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Fate of Archdioceses of America, Australia up for consideration by Ecumenical Patriarchate's Holy Synod this week



A closely watched Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate begins on Thursday at the Fanar-district Patriarchate of Constantinople — possibly one of the more important such sessions in recent memory.

Decisions to be taken are judged as significant for Orthodoxy, and particularly for the Greek Orthodox faithful in three major international centers of Orthodoxy and the Greek Diaspora: namely, in North America, Australia and Great Britain.

According to reports in expatriate Greek media, the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, is reportedly the recipient of pressure to preside over a Holy Synod that will deal with the leadership of the three very significant Greek Orthodox Archdioceses.

An opinion piece in the New York-based National Herald, for instance, calls on the Ecumenical Patriarch to act immediately, as Hellenism in the United States has reached its limits.

Meanwhile, a distinguished member of the Greek Diaspora in Australia told the Orthodoxia news agency that the situation is also at a critical phase for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese after the recent repose of the soul of the late Archbishop Stylianos.

The closely watched deliberations regarding the Greek Orthodox Church of Australia will also reportedly touch on whether the ecclesiastical jurisdiction will be divided or remain as a sole Archdiocese.

For instance, the Ecumenical Patriarch has fielded proposals by the Orthodox Metropolis of Melbourne, Victoria and Tasmania, to create

two separate metropolises there, given that a majority of the expatriate Greek community in Australia lives in the specific region.

According to sources, two Archimandrites that currently serve in Australia, considered as particularly hard-working and devoted to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, are front-runners – namely, Archimandrite Kyrillos Zisis, who up until recently was the chief of staff for the late Archbishop — as well as Archimandrite Elpidios Karalis, who currently serves in western Australia.

By all accounts, Bishop of Dorylaion, His Grace Nicandros, is a front-runner as a new Metropolitan of Adelaide and North-West Australia, if the Archdiocese is divided, as the latter is well-regarded by the Patriarch.

If the Archdiocese is not divided, and kept as a whole, then Metropolitan of France, His Eminence Emmanuel, is judged as a front-runner. His Eminence is currently viewed as the Ecumenical Patriarchate's unofficial foreign minister, with relevant responsibilities keeping him at the Patriarchate for long periods of time. Conversely, the same hierarch is viewed as a possible new Geron of Ephesus, which would mean he is the first-in-line after the Ecumenical Patriarch.