Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America



The fourth Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America was held from September 17 to 19, 2013, in Chicago. Before the meeting, the archpastors prayed at the Church of the Protecting Veil of the Theotokos (ROCOR) during the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Peter of Cleveland, chancellor of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid- America, the website of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA has reported.

The meeting was attended by 43 out of 66 bishops of Orthodox jurisdictions which have their parishes in North and Central America. According to its statute, the Assembly was co-chaired by the chancellor of the Greek Archdiocese in the USA, Archbishop Demetrios, Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes in the USA, Archbishop Justinian of Naro-Fominsk.

The Assembly heard reports about the work carried out during the year by thirty commissions responsible for coordination between the Orthodox jurisdictions. Special attention was given to the work of the commissions for administrative governance, cooperation with the Armed Forces, youth work, pastoral care and monasteries' affairs.

The meeting approved the idea to hold a large-scale youth assembly in three years so that Orthodox higher school children from various jurisdictions could come to a better knowledge of each other's religious and ethnic peculiarities and to show together their commitment to basic Christian moral values. It is planned to convene such youth forums with the support of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America every three years.

The loveliest discussion was provoked by the report of the commission for regional canonical planning. The Assembly showed determination to settle problems of canonical order of Orthodoxy in North and Central America in conformity with the agreements reached by the 2009 Pan-Orthodox Conference in Chambesy. It was deemed necessary to give closer attention to the migrant newcomers who wish to preserve their cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

It was agreed to continue searching for acceptable canonical decisions in the co-existence of various Orthodox jurisdictions in North and Central America and for this purpose to include all the heads of Orthodox jurisdictions in the continent of North America into the Assembly's commission for regional canonical planning.

The bishops also adopted a statement on the situation in the Middle East and a statement on the action by the US Supreme Court to legalize same-sex unions.

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