

13/01/2023

His Eminence Metropolitan Dimitrios of Xanthos Elevated



On January 10, 2023 at the suggestion of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate elevated His Grace Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos to the rank of Metropolitan and, as such, the see of Xanthos to the rank of Metropolis in his person.

Upon the news of the elevation of Bishop Dimitrios of Xanthos to Metropolitan, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America called Metropolitan Dimitrios in order to congratulate him on his elevation. Archbishop Elpidophoros expressed his wholehearted congratulations for this great honor and wished the newly-elevated Metropolitan much health, success, and dynamism from above in the year ahead. In response, His Eminence Metropolitan Dimitrios of Xanthos said, "I am deeply humbled and grateful to His All-Holiness and to the Members of the Holy and Sacred Synod for this elevation. It is an honor that I pray to be found worthy of."

His Eminence Metropolitan Dimitrios (Couchell) of Xanthos was born in 1938 in Greenville, South Carolina. He graduated from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in 1963 and thereafter continued studies at Yale Divinity School before being invited to join the staff of the Archdiocese in New York City and charged by His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos to establish a national Campus Ministry program for Orthodox college students.

Dimitrios Couchell was elected in 1977 to serve as President of Syndesmos, which was headquarter in Helsinki, Finland. After receiving the blessing of Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios, he traveled to many countries establishing contact with Orthodox young people. His term concluded in 1980 with the first World Orthodox Youth Festival, hosted by the Orthodox Monastery in Valamo, Finland. Archbishop Paul of Finland invested him as a member of the Order of the Holy Lamb, of the Orthodox Church of Finland.

In 1981, Archbishop Iakovos appointed him as the Executive Director of the St. Photios National Shrine in St. Augustine, FL. In 1983, he was ordained to the Diaconate and to the Priesthood. Fr. Dimitrios was elevated to the rank of Archimandrite in 1985. While serving the Shrine, he was asked to assume, also, responsibility for the Foreign Mission efforts of the Archdiocese. Two years later this became the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, an inter-Orthodox ministry under the umbrella of SCOBA.

In 1998, Fr. Dimitrios was elected Bishop of Xanthos by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Following his ordination to the episcopacy at the St. George Cathedral in Philadelphia, PA, Bishop Dimitrios was called to return to the Archdiocese in New York City, where he served as an auxiliary bishop to Archbishop Spyridon and then to Archbishop Demetrios. He was appointed Ecumenical Officer, responsible for the Inter-Orthodox, Inter-Christian and Inter-faith relations of the Archdiocese. At the same time, he served as General Secretary of SCOBA while also serving on the Executive Committee of the NCCC, on various committees of the WCC, and on the Board of the New York City Council of Churches.

In 1999, he was appointed by His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew to the delegation representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the meeting with Pope John Paul II for the Patronal Feastday of Sts. Peter & Paul.

In his 60 years of ministry to the Church, he has played a major role in the founding and nurturing of several Archdiocesan and inter-Orthodox ministries still active today including, but not limited to, being a founder of the OCF (Orthodox Christian

Fellowship), founding editor of the Orthodox Observer, founding Executive Director of the St. Photios National Shrine, and founding Director of the OCMC (Orthodox Christian Mission Center).

Following 43 years of service to the Sacred Archdiocese, Bishop Dimitrios retired in December 2007, but he has continued to stay active at the Holy Trinity parish in St. Augustine, FL.

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