



NEWS RELEASE *Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute*

Graduate Theological Union

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New Director at Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute

Berkeley, CA (for immediate release) – The Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute (PAOI) announces the arrival of His Eminence, Metropolitan Nikitas of Hong Kong, as Director of the Institute, effective July 30, 2007. Metropolitan Nikitas comes to the PAOI with the blessing of His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the approval and endorsement of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Metropolitan Nikitas comes to the position after serving for ten years as Metropolitan of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. An experienced clergyman, educator and administrator, he has studied and lived in various countries, cultures and societies. “Metropolitan Nikitas will bring his broad cultural and ecumenical experience to the PAOI and its affiliate, the Graduate Theological Union, which is the largest partnership of seminaries and graduate schools in the United States, comprised of nine denominational schools and eight academic centers.”, according to Christ Kamages, AIA, Chairman of the Institute’s Board of Trustees.

Metropolitan Nikitas was consecrated a Hierarch and named the first Metropolitan of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia in 1996. His see included the Exarchates of China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore. He was born in Tampa, Florida and graduated from the University of Florida with honors, majoring in Religious Studies and Classics. He attended Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology from which he

received his Master of Divinity Degree with Honors in 1980. He was a Rotary International Graduate Scholar from 1980-1981 and A Graduate Scholar, Ministry of the Exterior, Greece, from 1981-1982. He pursued his graduate studies at the University of Thessaloniki, Greece until November 1982. In 1983-1985 as served as Legislative Assistant to the Hon. Michael Bilirakis in the U. S. House of Representatives.

From 1988 to 1991 he was a Lecturer in Orthodox Christian Theology at Loyola University, and from 2000 to present on Orthodox Christian Tradition at Holy Spirit Catholic Seminary in Hong Kong. In 1992-1993 he studied the Russian language at the St. Petersburg Theological Seminary in St. Petersburg, Russia. In 1994-1996 he was the Director of Development of International Orthodox Christian Charities. He served two terms as Vice-president of SYNDESMOS, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth. Fluent in English, Greek and Russian, he has a working knowledge of Latin, Church Slavonic and Spanish.

Upon ordination, his first assignment was at SS. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Merrillville, Indiana, and in 1994-1995 he served as Pastor of St. Demetrios Church in Chicago. In 1987 he was he was appointed Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago, Illinois and served in that position until 1995, during which time he was involved in numerous educational, community service and interfaith activities.

The Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute is an affiliate member of the Graduate Theological Union at Berkeley, California, with a special relationship to the University of California. The Institute exists to study and disseminate Orthodox thought and culture. It offers courses at the Graduate Theological Union through the Alexander G. Spanos Chair in Orthodox Studies. Since 2004, the Institute has offered a Master's Program in Orthodox Studies, the only such program in the western United States.

By decision of the Holy and Venerable Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Institute has been designated a "Patriarchal Institute", ecclesiastically related to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It is the only institution in the United States so designated.

The Institute offers a number of community education programs, including an annual Summer Institute, a lecture in celebration of St. Demetrios Day October, and the

Paul G. Manolis Distinguished Lecture series, which brings to Berkeley internationally known scholars in Orthodox theology and history. Over the years Bishop Kallistos Ware, Fr. John Meyendorff, Sir Dimitri Obolensky, Fr. Robert Taft, and others have delivered the lectures.

The research arm of the Institute performs insightful studies of conditions facing the Orthodox Church. The most recent study of parish life, *Evolving Visions of the Orthodox Priesthood in America*, provides a broad array of conclusion concerning priests and the Church today. Inter-Orthodox Press, the publishing arm of the PAOI has published ten compelling titles on Orthodox theology and history.

The Institute sponsors the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at the University of California, Berkeley, offering the Divine Liturgy in the Chapel of St. Demetrios every Tuesday evening during the academic year, as well as a regular program of discussion and activities.

The Institute was founded in 1981 as an inter-Orthodox endeavor, supported by the various Orthodox Churches (Antiochian, Greek, OCA, Romanian, Serbian and others) in the United States. The Institute is named after His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, who served as Archbishop of North and South American from 1931 to 1948 and Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 1948 to 1972. As Archbishop, he was instrumental in healing the division between Royalist and Venizelist Greek-American communities and established a number of Archdiocesan organizations, including the Holy Cross School of Theology. As Patriarch, he was actively involved in the World Council of Churches and his meeting with Pope Paul VI in 1964 in Jerusalem led to rescinding the 1054 excommunications of the Great Schism.



His Eminence Metropolitan Nikitas
New Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute