

Romanian Orthodox Diocesan Councils Meet

[Cleveland, OH – Posted 3/28/2009] – In an historic meeting, the Eparchial (Diocesan) Councils of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (ROEA) and the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas (ROAA) met jointly on Saturday, March 21, 2009 at the St. Mary Romanian Orthodox Cathedral in Cleveland. The meeting was based on decisions of the 2008 Congresses of the ROEA and ROAA endorsing the continuation of talks between the two North American Eparchies. The primary issue is a potential union of the two bodies.



Photo by Gregory Sotak

The starting point for the continuing discussions is a document drafted by the Joint Dialogue Commission (JDC) entitled: "Proposal to Establish a Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate in North America". The Joint Dialogue Commission is a working-group established by both Congresses to explore the possibility of healing the division between the two Eparchies dating to the middle of the last century. After presenting a text that was deemed viable by the hierarchs of both Eparchies to the respective Councils, Clergy and Congresses, the JDC has continued to refine the Proposal to reflect the concerns expressed by members of these decision-making bodies. The Proposal describes the ecclesiological terms that must be acceptable to both the ROEA and ROAA for a united North American Metropolitanate in canonical communion with the Church of Romania. The Proposal would need to be approved by the two Congresses before it could be presented to the Church of Romania for consideration.

In the joint meeting held on Saturday, chaired by Their Eminences Archbishop Nathaniel and Archbishop Nicolae, members of the Councils discussed fundamental questions that underlie the provisions of the draft. Among the issues addressed were: the nature of the autonomy envisioned under the proposal; the ways in which this union is perceived to advance the eventual administrative unity of all Orthodox Christians under a singular ecclesiastical authority in North America; the relationship of the envisioned autonomous Metropolitanate with the Romanian Orthodox Church; necessary “due diligence” investigations, but most especially, the ways in which a spiritual healing might be realized in the present division between the Romanian Orthodox in North America. The open dialogue of the gathering was cordial and informative, and the participants felt it was a necessary first step and a positive experience.

In addition to Their Eminences Archbishops Nathaniel and Nicolae, also present were His Grace, Bishop Irineu, ROEA Auxiliary, members of the two Councils and the Joint Dialogue Commission.