

Met. Emmanuel of Gaul offers to create vicariate for parishes of Constantinople's former Russian Exarchate



Metropolitan Emmanuel of Gaul of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of France of the Patriarchate of Constantinople sent a letter yesterday to the priests of the Archdiocese of Russian Orthodox Churches in Western Europe, recently stripped of its exarchate status, offering to allow for its continued existence in a vicariate within his metropolis.

A translation of his letter has been published on [Orthodoxie](#).

Met. Emmanuel writes with a much more conciliatory attitude than Metropolitan Gennadios seems to be taking in his Metropolis of Italy where two parishes have already moved into the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, saying, "I am sending you this letter today to assure you I do not try by any means to dispossess anyone of anything."

He begins his article recalling the Patriarchate of Constantinople's unexpected decision announced on November 27 to revoke the Archdiocese's exarchate status,

and the invitation for you to join the [Greek] Metropolises of the countries where you are established.”

However, the Patriarchate’s explanatory communiqué of November 28 does not speak of an “invitation” but rather: “It is by pastoral concern that the ecumenical patriarchate has decided to integrate and connect parishes to the various holy cities of the ecumenical patriarchate in the countries where they are located.”

Nevertheless, Met. Emmanuel offers to establish a vicariate for the Russian Churches with the following characteristics:

“the preservation of the existing association, which will continue to manage the property belonging to it, and to function according to its own statutes, probably with some necessary adaptations;

the commemoration by His Excellency, Archbishop John, of His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew;

the guarantee, in keeping with the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s constant care about it, of the preservation of your Russian liturgical and spiritual tradition, as well as of your work of Orthodox witness in Western societies.”

The metropolitan also notes that he recently met with Abp. John and communicated these points to him in person. The General Assembly of the Archdiocese will meet on February 23 to decide how to respond to the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s November decision. Among the options under consideration are moving into the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, the Moscow Patriarchate, or the Romanian Patriarchate.

([Source: Orthodox Christianity](#))