

Optimistic and unifying message from the New Metropolitan of Paphos, Gregorios



“It is a great honour for someone to serve the Metropolis of Paphos,” said the newly elected Metropolitan of Paphos, Gregorios, in his first public statements.

Archimandrite Gregorios Ioannidis, Protosyncellus of the Metropolis of Trimythous and Dean of the Theological School of the Church of Cyprus, was elected on Tuesday by the Holy Synod as the new Metropolitan of Paphos, receiving 11 votes, against one vote for Hieromonk Sophronios Stasinou and four blank ballots.

In his first remarks following the decision of the Holy Synod, the new Metropolitan of Paphos conveyed an optimistic message to the faithful of Paphos.

“I look forward to meeting and getting to know the wonderful people of Paphos... The doors of the Metropolis, once they open for me as well, will be open to everyone, to you and to every person,” he added. He also made special mention of the late Archbishop of Cyprus Chrysostomos II.

Asked about his election as Metropolitan of Paphos, he thanked God for deeming him worthy of the honour of this election.

“In the Church, we are all servants. We shepherd the flock of the Church of Christ, which He sanctified with His own blood. For nineteen years I have served the Metropolis of Trimythous. Today, the Holy and Sacred Synod, by a great majority as I have been informed, elected me to this new mission and ministry by the grace of God. Guided by the great history of the Church of Cyprus, we shall proceed according to the example of the Holy Great Fathers. We possess a great treasure on this land. The greatest institution is the Church of Cyprus, with twenty centuries of history and a great tradition within the firmament of the Orthodox Church. It is a great honour to serve the Metropolis of Paphos,” he said.

He continued by noting that it was in Paphos that the Apostles Barnabas and Paul preached and brought Christianity.

“Thus, with great joy, awe, and emotion, I received the news and the message from

the Synod, and now we make the sign of the Cross. Just as we have laboured all these years, so too we shall continue, for the glory of the Triune God and the salvation of us all," he noted.

When asked whether he had thought about his first action upon assuming the Throne of the Metropolis of Paphos, the newly elected Metropolitan replied: "No, at this moment I have thought of nothing."

"Only a few minutes ago the Synod informed me of the decision. There are no thoughts yet. The first thought is glory to the Triune God. We make the sign of the Cross. The Lord is the One who enlightens, strengthens, directs, and guides our steps. He Himself will illumine all that follows," he added.

When it was remarked that it was an honour for the Theological School that its Dean had been elected not merely a bishop, but effectively first among the hierarchs, the new Metropolitan responded that everything in the Church is an honour.

"Even the priesthood which I bear today is a great honour. Everything is an honour, provided that we ourselves honour it through worthy ministry and pastoral mission. Certainly, the Theological School was a very sacred and significant institution, a vision of the late Archbishop Chrysostomos II. I had the honour, from 2014 onward, to be invited by him, together with a team of people, to help establish and realise this vision, and today the School has reached its eleventh year of operation," he said.

Cyprus, he continued, is now becoming a centre of theology and theological dialogue, offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, while a doctoral programme is also being prepared.

"Certainly this too is an important development for the witness of Orthodox Theology in Cyprus and for the significance of the Church of Cyprus worldwide. Indeed, not by chance, next week this School will host one of the largest liturgical conferences in the world, the 10th International Liturgical Symposium of the Society for Oriental Liturgical Studies. The previous symposium was hosted at the Catholic University of America in Washington, perhaps the most important Catholic university in the United States, and this committee chose Cyprus and its Theological School, bringing together more than forty-five academics from various countries, universities, and research centres. Surely this is both a great honour and a great responsibility for all of us," he added.

Asked to address a message to the people of Paphos, the new Metropolitan said:

“My message is one of optimism. I eagerly await the opportunity to meet and know the wonderful people of Paphos.”

“I came to know them through the person of the late Archbishop Chrysostomos II, with whom I had the joy and honour of close cooperation for many years, especially because of the work of the newly founded Metropolis of Trimythous, and later through our daily collaboration in the work of the Theological School. Through this I came to know all of Paphos, its spirit, the beauty of its character, and the unique identity of its wonderful people. It is a great honour for me today to serve this remarkable people in Christ and together with Christ. I am certain that together we shall walk according to the Gospel and the great tradition and history borne by the Metropolis of Paphos,” he added.

Asked whether he would meet with his predecessor, Tychikos, the newly elected Metropolitan replied: “Those matters should be discussed with the Synod.”

“The doors of the Metropolis, once they open for me as well, will be open to everyone, to you and to every human being. I remember the advice of the late Archbishop Chrysostomos II when we went to the Metropolis of Trimythous: ‘The door of the Metropolis must always remain open.’ Therefore, it shall be open to all. Thank you very much for your time. May you always be well, and may you pray that we may all serve the truth,” he concluded.

“Gregorios is a Man of Peace”

The theologian and publications director of the Holy Metropolis of Trimythous, Mr. Andreas Zachariou, speaking on behalf of the staff and the Metropolis in general, said that they were deeply moved.

“We congratulate Gregorios, he truly deserved it. He is a balanced man, exceptionally educated, a professor at the Theological School, and we believe he will offer exactly what is needed during this difficult period through which the Metropolis of Paphos is passing,” he stated.

Asked whether his mission would be difficult, Zachariou replied: “It is difficult, which is precisely why I said earlier that his character, education, and knowledge make us believe that he will provide what is needed at this moment in the Metropolis of Paphos.”

When asked whether he would help calm tensions, Zachariou responded that this did not depend solely on Metropolitan-elect Gregorios. “He is a man of peace and dialogue. Of course, it also depends on others. But as far as Gregorios himself is

concerned, I believe he will certainly help in this matter,” he concluded.

Source: Cyprus News Agency (ΚΥΠΕ)

vema.com.au