



The HOLY SYNOD
of the
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

August 1, 2022
Protocol 08/003

Albanian Orthodox Archdiocesan Council
c/o Michael Gregory, Lay Vice-Chairman
517 East Broadway
South Boston, Massachusetts 02127-4415

Dear Members of the Albanian Archdiocesan Council:

The blessing of the Lord be upon you!

In my most recent communication to you on April 11, 2022, I informed you that the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America had interviewed the three episcopal candidates previously approved to enter the vetting process. At that time, all three candidates were approved to take the next steps in the process, which included the completion of psychological examinations, personal interviews with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, and a final consideration by the Holy Synod.

The Holy Synod met in special session during the recent All-American Council (July 18-22, 2022) under the presidency of Metropolitan Tikhon, and further considered the matter of the episcopal candidates for the Albanian Archdiocese. As a result of those deliberations, I am pleased to inform the Archdiocesan Council that the Holy Synod has approved the following two priests as fully vetted candidates for nomination by a special assembly of the Albanian Archdiocese:

1. Igumen Nikodhim Preston
2. Priest Benedict Churchill

Each candidate (including those who were not approved) has been so informed of the Holy Synod's decision and, with this notification, the Archdiocesan Council should now proceed with the convening of a special nominating assembly per its bylaws (Article I, Section L).

In addition to this matter, Metropolitan Tikhon, as Locum Tenens of the Albanian Archdiocese, presented the request of the Lay Vice-Chair, Mr. Michael Gregory, that the Holy Synod delay the nomination and election process to allow further internal discussions on the future of the Archdiocese. The Holy Synod notes that we are coming up on the third year of episcopal vacancy in the Archdiocese following the repose of Archbishop Nikon, of blessed memory, and that canonical procedures require a timely filling of any episcopal vacancy. The Holy Synod further reminds the Archdiocesan Council that a similar urgency was likewise expressed by resolution of the Archdiocesan Assembly in September of 2021.

The Holy Synod recommends that the Archdiocese maintain the trajectory that is outlined by the canons of the Church, the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, and the Bylaws of the Albanian Archdiocese. None of this precludes the possibility of holding discussions on the internal life of the Archdiocese, though it should be emphasized that nothing of significance can be implemented without a diocesan bishop.

Please let me know if you have any further questions in this matter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Archbishop Michael

+ Michael
Archbishop of New York and New Jersey
Secretary of the Holy Synod of Bishops