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The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America  
The Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest

—  
His Grace, Bishop Mark

Friday, May 28, 2010

Dear to God,

Christ is in our midst! By the grace of God we have completed our First Episcopal Assembly, chaired by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North America and attended by 57 of the 65 Hierarchs of North and Central America. He is truly a gracious, loving and patient man and certainly a gift to our Church in North America. May God grant him good health and many years!

Recommendations were made to separate Mexico and Central America from our Episcopal Assembly as their needs linguistically and culturally are quite different. Hopefully, Mexico and Central America will be absorbed into the Episcopal Assembly of South America. Likewise the Bishops of Canada asked to form their own Episcopal Assembly and both requests will be forwarded to the Ecumenical Patriarch per the procedures outlined in the Chambésy Documents.

The agencies of SCOBA were received by the new assembly which considers itself the successor of SCOBA. Monthly updates to a data base will assist in identifying Canonical Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Parishes. Joint Committees have been identified to address the common needs of the Orthodox Church here in the United States which will assist us in uniform articulation, discipline and expression of the One Orthodox Faith.

When building a new house, the most difficult aspect can be assessing the soil and digging deep down to find the bedrock upon which to lay a strong foundation. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios commented that when one looks at a beautiful building, one rarely considers the effort that went into creating a sufficient foundation for the building. By the grace of God we hope we have begun to lay an unyielding foundation upon which to bring the living stones, the faithful in Christ from our various jurisdictions, for the building up of a beautiful Church in North America to the Glory of God. May the All-Holy Spirit direct and guide our Hierarchs as they seek to do Lord's will.

Your unworthy father in Christ,

+ Mark

+ Mark, Bishop of Toledo and the Diocese of the Midwest