



# **Message of the Episcopal Assembly Of the Canonical Orthodox Hierarchs of North and Central America May 26-28, 2010**

## **MESSAGE**

We glorify the name of the Triune God for gathering us at this first Episcopal Assembly of this region in New York City on May 26-28, 2010 in response to the decisions of the Fourth Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference held at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland, from June 6-12, 2009, at the invitation of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

Gathered together in the joy of the Feast of Pentecost, we humbly recognize our calling, in our unworthiness, to serve as instruments and disciples of the Paraclete, who “holds together the whole institution of the Church” (Hymn of Vespers of Pentecost).

We honor and express gratitude to the Primates and Representatives of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches who assembled at the Ecumenical Patriarchate from October 10-12, 2008 to affirm their “unswerving position and obligation to safeguard the unity of the Orthodox Church” (Chambésy Rules of Operation, Article 5.1a) and emphasized their will and “desire for the swift healing of every canonical anomaly that has arisen from historical circumstances and pastoral requirements” (Message of the Primates 13.1-2)

We call to mind those who envisioned this unity in this region and strove to transcend the canonical irregularities resulting for many reasons, including geographically overlapping jurisdictions. For, just as the Lord in the Divine Eucharist is “broken and distributed, but not divided” (Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom), so also His Body comprises many members, while constituting His One Church.

We are grateful for the gift of the doctrinal and liturgical unity that we already share, and we are inspired by our leaders, the Heads of all the Orthodox Churches throughout the world, who proposed that which we painfully yearn for in this region, i.e., the “swift healing of every canonical anomaly” (Message of the Primates 13.2). We are also grateful that they established a fundamental process toward a canonical direction and resolution.

We are thankful to almighty God for the growth of Orthodoxy, for the preservation of our traditions, and for the influence of our communities in this region. This is indeed a miracle and a mystery.

During our gathering, and in accordance with the rules of operation of Episcopal Assemblies promulgated by the Fourth Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference, we established:

1. A registry of canonical bishops (Article 6.1)
2. A committee to determine the canonical status of local communities in the region that have no reference to the Most Holy Autocephalous Churches (Article 6.2)
3. A registry of canonical clergy (Article 6.3)
4. Committees to undertake the work of the Assembly, among others including liturgical, pastoral, financial, educational, ecumenical, and legal issues (Articles 11 and 12)
5. A committee to plan for the organization of the Orthodox of the region on a canonical basis (Article 5.1).

In addition to the above, we agreed that a directory would be created and maintained by the Assembly of all canonical congregations in our region.

We as Episcopal Assembly understand ourselves as being the successors of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), assuming its agencies, dialogues, and other ministries.

Moreover, at the formal request of the Hierarchs who have jurisdiction in Canada, the Assembly will submit to the Ecumenical Patriarch, in accordance with the rules of operation (Article 13), a request to partition the present region of North and Central America into two distinct regions of the United States and Canada. Additionally, at the request of the Hierarchs who have jurisdiction in Mexico and Central America, the Assembly will likewise request to merge Mexico and Central America with the Assembly of South America.

As Orthodox Hierarchs in this blessed region, we express our resolve to adhere to and adopt the regulations proposed by the Pan-Orthodox Conferences and approved by the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, and to do everything in our power by the grace of God to advance actions that facilitate canonical order in our region.

We confess our fidelity to the Apostolic Orthodox faith and pledge to promote “common action to address the pastoral needs of Orthodox living in our region” (Chambésy, Decision 2c). We call upon our

clergy and faithful to join us in these efforts “to safeguard and contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church of the region in its theological, ecclesiological, canonical, spiritual, philanthropic, educational and missionary obligations” (Article 5.1) as we eagerly anticipate the Holy and Great Council.

The Assembly concluded with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Friday, May 28, 2010 at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral in New York City. During the Liturgy prayers were offered for the repose of the eleven victims of the current ecological disaster in the Gulf Coast, for the consolation of their families, for all those adversely affected by this catastrophe, as well as for all people living under conditions of war, persecution, violence, and oppression.

Of the sixty-six Hierarchs in the region, the following 55 were present at this Assembly:

Archbishop Demetrios, Chairman  
Metropolitan Philip, Vice Chairman  
Archbishop Justinian, Vice Chairman  
Bishop Basil, Secretary  
Archbishop Antony, Treasurer  
Metropolitan Iakovos  
Metropolitan Constantine  
Metropolitan Athenagoras  
Metropolitan Methodios  
Metropolitan Isaiah  
Metropolitan Nicholas  
Metropolitan Alexios  
Metropolitan Nikitas  
Metropolitan Nicholas  
Metropolitan Gerasimos  
Metropolitan Evangelos  
Metropolitan Paisios  
Archbishop Yuriy  
Bishop Christopher  
Bishop Vikentios  
Bishop Savas  
Bishop Andonios  
Bishop Ilia  
Bishop Ilarion  
Bishop Andriy  
Bishop Demetrios

Bishop Daniel  
Bishop Antoun  
Bishop Joseph  
Bishop Thomas  
Bishop Mark  
Bishop Alexander  
Metropolitan Hilarion  
Bishop Iov  
Bishop Gabriel  
Bishop Peter  
Bishop Theodosius  
Bishop George  
Bishop Ieronim  
Metropolitan Christopher  
Bishop Maxim  
Archbishop Nicolae  
Bishop Ioan Casian  
Metropolitan Joseph  
Metropolitan Jonah  
Archbishop Nathaniel  
Archbishop Seraphim  
Bishop Nikon  
Bishop Tikhon  
Bishop Benjamin  
Bishop Melchisedek  
Bishop Alejo  
Bishop Irineu  
Bishop Irinee  
Bishop Michael

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