



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

Protocol Number 1/2011

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Saturday of Cheesefare

Commemoration of all our God-bearing Fathers and Mothers who shone forth in asceticism  
St. John the New Martyr of Bulgaria

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

In June of last year, under the hierarchical guidance of our *Locum tenens*, His Grace, Bishop MELCHISEDEK, the Bulgarian Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America began the process of searching for a suitable candidate to take on the ministry of Bishop of Toledo and head of our diocesan family.

At the close of the first phase of the search in August 2010, the Committee reviewed the names of twenty-two possible episcopal candidates. These names came from diocesan members and from a list of names of potential candidates identified by the OCA's Holy Synod of Bishops. Out of these twenty-two names the Committee created a short list of eight names.

The second phase of the search involved a closer review of the short list by the Search Committee, and by His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH, together with other members of the Holy Synod. At the conclusion of this stage, the list was reduced to six names.

All six men were contacted, their suitability as candidates was further reviewed, and through this process the Search Committee arrived at the two candidates for episcopal nominee that we will be presenting at our Diocesan Congress-Sobor this summer. We are pleased to announce these candidates at this time. We present them in alphabetical order, with a brief biographical sketch of each.

**Archpriest Paul Gassios:** Fr. Paul Gassios grew up in a Greek Orthodox family. In the 1980's he received a Master of Social Work from Wayne State University.

It was also in the mid-1980's that he became a member of the Orthodox Church in America, drawn by the OCA's vision of a local autocephalous Orthodox Church in North America.

He began studies at St. Vladimir's Seminary in 1991, graduating with a Master of Divinity in 1994. That same year, he was ordained a deacon and a priest.

Fr. Paul served as a priest in the OCA Diocese of the Midwest in Kokomo, IN for 11 years and St. Louis, MO for 7 months. During this time, he developed a relationship with St. Gregory Palamas Monastery, Perrysville, OH. In 2007, Fr. Paul transferred into the Bulgarian Diocese and was assigned to St. George Cathedral, Rossford, OH, where he serves today.

**Archimandrite Alexander Golitzin:** Fr. Alexander Golitzin's home parish was St. Innocent Orthodox Church (OCA) in Tarzana, CA. As a child, he considered the priestly vocation, and was encouraged to follow his calling by his parish priest, Fr. Sergei Glagolev.

Fr. Alexander went to college at UC Berkley, receiving a BA in English. He then attended St. Vladimir's Seminary. Following St. Vladimir's Seminary, Fr. Alexander spent seven years doing doctoral studies at Oxford University in England under Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. While studying at Oxford, he spent two years in Greece, including one year at Simonos Petras Monastery on Mount Athos.

After completing his doctoral studies, Fr. Alexander returned to the US at end of 1980. He was ordained a deacon in January 1982 and priest in March 1984. In 1986 he was tonsured a monk. Fr. Alexander served a number of OCA mission parishes in Northern California and was made head of the Diocese of the West's Missions Committee.

In 1989, Fr. Alexander took a teaching position at Marquette University in the Theology Department, a position which he still holds today.

Our next steps in the episcopal search process will be to produce video interviews with both candidates that will be posted on our diocesan web site. We will also make DVDs of the interviews available to parishes. These will allow our diocesan membership at large to become better acquainted with the candidates, their thoughts on the episcopacy and on the life of our diocese. We anticipate posting these video interviews by the beginning of April.

After Pascha we will be arranging for our two candidates to visit a selection of our parishes. Additionally, with this letter we are notifying our diocesan priests and deacons that we will be holding a Clergy Convocation at Holy Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, MI, May 19 and 20, at which time we will be meeting with Fathers Paul and Alexander.

The final step in our process will be the election of one of our two candidates as our Episcopal Nominee at the Congress-Sobor in July, in Fort Wayne, IN. Following the election, our Nominee's name will be presented to the OCA Holy Synod of Bishops for consideration for canonical election.

We are looking forward to our search process continuing and to gathering in July for the selection of our Episcopal Nominee. If you have any questions about the remaining steps in our search process, please contact our Episcopal Search Coordinator, Archpriest Andrew Jarmus, at [ajarmus@gmail.com](mailto:ajarmus@gmail.com) or 260-484-2277.

May the Lord continue to guide us in our work.

With love in Christ,



Very Rev. Don A. Freude, Chancellor  
Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo



Very Rev. Andrew Jarmus  
Episcopal Search Coordinator

cc: Bishop MELCHISEDEK