elevate the name of the Metropolitan alone.

XVII. Recognizing the maximal autonomy of the Metropolitanate, the Holy Synod extends an open invitation to the Metropolitan or his delegate to attend and participate, at his discretion, in its meetings as a witness to the canonical relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Church.

XVIII. The Romanian Orthodox Church shall not, directly or indirectly assert any claim to any right, title or interest in any of the properties of the Metropolitanate, its parishes and affiliated institutions.

#### **Financial Autonomy**

XIX. The Metropolitanate's regular operating expenses shall be financially supported by its faithful, parishes, institutions and auxiliary organizations. No clergyman, officer, functionary, employee, office, parish, diocese or other institution or structure of the Metropolitanate shall receive any subsidy, support, wage, salary or other form of financial support from any government or institution located outside the boundaries of its jurisdiction, including the Romanian Orthodox Church. Reception of such monies by any person shall be sufficient cause for summary and immediate removal from office, in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Metropolitanate.

XX. Notwithstanding this provision, grants or other monies may be received for specific projects, exchanges, or other activities as may be approved from time to time by the Metropolitan Council. All such monies shall be reported annually to the Metropolitan Congress as line items in the Metropolitanate's financial report.

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Fr. Ioan Ionita  
Fr. Ioan Gherman  
Fr. George Chisca  
Fr. George Sandulescu

Fr. Laurence Lazar  
Fr. Romey Rosco  
Fr. Remus Grama  
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