



DORMITION
OF THE VIRGIN MARY

ΚΟΙΜΗΣΙΣ
ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ

Greek Orthodox Church of the Hamptons

July 6, 2020

Saint Sisoës the Great

Mr. Constantine Caras, Archon Skevophylax
Chairman, Archdiocese Council Administration Committee

Dear Gus,

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with abundant gratitude for your service to our Church over the decades. I write to you on the Feast of St. Sisoës, the disciple of Anthony the Great. Sisoës knew the vanity of clinging to position and power, and wept before the tomb of Alexander the Great saying “O Death, who can escape thee?” He reminds all of us of our fleeting moment on this world’s stage. I share his icon with you (below), the very one I keep in my office above my head as a reminder of our need of humility in the face of our mortality.

As you may recall, two years ago we spoke about the resolutions (attached) that I thought would be salutary for the life of our Archdiocese. At that time, you did take them to the former Archbishop who rejected them out of hand, the Resolution about age limits being the obvious reason. Nevertheless, our Archdiocese turned the corner last year with the election of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, and there is now another opportunity to do what is right for the Church, rather than for personal agendas.

All of us remember the pain across the Church as former Archbishop Demetrios refused to retire, even after numerous requests from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in the face of a collapsing Archdiocese, and when he had already surpassed his ninetieth birthday! To this day division remains in the Archdiocese, between those who were begging for an end to a degenerating Archdiocese and those who supported the then archbishop, regardless of his advanced age and the obvious mismanagement in Church affairs.

It seemed to me then, and even more to me now, that having a uniform retirement policy would have solved the issue without any of the rancor or divisiveness engendered by his refusal to do what was clearly best for the Church. A retirement age is a simple and apolitical solution that is reassuring to the clergy of every rank. As our esteemed Ecumenical Patriarch often states: “above everything is Christ and the Church.”

FATHER ALEXANDER KARLOUTSOS, PROTOPRESBYTER

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Additionally, should the Resolution on the pension program be adopted, and with the Eleventh Hour salvation of the Plan underway after literally decades of neglect, both Resolutions would have a salubrious effect on the life of all members of the hierarchy, the presbytery, and the diaconate. I am convinced that my brother priests are rightfully pained that their respective spiritual fathers have little or no concern for the clergy's financial welfare. The corporate pension plan that was adopted years ago has undermined the Lord's commandment that the greatest amongst us will be the greatest servant.

As you will note, I am copying the Archbishop and all the Metropolitans of the Holy Eparchial Synod, as well as the Presidents of the Archdiocese Presbyters Council, the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres, the Retired Clergy Association and the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee, because I believe their support for such reasonable and beneficial proposals would be the logical consequence of their reading of these Resolutions.

Please let me know how I can be of help in advancing these Resolutions, and I thank you in advance for your consideration and that of the Administration Committee of our Holy Archdiocese.

Faithfully yours,



Father Alexander Karloutsos
Protopresyber of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

CC: His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America	Father Mark Leondis President of the Archdiocesan Presbyters Council
His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Boston	Presbytera Nicole Keares President of the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres
His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Denver	Father Eugene Pappas President of the Retired Clergy Association
His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Atlanta	Father James Paris Chairman of the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee
His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Detroit	
His Eminence Metropolitan Savas Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Pittsburgh	
His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos Metropolitan of the Metropolis of San Francisco	
His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos Metropolitan of the Metropolis of New Jersey	
His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael Metropolitan of the Metropolis of Chicago	

RESOLUTION REGARDING RETIREMENT OF CLERGY AND TERM LIMITS FOR LAITY

WHEREAS, as the Psalmist has declared: “As for the days of our years, in their span they are seventy, and if we have strength perhaps eighty; and what is more than these is toil and travail” (Psalm 89: 10,11 LXX);

WHEREAS, the Holy Archdiocese of America (hereinafter the “Archdiocese”) does not now possess a standard for retirement of its clergy and lay leadership;

WHEREAS, the pastoral example of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) is such that all bishops must submit their retirement to the Holy Synod at age 75 (Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, Article XV.1.25);

WHEREAS, the pastoral example of the Roman Catholic Church is such that all bishops must submit their resignation to the Pope at age 75 (Code of Canon Law, Article 2, Canon 401 §1), and parish clergy are required to submit their resignation to their diocesan bishop at the age 75 (Code of Canon Law, Chapter VI, Canon 538 §3);

WHEREAS, both of the aforementioned examples allow for archpastoral discretion as to the acceptance of the retirement (except the Roman Catholic Church where the Pope may only delay the retirement for two years until the age of 77);

WHEREAS, transparency is the foundation of any soundly governed organization and term limits and a prohibition against interlocking directorships foster and promote transparency;

WHEREAS the organizations of the Archdiocese do not currently have a requirement that all its officers, directors, trustees and committee members serve for a limited term so that transparency and sound governance may be achieved;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- A.** That the Archdiocese establish the age of 75 as the age that every clergyman must submit their retirement to the proper ecclesiastical authority. Proper ecclesiastical authority means: 1) for the Archbishop, all Metropolitans and all Bishops, the Holy and sacred Synod of the Most Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate; and 2) all other clergy to their ruling Hierarchy.
- B.** That those serving, whether clergy or laity, as officers, directors, trustees, committee members, shall serve for a maximum of five consecutive years and that this requirement of term limits applies to all organizations of or associated with the Archdiocese and its Metropolises, including but not limited to the Archdiocesan

Council, Metropolis Councils, Hellenic College and Holy Cross Seminary Board of Trustees and the National Philoptochos Society; and

- C.** That current members of the clergy and laity serving in their respective positions and who have reached or exceeded the age limit or term limit would be “grandfathered” in, and be exempt from this resolution for two years, after which if a member of the clergy they would submit their resignations pursuant to paragraph **A** above and if laity to the Archbishop for Archdiocesan/national level organizations and the presiding Metropolitan for Metropolis/local organizations.

RESOLUTION REGARDING CLERGY PENSION

WHEREAS, the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ is One and shared by grace with the ordained clergy who serve as Bishops, Priests, and Deacons;

WHEREAS, a pension plan for all clergy in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese was created and became effective as of January 1, 1973, hereinafter referred to as the GOA Pension Plan. Pursuant to the terms of the GOA Pension plan clergy based on years of service will receive a pension upon retirement of approximately 23.4% of the annual earnings;

WHEREAS, subsequent to the creation the GOA Pension Plan a supplemental benefit plan was created for the Hierarchs in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese which created an enhancement in addition to the benefit paid out by the GOA Pension Plan. The Hierarchs supplemental plan is hereinafter referred to as the Bishops' Plan. The Bishops' Plan is a general obligation of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. The Bishops' Plan supplements the hierarchs' retirement benefits so that they receive 80% of the annual earning upon retirement (inclusive of the payment of 23.4% of their annual earnings paid out through the GOA Pension Plan);

WHEREAS, the parish clergy of our Holy Archdiocese have the opportunity to participate in a Clergy pension program, while the Hierarchs receive a supplemental income upon retirement that is based not on the sacred servant/leader model of our Lord and Savior, but rather on a secular executive/corporate model, and which is vastly different from the parish clergy;

WHEREAS, the Holy Archdiocese is setting aright its past financial and administrative anomalies;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- A.** That effective 30 days after the enactment of this resolution, the Holy Archdiocese of America terminate and cancel all obligations under the Bishops' Plan and that there be one, singular and exclusive pension plan for all ranks of the priesthood, without any difference in respect to ratios of distribution based upon ecclesiastical rank;
- B.** That Bishops who are retired as of the date of the enactment of this resolution or who retire within 30 days of the date of the enactment of this resolution by submitting their written resignations to the Holy and sacred Synod of the Most Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate, will retain their rights, if any, under the terms of the Bishops' plan;
- C.** That said clergy pension plan be fully funded by a proper and righteous readjustment of Archdiocesan assets to insure the fund's success; and

D. That we encourage all full-time clergy – be they Bishop, Priest, or Deacon – to participate fully in the clergy pension plan and thus insure the health and stability of retirement for all members of the clergy of our Holy Archdiocese.

Ἡ ματαιοῦης,

ὁ τίς σιωῆς

ὁ δὴ γὰρ

ὁ μέγας ἐν ἀσκηταῖς
σιωῆς ἐμπεσεν τὸ τάφος
τῶ βασιλέως τῶν Ἑλλήνων
ἀλεξάνδρου τῶ πάλαι ποτε
λαμπρῆς ἐν δόξῃ, φρίττει
καὶ τ' ἀστάτον τῶ καιρῶ καὶ τῆς
δόξης τῆς προσκαίρου λυπηθεῖς

ἰδὺ κλαίει:

ὄρων σε τάφε δειλιῶ
σὺ ἦν θεῶν, καὶ
καρδιοσταλάκτον
δάκρυον χέω,
χρὲς τὸ κοινόφλητον
εἰς νῦν λαμβάνων,
πῶς ὦν μέλλω διεθεῖν
πέρας τοῦτον;
αἰ! αἰ! τίς δύνηται
φυγεῖν σε;



διὰ χειρὸς Κ.Θ. Μούση
ἐπι Χλωρῶ Β. Ηπειρῶ
9.11.02

