

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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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 22, 2004 – Englewood, New Jersey

**HOLY SYNOD OF ANTIOCH APPROVES THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
SELF-RULED ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH
AMERICA**

On Thursday, October 14th, 2004, the Holy Synod of Antioch voted to approve the Constitution of the self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. By this action, the final step has been taken and this Archdiocese can now function as a self-ruling Archdiocese.

In approving the Constitution, several important changes were made to the version that had been approved by the General Assembly of the Special Convention in Pittsburgh on July 16th, 2004. The following are the significant changes that were made:

1. The election of Diocesan bishops will be conducted by the Local Synod (Archdiocesan Synod), with the participation of only the Metropolitan, and the Diocesan Bishops who are members of the Local Synod (Archdiocesan Synod).
2. The consecration of Diocesan Bishops will be held at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Damascus, Syria.
3. Clergy from this Archdiocese who are eligible for election will be added to the master list of candidates held in the Patriarchate, and the General Assembly of this Archdiocese will nominate candidates from this master list.
4. Other minor changes that will be communicated in the near future

The final ratification of this amended Constitution by the General Assembly of this Archdiocese will be accomplished at the upcoming 47th Convention of the

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America which is scheduled to be held from July 24th through 31st, 2005, and hosted by St. George Church of Troy, Michigan.

In accordance with this decision, the Local Synod will elect three new Diocesan Bishops at its upcoming Fall meeting which will be held on Friday October 29th, 2004, in Naples Florida. The consecration of these new Diocesan Bishops will take place in Damascus at some time following the election. Some time after the consecration, they will be enthroned in the Cathedral of their diocese.

His Eminence was accompanied to the Middle East by the following members of our Archdiocese (listed in alphabetical order):

Dr. George Farha, Vice Chairman of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees
Very Rev. Joseph Antypas, Pastor of St. George Church of Troy, Michigan
Mr. Nicola Antakli, Member of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees
Mr. Fawaz El Khoury, Member of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees
Mr. Walid Khalife, Honorary Member of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees
Mr. Anton Khoury, Member of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees

We are thankful to these men for the outstanding support that they gave to His Eminence throughout this arduous journey.

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to Our Father in Christ, Patriarch IGNATIUS IV, and the members of the Holy Synod of Antioch for this vote of confidence in the North American Archdiocese. In addition, we thank our Metropolitan PHILIP for his vision and untiring leadership, without which, this historic event could not have occurred. We pray that God will grant them all Many Years!