

Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos elected Metropolitan of New Jersey



The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America joyfully announces that today, Thursday, October 1, 2026, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate elected His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos as Metropolitan of the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America received the news of the election with profound joy and thanksgiving to Almighty God, joining the clergy and faithful of the Sacred Archdiocese and the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey in proclaiming “ΑΙΙΟΣ!” to His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras.

Reflecting upon the election, Archbishop Elpidophoros stated:

“With profound joy and thanksgiving to God, I congratulate my beloved brother, His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of New Jersey, upon his election by the Holy and Sacred Synod of our Ecumenical Patriarchate. For many years, I have had the blessing of witnessing firsthand his devotion to Christ and His Church, his fidelity to the Mother Church of Constantinople, and the extraordinary care with which he has undertaken every ministry entrusted to him.



H.E. Archbishop Elpidophoros Officiated Orthros and Divine Liturgy on the Feast of St. Demetrios at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Astoria, NY on October 26th, 2025. Concelebrants with H.E. were Metropolitan of Buenos Aires Joseph and His Grace Bishop Athenagoras.

Today, his many years of faithful service open into a new chapter of his episcopal ministry. The Holy Metropolis of New Jersey receives a shepherd who knows and loves our Church, who has served Her faithfully, and who understands that the episcopacy is above all a ministry of sacrifice, presence, and love. I rejoice not only as Archbishop of America, but as his brother and concelebrant, and I assure him of my wholehearted love and support as he begins this sacred responsibility. We wish him many years and exclaim Αἰῶς!”

The Enthronement of His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of New Jersey will take place on Saturday, November 7, 2026, at the Cathedral of Saint John the Theologian in Tenafly, New Jersey at 11:00 am. On the following day, Sunday, November 8, His Eminence will celebrate his first Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral as

Metropolitan of New Jersey.

The clergy and faithful of the our Sacred Archdiocese offer their heartfelt congratulations and fervent prayers for His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras as he begins his archpastoral ministry in the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey, praying that our Lord Jesus Christ grant him strength, wisdom, and many years of fruitful service to His Holy Church.

His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of New Jersey was born Christos Ziliaskopoulos in 1970 in Reutlingen, Germany, and was raised in both Germany and Greece. During his young adulthood, he spent several formative years in the monastic life on Mount Athos, an experience that profoundly shaped his vocation and lifelong devotion to Christ and His Church.

He was ordained to the Holy Diaconate in 1997 and to the Holy Priesthood in 1998 by His Eminence Metropolitan Augoustinos of Germany. In 1999, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew elevated him to the rank of Archimandrite of the Ecumenical Throne.

For more than twenty years, His Eminence served the Church in Germany in extensive parish, pastoral, and administrative ministry, including as Hierarchical Vicar of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Germany for the states of Hessen and Rhineland-Palatinate. He also represented the Ecumenical Patriarchate in ecumenical theological dialogues and was active in Christian and interfaith initiatives. Among his pastoral accomplishments were the establishment of the first Orthodox chapel at Frankfurt International Airport, a 24-hour Orthodox crisis hotline, and the first Greek Orthodox youth camp in Germany. He also oversaw significant parish building and restoration projects.

In 2017, he relocated to Toronto, Canada, at the invitation of His Eminence Archbishop Sotirios of Canada, where he served as Dean of the Patriarchal Toronto Orthodox Theological Academy and as Office Director of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada.

In 2019, His Eminence came to the United States to offer his ministry to the Sacred Archdiocese of America and Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, where he initially served as Chaplain. In 2021, he was appointed Chief Secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod and Spiritual Advisor of the National Philoptochos Society and was subsequently entrusted with the direction of the Archdiocesan Department of Religious Education.



Archbishop Elpidophoros officiates the ordination of His Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos to the Holy Episcopacy. Photo by Orthodox Observer/Dimitrios Panagos.

On May 19, 2021, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate elected him Bishop of Nazianzos. He was ordained to the Holy Episcopacy on June 5, 2021, at Holy Cross Chapel in Brookline, Massachusetts, with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America presiding. In the years that followed, he continued his extensive service to the Sacred Archdiocese while also serving as Archiepiscopal Vicar of the Hellenic Orthodox Community of Astoria.

Metropolitan Athenagoras has an extensive academic background. He holds degrees in German Language and Orthodox Theology, including a Master of Theology and a Doctorate in Orthodox Theology from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His studies have also included pedagogy, German literature, Roman Catholic and Protestant theology, Judaism, Islamic studies, and comparative religion. His scholarly and ecclesiastical work has been particularly engaged with Orthodox theology, religious education, ecumenical dialogue, and interfaith relations.

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