

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN  
THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
AND  
THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX  
EPISCOPATE OF AMERICA**

Agreement made on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December 1970, between the Orthodox Church in America, acting through its plenipotentiary, His Beatitude Metropolitan Primate IRENEY and The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, acting through its plenipotentiary, His Eminence, Archbishop VALERIAN.

**PREAMBLE**

Whereas, the Russian Orthodox Metropolia was legally and canonically granted autocephalous status and thus has become the Orthodox Church in America; and

Whereas, this historic event is considered the most constructive step towards the establishment of a unified Orthodox Church in America; and

Whereas, the Clergy and lay delegates of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America in their annual Church Congress held on July 4, 1970, at Grass Lake, Michigan, have confirmed their determination to support the movement towards the establishment and consolidation of the unity of the Orthodox Church on the North American Continent; and

Whereas, the Orthodox Church in America recognizes as its task to unite all the Orthodox Christians of America into One Church; and

Whereas, the Orthodox Church in America believes that the unity of Orthodox Christians in America in conformity with the canonical order of the Church is possible only by free consent; and

Whereas, the Orthodox Church in America recognizes that canonical unity does not mean suppression of particular national traditions and is not based on the predominance of one national tradition, but on the cooperation of all in love for the good of the One Church;

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties hereto, in consideration of the premises and the mutual covenants hereinafter set forth, do hereby agree as follows:

**ARTICLE I.**

The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate acknowledges and accepts the Orthodox Church in America as the sole Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

**ARTICLE II.**

1. The parties hereto agree that the canonical jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America includes the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America and its parishes.
2. It is further mutually agreed that the canonical jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church in America over the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America manifests itself as follows:

- a. The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America will receive the Holy Chrism and the Holy Relics from the Primate;
- b. The name of the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America will be elevated during the Divine Services by the Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America;
- c. The Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America is the highest spiritual authority in all canonical matters;
- d. The Primate, upon canonical confirmation by the Synod of Bishops as provided in Article III, par. B, will consecrate the Bishop-elect of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America;
- e. The Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America in its judicial session will act as the Court of Final Appeals in all cases originating in the Court of the Spiritual Consistory of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America;
- f. All complaints against the persons of the Bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America are within the competence of the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America.

### **ARTICLE III.**

Regarding the administration of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, the Orthodox Church in America agrees to the following conditions:

- a. The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America shall be governed as a distinct administrative unit in accordance with its own Constitution and By-Laws, customs and traditions;
- b. The Bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America are elected from among the nominees canonically approved by the Synod of Bishops, by the Church Congress of the Romanian Diocese in accordance with its own By-Laws and practices;
- c. The parishes under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America are and shall remain under the direct jurisdiction of the Bishops of the Romanian Diocese;
- d. The Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America is the sole legislative body of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate, having the right to approve and amend the Constitution and By-Laws of the Episcopate, provided that such amendments do not contradict any of the terms of this agreement;
- e. The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate may have and/or maintain its own official organ and its own diocesan publication;
- f. The Orthodox Church in America further agrees that it will not, directly or indirectly, at any time in any way assert any claim to any right, title or interest in any of the properties of

the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, its parishes and its affiliated institutions.

**ARTICLE IV.**

The Orthodox Church in America and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America mutually agree that:

- a. The Bishop or Bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America are ex-officio members of the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America;
- b. There shall be no intermediary administrative authority between the Primate and the Synod and the head of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America;
- c. For the purpose of electing the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America shall have the right to participate in the All-American Assembly with delegates in the same proportionate number as any other participating Diocese;
- d. The external and ecumenical relations of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America shall be conducted through active participation in the Central Department of External Affairs of the Orthodox Church in America;
- e. The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America shall fully participate through official appointees of its governing bodies in the works of all departments and commissions established by the Orthodox Church in America for the general welfare, progress and mission of the Church;
- f. The financial contribution to the Central Administration of the Orthodox Church in America by the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America shall be proportional to its participation in the workings of the Departments and Commissions of the Church as will be mutually determined from time to time by both parties.

**ARTICLE V.**

The present agreement shall come into force upon the date of signature, subject to ratification by the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America and subsequently by the Church Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

Done at New York City this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1970, in duplicate, both copies being equally authentic.

FOR THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA  
Metropolitan Ireney

FOR THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX  
EPISCOPATE OF AMERICA  
Archbishop Valerian