22/04/2024

Ordination of His Grace Bishop Anthony of Synada



Saturday, April 20, 2024, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America ordained Bishop Anthony of Synada at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Axios! His Grace's family, fellow hierarchs, local clergy, and many Greek Orthodox faithful gathered for this special ordination.

Hierarchs in attendance include Archbishop Demetrios former of America, Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church of North, Central and South America, Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Bishop Theophan of Philomelion, and Bishop Nektarios of Diokleia. Also attending the ceremony was Bishop Anba Suriel of the Coptic Orthodox Church, a colleague in the field of religious education of Bishop Vrame's.

Also in attendance was Lieutenant Governor of California, Eleni Kounalakis, Bishop Vrame's cousin, and Demetrios Katos, President of Hellenic College Holy Cross.

Archbishop Elpidophoros remarked, "May your Episcopacy be infused with such grace, so that the ancient glory of Synada and all your predecessors shines through all your ministries. And may your words and actions breathe life into the faithful

you serve, so that they may know the God of the Living. Amen.” Full text here.

His Grace addressed the faithful in attendance thanking His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Archbishop Iakovos, Archbishop Demetrios, the Holy Eparchial Synod, and his family. He spoke with emotion about his journey and his thoughts about his ministry. Full text here.

“A phrase I learned many years ago in my doctoral studies has stayed with me as a guide: ‘Loyal but open.’ I have labored to hand forward our Faith and Way of Life as it has been received, trying to be clear about the treasure we have inherited while differentiating what my personal thinking may be, and to be open to the ideas and experiences of others” His Grace remarked.

Biography

His Grace, Bishop of Synada, Anton Chris Vrame (Avramopoulos) was born in Chicago, Illinois, the son of the late George and Maria Vrame. He grew up at the St. Nicholas Church in Oak Lawn, serving in the altar and active with the parish GOYA. He attended DePaul University, graduating with a BA in Psychology in 1981. From there he attended the University of Chicago, where he earned a MA in International Relations in 1983. For one year, he worked as a substitute teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, including teaching eighth grade for a semester. In 1986, he matriculated to Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA, earning the M.Div., with highest distinction in 1989. As a student and then following his graduation, he worked in the Archdiocese Department of Religious Education, becoming its Associate Director. During those years, 1989-1993, he was active in the creation of the new religious education textbook series for parish use. In 1992, he entered the Ph.D. program in Religion and Education at Boston College, earning the degree in 1997. His dissertation, The Educating Icon: Teaching Wisdom and Holiness in the Orthodox Way, was eventually published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press, becoming a standard in the field of religious education. From 1996-2002, he was Managing Editor of Holy Cross Orthodox Press, where he refocused the publishing program, creating one of its most active periods. During this time he was Adjunct Assistant Professor at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. From 1999-2002, he was also Lecturer in Religious Education at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary.

In 2002, he became the Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California. As Director, he oversaw the creation of the MA program in Orthodox Studies, developed an active community

education program, and oversaw the Orthodox Christian Fellowship. During that time, he was Associate Professor of Orthodox Studies at the Graduate Theological Union. In 2007, he became the Director of the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, where for the next fourteen years he developed many new resources for parish programs. In 2021, he returned as Director of Holy Cross Orthodox Press, revitalizing its mission. Since 2007, he is Adjunct Associate Professor of Religious Education at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

Active as a scholar, in addition to The Educating Icon, Fr. Vrame has edited other books and published many articles and chapters in books on Orthodox Christian religious education and the history of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. He has lectured in over 150 parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America as well as other jurisdictions and universities. He has been President, Vice-President, and Treasurer of the Orthodox Theological Society in America; an active member, Board Member, and Treasurer of the Religious Education Association: An Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education. He has worked to create the Orthodox Christian Religious Education Association, an international group of scholars in this discipline. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the International Orthodox Theological Association, and continues to serve as Co-Chair of its Study Group on Orthodox Education. He represented the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese to the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States from 2005 to 2019, including five years as Chair of the Commission (2008-2013), which placed him on the Executive Committee of the Governing Board. He currently represents the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese to the NCC’s Convening Table on Christian Education and Faith Formation and Leadership Development. He also serves on the Board of Trustees of Friendship Press, the publishing arm of the NCC, after a term on its Bible Translation and Utilization Committee. He was recently appointed as a Consultant to the Committee on Church and Society of the Assembly of Canonical Bishops in the United States.

In 2016, he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood, given the rank of Archimandrite in 2019, and Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne in 2022. He served the parish of the Nativity-Assumption of the Theotokos in Cohasset, Massachusetts, from 2019 until his election to the episcopacy. He was elected as Bishop of Synadon by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople on March 22, 2022. He will serve as an Assistant Bishop to Archbishop Elpidophoros of America.

Photo: GOARCH/Dimitrios Panagos

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