



THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX EPISCOPATE OF AMERICA

The Most Reverend Dr. NATHANIEL Popp, Archbishop

June 29, 2017

Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

Reverend Fathers and Beloved Faithful of our God-protected Episcopate:

With profound sadness, I share with you the news received from the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America on the morning of June 28, 2017, in regard to the status of our former Vicar Bishop Irineu Duvlea.

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America met on June 21, 2017, at St. Demetrios Church in Jackson, Michigan, and convened a Spiritual Court to hear and consider certain accusations brought against Vicar Bishop Irineu. Following the review and consideration of the evidence presented, the Holy Synod determined that Bishop Irineu should be deposed from the episcopacy and the ranks of the clergy and reduced to the state of lay monk.

I was not present at the meeting of the Synodal Court. The decision of the Holy Synod of Bishops was difficult and required spiritual discernment and thoughtful consideration on the part of the participating hierarchs. As we were notified by the Secretary of the Holy Synod, the accusations brought against Bishop Irineu were canonical infractions which required careful review, consideration, and discussion, based on canonical, disciplinary, hierarchical, moral and pastoral order. All of the evidence presented to sustain the accusations against the former Bishop Irineu was previously compiled and verified by professionals competent in church and civil matters.

As a result, the decision of the Synodal Court is solidly grounded in accordance with the canonical and hierarchical discipline of the Orthodox Church. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon emphasized in his letter addressed to our Episcopate, that: “The bishops have a God-given responsibility to address the good order of the Church and the continuing leadership and oversight by brother bishops. We are bound to this primarily by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and by the canonical tradition of the Church. Therefore, we must always take matters concerning bishops seriously and respond in the proper pastoral way for all concerned.”

As the father of our hierarchical Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, I ask you to pray for the monk Irineu and for his salvation. It is not easy to make this announcement to my spiritual children because this kind of news can result in sadness for some and scandal for others. Nonetheless, we must not forget that both clergy and faithful are bound to respect the hierarchical nature of our Church and her discipline. In this sensitive time in the life of our Episcopate, we must be united and strive for spiritual peace and love before God and our neighbor as much in word as in deed. We exhort you to take to heart the words of the Holy Apostle Paul: that we may “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you (we) have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3).

Also, I ask you to keep me in your prayers as I, your shepherd, pray for you. To carry the yoke which the Lord has placed on my shoulders, when the Church called me to serve as a bishop, is not an easy task; but, its weight becomes lighter through your prayers, love and support, so that together we may give a good response before the dread judgment seat of Christ.

Your father and fervent intercessor before God,

A handwritten signature in blue ink. It begins with a stylized 't' with a crossbar, followed by 'NATHANIEL' in a cursive script.

+NATHANIEL, Archbishop