



Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo
Orthodox Church in America
Chancery: 286 E. Woodsdale Avenue, Akron, OH 44301
(330) 724-7009

Protocol Number 4/2010

24 June 2010

The Nativity of the Holy Prophet,
Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John

To the venerable Clergy, Monastics and God-loving Faithful of the Bulgarian Diocese:

At our 47th Annual Diocese Conference on June 18, 2010 the Spiritual Council of the Bulgarian Diocese announced the commencement of a search for a new bishop for our diocese. The Bulgarian Diocese has been without a bishop since the repose of His Eminence, Archbishop Kyrill, of blessed memory, on June 17, 2007. Under the hierarchical guidance of our *Locum tenens*, His Grace, Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvanian, the diocese now moves to find a man to take on the ministry of Bishop of Toledo and spiritual head of our diocesan community.

According to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, a diocese presents the name of a nominee for bishop to the Holy Synod of Bishops. The Holy Synod, after a process of review, will consider the nominee in a canonical election as a bishop. Should the nominee be elected, the Holy Synod will announce the election and, with the diocese, will coordinate plans for an episcopal consecration (if the nominee is not already a bishop) and his official installation as bishop of the diocese.

The process we have chosen for finding a suitable nominee for our new Diocesan Bishop will take approximately five months and will include several steps. The first step will be to invite names of potential candidates from our diocesan membership at large. All of these names will be considered and a short list of four to seven possible candidates will be contacted for further review. Based upon this review, three candidates from the short list will be selected for in-person interviews. Then, based upon the results of the interviews, two of the three will be presented to a Diocesan Congress-Sobor, called for November 12 and 13 of this year, for election as our episcopal nominee.

The Episcopal Search Committee includes members of our Spiritual Council, our Diocesan Trustees, and a Search Coordinator, Archpriest Andrew Jarmus, from St. Nicholas Church in Fort Wayne, IN.

The Search Committee is now inviting all of our diocesan parishes and faithful to submit names of potential candidates for bishop.

Speaking in the most general terms, as a diocese we are looking for a bishop who will place the well-being of our parishes and membership first in his archpastoral ministry. We look for a man who will teach and defend the Holy Orthodox Faith, be a shepherd to our faithful, and a spiritual father to our clergy. We seek a man with strong administrative and pastoral gifts. Above all, we pray that the Lord will send us a man who exemplifies a life of complete commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Church.

There are also very specific criteria for the ministry of a hierarch that come from the Holy Canons of the Orthodox Church and from the Statue of the Orthodox Church in America. These criteria are outlined in the enclosed document. Please note that they are not negotiable.

The Search Committee also requires that any submission of names must include the name of the person making the submission and his or her home parish. No anonymous submissions will be considered.

The deadline for this first phase of the search process is August 6, 2010. Submissions must be received or post marked by this date in order to be included for review.

Submissions or questions may be addressed to the Episcopal Search Coordinator, Archpriest Andrew Jarmus, at the following address:

**Episcopal Search Committee
c/o St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
3535 Crescent Ave.
Fort Wayne, IN 46805**

Fr. Andrew may also be contacted by email at bishopsearch@saintnicholaschurch.com

When submitting a prospective candidate, please include the following information:

- 1- Proposed Candidate's Name (please include titles for clergy: e.g., Hieromonk, Hierodeacon, Priest, Archpriest, Deacon, Protodeacon)
- 2- Home Parish (and Diocese, if he is not from the Bulgarian Diocese)
- 3- Education
- 4- Current parish assignment (clergy) / Current employment (layman)
- 5- Short biography (300 words, max., please; more biographical information will be requested if a candidate goes on for further review)

The Spiritual Council is also directing all parishes to include the following special petition in the Litany of Fervent Supplication at all Divine services in the time leading up to our Congress-Sobor:

“Furthermore we pray that the Lord our God, in His mercy and providential care for us, will call forth for His flock a true shepherd of wisdom and strength, blessing us with a hierarch to care for the well-being of our diocese, and to unite His faithful people in a zealous confession of the Orthodox faith, in loving service to one another, and a bright witness to the glory of His Holy Name.”

This petition should be taken immediately before the petition “Furthermore, we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works...”

Once again, please read over the criteria outlined in the enclosed document very carefully before submitting names.

Thank you, in advance, for your prayerful consideration of potential candidates for our next diocesan bishop. May the Lord God guide us in our search and our decisions.

Sincerely in Christ,



Archpriest Don Anthony Freude, Chancellor
Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo



Archpriest Andrew Jarmus
Episcopal Search Committee Coordinator



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Criteria for Episcopal Candidates

The Statute of the Orthodox Church in America [Article VI, Section 9] outlines a series of criteria for bishops in the Church.

1. The candidate for the office of diocesan bishop must satisfy all the requirements of the Holy Canons pertaining to this highest of all ecclesiastical offices. In addition, it is preferable that he have completed a course of study in a Graduate School of Orthodox Theology and that he be conversant in the English language.
2. If he is not already a bishop, he can be nominated only from among the monastic or celibate clergy or laymen.
3. If at the moment of his nomination he is a layman or a celibate or widowed priest, he shall pronounce at least the first monastic vows (rasophoria).
4. Diocesan bishops of the Orthodox Church in America shall not be candidates for nomination by the Diocesan Assembly of another diocese.

Points to consider:

- According to the Holy Canons, candidates for bishop are only elected from the monastic ranks. If a man is deemed suitable but is not a monk, before his name is formally considered by the Holy Synod of Bishops in a canonical election, he must have made the commitment to monasticism by taking at least the first level of monastic tonsure (the “rasophoria”).
- Candidates do not have to be priests or deacons. A candidate may be a layman – either a monk or not (see the previous point). However, a layman must be willing to be ordained and he must fulfill all the criteria and pass the screening processes necessary for ordination. In particular, he must not have any canonical impediments to ordination (for example, if he is a widower, he can only have been married once).
- Candidates do not necessarily have to currently be part of the Bulgarian Diocese or the Orthodox Church in America. However, if such a candidate is a deacon or priest, his current bishop must agree to give him a canonical release to the Bulgarian Diocese. If he is a bishop from another jurisdiction, his Synod of Bishops must be willing to release and transfer him to the OCA.

Please remember, the above criteria are non-negotiable.