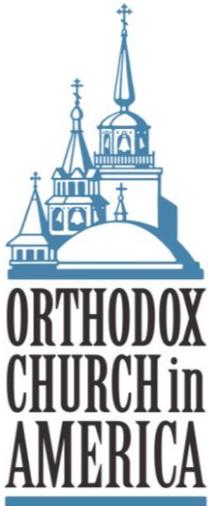


09.07.2019
09/003

Reverend Fathers, Faithful, and Monastics of the Albanian Archdiocese,

Christ is in our midst!

On behalf of the Holy Synod of Bishops, the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, allow me to express my condolences for the loss of your Archpastor and Father, the ever-memorable Archbishop Nikon. The falling asleep of Archbishop Nikon is a great loss to the Orthodox Church in America, to the Albanian Archdiocese, and to each of you personally. His Eminence loved and served this Archdiocese and each of you with humility and with dignity. I pray that you will find comfort in our Lord Jesus Christ and in His saints as you grieve the loss of your archpastor, and be inspired and strengthened by the sacrificial labors of Archbishop Nikon to continue the Apostolic mission of this Archdiocese. May our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, the Master of the vineyard in which we all labor, hold the memory of His Eminence Archbishop Nikon eternally!



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You will shortly receive from the Secretary of the Holy Synod, His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, formal notice of recent actions taken by the Holy Synod with respect to the Albanian Archdiocese. Per the statute of the Orthodox Church in America, the office of the bishop of the Albanian Archdiocese was declared vacant and I informed the Holy Synod that I will serve as the Locum Tenens of the Archdiocese for the immediate future.

As Locum Tenens, my primary responsibility is to see to the election of a new bishop and to maintain the widowed diocese in the interim period. While I will attend to other administrative and pastoral matters, decisions during the period of a locum tenency are typically considered provisional until such a time as a new archpastor is elected. I look forward to working with your Chancellor, Archpriest Arthur Liolin, as we proceed with the good work of the diocese, and begin the process of identifying a candidate to lead the Albanian Archdiocese.

In this interim period, I will be available to the clergy and the faithful of the diocese through the diocesan chancellors. I also look forward to being with you at your archdiocesan assembly in September and to hear from you concerning the current life and future prospects of the Albanian Archdiocese.

Extending my blessing on you as we together grieve the loss of an excellent archpastor and leader of the Church, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada