

Episcopal Ordination of His Grace Bishop-Elect Theophan of Philomelion

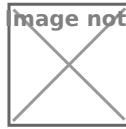


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On Tuesday, July 25, 2023, with the blessings of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, His Grace Bishop-elect Theophan of Philomelion was ordained to the episcopacy during the Divine Liturgy presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America at the Patriarchal Cathedral of Saint George, at the Phanar.

In his address, Archbishop Elpidophoros stated: “You, Bishop-Elect Theophan, are called to bring to your ministry in America the same ‘trans-national and spiritual force’ that His All-Holiness speaks of, to minister to the faithful over whom you shall preside in love. You have been elected to fulfill the place of your late predecessor and elder brother in the See of Philomelion, the ever-memorable Metropolitan Ilia. May his memory be eternal!”

His Grace offered the following response: “I was born and raised in Albania during the communist regime in a time when there was no church and organized church activities, but where there was faith in the hearts, souls, and minds of the faithful people. It was this kind of belief that kept kindled the light of the faith in me since my childhood, that light that in time grew in my heart and mind, becoming the fire that warmed my soul, longing for my Orthodox Faith my belief and for the service to the martyred Church of Christ, especially the one from my native country of origin, the martyred Albania... Since his All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, to whom I am grateful for the trust and blessings, ascended to the Ecumenical Throne, he has always kept in his mind and heart his role as Shepherd of the Oikoumene, the father of those who are scattered around the world.”

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros was joined for the ordination by His Eminence Metropolitan Job of Pisidia and His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey. Also attending this joyful celebration, as a sign of unity and support around the new ordained hierarchy, His Grace Bishop Andrei from the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (Orthodox Church in America), diocese that Bishop Theophan served as a priest for over a decade. A delegation from the Patriarchate

of Romania was also present.

During the ceremony following the ordination, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew congratulated the newly ordained Bishop and said: “You are called to serve the Albanian-speaking Orthodox faithful under our omophorion in the United States of America and Canada. You must do this with absolute respect to the Great Church and its Primate, and also in fraternal collaboration with our Exarch, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America. We pray to the God in Trinity, in one mouth and in one heart with all those present and sharing in your joy, that you may be granted a fruitful episcopal ministry for the glory of His heavenly name and for the benefit of the faithful entrusted to you as their pastor.”

His Grace Bishop Theophan of Philomelion will serve the Albanian Diocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the USA and Canada. He was elected on June 28, 2023, by the Holy and Sacred Synod at the proposal of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The date of the Bishop’s enthronement is forthcoming.

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