

Archbishop Elpidophoros' First Appointment at School of Theology



Archbishop Elpidophoros of America appointed Archimandrite Athenagoras Ziliaskopoulos chaplain at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Boston, in charge of the worship life of the School and the orderly functioning of the Chapel.

It is the first appointment of Archbishop Elpidophoros at the School of Theology, which he has officially announced that he will reorganize. As *The National Herald* has revealed, the School of Theology is in a dire condition from administrative, academic, and financial points of view.

Archimandrite Athanagoras Ziliaskopoulos was until now Director of the Patriarchal Orthodox Theological Academy of the Archdiocese of Canada in Toronto.

He has known Archbishop Elpidophoros through a long time of through a long time of acquaintance and friendship. "We have known each other since our teenage years. He always stood out for his zeal, his learning, his determination, his seriousness, his simplicity, his contentment with modest things, his discernment,

his deep faith and his love for the Church. He has educated himself very broadly, has cultivated excellent administrative abilities, and has made exceptional academic contributions to Orthodox Theology. With an open spirit, a strong theological foundation and a disposition towards reconciliation, he has served in support of the Church's dialogue in every direction."

He also said that the Archbishop "loves man not merely as a fellow human being but as the image of Christ and is totally consumed with the ecclesiastic ministry of God's people. He has an incredible courage to defend what is right until the end, both at the human-pastoral level as well as the ecclesiastical level. He is known for his insight and ability to see light and hope in the future – very much in keeping with his name – when everyone else sees darkness and despair. But what characterizes him above all is his sacrificial love for the Mother Church and the Ecumenical Patriarch. With him, we turn the page and engage ourselves in the good fight of our faith at all levels. His main concern is the Holy Cross Theological School. He envisages it as the light on the lampstand, the training ground for capable and well-educated clergymen, a pole of attraction for theological pursuits, and a center of excellence for Greek Orthodox education and civilization."

Fr. Ziliaskopoulos, Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne, was born in 1970 in Reutlingen, Germany. He spent his childhood in both Germany and in Greece with his parents Dimitrios and Fotini. His family is from the village of Thourio in Evros, and the village of Vlasti in the region of Kozani.

Fr. Athenagoras earned degrees at the undergraduate level in German philology and Orthodox theology from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. At the postgraduate level, he completed a program in German studies and pedagogy at the University of Frankfurt, as well as graduating from the Department of Pastoral and Social Theology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Fr. Athenagoras has also completed coursework at the University of Frankfurt in the areas of comparative religion, philosophy, Evangelical and Roman Catholic theology, and Islamic studies. In 2012, he was conferred a Ph.D. from the Department of Pastoral and Social Theology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on the basis of a doctoral dissertation titled *The Attitude of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) Towards the Papal Encyclicals After the Year 1965*.

Having spent several years on Mount Athos as a monk, he was ordained to the diaconate in 1997 and to the priesthood in 1998 at the Church of the Prophet Elijah of Frankfurt. In 2000, Fr. Athenagoras was conferred the title of Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne. From 1997 to 2017, he served as a priest in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Germany, and has participated in numerous ecumenical

conferences and dialogues.

Fr. Athenagoras also established an Orthodox chapel in the international airport of Frankfurt, one of the busiest airports in the world and has exercised a special pastoral charge over the university students in the Frankfurt area.

In 2017, Fr. Athenagoras relocated to Canada in order to serve as Dean of the Patriarchal Theological Academy of Toronto as well as Office Director of the then-Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto. Fr. Athenagoras also taught the course on World religions at the Academy while also serving as parish priest of the Church of Saint John the Theologian in Toronto as well as confessor for the broader Toronto area. On August 26, 2019, Fr. Athenagoras was transferred to the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology at the request of Archbishop Elpidophoros.



- Source: [thenationalherald.com](https://www.thenationalherald.com)