

AUTONOMY OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX MISSIONARY ARCHDIOCESE IN  
AMERICA AND CANADA

**Decision No. 14079 of the December 12th, 1974,**

**granted by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, Romania.**

**YOUR EMINENCE:**

With brotherly love We inform you that in its working session of December 12, 1974, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church took into consideration your official letter No. 219/1973 regarding the decision of the Annual Congress of your Archdiocese of July 21, 1973 with regards to the elevation of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America to the rank of Archdiocese.

In view of the fact that the decision was taken by your Church Congress in relation with the necessities stemming from the inner religious life of your Diocese, and as a consequence of the decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of June 11, 1973, by which Your Eminence was granted the rank of Archbishop.

Taking into account the canonical rules and traditional practices in Orthodox Churches regarding the administrative organization of the dioceses according to the rank held by their heads.

Following the debates which took place as well as the explanations given by His Beatitude Patriarch Justinian, and the proposal made by the Canonical, Juridical and Disciplinary Commission, the Holy Synod decided:

- It acknowledges the decision made by the Annual Church Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America held on July 21, 1973, and approves the elevation of that Diocese to the rank of Archdiocese, with the official title "The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America."
- It recommends to the Church Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America to proceed to amend the Statutes for the organization of that Archdiocese, in which the establishment of a post of Auxiliary Bishop could be provided.

At the same time and in the same session, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church took into consideration your official letter No. 163/1973 as well as the V. Rev. Archimandrite Bartholomew Valeriu Anania's report of December 10, 1974, both regarding the issue of the autonomy of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America.

The Plenary Holy Synod, noting that it is necessary that the decision of the Permanent Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of July 12, 1950 which defined at that time the status of autonomy of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America be completed and reformulated, so that decision be adjusted to correspond to the structure of the Diocese which was elevated to the rank of Archdiocese;

Taking into consideration Your Eminence's proposals in the letter No. 163/1973 as well as those in the V. Rev. Archimandrite Bartholomeu Valeriu Anania's report of December 10, 1974;

Following the proposal made by the Canonical, Juridical and Disciplinary Commission, the Holy Synod decided:

- The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America is and remains an autonomous diocese.

- The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, based on the Permanent Synod's decision of July 12, 1950 as well as on the Most Rev. Archbishop Victorin's official letter No. 163 of June 8, 1973 recognizes and renews that status of autonomy as follows:

1. The jurisdictional territory of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America on Orthodox parishes with members of Romanian origin - or associated by religious faith or affiliation encompasses the United States of America, Canada, South America and Pacific Area.
2. The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America is governed by its own Statutes and By-Laws, without any interference from outside, having to maintain canonical, dogmatic and spiritual ties with the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church - from which it receives the Holy and Great Chrism - according to the Holy Canons and to the hierarchical structure of the Eastern Orthodox Church.
3. The Archbishop is elected by the Church Congress of that Diocese, composed of the clergy and lay delegates of the parishes, according to the provisions set forth in the Statutes of the Archdiocese as well as in the laws of the United States of America on whose territory the Archdiocese has its headquarters.
4. The local Church Congress is the authority that proposes to the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church to confirm the election as well as to elevate the newly elected (Archbishop) to the hierarchical level, in the event that he does not already have it.
5. The spiritual authority of the Archbishop derives from that of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which grants him investiture through Patriarchal Gramata in public and ceremonial fashion.
6. The Archbishop together with the legislative, executive and disciplinary organs of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America rules the Diocese in a self-governing way, having the right and the liberty to appoint priests, deans, counselors and employees, to grant Church distinctions and ranks, to apply punitive sanctions, to have an inner self economical and financial administration, to publish on the account of the Archdiocese magazines, periodicals, bulletins, almanacs, books of religious ritual and education, to supervise and rule all the ecclesiastical and cultural activities of the parishes.
7. The Archbishop is a rightful member of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, with the right to vote on matters concerning his Diocese. The Holy Synod's positions or decisions regarding the relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian State are not obligatory for the Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America nor for the priests and faithful under his jurisdiction,

all of them living in countries with political and social systems different from that of Romania.

8. The parishes of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America are owners DE JURE and DE FACTO of the personal and real property they possess, having to administer them in conformity with the Statutes of the Archdiocese as well as with the laws of the respective states. The Romanian Patriarchate does not claim any rights of personal or real property on the parishes within the jurisdictional territory of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America.
9. The Romanian Orthodox Missionary in America enjoys the right to establish and maintain inter-Orthodox, inter-Christian and ecumenical relationships with the religious organizations on its jurisdictional territory, having to observe the dogmatic teaching and canonical rules of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church. Its Archbishop is the only Hierarchy invested with the authority to represent it canonically and legally.
10. In order to be aided in his leadership activities, the Archbishop may have an Auxiliary Bishop. This one enjoys the right to be honored according to his rank and is, as the Archbishop, a member of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Auxiliary Bishop to be is recommended by the Archbishop in agreement with the Archdiocesan Council. The procedure for his confirmation and his elevation to the Hierarchical level is the same as for the Archbishop with the exception that he is installed by the Archbishop.

- The Holy Synod recommends that the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America take into account all the above in amending its Statutes.

Bringing to Your Eminence's knowledge all the above for their implementation, we brotherly embrace you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**President of the Holy Synod**

**+ JUSTINIAN, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church**

**Secretary of the Holy Synod**

**+ Bishop ANTONIE PLOIESTEANUL, Patriarchal Vicar**