

*The following text was provided by and published in Greek exclusively in The National Herald of New York, January 16-17, 1999, and in English, January 23-24, 1999. To subscribe to The National Herald call 718 784 5255*

---

**REPORT**  
**CONCERNING THE DISORDERLY STATE OF AFFAIRS**  
**IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA**  
**SUBMITTED**  
**TO HIS DIVINE ALL HOLINESS**  
**THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH**  
**BARTHOLOMEW**  
**AND**  
**THE HOLY AND SACRED SYNOD AROUND HIM**

**JANUARY 12, 1999**

**BY THE METROPOLITANS:**

**IAKOVOS OF KRINIS AND PRESIDENT OF CHICAGO**  
**ANTHONY OF DARDANELLION AND PRESIDENT OF SAN FRANCISCO**  
**MAXIMOS OF AINOUS AND PRESIDENT OF PITTSBURGH**  
**METHODIOS OF ANEON AND PRESIDENT OF BOSTON**  
**ISAIAH OF PROIKONISOU AND PRESIDENT OF DENVER**

## REPORT

### OF THE METROPOLITANS OF THE SACRED ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA CONCERNING THE CURRENT DISORDERLY STATE OF AFFAIRS IN AMERICA AND PRESENTING SUGGESTIONS FOR THE AVERTING OF THE CRISIS

January 9, 1999

To His Divine All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch  
Bartholomew  
and the Holy and Sacred Synod Around Him  
At the Fanar

Most Holy Father and Master,

Your Eminences Holy Synodical Members:

We have gladly accepted the invitation of the Mother Church to come to the Fanar and present ourselves before her Holy and Sacred Synod on the 12th of the current month of January 1999 for collective discussion and desirable resolution of the problems raised in this Eparchy of the Throne, which continue to distress the Church "to the great scandal and division of the flock."

We are grateful to the Mother Church for its positive response to our request, a response which we regard as clear proof of her love, concern and care toward us and the devout flock of this great Eparchy of the Throne.

According to the request of the Mother Church, we submit to her our present report. Responding to her invitation, we proceed "in the spirit of meekness and of seeking God's will which is good, pleasing and perfect" to report our views concerning the continuing disorderly state of affairs of the Archdiocese, and the measures to be taken for the averting of the crisis.

Respectfully we present our views concerning the measures to be taken in the main part of our report in order to save time, while in an addendum we add a review of the history of the crisis and its causes.

Your All Holiness and Holy Hierarchs of the Throne,

The Sacred Archdiocese of America was, only a while ago, the boasting of our Ecumenical Throne. It was the jewel of world-wide Orthodoxy. It enjoyed a leading position among all the religious groups in America, whether Christian, Orthodox, or not. This same Archdiocese is now found in crisis and nearly administrative dissolution and disintegration.

The Archdiocese is presently suffocating in an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, insecurity, lack of trust and vindictiveness. The majority of the clergy and laity have lost their trust in their ecclesiastical leadership, which during the last two and a half years has not been able to create and promote new visions and new dreams for the future. Instead of building on the strong foundations of the work of Archbishops Alexander, Athenagoras, Michael and Iakovos, the present leadership contends that it has found nothing remarkable in the Sacred Archdiocese. It has characterized our faithful as "plastic" and our ethos as unOrthodox and "Protestant." It does not appreciate our clergy. It is surrounded by persons whose main attribute is the fabled "blind obedience" and the so-called "loyalty." Those who

think otherwise are regarded as "antiarchiepiscopal" and sometimes "Iakovites."

The aforementioned so-called "loyalty" in the Church is not gained automatically, nor is it inherited, but a consequence and result of winning the trust of the faithful. And "obedience" in the Church cannot be "blind obedience." The general state of affairs and the atmosphere in the Archdiocese have created such a spirit of unbearableness and disillusionment that especially our young people no longer feel proud of their faith, the Church and our Archdiocese.

The marginalization of the Metropolitans and of the synodical system by the present leadership greatly scandalizes those who are informed about ecclesiastical affairs and the two-thousand-year history of our Holy Church. The excessive projection of the Sacred Monastery of Chrysovalantou and of those who go to extremes pertaining to the so-called "Orthodox tradition" and life creates anxieties both for the present and the future of our Church in America.

The impression is given that the present leadership of the Archdiocese is far more concerned with taking vengeance on its "enemies" than for the progress and increase of the Church. Thus, the devout people of God are distancing themselves not only from the Archdiocese, but much more so from the Ecumenical Patriarchate which even those least informed hold accountable for inertia and lack of intervention to correct what Your All Holiness rightly has characterized as "disorderly state of affairs" in our Sacred Archdiocese.

#### The Causes of the Crisis

After diligent study of the crisis of the Archdiocese, according to the evidence presented in the addendum of this report, we are led to the conclusion that the crisis which plagues the Archdiocese must be connected with the person of the Archbishop. The great majority of both the clergy and the laity regard the Archbishop as the one responsible for this crisis.

The basic cause of the crisis is the inexperience of the Archbishop and his lack of adjustment (or rather readjustment) to the American, and especially the Greek-American, reality. He appears to lack appreciation for the achievements of the Greek Orthodox community in America, of which to the contrary he is a severe critic and judge.

The Archbishop is regarded as insecure, and his insecurity is the source of his lack of trust in his co-workers. The Archbishop's deportment and manner of administration are judged by Roman Catholic observers themselves as being "hyperpapal." According to their incisive observation, not even the Pope enjoys our Archbishop's freedom of action, and the freedom to make arbitrary decisions without accountability. According to the same observers, the centralizing style of Archbishop Spyridon greatly exceeds a similar papal style.

Many clergy and laity accuse the Archbishop for his lack of Christian and pastoral love, as well as on account of his "paranoid" manner of dealing with his "enemies." Unfortunately, his use of qualifying adjectives, whether privately or even publicly, often proves problematic. Generally, he calls our Christians "plastic." He characterizes our priests as "goons," boorish and "mentally retarded." To the Metropolitans he sometimes attributes adjectives unbecoming of clerics, both the attributor and the attributed. Frequently, his use of language, whether in Greek or in English, unbecoming of a cleric, causes perplexity to hearers who do not know what to think and how to regard the Archbishop.

#### Measures To Be Taken To Avert The Crisis

Your All Holiness and Sacred Synodical Hierarchs,

With much sorrow, but also love toward the Archbishop himself, our Sacred Archdiocese of America, and the Mother Church, our Ecumenical Patriarchate, we arrive at the point of raising certain burning questions. Given that for all the factors of the crisis, which are explained at length in the addendum, the responsibility falls mainly, if not exclusively, on the Archbishop himself, this question is raised: Is the Archbishop able to change and for his part deal with the resolution of the causes of the crisis? Specifically:

- (1) Is he able to forgive, if they erred, the clergy professors and reinstate them as teachers in the School?
- (2) Is he able to cease the litigations against GOAL; and dialogue and reconcile with them, responding to their possibly just requests?
- (3) Is the Archbishop able to restore the Synodical System of administration in the Archdiocese; to acknowledge the canonical and constitutional rights of the Bishops and Metropolitan, without thinking that acting in this manner "he does them a favor," allegedly granting them "powers which he cannot give on the basis of the present Charter"; or without thinking that the Bishops are ambitious, lovers of prominence and seekers of power, whereas they truly seek but respect for their canonical rights assured by two thousand years of Orthodox life, which he has trampled and of which he has deprived them?
- (4) Is the Archbishop able, applying the Charter of 1977, to share administrative authority with the other Bishops, and govern according to the Orthodox tradition of two millennia, collectively and not autocratically and dictatorially?
- (5) Is he able, as he promised, to "upgrade" the Synod of Bishops instead of degrading and marginalizing it as facts have proven?
- (6) Is he able to restore the position of the Metropolitan as members of the Executive Committee of the Archdiocesan Council, as "co-administrators," i.e., with him and the other nine lay members?
- (7) Is he able to respect the Synodical Concept and the Synodical System of administration in the Archdiocese at all levels, affording the appropriate place which belongs to the Honorable Presbytery and the Diaconate in Christ?
- (8) Is he able to cease the division of the flock into Greeks and Americans, or otherwise into first and second categories of Christians?
- (9) Is he able to confine the previously uncanonical Bishops of the Sacred Monastery of Chrysovalantou to their duties in their Monastery, and give to his own assistant Bishops the opportunity to serve him?
- (10) Is he able to embrace the other Orthodox and promote the unity of Orthodoxy in America?
- (11) Is he able to restore the trust of the organization "Leadership 100" in the Archdiocese?
- (12) Is he able to appreciate the work of both clergy and laity of the Church in America, and ask forgiveness for the qualifying adjectives he let loose against the devout flock, the clergy, and the Metropolitan, in his letter of August 28, 1997 to His Divine All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch?
- (13) Is he able to cure his paranoia and insecurity, seeing "enemies" where none but friends exist, who

have the courage of their convictions according to American custom?

(14) Is he able to cease "interventions into alien sheepfolds?"

(15) Is he able to heal the division existing among both the clergy and the laity, which is due to the so-called "fundamentalism?"

(16) Is he able to cure his vindictiveness and aggressiveness, and replace them with compassion for the weaknesses of others, and with Christian love?

Unfortunately, the experience of two and a half years of Archbishop Spyridon's ministry leads us to the sorrowful conclusion to answer negatively to all of the above. We, the majority of the clergy and laity, and including ourselves, believe that it is not possible for the Archbishop to change. With Spyridon at the helm we are indeed "losing the Church" according to the Patriarchal expression.

Specifically, the extension of Archbishop Spyridon's stay in authority is fraught with the following dangers:

(1) Further divisions within and without the Archdiocese.

(2) Creation of more "paraecclesiastical" lay organizations.

(3) The financial support and gifts of the parishes to the Archdiocese, already in question, will become even more problematic. The parishes will continue to decrease their financial contributions and support. Some of them have already begun to withhold their financial contribution in expectation of change in realities in New York. The Archdiocese will thus find itself in a financial impasse fraught with many sundry disastrous consequences.

(4) The Archdiocese will lose its leading role in the Orthodox Church of America and the rest of the Christian and religious world, including the political world.

(5) The notions and discussions about autocephaly, now promoted by one of the lay organizations (OCL), will multiply, while the Ecumenical Patriarchate will be marginalized and regarded as irrelevant to the life of the Church in America.

Our unshakable opinion and conviction is that no possibility exists for Archbishop Spyridon to change. Consequently, it is up to the Mother Church, in her wisdom and prudence, to find the appropriate means to help the Archbishop himself but also to save the first and greatest Eparchy of the Throne, the Sacred Archdiocese of America, by reassigning him to a position appropriate and analogous to his office and by electing a new Archbishop according to the Constitutional Charter of 1977.

Your All Holiness and Sacred Hierarchs,

The situation of the previously splendid Eparchy of the Throne is at this time deplorable. Our Christians expect the speedy intervention of the Mother Church. If the Mother Church decides the reassignment of our Archbishop, we his brother co-bishops in America will do everything to achieve a smooth and the least painful possible transition for him and for the Church.

We hope that our brother, His Eminence, will also do his duty, placing the interest of the Church above his own personal interest. It is not easy for us to say, but we recommend to him in a brotherly way that it would be purposeful and beneficial both for him and the Church to submit to the Mother

Church his resignation as his predecessor precisely did.

Regarding the future, the undersigned are once again ready to offer their services in fidelity and devotion to the Mother Church. As in the past, we promise in total fidelity and devotion to the Mother Church our full support and love for the person whom the Mother Church will place in the leadership of our Sacred Archdiocese.

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip" all of us "in every good work to do His will, working" in us "what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory" and the dominion "unto the ages of ages. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Thus, reverently invoking the God-pleasing prayers and blessings of Your All Holiness and the Venerable Company of Sacred Hierarchs around You upon us and the flock over which the Mother Church has placed us as sacred Bishops, we remain,

With deep respect,

Iakovos of Krinis/President of Chicago  
 Anthony of Dardanellion/President of San Francisco  
 Maximos of Ainou/President of Pittsburgh  
 Methodios of Aneon/President of Boston  
 Isaiah of Proikonisou/President of Denver

## **ADDENDUM**

### **I. Historical Review of the Crisis**

We were informed of the news of the election of the new Archbishop with joy and we welcomed him enthusiastically upon his arrival in New York, as well as at his enthronement. From the beginning we promised him undivided cooperation and concord, despite the fact that from the beginning we received mixed signals concerning his character and the administrative structure of the Church, and specifically concerning synods and the synodical system of Holy Orthodoxy. The Archbishop on the one hand was promising that "he would upgrade the Synod," but on the other was saying in jest that "according to Gregory the Theologian, nothing is worse than episcopal gatherings." In reality Archbishop Spyridon degraded the Synod of Bishops.

The new Archbishop exhibited from the outset a certain irritability and insecurity, attacking invisible enemies. This we attributed to his inexperience, hoping that he would soon transcend the difficulties of his readjustment to the new world, which he had left as a young man, and with which he had lost contact until his return in 1994 as representative of the Mother Church to the Clergy-Laity Congress in Chicago and his arrival here as our Archbishop in September of 1996.

Unfortunately, the expectations of both clergy and laity were dashed. The passing of time did not help in his improvement but his worsening. The parish clergy was the Archbishop's first victim. The clergy of our Archdiocese, which for the most part is well educated, has shown excellent work. Despite this fact, it received the attacks of the Archbishop as being boorish and uneducated, as being "mentally retarded," as selfish and interested only in high and fat salaries and large parishes (compare the letter of the Archbishop to His Divine All Holiness dated August 28, 1997). Only a few months after his enthronement, during his visit to Constantinople with the representatives of the National

Presbyters Council, the Archbishop threatened them that, if they did not conform to his own mentality and thought, he would pursue dissenters and would find them "wherever they might hide in America" in order to punish them. "I am your Bishop. You will always have an Archbishop, but you will not always have Bishops. Do not try to hide behind your Bishops," the Archbishop is reported to have said.

Archbishop Spyridon attempted to apply a system of remuneration of the clergy which proved ungrounded and failed thunderously. Without previous study of the issue, and without the consultation of the Synodical Hierarchs, the Archbishop decided that "the remuneration of the clergy will be conducted by the Archdiocese." The disagreement over this issue, and especially the insecurity of the Archbishop, were two of the many reasons behind the departure of Fr. Alexander Leondis from the chancellorship. Subsequently, Fr. George Passias was appointed as Chancellor who was used for the implementation of risky decisions. These were made, and continue to be made, without the consultation of the Sacred Eparchial Synod.

An opportunity to show good will and cooperation by the Archbishop toward the Bishops and the Archdiocesan Council was promised, necessary, much discussed, but never realized revision of the Charter of the Archdiocese. His Grace Bishop Maximos of Pittsburgh enthusiastically accepted his appointment by the Synod as President of the Committee on the Revision of the Charter. He consulted with the Archbishop and his brother co-Bishops regarding the members who were to be asked to participate in the committee, which were representative of both the Dioceses as well as of experts in the Archdiocese, lawyers, professor of Canon Law of the Theological School, men and women.

When the committee was thus constituted, the president decided to call a meeting. The letter of invitation was prepared and was sent to the Archbishop for his information. It was then that, unfortunately, the insecurity and the centralizing style of the new Archbishop's character became manifest: the Bishop of Pittsburgh received a stern call from the *office* of the Archbishop not to proceed to call the committee to the meeting. No further steps were taken to convene this committee until the time the Archbishop appointed himself as president, and members of his own choice and absolute confidence, with the singular criterion being that of blind obedience to him, independent of representative composition or even of basic knowledge of our ecclesiastical life.

The Bishop of Pittsburgh was relieved of his duties as Locum Tenens of the Detroit Diocese in a truly strange manner: he was in a meeting with the administrative board of the regional choirs when he was informed by one of the participants that an hour earlier news from the Archdiocese was posted on the Internet that the Bishop of Pittsburgh was relieved of his duties and was dismissed from the office of Locum Tenens "because of an excessive work schedule" and that the duties of Locum Tenens were assumed by the "multi-overseer" Archbishop who added the Diocese of Detroit, in addition to Atlanta and New Jersey, under his jurisdiction as Locum Tenens. The Bishop of Pittsburgh returned quietly and without comment to his Diocese, not allowing this matter to become an issue.

One of the risky Archiepiscopal decisions, which was made not only without the consultation of the Bishops, but also without the consultation of the responsible bodies of the School, the Board of Trustees and its Administrative Council, "shook from the foundations" and from one end to another the Sacred Archdiocese of America. It concerns the known decisions of the dismissal of the four clergy-professors from Holy Cross School of Theology, that is, its clergy-president and three clergy-professors. The last three comprised the Disciplinary Council which recommended imposing sanctions against students who were found to be involved in the known incident violating the

regulations of the School. Through this dismissal, which was regarded as a violation of academic freedom and since then placed the School in a difficult position pertaining to the accrediting agencies in America, the impression was given of covering up that incident on the part of the Archdiocese, inasmuch as the professors opposed this coverup. In addition, the impression was given that the School does not respect its own regulations and that it is essentially devoid of discipline.

All these matters took place in a period when the Archdiocese was preparing for the welcome of His Divine All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and His entourage, to the United States. To the honor of both the clergy and the laity, despite the bitterness and pain they felt regarding the happenings in the Archdiocese of America, they received the Ecumenical Patriarch with respect and enthusiasm, placing in him all their hopes for the resolution of the ecclesiastical problem which had broken out, and which presaged the autocratic manner of the Archbishop as administrator and his total lack of cooperation with the Bishops and other ecclesiastical figures.

Despite our conviction that the Archbishop was in the wrong here, we did everything to support the Archbishop and protect his prestige, and to such a degree that we were misunderstood by many of our people and others. The greatest sacrifice was made by His Grace Bishop Isaiah of Denver, who accepted the responsibility of President of the School under these adverse circumstances, and whose work in the School was continuously undermined on the part of the Archdiocese. The brother can say more about this in his address.

The decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to promote the five eparchial Bishops to active Metropolitans of the Throne generated negative, unfortunately, reaction on the part of the Archbishop. He did not hide his bitterness, by means of open declarations against the Metropolitans, calling them ambitious and seeking to diminish and degrade them. Strong proof of the disposition to diminish the Metropolitans on the part of the Archbishop are the still prevailing withdrawal by him of their canonical and constitutional right to ordain the clergy of their eparchies, his intervention in the consecration of their churches, and his uninvited presence in episcopal churches and parishes often without the knowledge or consultation of the reigning local Bishop. To be sure, this matter was clarified in the presence of His All Holiness last September, who certified that the Metropolitans were not demoted to titular Bishops, but remain reigning Bishops of their Eparchies in America, while at the same time the title of Metropolitan of an active Metropolitanate was given to them based on the Charter of the Throne. Nevertheless, violations of this and disregard of the Venerable Patriarchal directions have not ceased until the present time. The bitter negative comments against the five Metropolitans and their "demonization" as ambitious, lovers of prominence, hungry for power, and zealous seekers of authority, have not ceased.

The lay organization GOAL (Greek Orthodox Lay Leaders) was created as a reaction to what the lay people characterized and still characterize as abuses of power on the part of the Archbishop, breaches and violations of the Charter of 1977, denial of the rights of the laity, and especially the offering of opinion on administrative matters, and most especially in the case of the Holy Cross School of Theology and the unlawful dismissal according to them of the four clergy-professors of the School. In regard to this case, and up until the Clergy-Laity Congress in Orlando, the Bishops helped and supported the Archbishop, having co-signed with him an encyclical to the devout faithful calling all to unity. One of us composed a treatise condemning, without naming it, the movement of the laity as "paraecclesiastical," while at the same time it recommended dialogue with them for the resolution of differences between them. Such resolution proved impossible by what was characterized as intransigence on the part of the Archdiocese regarding the terms of dialogue. Therefore, in their gathering in Chicago, over four hundred lay people from throughout America asked, as is known, for



the removal of the Archbishop. The relations between them and the Archdiocese have not been settled, but further worsened, which ought not to have occurred, particularly because of taking them to civil courts.

At the end of April 1998, a scandal broke out at the Sacred Archdiocese because of the signing of a contract to buy a luxurious residence for the Archbishop without the consultation of the Archdiocesan Council and its Executive Committee. The contract was illegally signed by the Chancellor, Fr. George Passias, and the legal counsel of the Archdiocese, Mr. John Mavroudis. A down payment of \$140,000 was deposited which was lost when the Executive Council, in which then the Bishops also participated, refused to approve by way of "rubber stamp" the prearranged purchase. A consequence of this attempt was the disappointment and resignation of the lay president of the Archdiocesan Council, Mr. A. Spanos. Similarly, a consequence of the free expression of the view of the Bishops for the purpose of protecting the Archbishop and the Archdiocese was the Bishops' ostracism and expulsion from the Executive Committee of the new Archdiocesan Council on the part of the Archbishop.

In the beginning of May 1998, the then Protopresbyter Fr. George Papaioannou, had been invited to give an address at the Theological School as part of the lectureship program in honor of Patriarch Athenagoras. His topic was: "The Crisis in the Church as Opportunity for the Creation of a Brighter Future." Immediately upon hearing of "crisis," the Archdiocese intervened and canceled the lecture. The election of Fr. Papaioannou as Bishop of Komanon and his ordination the following month, in no way settled his relations with the Archbishop.

The last Clergy-Laity Congress in Orlando was perhaps the worse in the annals of the Archdiocese. The prevailing spirit of it was that of policing and lack of freedom of expression. The division into two warring camps--the "followers of the Archbishop" and the "opponents of the Archbishop"--was clear from the outset and became more clear as the Congress progressed. The Congress was deprived of the right to bring new issues to the floor "for the good and the welfare of the Church" as was done in the past.

When the controversial issue of the School was presented before the Committee on Institutions, it was stated to the committee that it could not bring this issue for decision to the plenary session. Thus the committee brought the issue before the plenary not for decision but for "recommendation" because new, strange and unheard of regulations were interjected into the police-controlled Clergy-Laity Congress, reminiscent of the "bullying tactics" of the Middle Ages. According to these strange and unheard of but deliberate regulations, "only issues proposed by the regional Clergy-Laity Assemblies could be considered for decision by the Clergy-Laity Congress of the Archdiocese." Thus, the Clergy-Laity Congress could make only a recommendation concerning the Theological School and the reinstatement of the four clergy-professors, which recommendation was of course totally disregarded. Another "recommendation" concerning more adequate representation on the Committee for the Revision of the Charter was also totally disregarded. And all was disregarded, despite the public promise of the Archbishop that he would devote "loving reflection" on the "blow" which the Clergy-Laity Congress gave him by rejecting both of his decisions, the arbitrary dismissal ("slaughter") of the clergy-professors, as well as his Committee on the Revision of the Charter which was appointed in a dictatorial manner by him alone, and to which he appointed himself president.

A negative influence on the relations between the Archbishop and the Bishops dramatically occurred with the reading of the deliberate, previously arranged, and despicable opinion of Mr. V. Pheidias, Professor of the Theological School of the University of Athens, which was read, but should not have

been, at the Committee on Administration, despite the recommendation of the chair to the contrary. At it is known, that opinion calls the Bishops "ambitious" and "lovers of prominence," thirsting after administrative power, privileges, leadership, etc. The reading of this opinion rendered a critical blow to the relations between the Archbishop and the Bishops, especially when it was revealed that a Venerable Patriarchal Letter pertaining to the issue of the elevation of the Dioceses to Metropolitanates, which had already put an end to this issue prior to the Bishops' letter to the Patriarch about it, was concealed and was not announced to the Bishops by the Archbishop as is customary. This concealment was regarded as a trick not in good faith which intended their humiliation. Indeed, this humiliation was realized through the reading of the aforementioned opinion. As is known, the Bishops answered appropriately and submitted their answer to the Mother Church.

The climate of the Clergy-Laity Congress was so oppressive that many of the delegates quickly left for home, thus voting by their absence, or rather voting against the badly acted matters in Orlando.

It should be noted that all these matters, which have been presented up to this point concerning our differences with the first among us, had been discussed at the Fanar before His Divine All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch and Archbishop Spyridon, when four of the five Metropolitans were present. It was asked of all of us to cooperate for the resolution of our differences with the Archbishop. Indeed, the Metropolitans cooperated but, unfortunately, the first among us did not change.

During the meetings of the new Archdiocesan Council in New York at the end of September of last year, there was an announcement of the expulsion and ostracism in essence of the Metropolitans from the Executive Committee of the Archdiocesan Council. Similarly, it was now "officially" announced that the Archdiocese was filing a suit against GOAL for illegal use of the Archdiocese mailing list, news that had already been published in the newspapers some two weeks before. The Synod knew nothing about this announcement, despite the fact that it held a meeting with the Archbishop on the previous day. But the Archdiocesan Council and its Executive Committee were similarly disregarded. The decision was, as usual, made by the Archbishop and his immediate co-workers in the Archdiocese, apart from the Synod and the other Archdiocesan bodies. First and above all, however, the decision was made apart from the Mother Church which, according to the sacred canons, has the last word on this issue.

When the Archbishop was asked by the Metropolitan of Dardanellion if the Mother Church gave permission to file the suit, the first among us answered that he had written to the Patriarch concerning this matter. But again, as the Metropolitan of Dardanellion and the Bishop of Komanon, among other speakers, rightly observed expressing the feelings of the Hierarchy on the basis of reality rather than law, the aforementioned suit was regarded not only by the Metropolitans, but also by a great part of the clergy and laity interested in the ecclesiastical affairs, as having a "bad taste."

Having asked and received the blessing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Metropolitans castigated the filing of the suit, just as all legal suits from any side, as being destructive of the unity, peace and generally the work of the Church in America. Clergy and laity approved this act of differentiation of our responsibilities from those of the first among us, apart from the first and his co-workers who still ask themselves by what right did we write addressing "the flock of the Archbishop!" Our position, which we clarified in the explicatory letter to the Archbishop, was and remains the same; that is to say, that the Church wrongly entangled itself in legal quarrels with its children, and that the sacred moneys diligently collected from our Christians cannot be wasted in legal quarrels without accountability; and for the purpose of feeding the small-mindedness and vindictiveness of the first

among us who is unable to forgive and overlook the possible weaknesses of the faithful who in good faith and according to the custom of this land ask from time to time justifiable questions about the financial affairs of the Archdiocese, or about the polity of our ecclesiastical leaders, especially when it appears odd, if not something else, to say the least.

The last legal action against GOAL, which is the appeal exercised by the Archdiocese after losing the judgment, is ample proof that the first among us is unable to be taught by his own mistakes. It is possible in every way that he will lose the appeal, while obstinately continuing his vindictive tactics which lead our Church to nothing edifying, whereas the waste of the sacred moneys continues with the collusion of the nine lay members of the Executive Committee who were lately appointed by the first and are under his control.

This is the climate in which the past year has very recently ended, while the prospects for the year that has just begun, under the uninspired and essentially non-existent leadership of the first among us, are less than encouraging. We now move to touch on a number of the more troublesome and critical issues, which are regarded as the main contributing factors behind the crisis, reserving the opportunity to orally complete our report which is as short as possible.

## **II. Main Contributing Factors to the Crisis**

According to our humble opinion, the following can be regarded as some of the main factors contributing to the crisis:

### **1) Holy Cross School of Theology**

For more than six decades Holy Cross School of Theology has offered hundreds of clergy to the Church. Among them are able Hierarchs as well as theologians of the first rank. This School, which constituted the boast of the Archdiocese, is now being led to wither on account of illogical and thoughtless moves. Veteran theologians have been removed and exceedingly promising young ones feel insecure and threatened. They have collectively sent applications to other academic institutions where professional security and academic freedom exist. Some of them have already made the transition.

What is more tragic is that some of the students who are among the most promising are leaving the School and transferring to other theological schools, specifically that of St. Vladimir. The latter school has never had more than ten Greek students, and the number is continually rising. The students feel insecure in our School, and far more insecure as far as serving the Church in the future as priests. Each person can draw the easy conclusion as to why things are such.

In any event, the majority of our Christians interested in ecclesiastical affairs will not rest, and will not be satisfied, until, according to them, slighted justice is restored through the reinstatement of the four dismissed clergy-professors as teachers in the School.

### **2) Relations between the Archbishop and the Metropolitan**

The relations between the Archbishop and the Metropolitan, which have recently become tense, can be regarded as one of the main causes of the crisis. The Archbishop remains with the impression that the Archdiocese belongs to him and only to him. This explains the so-called "interventions into alien sheepfolds," as also the visits to parishes of the other Metropolitan without their permission, or even without consultation, the celebration of ordinations of their own clergy candidates, his involvement in the consecration of their churches, the threats toward priests who do not belong to his jurisdiction but

to other jurisdictions, and the like. In this case, it is a matter of clear circumvention of the Charter of 1977, and specifically the articles which pertain to the *Synodical administration* of the Archdiocese (**Articles 5, 6, and 7: The Archbishop together with the Synod of the Bishops** bears the responsibility for the administration of the Archdiocese, and **Article 15**, concerning the *Synodical election of new Bishops*, whether assistant or eparchial Bishops). Similarly, the Archbishop circumvents **Article 8, concerning the rights and responsibilities of the Bishops**, which grants to the eparchial Bishops all the rights afforded to those Bishops during the course of Church life for nearly two thousand years, for example the consecration of the churches of their Eparchy, the ordination of the clergy of their Diocese, and the right "of installation on the Bishop's throne," that is, of the exclusive right to preside at the Divine Eucharist celebrated in his Eparchy, while no other Bishop has the right to sit in his episcopal throne.

All these--visits to and the celebration of services in parish churches, which belong to the jurisdiction of other Bishops and Metropolitans, without invitation from, permission by, consultation with, or at least informing the local Bishop; ordinations of all clergy by the Archbishop; the consecration of sacred churches by him; the establishment of abbots in monasteries belonging to other jurisdictions, and the celebration of Door Opening Ceremonies at monasteries and churches of other jurisdictions without consultation with, invitation by and permission of the canonical local Bishop/Metropolitan--in no way favor good relations between the Archbishop and the Metropolitans.

Despite the above breaches of the Archbishop, and the attested understanding and tolerance on the part of the Bishops for the preservation of peace, the Archbishop has often accused and continues to accuse the Metropolitans of seeking powers beyond those granted to them by the Constitutional Charter, contending that the Metropolitans have turned against him because he does not grant them those powers, whereas the truth is that the Bishops request respect for their abrogated constitutional rights and privileges, and nothing else.

### **3) Lack of Conciliarity and Synodal Manner in the Administration of the Archdiocese**

With regard to conciliarity and the synodical administration of the Archdiocese, enough has already been said about the autocratic manner of administration by the first among us, despite his initial assurance that he would "upgrade" the Synod. In reality, he degraded it, placing on its agenda only unessential issues, whereas the essential administrative and other issues have been placed on the agenda of the Archdiocesan Council and its Executive Committee.

The Synod of Bishops is, and must be, the highest administrative body of the Archdiocese according to both the sacred canons and the Charter of 1977. A member of the present Archdiocesan Council and its Executive Committee revealed his ignorance, but also spoke the truth, about how some of the lay members of the "new order" view the administrative structure of the Archdiocese, having, according to them, the following order of importance and authority:

- (1) Executive Committee
- (2) Archdiocesan Council
- (3) Synod of Bishops (1)

The order has been reversed. The head has become the feet and the feet head. Why then do we accuse Protestants of oddities when such are lived in our own Archdiocese itself?

Conciliarity (Slavic *Sobornost*) is the characteristic attribute of the Church of Christ, and particularly of Orthodoxy. This attribute has been lost by our Archdiocese which is administered, on the one

hand, in a "hyperpapal" manner (inasmuch as the Roman Pontiff, according to a Roman Catholic observer, does not possess the "power" and immunity of our own Pontiff), and, on the other hand, in a Protestant manner (that is, according to the system of Protestant *consistories*, since all the administrative power is found in what is essentially an administrative committee of nine lay members of the Executive Committee).

The Metropolitans have been accused and "demonized" repeatedly as ambitious, lovers of prominence and zealous seekers of power. Nothing is more untrue. That which we seek is integrity with Orthodoxy and the Charter of 1977. We are an episcopal, not laicistic Church. We are the Church described by St. Ignatios the Godbearer: "where the Bishop is, there also is the Church," and "let nothing be done without the Bishop," while in the "nothing" are also included the administrative and financial issues and concerns. We are the Church of Canon 34 of the Holy Apostles according to which nothing essential is done by the Bishops of an ecclesiastical region without the first among them, but also the first among them does nothing essential without the Bishops around him, in order that peace and harmony may reign, and the Name of our Triune God be glorified. It is not possible for peace and harmony to exist when conciliarity, synodical spirit and synodical life are lacking.

#### **4. The Laicism of the Executive Committee and the Archiepiscopal Inner Circle**

Unfortunately, the present Executive Committee is governed by a laicistic spirit as was expressed by one of its members who placed the Synod under the Archdiocesan Council and the Executive Committee. The whole administrative authority of the Archdiocese has been given to the latter committee since all the administratively serious decisions are made by this committee. The Metropolitans have recently been expelled from it, which should not have occurred, and they have not participated in the serious decisions pertaining to the wasteful use of money, which they laboriously collect, in vindictive law suits such as that against GOAL. What was recently stated is characteristic, that the Archbishop did not want to appeal the court's decree but that the decision was made by the lay members of the Executive Committee who are ignorant of the sacred canons prohibiting the lawsuit, especially without the permission of the Synod of Bishops and of the Mother Church. If this is indeed true, then, reasonably, the question is raised: where is the leadership role and responsibility of the Archbishop?

The same spirit prevails as well in the Archiepiscopal Inner Circle, the Archbishop's advisors who overwhelmingly influence him to make mistaken decisions apart from the Synodical system of the Church, that is, the Synod of Bishops.

It is not possible for peace to be restored without the necessary correction of this basic ecclesiological and unorthodox error of laicism.

#### **5) The Degraded Role of the Honorable Presbytery and of the Diaconate in Christ (regrettably non-existing in its true form)**

The Honorable Presbytery and the Diaconate in Christ should always play a main role in the exercise of the Conciliarity of the Church. As is known, according to St. Ignatios the Godbearer, the Presbytery on the one hand holds the position of advisor to the Bishop, and the Diaconate in Christ on the other hand holds the position of Christ as servant. It would be a welcome act to restore the Diaconate in Christ as happened for only two years during the ministry of the previous Archbishop Iakovos. Unfortunately, neither disposition, nor time were found for this issue to be put on the agenda of the Synod. In any event, the value of the Honorable Presbytery which is fully competent, despite the negative "qualifying" adjectives attributed to it by the Archbishop, has not been

sufficiently actualized.

The cry of more than one hundred priests castigating the Archdiocese for lack of love, and supporting the Metropolitans in their request for the restoration of conciliarity, justice, and peace with justice in the Archdiocese, has not been heard and accepted by the Archbishop up to now. To the contrary, these priests are called "retired and retarded." Nothing of this is true because only a few are retired, whereas the majority of them are among the most educated and successful actively serving priests of the Archdiocese.

All the priests of the Dioceses which have a Bishop, and even of the Diocese of Detroit which is "without one," essentially support the position of the Metropolitans regarding the need to restore the synodical institution and administrative system of the Archdiocese of America. The whole body of the Clergy Brotherhood of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, as well as the clergy of other Dioceses, have unreservedly expressed themselves on behalf of such restoration as the only means by which to avert the present crisis of the Archdiocese. The parish priests appeal to His All Holiness, to the Archbishop, and to the Sacred Eparchial Synod for the restoration of conciliarity in the Holy Archdiocese. Indeed, without such restoration, the present crisis will continue to plague the Church and will become worse with time.

#### **6) The Division into Greeks and Americans**

The Archbishop has caused another division, which should not have happened, between Greeks and Americans. In a previous letter of ours to the Mother Church we noted this danger. A daily Greek-language newspaper has published an interview with the Archbishop in which he is reported to say that his supporters love Greece and the Greek language, whereas his enemies do not speak Greek with each other and have separated themselves from Greece.

The devout people of the Lord are divided by such declarations into Greeks and Americans, Archiepiscopals and anti-Archiepiscopals, or even Iakovites and Spyridonites, Greek-speaking and English-Speaking, pro-Greek and anti-Greek, or even conservatives and progressives, modernists and traditionalists. This kind of division must stop.

Similarly, it must be said in passing that lately the Archbishop has identified himself in an excessive and even exclusive manner with the "little Greece" of Astoria and Flushing, causing the departure of Greek Americans. Through such actions the Archbishop has become the cause of split and division in the Omogeneia and the Christ-named faithful of the whole country.

#### **7) Metropolitan Paisios of Tyana and Bishop Vikentios of Apameia**

In a previous letter of ours we have already written about these two formerly uncanonical Old-Calendarists, whom, unfortunately, the Christians of the Archdiocese do not esteem on account of their previous as well as present manner of conduct. These two hierarchs, having totally substituted for themselves the presence of the Eparchial Metropolitans or Assistant Bishops at the side of the Archbishop, are virtually the only permanent escorts of the Archbishop, very visible at the Archdiocese, and at times contributing to or even taking a leading role in the division between archiepiscopals and anti-archiepiscopals.

In a general way, objective critics of the Archdiocese and its relations with the Old-Calendarist Bishops of the Sacred Monastery of Chrysovalantou observe that "instead of them adapting to the Archdiocese, the Archdiocese is adapting to them."

### **8) Fanatical Adherents and Super-Orthodox (Fundamentalists)**

Contributing factors to the division of our Christians are certain excesses which are not necessarily the creation of the Archbishop or the Monastic Ephraim, but are related to them because some the clergy and laity, for their own selfish purposes, invoke the authority of both. Conservatism is one thing, fanaticism another. Traditionalism is one thing, "super-Orthodoxy" and "fundamentalism" other things.

A simple example of the Archbishop's entanglement in the above issue is his inexcusable persistence in the "Helladic" external appearance of the clergy.

### **9) The Other Orthodox**

It is unfortunately known that neither does the Archbishop esteem most of the other Orthodox of SCOBA, nor do they esteem our Archbishop. This is deplorable because the other Orthodox usually and regularly look to the Greek Orthodox and the Ecumenical Patriarchate for direction. Our failure in this area is a serious breach of our duty in a extremely serious area of our responsibility and mission as a Greek Orthodox Archdiocese representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America.

Unfortunately, despite expectations to the contrary, Archbishop Spyridon is not able to play a leading role in this area of the other Orthodox in America.

### **10) Leadership 100**

Leadership 100, an organization comprised of faithful and devoted lay supporters of the Archdiocese, feels "totally betrayed" by the Archbishop who has not kept his promises to the organization. The result has been that new members do not join, and the old ones do not fulfil their commitments. According to the president of the organization, Mr. George Kokalis, the organization has lost substantial funds amounting to many millions of dollars during the last two years. A radical change is needed in the relations between this organization and the Archdiocese which, in our estimation, cannot be realized under Archbishop Spyridon.

