

August 2008

Dear Brotherhood Members,

A very important question is before all the members of our Episcopate. Should we unite with the other Romanian Diocese in America, which is "autonomous" from the Patriarch in Bucharest, and have a new Metropolia in America which would have "maximum autonomy" from Bucharest???

We are sending you the 20 point Proposal which the Joint Dialogue Commission (JDC) developed and wanted the Episcopate Council to endorse. The Council had too many questions which did not receive answers and as a result, the Council proposed a different Motion and the Motion that the Church Congress approved is also enclosed. The Council and the Congress agreed that "due diligence" is necessary to answer the questions and avoid future problems.

Shortly after the Congress ended, the enclosed announcement appeared on the Patriarchate's website and this started a new series of concerns because I believe no one on the JDC, nor the Council, nor the Congress wants us to be under the authority of the Patriarch.

Autocephaly is better independence than Autonomy! The OCA is autocephalous from the Patriarch of Moscow and we have a very comfortable agreement with the OCA. I believe that we have a greater strength of Orthodox unity in America through the OCA than we would have by leaving the OCA and merging with the other Romanian Diocese.

We would welcome your opinions and questions.

Yours in Orthodoxy,
Orthodox Brotherhood of the U.S.A.
Dan Miclau, President

August, 2008

Dear Brotherhood Members:

At the Summer Board meeting in July it was agreed upon to send a special "Newslines" that carried information about "unity" of the ROEA with the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of Americas (ROAA) and the Joint Dialogue Committee (JDC) Joint Proposal, given to the delegates at last month's Episcopate Congress. After the Congress there have been further developments which have also been addressed.

The JDC was established in 1992 and their Annual Reports can be located in the yearly Congress Report book. Other than this information nothing has been shared, distributed or discussed in a public forum prior to the Proposal being made public. We felt it was time to begin.

Given the lack of information and the great desire to know from our membership we have both a duty and responsibility to distribute documentation and the range of thoughts and opinions on this subject. Silence only keeps our faithful uninformed, uneducated and this is simply unacceptable.

Archbishop Nathaniel was made aware of our desire and general intent through past president George Aldea. I personally spoke with the Archbishop at the Vatra about the need for information and education materials to be created and made available to our ROEA faithful. Further, it was encouraged that SOLIA, the Department of Publications with, perhaps, the Department of Religious Education generate educational materials and information: on unity, its implications, and the pros and cons of the "Joint Proposal". I asked that Town Hall meetings include a non-JDC moderator and people representing a pro and con viewpoint as the contributions of informed faithful are essential to the success of this process, whatever direction it takes us. The Archbishop listened and considered these suggestions.

It is in this spirit that the **Bulletin "On Unity"** was created and mailed to you. It is divided into two parts. The first part includes three official documents: 1) the Congress News Release, 2) the Joint Proposal to establish a "Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas" and 3) the "Agreed Statement" of the ROEA and the Church of Romania. The second part of the Bulletin includes: 1) Mistakes or Signs, 2) Questions, 3) Clergy Observations 3) the Patriarchal Press Release and 4) Archbishop Nathaniel's 2007 Congress Address.

I'm sure that all the information contained within the Bulletin will not satisfy either end of the debate. For some it will not be enough and for others it will be too much.

If there are errors of fact I stand corrected. If you are offended I ask your forgiveness. If you learned something than we accomplished what we set out to do; better inform and begin to educate our general membership on a "unity" process that has been going on for years over this question that is central to our lives and crucial to the future of the Church in North America.

I look forward to your responses and seeing you at the Brotherhood Conference October 17-19, 2008 in Cleveland, Ohio.

In the Love of the Risen Lord,

Fr. Dimitrie Vincent
Spiritual Advisor

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Statement of Purpose

The ongoing need to inform and to educate our faithful members is a natural extension of our Purpose as an Auxiliary Organization in furthering the aims of the R.O.E.A. and strengthening bonds of Christian brotherhood within our Episcopate.

With this in mind, the Brotherhood Executive Board Meeting in July 2008 determined that a special issue of the NEWSLINE is to be created and distributed to help inform and educate members on the "Unity" efforts, discussions and ideas that are being put forth between, our R.O.E.A. the R.O.A.A., and the B.O.R. with an eye to current events and history.

76th Annual Episcopate Congress Held

Grass Lake MI [ROEA Chancery] – The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, under the omophoron of His Eminence Archbishop NATHANIEL POPP, held its 76th Annual Congress (diocesan assembly) on July 4-5, 2008. The meeting was attended by over 110 clergy and lay delegates from parishes throughout the United States and Canada.

In addition to the normal year-to-year business of the Congress, the topic of utmost significance was the presentation, explanation and discussion of the **20-point "Proposal to Establish a Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of America"** [*posted on the <http://www.roea.org/website/>*]. The **debate** resulted in the adoption of the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the Episcopate Council recommends that the Congress acknowledge the combined "Proposal to Establish a Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of North America" as an acceptable basis to continue the work of the JDC towards a final proposal to be presented to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

*Be it also resolved that the Episcopate Council recommends to the Episcopate Congress, in keeping with due diligence, that the Joint Dialogue Commission's efforts to establish the Metropolitanate **can continue**, that the Archbishop as President of the Congress **establish special committees**, namely, a "**Constitution and By-Laws Committee**", "**Jurisprudence**", "**Finance Committee**" and **any other committees that may be necessary to create a unified Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of North America.***

*And be it further resolved that said committees be established as soon as possible, and that **their work be reported to the Episcopate Council**, so that a Special Episcopate Congress may be convened.*

This action of the Congress enables the continuation of discussions between the two

Romanian **eparchies [dioceses]** in North America. The **"Proposal"** to unite these eparchies remains, therefore, a **work in progress**. There has not been, as incorrectly reported by the Romanian Patriarchate's press office, any final action about unification. There has been **no change in the ROEA's relationship with the Orthodox Church in America.** As understood by the Congress, the ten-member Joint Dialogue Commission of the Episcopate and Archdiocese will discuss the "Proposal" in light of the input of our respective Councils and Congresses in order to prepare a finalized text for presentation to the Church of Romania at some future date. We still look forward to the possibility of an eventual union, which would be to the benefit of Orthodox Romanians in North America and to Orthodoxy on this continent.



The Proposal To Establish a Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of America (ROMA)

Since 1993 the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America has dialogued seeking **a way to heal** the separation that we have endured for over sixty years. In the first dialogue meeting steps were taken to normalize relations between our two dioceses. This was approved by both our hierarchs and decision-making bodies. Over these past years closer relations were nurtured and encouraged. The members of the Joint Dialogue Commission have now come to a common mind over the issues that have separated the Romanian Orthodox people in North America, and propose the following as a way to reestablish the unity that we once shared under Bishop Policarp.

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[Editors Note: Emphasis in all ROEA documents (underline, italics, bold & brackets) is ours.]

The PROPOSAL

“A Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of America”

WE PROPOSE THAT, together, we ask the Romanian Orthodox Church to recognize a **maximally autonomous**, united, Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas made up of the present Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, and the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas, with the following properties:

I. The Romanian Orthodox Church, as **the Mother Church**, irrevocably entrusts all care of the Romanian Orthodox faithful in the Americas to the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas.

The Romanian Orthodox Church shall not modify or abolish this trust, nor shall it encourage, promote or establish any other jurisdiction within the territory of the Metropolitanate.

II. The **territory** of the Metropolitanate shall include North and South America.

Purposes

III. The Metropolitanate shall preserve, defend and promulgate the Orthodox Christian faith in the Americas, giving special expression to the **traditions** of its Romanian Orthodox spiritual heritage.

IV. The Metropolitanate shall use every appropriate means to **work** in cooperation with other jurisdictions **toward the realization of a unified Orthodox jurisdiction in North America**, understanding the union of the Romanian Orthodox faithful in America to be **a necessary, interim step toward the ultimate administrative unity of Orthodoxy in North America, in particular.** As the sole canonical Romanian Orthodox jurisdiction in the Americas, the Metropolitanate shall participate as it elects in Orthodox commissions, bodies, councils and institutions.

Governance

V. The Metropolitanate shall be **totally self-governing**, according to its own Constitution, By-Laws, customs and traditions.

VI. The Metropolitanate shall have **its own Synod of Bishops**. In all matters, the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan Synod shall uphold the special, maximal autonomy of the Metropolitanate.

VII. **The Metropolitan Synod** shall be the highest spiritual and judicial authority in all matters concerning the Metropolitanate, its institutions, clergy, and faithful, exercising its powers in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Metropolitanate. **The Romanian Orthodox Church shall assert no privileges of supervision or adjudication in any matters concerning the Metropolitanate, its institutions, clergy, and faithful.**

VIII. **The election, ordination and enthronement of hierarchs** rest entirely within the competence of the Metropolitanate. The hierarchs of the Metropolitanate,

including the Metropolitan Primate, shall be elected by the Metropolitan Congress from among nominees canonically approved by the Metropolitan Synod of Bishops.

IX. **Hierarchs-elect** shall be confirmed by the Metropolitan Synod prior to **ordination**.

X. Prior to his ordination and/or enthronement, the Metropolitan-elect shall be **recognized in a timely manner** by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. As a sign of communion with the Mother Church, the **Patriarch shall present the Grammata** at the invitation of the Metropolitan Synod.

XI. **Complaints against any hierarch of the Metropolitanate** shall be addressed to the Metropolitan Synod of Bishops for adjudication.

XII. **The Metropolitan Congress shall be the sole legislative organ** of the Metropolitanate, having the right to approve and amend the Constitution and By-Laws of the Metropolitanate.

XIII. The Metropolitan Congress is **subject only to the canonical authority of the Metropolitan Synod of Bishops**. The Metropolitanate and its Congress are required to comply with the civil laws of the state or province and country in which it is incorporated and operates. The **decisions** of the Metropolitan Congress are **not subject** to approval or ratification by the Romanian Orthodox Church or the government of Romania.

XIV. Notwithstanding Articles I through XIII above, in the case of a canonical issue that the Metropolitan Synod finds itself unable to resolve, the Metropolitan Synod may, after having exhausted all local avenues, **invite** the Romanian Orthodox Church **to assist** in mediating that issue. Such an invitation shall not be construed as an abridgement of the autonomy of the Metropolitanate.

Relations with the Romanian Orthodox Church

XV. The Metropolitanate **shall receive Holy Chrism** from the Romanian Orthodox Church.

XVI. The Metropolitan alone shall commemorate the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Other hierarchs of the Metropolitanate shall elevate the name of the Metropolitan alone.

XVII. Recognizing the **maximal autonomy** of the Metropolitanate, the Holy Synod extends an **open invitation** to the **Metropolitan** or his delegate to attend and **participate, at his discretion**, in its meetings as a witness to the canonical relationship with the Romanian Orthodox Church.

XVIII. **The Romanian Orthodox Church shall not, directly or indirectly assert any claim** to any right, title or interest in any of the **properties** of the Metropolitanate, its parishes and affiliated institutions.

After **60 years of separation** from the Patriarchate of Romania, **representatives** of the Romanian Orthodox **Episcopate** of America – His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, Very Rev. Frs. Laurence Lazar, Remus Grama, Catalin Mitescu, Ian Pac-Urar, and Romey Rosco – **met** at the Patriarchal Palace in Bucharest, on February 25-27, 2008, with **representatives** of the **Patriarchate** of Romania – His Eminence Archbishop Nifon, His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae, His Grace Bishop Ciprian Cămpineanul, Very Rev. Frs. Mircea Uta and Ioan Armasi – with the **intent of seeking a historical reconciliation**, and have **jointly agreed to acknowledge the following realities**:

1) **The break** between the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America – the historical diocese of Bishop Policarp (Morusca) – and the Patriarchate of Romania **was the result of the instauration of the communist regime in Romania**, and expressed the will of its faithful and of the 1947 Episcopate Congress, whom that Congress officially represented. Given its **unrestricted freedom** in the free world, the Romanian Orthodox **Episcopate** of America acted in accordance with its duty to **denounce**, to reject with the utmost clarity, and to **disassociate itself** from the evils of **atheistic communism**, which had **separated the diocese** both from its Mother Church and from Bishop Policarp, of thrice-blessed memory, whom the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America continued to acknowledge as its ruling hierarchy up to the time of his falling asleep in the Lord (1958).

2) The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, **rejecting communism**, found itself compelled to **sever its canonical ties to the Patriarchate** of Romania, conscious of the fact that, by doing so, **it was defending the faith and identity** of the Romanian Orthodox community on the North American continent, particularly in those days when the interference of the communist government of Romania in the life of the Church was blatantly evident.

3) Under the critical and dramatic circumstances of those times, when Bishop Policarp was **held against his will** in Romania, Vicar Bishop Valerian (Trifa) dutifully **sought a solution that preserved the canonicity of the Episcopate**, taking the best possible course of action available in those particularly difficult times.

4) The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America never rejected or denied the Patriarchate of Romania as its Mother Church but, **given the reality** of the

“Iron Curtain”, the only remaining means for her canonical survival was to **affiliate canonically** with the “Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North and South America” (known as the “Metropolia”, which eventually became the Orthodox Church in America). **Within the OCA**, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America always maintained the status of an **administratively autonomous** diocese.

5) The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America recognizes that the hierarchs and faithful of the Church of Romania suffered and struggled greatly through the terrible, unprecedented circumstances of the communist oppression. But the actions of the communist government of those times also imposed great suffering on the Romanian Orthodox **Episcopate** of America, as well as upon her hierarchs of thrice-blessed memory: Bishop **Policarp** and Archbishop **Valerian**, Confessors of the Faith, who were **persecuted, slandered and marginalized**.

6) We happily note that, after the fall of the communist regime, the Holy Synod of the **Patriarchate of Romania recognized, in 1991**, the **canonicity** of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, and the **apostolic succession** of her hierarchs. Since that time our relationship has been marked by fraternal **dialogue** and **liturgical concelebration** with the Patriarchate of Romania as well as with the hierarchs and clergy of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the two Americas, by **exchanges** of hierarchal visits, and by very significant **aid** provided to Romania through the efforts of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.

7) On the basis of the above acknowledgements, **we ask each other for mutual forgiveness**, in the **name of our predecessors**, for any ways in which we may have offended one another, and we ask Almighty God to bless us, and to guide us on the path toward a common vision of the Romanian Orthodox presence in America, and toward the strengthening of the unity of all Orthodox people on the North American continent.

8) Having recognized **the errors** of the past, and having asked each other for **mutual forgiveness**, the representatives of the Patriarchate of Romania and those of the ROEA express their sincere desire for the realization of the **unity of all** Romanian Orthodox on the American continent, in a **canonical relationship with** the Church of Romania.



ROEA: Fr. Fr. Laurence Lazar, Fr. Remus Grama, Fr. Catalin Mitescu, Fr. Romey Rosco & Fr. Ian Pac-Urar
 ROAA: Fr. Nicholas Apostola, Fr. George Chisca, Fr. Ioan Gherman, Fr. Ioan Ionita & Fr. George Sandulescu

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Financial Autonomy

XIX. The Metropolitanate's **regular operating expenses** shall be financially supported by its faithful, parishes, institutions and auxiliary organizations. **No** clergyman, officer, functionary, employee, office, parish, diocese or other institution or structure of the *Metropolitanate shall receive any subsidy, support, wage, salary or other form of financial support from any government or institution located outside* the boundaries of its jurisdiction, including the Romanian Orthodox Church. Reception of such monies by any person shall be sufficient cause for summary and immediate **removal from office**, in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Metropolitanate.

XX. Notwithstanding this provision, **grants or other monies may be received** for specific projects, exchanges, or other activities as may be approved from time to time by the Metropolitan Council. All such monies shall be **reported annually to the Metropolitan Congress** as line items in the Metropolitanate's financial report



Proposal Terminology

"Metropolitanate"- territory of the Metropolitan

"maximally autonomous" or **"maximal autonomy"** phrase coined by the Patriarchate and currently undefined

"Autonomy" –the right of self-government

"Self-governing"-a quality of an autonomous Church (such as the ROAA)

"Autocephaly"-subordinate to no superior authority (such as the OCA)

"Mother Church"-Church of Romania

"traditions"-cultural (not "Holy Tradition")

"interim step"-the "how" is unexplained

"Ordination"-ROAA term for "consecration"

"Eparchy"- ROAA term for "archdiocese"

Mistakes or Signs?

Even before the ink was dry on the 76th ROEA Congress Resolution, a flurry of incidents took place, some say mistakes, others see then as signs, which muddied the already troubled waters of the JDC unity efforts. It caused Archbishop Nathaniel's Office to stop, take notice and ponder these incidents in light of the ROEA and Church of Romania "Agreed Statement" of February 27, 2008.

The list of chronological events includes:

- **Sunday, July 6:** Archbishop Nicolae, the head of the ROAA, BOR makes the public remarks to Auxiliary Bishop Irineu, ("*Welcome Home*" and, "*Thank you for bringing the others with you.*") in Romanian at the end the Services on Sunday at Sts. Constantine & Helen Church, ROAA in Chicago, recorded and seen on the internet (*Biserca.TV video 114*).
- **Sunday, July 6:** Metropolitan Laurentiu Streza of Ardeal, Patriarchal representative, makes the public remark (The failed "*Plan B*", that was used as a warning to both archdioceses to rush unity efforts.) at the Consecration Banquet of Sts. Constantine & Helen Church, ROAA in Chicago, recorded and seen on the internet (*Biserca.TV- video 48*).
- **Sunday, July 6:** Auxiliary Bishop Irineu, representing Archbishop Nathaniel and the ROEA, at the Consecration Service and Banquet neither corrects Archbishop Nicolae nor asks Metropolitan Laurentiu for an explanation of his statement (*Biserca.TV-115*)
- **Monday, July 7:** The Church of Romania's official website incorrectly states that "*unity*" occurred between the two Archdioceses "*under*" the Patriarch of Romania. The article was removed and replaced as members of the ROEA and ROAA contacted Romania, no editorial correction or acknowledgement of error was made.

Cont. on page 5

LEGAL: Attorneys Michael Khoury, Jovan Dragovic, Mary Lynn Pac-Urar & Judge John Regule
FINANCE: Mr. Louis Marikas & Mr. Dean Calvert

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- **July 8:** The Holy Synod of Romania meets and Patriarch Daniel offers his official report (p7) which states, “**unity**” has occurred between the ROEA and the ROAA “**under**” the Church of Romania, establishing Patriarchal involvement in this misrepresentation.
- **August 20:** The JDC met at St. George Cathedral and issued a **Joint Communiqué** asking that there not be anymore outside interference as they will jeopardize unity talks and unity itself: “*The Commission regrets the **hasty pronouncements of various officials and the media immediately after our Congresses. These misrepresented our Congresses’ decisions... speculation and public commentary by individuals outside of our eparchies [Archdioceses] have only complicated... this process and threatened its ultimate success***”

Given these current incidents, the Episcopate Office has yet to publicly weigh in on the matter, even after Archbishop Nathaniel sent out a questionnaire to the Episcopate Council members the week after the Congress to which they have responded. Many are wondering why the delay? It is surmised that the Episcopate Council is, at least, divided on this question. Some believe the majority want to discontinue the dialogue. The Episcopate Office patiently continues to monitor developments and quietly observes. The most recent incidents are interpreted two different ways reflecting the perceptions and desires of both groups.

The **pro-unity JDC perspective**, held by JDC members and others who desire to see the unity talks realized “with” (not under) “maximal autonomy” dismisses these actions as “**mistakes**” by those lower down the administrative food chain. Yet, they have nothing to say when asked to explain how Patriarch Daniel’s own July 8 report to his Holy Synod uses the same language and arrives at the same conclusion: “unity” has been achieved “under” Romania.

It needs to be stated that at the annual Clergy Meeting and Episcopate Congress the JDC Proposal used the

language “**with**” and not “**under**”, furthermore, when the question was raised, there was **no support** for the idea of the ROEA being “under” the Church of Romania. It is also worth noting that all the early congratulatory remarks made by Romanian Church officials and media, from the Patriarch on down, used the word “under” and not “with” the Church of Romania. Why the immediate disregard of terms?

A **pro-unity OCA perspective** sees the post-Congress events as consistent and predictable to previous encounters with the Church of Romania. They believe this Romanian mindset has been there in the past, and should unity come to pass, will be there in the future.

They maintain these are indicators of what we ought to expect from a Church that has lived in an unhealthy culture and political climate from the early 40s’ to the fall of communism in 1989. They reason, the time will never be right, even if the institutional cultural climate changes in the Romanian Church, as the Church in North America has its own life and responsibility to live and preach Christ’s Resurrection to the World within its own North American territory, political climate and canonical structures. Therefore, the best current expression of “unity” is for the ROAA to be with the ROEA within the OCA in the USA and Canada.

The JDC Proposal also claims this Romanian unity is an “interim step” for greater North American unity with Sister Jurisdictions. The pro-unity OCA group notes a logistical problem, the “how” is not explained. At best, the JDC claims it could be used as a “model” for other jurisdictions to follow, but who’s to say?

It is also cautioned that such a move “under/with” the Church of Romania is, at best, a move “back” to move “forward”. Hopeful speculation risks a lot.

The major ideas of the Proposal start looking unrealistic and idealistic as it assumes and presumes more than what both sides are capable of doing at this time.

It is noted that the ROEA JDC 2007 Congress Report advocated no change in policy, “*These talks do not imply any change in the jurisdictional or administrative position the ROEA.*” Yet, this year a major policy shift occurred within the JDC & ROEA without explanation.



Some Questions Being Asked

“These talks do not imply any change in the jurisdictional or administrative position of the ROEA.” (JDC 2007 Congress Report p34)

There have been a host of questions that have been asked at the Congress and following that reflect the curiosity, doubts and concern of the faithful, clergy and laity alike, on “unity” and the “Joint Proposal”. We present some of them now.

The range of questions we have seen and heard can be classified into three areas: **I. Procedural and operational, II. Educational and informational and, III. Theological and practical.**

I. Procedural & Administrative Questions: 1) Why did the JDC adopt a position opposite of their 2007 Congress Report, and the ROEA Congress policy (*“These talks do not imply any change in the jurisdictional or administrative position of the ROEA.”*) and who authorized them to proceed in this way? 2) What was the reasoning the ROAA gave for not merging with us in the OCA, and at that point why wasn't the dialogue simply discontinued? 3) Over the years why the silence of the JDC on the “ideas” of any future proposal rather than inform and encourage participation? 4) How did the JDC Trip in February, which was to clarify historical matters, become a time to create an “Agreed Statement”? 5) Why the apparent rush to approve the Joint Proposal when the enormity of the project demands the very opposite approach? 6) Has the JDC lost sight of the “big picture”, becoming too attached to its own work after 15 years? 7) Why didn't our Auxiliary Bishop Irineu correct false and erroneous statements, when he had the opportunity, duty

and obligation to do so at Saints Constantine & Helen Cathedral on Sunday, July 6? 8) Why did Patriarchate Daniel include in his July Holy Synod report that the ROEA and the ROAA are now “united...under” Romania? 9) Why hasn't there been a response from our Episcopate Office concerning the misinformation placed on the Church of Romania's official website? 10) How can we trust a Church that misrepresents the facts from the top down, through media, official reports and Patriarchal Church officials?

II Educational and Informational Questions: 1) Why is there a lack of educational materials in Solia and the ROEA website on Unity, ROAA history, etc.? 2) Why hasn't the National Auxiliaries been utilized as a forum for explaining and teaching ideas such as: “autocephaly”, “autonomy” and “unity”? 3) Why hasn't there been the creation of education materials (worksheets workbooks etc. on all aspects of the “unity” question and placed in the hands of the faithful by the ROEA Department of Religious Education or Department of Publications? 4) Why haven't we informed or educated our faithful and delegates on the “*pros and cons*” of Unity so they can develop a clear understanding of all aspects of this question and be empowered to make thoughtful, intelligent and heartfelt contributions? 5) How can “Town Hall Meetings” properly inform us when they are run only by JDC members presenting their perspective (meetings that have an unbalanced approach sell only one point of view)? 6) Where is

a bottom-up, or grassroots, effort of simply getting to know the ROAA, her people and life, during these unity talks and before any unity takes place by our people?

III. Theological & Practical Questions: 1) Why isn't sacramental unity enough if the ROAA chose not to unite with us? 2) Why are we using a model of unity (Chambésy) whose text was never finished or fully accepted in World Orthodoxy? 3) We are Orthodox Christians, citizens of the United States and Canada (where church and state is separated). Why does the JDC propose to place us “with/under” the Church of Romania, a State Church? 4) Why would we want to leave the OCA, even if its autocephaly is not fully accepted and the greater freedom it offers (subordinate to no superior authority), in order to place ourselves “with/under” Romania, being maximally autonomous is less than autocephalous. 5) Our time with the Church in Romania was 22 years (1929-51) but our life and our identity with the Metropolia/OCA will be 50 years next year (1959-2009), why leave? 6) Does this unity effort bring together the “the People of God”, of Romanian background, or does it simply merge structures and absorb assets (liquid and real)? 7) If we believe, “*every foreign land is a fatherland and every fatherland is a foreign land*” (Epistle to Diognetus, 2-3rd c) and we follow the call of our Lord Jesus Christ to, “*Baptize all nations...*”, how will we do this better being under the Patriarchal Orthodox Church of Romania?



Some Clergy Views expressed July 3, 2008

On the JDC Proposal to the Clergy Conference

In his opening remarks before presenting the JDC Proposal to the Clergy, Fr. Laurence Lazar outlined the JDC's goals going into their discussions with the ROAA and the Patriarchate: 1) Maintain the Episcopate's **identity** 2) Maintain the Episcopate's **autonomy** 3) Eliminate **outside interference**. (*"We have sought to maintain the historic identity of our Episcopate, its autonomy, its freedom from outside interference." JDC 2007 Congress Report p 33*)

He further commented that the ROAA would not come with the ROEA under the OCA, because the OCA is not fully recognized as autocephalous. He stated that the impasse then became the fact that the ROEA would not go "back under" the Patriarchate and the ROAA would not come under the OCA. Then why not simply recognize that this longstanding impasse cannot be resolved at this time in history, rather than appear to capitulate on the above 2007 JDC statement? (See "Search for Answer")

A Response to the Three Points

1) Identity – Our identity as the Episcopate is being part of the Church in America for 48 years (10 years with the Metropolia – until 1960 and 38 years with the Orthodox Church in America – since 1970). We have been with the Church in America longer than under the Patriarchate. We are no longer the Church that we were before 1950/1960. We divorced ourselves from the Patriarchate due to their infringement upon our autonomy as outlined in our Bylaws. Healing of the relationship does not mean that we have to "remarry" – go back under them, especially if the issues which led to the divorce have not been faced and honestly worked through. The main issues seem to be trust and their disrespect for our autonomy. What has the Patriarchate done, what actions have they taken, which give the Episcopate any reason to trust them? If we go back under the Patriarchate, the ROEA is changing its identity, while the ROAA maintains its identity. How has our identity been maintained?

2) Autonomy – Autonomy is only as great as what is given – it can be taken back. Look at the experience of the ROAA – they are threatened with a letter which says that if they do not achieve unity by the Congress in July, that the Patriarchate not only has the right but the duty to set up a new Diocese which we will care for the Romanian Orthodox in North America since the ROAA and ROEA do not appear to be able to do so properly. If the "Proposal" is agreed to, who will enforce it when problems arise between the Patriarchate and the new Metropolia (reference the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Charter issue in which the Patriarchate of Constantinople forced a new Charter onto the GOA without respecting the previous Charter which called for a vote by a Clergy / Laity Congress on any new charter? The courts, including the last court of appeals (Supreme Court of New York) refused to hear the case, because they said that the GOA is part of a hierarchical Church, and consideration of the case is outside of the Court's domain.

3) Outside Interference – The Patriarchate of Romania is currently expanding all over the world, opening up Metropolitanates and churches throughout Western Europe, in Australia, Japan, etc. without regard for the Orthodox jurisdictions which are already established in those countries. How can we believe that they will not interfere in North America? I have heard JDC members say that Patriarch Daniel told them that North America is a unique situation which requires a unique solution, and that's why the Patriarchate wants so badly to unify the ROEA & ROAA, so that they don't have to worry anymore about this territory. Nevertheless, nearly all the Patriarchates throughout the world are acting as if the whole world is open territory – if a member of their particular "ethnic" group wants to be under their care, then they believe that they have jurisdiction where that person lives (Moscow and Romania have now put forth this argument). Additionally, the JDC keeps talking about Patriarch Daniel, the illumined man, who has offered this breakthrough proposal of maximal autonomy. They act as if the other 60 members of the Romanian Holy Synod have no say in the matter and that everything will be just as the Patriarch says. Once again, the trust factor is paramount, and I don't believe

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Fr. Gabriel, a Romanian Orthodox Historian, wrote a book on the Episcopate using documents from government files; U.S. and Romania. He spoke at last year's Congress.

Is It Enough?

We are compelled to make the following observations and ask a few of questions concerning *the Agreed Statement*. 1) The “break” is laid at the feet of the establishment (“*instauration*”) of communism. Nothing is said about the Orthodox Church of Romania (her institutions and/or leadership) and her free acceptance and/or forced compliance to become a tool of communist government ideology and practice. 2) There is no reference to the role of the Church of Romania and her interference in the life of the ROEA. 3) The historical fact is the ROEA did “*disassociate itself*”, not from “*the communist regime*”, but from the Church of Romania held captive by Romanian communism. 4) The ROEA never “*denied*” her historic roots but embraced the OCA as her new jurisdictional home. 5) Fashionable as it is, this *pro forma* statement asking “*mutual forgiveness...in the name of our predecessors*”, it a hard pill to swallow given the facts of history. Finally, how can one ask for forgiveness in the name of another brother or sister in Christ who has fallen asleep in the Lord?

Search for an Answer

Fr. Gabriel-Viorel Gardan

“The ways or methods, through which the accomplishment of the unity is conceived, are different, even opposite, and this fact produced, as a consequence, stagnation... For the [ROAA] the way to unity implies the return to the previous situation. What is desired is the re-union of the two jurisdictions in an autonomous Metropolitan Church under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Church...solution... suppress the memories of the agitated history and move on....Such an attitude, which implies the elusion of the past for the future’s sake is unacceptable for the representatives of the Vatra Episcopate, knowing and admitting the historical truth of the committed mistakes is an act indispensable to any progress of the dialogue...these mistakes have been done to the Vatra Episcopate under the pressure of the communist authorities... its legal rights and autonomy have been violated, felt compelled to estrange itself from the Mother-Church. Therefore, only through admitting the historical truth, can the wounds of the past be healed...offering a real chance to the dialogue and to the unity...due to the fact that the Vatra Episcopate belongs to the [OCA] solving the problem must be seen only in the larger context of American Orthodoxy.”

(*Episcopia Ortodoxa Romana Din America-Parte A, Ortodoxiei Americane*, p. 558)

“I expressed to the delegation my surprise and bitterness that the Romanian Patriarchate, even after so many dialogues between us, was not able to comprehend our position, our mentality, the interests and ideals of a group of Orthodox nurtured by Romanian Orthodox traditions but who had chosen to live on another continent and under a different political system than that in Romania.”
+Valerian, *Marginal Notes*, 90 (1987)

Cont. from page 7

that the Patriarchate has concretely shown the Episcopate any reason to trust them except for a few words on paper which are not backed up by their actions.

No one is against unity – we already have the only true unity which is in Christ by partaking of his Body and Blood in Holy Communion. Why would we want to merge with the ROAA under the Patriarchate, a state church, which brings with the relationship all the entanglements and politics of a foreign government and the perception from our governments in the US and Canada that we are “under” them? For example, at several events and at one in particular in Montreal recently where both the ROEA and ROAA celebrated a Liturgy together, there in the middle of the photo between the bishops was a government official, not from Canada, but an official of the Romanian Embassy. No matter how we perceive the relationship, to Romanian hierarchs and government officials it is very clear – you are part of us.

Why are we so ready to go under the Patriarchate when we have a stable position within the OCA? Even if the ROAA would merge with us under the OCA, there still would be difficult adjustments and problems to overcome due to the fact that their administration of their Archdiocese is quite different from ours. Why would we want to lose our foundation which we have worked for decades to build and for which previous hierarchs have personally suffered in order to preserve the only free Romanian Orthodox Church in the world? The answers given by the JDC are weak and unconvincing. We could accomplish the same by staying under the OCA.



And a Reflection

The Romanian Patriarchate Salutes the Unification of the Two Romanian Orthodox Eparchies of America

The Romanian Patriarchate has learned with joy about the decisions taken by the congresses of the two Romanian Orthodox eparchies of America and Canada, which, over the last days, after more than six decades of division, have decided to unite under the canonical and spiritual protection of their mother-Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The union is the result of dialog between the hierarchs, priests and faithful of the two structures, a dialog which was encouraged by the Romanian Patriarchate.

Earlier this year, in February, a delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, led by Most Rev. Nathaniel, discussed in Bucharest with representatives of the Romanian Patriarchate, as well as personally with His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel. The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church was informed by these discussions and encouraged the unification of the two Romanian Orthodox ecclesiastical structures.

Giving thanks to the Good God for this historical act, the Romanian Patriarchate congratulates all those who contributed to the unification process, which is beneficial for both Orthodox Romanians and the presence of Orthodoxy in the Americas.

THE PRESS BUREAU OF THE ROMANIAN PATRIARCHATE



An Open Letter to the ROEA

Monday
July 7, 2008

Dear Archbishop Nathaniel, Episcopate Council and 76th
Congress Body:

I awake this morning to read that the ROEA and the ROAA are united **“under”** the Patriarchate of Romania. Wow, what a “wake up” call! What happened?

My first reaction is, as with many of you, all our work, effort, and discussions about this very question of “under” and “with” the Romanian Orthodox Church during this past weekend at the Clergy Conference and the Congress and the Romanian Patriarchate Press Bureau produces this news report? It appears that the Church of Romania seems to have forgotten, misunderstood, or simply doesn’t really know what we were discussing here in North America. It appears that “we”, the Church in Romania and the ROEA (and the ROAA?), are operating with two different theological perceptions and

From the news report, the Romanian Patriarchate understands and knows our efforts, of merging the two “eparchies” in North American, the ROEA and the ROAA in an autonomous body, as one of coming **“under”** the Church in Romania.

There is no mention of **“with”** in the article, unless of course, it is claimed that we are with the Church of Romania by virtue of being “under” them.

It is also noteworthy to mention that, nowhere in this official news report from the Patriarchate’s website is their reference to the ROEA and the ROAA forming a new church body in North America that has **“maximal autonomy”** even though the ROAA accepted all twenty points unanimously in their Congress.

The JDC took great pains to explain both at the Clergy Conference on July 3 and at the Congress July 4 and 5 (the JDC members emphasized it time and time again) that the union of these two groups would not be “under” the Romanian Patriarchate. The JDC made it clear that this was not the desire, intent or the case. They advocated that the Joint Proposal would be one where we would be “with” the Romanian Patriarchate and not “under” them as the official Romanian Church website has reported. Maybe the “with” the JDC was talking about and presented to us was not understood by the Church of Romania in the same way as we have heard it to be.

From everything that was said and done at the Clergy Conference and the Congress this past 4th of July weekend it was understood that we, the ROEA, were not interested in going “under” the Romanian Patriarchate. That was very clear. The Congress ratified a motion to continue working towards a new North American maximal autonomous body, which would be formed by the ROEA and the ROAA that would not be “under” the Romanian Patriarchate but “with” the Church in Romania [a theological concept that has no historical basis and it seems the test case will be us...first indications don’t look promising].

This disturbing article continues to stir things and cause bewilderment. We must ask a question. Are we really talking with each other or simply past each other with turns of phrase and words that carry different meanings and outcomes?

What I see in this official news report of the ROEA and ROAA is unification efforts that carry two very different solutions, driven by two different perceptions and different ways of thinking and arriving at two different conclusions.

Respectfully,
Fr. Dimitrie Vincent

P.S. Before sending off my email I checked the Romanian Patriarchal homepage again (12:40 pm EST) and found the article gone...not edited and corrected. It’s as if it never existed.

Archbishop Nathaniel on UNITY

2007 Congress Address His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel

The Church is the unique Body of Christ in this world.... The Church bears witness to the Divine Truth....the Church , being in this world, is always under some form of pressure to conform to the ways of the world , to the laws made by men,....

The Apostolic Church began under the pagan Roman Empire, and spreading the good news throughout the world, also lived under other forms of government, including the aggressive Turkocracia and atheistic communism, She has lived in an exalted position under czars and monarchs and more lately, is experiencing life under "democratic" forms of government....

Our Church in North America has her own experience or more than 210 years of witnessing, first in Alaska under the Czars, and then under the British Crown in Canada, and the Republican form of Government in The United States. These modern forms of co-existence, mutual respect for one another, Church and State, has allowed the Church to be relatively independent and free of government intrusion, and the State remains unassailable since it has not pronounced government preference for any particular faith community....

North American governments, in general, recognize two forms of ecclesiastical governance: hierarchal and congregational...The uniqueness of Orthodoxy is that there is cooperation between the hierarchy, clergy and laity in the administration of the Church...

Both clergy and laity are responsible to the entire local parish/mission and must work with "one mind and on heart" in the administration of the goods of the parish; goods which are., after all, God's goods which, in fact, we have offered to him....

The purpose of the Church is to save souls...The life of the Church is witnessing to God's truth and living his invitation of life eternal....Although it is true that most of our parishes and missions serve Orthodox Christians of the Romanian tradition, history has shown us that all people can be attracted to the faith through the witness of local parish priests and faithful. The real reason of outreach is that love for neighbor demands this of us, as we know from the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The Church must not live in isolation.

The Episcopate is blessed and challenged by the recent immigrations...language can be an issue...members need to take a leap of trust...When this integration takes place with Christian patience and love, good fruits result...

Our Episcopate is itself a local church comprised of hierarch, clergy and laity....Our Episcopate is a part of the local autocephalous Orthodox Church in America (OCA)...

Worldwide Orthodoxy is affected by immigration from "Orthodox nations" into all parts of the globe. The ongoing migrations mean that new dioceses are being established in nations where Orthodoxy was merely a name...in North America, so in western and northern Europe, the issue of ecclesiastical order is the most pressing issue relating to effective evangelization. There exists in world Orthodoxy an ongoing debate as to the good order of the Church and as to how this order is made manifest. Some say it is through Constantinople; others say it is by a universal council fro the Church; others express neither concern nor urgency in resolving the matter; and some (primarily foreign governments) continue to inappropriately entitle this spread of Orthodox "the diaspora."

How does this ecclesiastical disorder affect the Episcopate? In theory, we are considered to part of this problem "diaspora"., just as are all Orthodox jurisdictions in North America, Europe and elsewhere. Is the Church in North America to be under a foreign Patriarch in Constantinople? -Under the multitude foreign Mother Churches?- Self-existing or autocephalous?

The issue is also a political one, because the Church, abroad and here, does not live in a vacuum...if the Church is under the authority of a foreign Patriarch who claims authority over all Orthodox parishes and institutions, it is precarious matter for us and is a form of papalism foreign to the Church...Mother Churches...retain the right to choose or confirm the election of the primate of their colony in North America. This persists in North America for all jurisdictions except for the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America (OCA).

The Episcopate was never estranged from world Orthodox. The existence of two Romanian jurisdictions in North America is not unique; there are two Bulgarian and two Albanian jurisdictions, two Ukrainian jurisdictions an event he Serbian resolution remains with separate administrations.

Some would reduce the matter to stating that now that communism has apparently (our subjective observation) been eradicated from those Orthodox lands, all North American jurisdictions should return to the free Mother Churches. The matter cannot be reduced to stating that since the government has apparently changed, everything can return to a pre-communist status, It is a

Cont. on page 11

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matter of canonical order that on the North American continent, there must exist at least separate and autocephalous Orthodox Churches, one in Canada and one in The United States.

If the issue is that government interference influenced or at least hindered the Church in the past, there is no reason that such may not happen in the future, God knows....

To recap our presentation, the Episcopate is a sovereign body, it is part of the local autocephalous Church; clergy and laity must work together mindful that the Church is one; we participate in pan-Orthodox activities in North America; we are known in world Orthodoxy; and, we are moving forward in dialogue with the Church of Romania so that some kind of reconciliation may be blessed by God for the good of Orthodox unity in North America....

Dearly beloved, as Orthodox Christians, we know that we are not living merely in secular time but primarily in the kingdom of God. Let us acknowledge that as God's stewards, our proper administration of the goods of the Church is an important part of our divine mission in that kingdom; let us add our own "Amen!" to the words with which we begin the Divine Liturgy and every Holy Mystery: "*Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and the of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto he ages of ages. Amen!*"

(SOLIA Sep/Oct, 2007)



Talk On Unity

Archbishop Kallistos Ware

Metropolitan of Diokleia, Archdiocese of Great Britain February 17, 2008

"What is the church here for? What is the distinctive function?" "My answer has only four words in it: "To celebrate the Eucharist".

"Church unity is not imposed by the outside by power of jurisdiction. It is created from within by the body and blood of our Savior." "The understanding of the Church as a Eucharistic communion...a Eucharistic organism – has some very important consequences for the way we think of the Church in the Western world.

First, if we think of the Church in Eucharistic terms – then, we must say the Catholicity and universality of the Church are more valuable, more fundamental than our national, ethnic, and cultural identity. Second, if

the basis of the Church's existence is life in the Eucharist, it means that the Church is organized on a territorial, and not on an ethnic principle...for the Holy Liturgy gathers together all the faithful in each, place regardless of nationality or ethnic origin. As St. Paul says, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek...*"

"Now certainly patriotism, faithfulness to one's national identity is a precious quality which can be offered to the Lord, baptized and sanctified..."

"...but, we need to be clear about our priorities - the catholicity and universality of the Church...are much more precious than our national or ethnic identity.

The true order of priorities is very well set out by the Greek theologian John Karmeres. He says, "*We should not speak of a 'national' Greek church, or a 'national' Russian, or 'national' Romanian church...or for that matter of French, or British or American national church ...we should rather speak of the one Catholic, Orthodox church IN Greece, IN Russia, IN Romania, IN France, Britain or America.*" And that's a big difference not to talk about national churches... but to talk of the ONE Church existing in particular nations.

"That is why the things that Archbishop Nathaniel has just been saying to you are so true...and so important."



An Orthodox Council Decision

Constantinople...1872

"We have concluded that when the principle of racial division (i.e. phyletism) is juxtaposed with the teaching of the Gospel and the constant practice of the Church, it is not only foreign to it, but also completely opposed, to it. We decree the following in the Holy Spirit: 1. We reject and condemn racial division, that is, racial differences, national quarrels and disagreements in the Church of Christ, as being contrary to the teaching of the Gospel and the holy canons of our blessed fathers, on which the holy Church is established and which adorn human society and lead it to Divine piety. 2. In accordance with the holy canons, we proclaim that those who accept such division according to races and who dare to base on it hitherto unheard-of racial assemblies are foreign to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and are real schismatics."

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- ❖ Christian **Education**
- ❖ ROEA **Missions**
- ❖ The Annual **Camp VATRA**
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- ❖ The Valerian D. Trifa **Romanian-American Heritage Center**

**ORTHODOX BROTHERHOOD
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate
Orthodox Church in America
2535 Grey Tower Road
Jackson, MI 49201**

Work Sheet on UNITY

We thought it would be good to offer a Work Sheet-Questionnaire.

Answer the questions below and mail them to George Aldea @ 824 Mt. Vernon Blvd Royal Oak, MI 48073
or email then to Fr. Dimitrie Vincent @ drv Vincent@sbcglobal.net

1. Are you in favor of **the idea** of the two Romanian Orthodox Church groups in North America, the Episcopate (OCA) and Romanian Archdiocese (Church of Romania), **of uniting** into one body called: “The Romanian Orthodox Metropolitanate of the Americas” (ROMA) ?
(Circle one) Y / N
2. A **Joint Proposal document on unity** has been prepared by the “Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, Orthodox Church in American” (ROEA, OCA) and the “Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the Americas, Bucharest Orthodox Romania” (ROAA, BOR). **What did you think of it?**
(Circle one)
 - A. This is very important
 - B. It is not important
 - C. I don’t know (undecided)
 - D. I don’t care
3. Looking at the Joint Proposal document, **are you in agreement** with the JDC’s “Proposal” on unity?
(Circle one)
 - A. 100%
 - B. Mostly
 - C. Not much
 - D. No
4. Why? _____
5. Under **which “jurisdiction”** (national church) would you like to see the ROEA, OCA and the ROAA, BOR (ROMA) connected to? (Circle one)
 - A. ROAA with the ROEA within the **OCA** (Orthodox Church in America)
 - B. ROMA “under” **BOR** (The Patriarchal Church of Romania)
 - C. ROMA “with” **BOR** (The Patriarchal Church of Romania)
 - D. None, I’m **not** in favor of unity, continue separately.
6. I have other comments, suggestions and ideas and they are...(see attached)
7. Would you like to receive more information on “Unity” discussions as it develops?
(Circle one) Y / N
8. How would you like to receive this information? (circle as many as you wish)
 - A. SOLIA News
 - B. ROEA Website
 - C. Special Mailings
 - D. Special Workshops
 - E. Town Hall Meetings (run by the JDC)
9. Name (optional) _____