

Decision

“Whereas the "Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America," which constitutes one of the Archdioceses of the See of Antioch, became vacant after the resignation of His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph Zahlaoui;

And whereas His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X, by virtue of the Basic Statute and the Internal Regulations of the See of Antioch, had appointed His Eminence Metropolitan Antonios (Al Souri) of Zahleh, Baalbek, and Dependencies as Patriarchal Vicar for this Archdiocese;

And whereas His Eminence Metropolitan Antonios (Al Souri) had called for a Special Convention of the Archdiocese, which nominated, according to the Vicar’s official correspondence of January 14, 2023, three candidates listed as follows, in alphabetical order by first name: Bishop John Abdalah, Bishop Nicholas Ozone, and Metropolitan Saba Isper;

And whereas His Eminence the Patriarchal Vicar has submitted a report to the Holy Synod in which he presented the current situation of the Archdiocese and the expectations of her faithful, based on his pastoral visits throughout the Archdiocese and the deliberations of the Special Convention;

And whereas the Holy Synod has taken note of the petition submitted by the “Legal Committee” in the name of the Special Convention of the Archdiocese, considering Metropolitan Antonios (Al Souri), Metropolitan of Zahleh, Baalbek, and Dependencies, and Patriarchal Vicar for the Archdiocese of New York and All North America, an “eligible candidate,” as received by His Beatitude on January 16, 2023;

Be it resolved by the Antiochian Holy Synod Fathers to:

- Commend the efforts made by the Patriarchal Vicar, Metropolitan Antonios (Al Souri), which had a positive resonance among the faithful of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in North America;
- Express thankfulness to the Auxiliary Bishops, Clergy, Board of Trustees, and the Archdiocesan Special Convention for their openness and cooperation with the Patriarchal Vicar during the period in which the Archdiocese was vacant;

- Acknowledge the leading role played by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in North America, and the bonds formed by her faithful with their Mother Church;

- Establish a Joint Committee to articulate a future vision for the role of this Archdiocese and her witness, and to examine her administrative structure and internal regulations, in order to harmonize her legal, organizational, and administrative status, being an Archdiocese as all the Archdioceses of the See of Antioch, with the provisions of the Basic Statute of the See of Antioch and its internal regulations, and with the decisions of the Holy Synod of Antioch which oversees the work of the Archdioceses of the See of Antioch. The conclusions and recommendations reached by the Joint Committee shall be submitted to the Holy Synod of Antioch in order to take the appropriate decisions thereon.

-Accept and confirm the names of the three candidates nominated by the Special Convention of the Archdiocese held on January 13, 2023, and take note of the position of Metropolitan Antonios who thanked the Special Convention for nominating him while appealing not to be considered a candidate, having been the Patriarchal Vicar who oversaw the nomination procedure.”