



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF DENVER

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## Encyclical Message

March 30, 2024

To the Clergy, the Monastic Communities, and the blessed faithful of the Holy Metropolis of Denver.

It is with great joy that I communicate with you, praying that my message finds you all spiritually uplifted by Holy and Great Lent.

As you have already learned, His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah has resigned his position as Metropolitan of Denver. After careful review, and with the paternal guidance of our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate accepted his resignation and elected His Eminence to the venerable see of the Metropolis of Lystra.

Metropolitan Isaiah has offered sixty-two years of service as a clergyman—thirty-eight of which were dedicated to active Hierarchical ministry. During this time, His Eminence has blessed your marriages, baptized your children, initiated you into the Body of Christ, mourned the loss of your loved ones, established new parishes, and ordained countless clergy to care for Christ's flock. More than just your spiritual father and chief shepherd, His Eminence impacted countless clergy across the Holy Archdiocese as the Dean of Students at Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. As Chancellor of the then Diocese of Chicago, and later of the Archdiocese of North and South America, His Eminence imbued Church administration with humility and pastoral sensitivity. Naturally, his love for God informed Metropolitan Isaiah's love for country, especially as a US Marine.

The endeavors of His Eminence, supported by the prayers and efforts of the faithful of this Metropolis, are boundless. Although your parishes are spread across the Midwest, His Eminence recognized that nothing could *separate you from the love of God*. The Metropolis Center in Denver stands as a beautiful testament to the faith of your ancestors who boldly moved westward in pursuit of the American Dream and who established churches throughout this vast region. The camp and retreat center in the great Rocky Mountains strengthen your communion with each other and provide a space for our youth to enjoy Christian fellowship. The entire Archdiocese expresses its love and gratitude for the sacrificial service of His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah.

By the grace of God, the time has finally come for Metropolitan Isaiah to enjoy his well-deserved rest. As he continues to recuperate at the sacred Monastery of the Holy Archangels, participating in the monastery's liturgical life and devoting himself to contemplative prayer, please rest assured that His Eminence remains your fervent supplicant before the Lord.

Following the tradition of the Church, and in accordance with the Charter of our Holy Archdiocese of America, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, in consultation with our Holy Eparchial Synod, designated my unworthy person to serve as *locum tenens* of the Holy Metropolis of Denver. According to ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church, until a successor to Metropolitan Isaiah is enthroned, the clergy shall commemorate the name of the *locum tenens* during all divine services ("For our Archbishop Nathanael...").

In the coming weeks, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros will convene the Holy Eparchial Synod to prepare a ballot of three names (the *triprosopon*). The ballot will be submitted to the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which will elect one of the three candidates as the next Metropolitan of Denver. Once formally enthroned, the next Metropolitan of Denver will begin his Archpastoral responsibilities.

Beloved children of Christ and of the Holy Metropolis of Denver, during this special time of change, it is important to remain firm in the faith and to cultivate your hearts and souls. In the coming weeks, I will have the opportunity to visit some of your parishes and join you in worship and fellowship—to interact with you, to guide you, and to answer your questions. I urge you to prepare to receive your new spiritual father by participating more deeply than ever before in the life of the Church. Set aside time for daily prayer; read and reflect upon the holy scriptures; partake in the sacrament of confession and reconciliation; draw closer to Christ through His Lifegiving Body and Blood.

Extending to each of you my heartfelt prayers, I remain

With paternal love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Nathanael". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+NATHANAEL  
Metropolitan of Chicago  
*Locum Tenens* of the Metropolis of Denver