

Historic First Synaxis of Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the USA



On Saturday, January 28, 2023, the First Synaxis of Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the USA convened in Los Angeles, California, under the presidency of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America. The hierarchs, twelve in all, represent the Orthodox ecclesiastical eparchies under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, namely the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, as well as the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox and Albanian Orthodox dioceses.

“As leaders of our communities at every level, we have the responsibility and privilege to voice the concerns of the Ecumenical Throne, and to provide advocacy for Her interests,” Archbishop Elpidophoros said in his opening remarks. He called the Synaxis an additional opportunity for the hierarchs to engage with one another and share their ideas:

“Most, if not all, of you have participated in the wonderful Synaxēs of the Ecumenical Throne at the Phanar. When His All-Holiness assembles us, it is a tremendous opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives with our fellow brethren of Asia Minor, as well as the bishops of the worldwide Diaspora. We can learn so much from each other if we are open to fresh viewpoints. That is why, since we are meeting as the Assembly of Bishops, I thought it providential and prudent for us to gather in a Synaxis, as Hierarchs in the United States of the First Throne of Orthodoxy.”

The Ecumenical Patriarch’s message to the hierarchs also underscored their responsibility to represent and express the principles and spirit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate— most importantly, the “supra-national character” at “the very core” its identity. “For those within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, cultural identity functions on the basis of the sacred canons and a healthy ecclesiology, without constituting a central criterion for the organization of church life,” His All-Holiness said.

Following the opening remarks, hierarchs discussed and shared information about their respective eparchies and familiarized themselves with the work of the

upcoming XII Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA, which is made of all active canonical Orthodox bishops, of every jurisdiction, in the United States.

Participating hierarchs in this historic first meeting include: His Eminence (H.E.) Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, H.E. Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, H.E. Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa, His Grace (H.G.) Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, H.G. Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, H.G. Bishop Apostolos of Medeia, H.G. Joachim of Amissos, H.G. Bishop Spyridon of Amastris, H.G. Bishop Timothy of Hexamilion, H.G. Bishop Ioannis of Phocaea, H.G. Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, H.G. Bishop Constantine of Sassima. Several additional hierarchs were unable to attend for health reasons.

The Synaxis of Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the USA is expected to meet every year.

“Just as there can be no son without a mother, there can be no hierarch of Constantinople without the Mother, which is the Mother Church of Constantinople,” Archbishop Elpidophoros said. “But I know there is no lack of loyalty and devotion to the Great Church by Your Eminences and Graces. Each of you exercises, in your own way, the interests and dignity of the Ecumenical Throne.”

goarch.org