

To our beloved in the Lord, the hierarchs, priests, deacons, and spiritual children of our Holy Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America,

During this difficult time that the Holy Archdiocese is facing, following the accusation that was put against the Metropolitan and the consequential turmoil, I feel it is my paternal duty to remain close to you as I mentioned in my previous letter. In the present letter, I wish to share with you some guidance that is based on the principles of the Church order that was handed over to us by the Holy Fathers, what characterizes our Orthodox Church.

I hereby put said guidance under two headings:

Firstly: The well-being and peace of the Archdiocese. When challenges face the Church at the level of the episcopacy, the believers come together in prayer, and they gather in support of each other as one body, both clergy and laity. This is to emphasize that the current crisis is neither between the church leadership and the faithful believers, nor between the Mother Church of Antioch and the Archdiocese. All the body of the Church of Antioch is concerned with this crisis. And redeeming this matter requires the protection of the well-being of the Archdiocese in order to preserve peace within the whole Church of Antioch. This is the vision guiding our action. We share it with you so that you be assured that the well-being of the Holy Antiochian Archdiocese of North America and her peace is the utmost priority superseding any other consideration. It is within the framework of this vision that we are liaising with you through the Bishops of the Archdiocese and the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Metropolitans, members of the Holy Synod of Antioch.

Secondly: The procedural order to follow. When critical accusations are raised against the episcopacy resulting in a state of turmoil within the Archdiocese, the responsibility of addressing this matter falls within the hands of the Holy Synod. The Patriarch is responsible for convening the Holy Synod to examine the issue at hand, however not before conducting a thorough review of the facts, in order to examine the substantiality of the facts and listen to the parties concerned. If necessary, the Patriarch would appoint a synodal committee for this purpose, and the findings of the committee would then form the basic material to be seen by the Holy Synod.

We have informed you in the previous letter, that we were from day one and continue to be in direct contact with the people concerned in the Archdiocese, both clergy and laity. Within this procedural course, I shall also have a personal meeting with our brother, Metropolitan Joseph Zehlaoui, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese; and I shall then proceed to further proper steps following the procedural course described above. I hope that my words to you serve to bring unity in vision and prayer leading to the well-being of the Archdiocese and her peace, thus the well-being and peace of the whole Antiochian Church. This is what we pray and work for day and night. Do keep us in your prayers, as we keep you in our hearts and prayers.

Balamand, 4 September 2022.

John X
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East

[#John X](#)