



# THE ORTHODOX CHRONICLES

A Newsletter of the Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association

Vol. 1, No. 1, June 2022

*Letter from Fr. Christos Mars, Chairman of AIOPA, Annunciation Greek Cathedral, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA)*

Welcome to the inaugural edition of The Orthodox Chronicles! This publication is an effort by the newly formed Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association, a committee of the Atlanta Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood, or AIOPA for short. It is at the direction and blessing of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops that this association was created, and we look forward to communicating with you on a monthly basis.

That being said, in the month of June, we celebrate many major feasts and saints. Though we could spend entire books writing about each, I wanted to focus on one of the major Feasts, the Feast of the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul.

Following the Sunday of All-Saints, fasting is prescribed in preparation for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29). Due to the fact that All-Saints is a moveable feast, falling on the Sunday following Pentecost (the previous week there is no fasting prescribed), the Apostles Fast varies in length from year to year. For example, the Fast may last many weeks, or, when the Feast falls on or prior to

All-Saints there is no Fast at all!

We fast in honor of the Apostles, and in this case the two paramount Apostles, Peter and Paul, who were instrumental in setting the path for the early Church. We can read about their struggles in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul is best known for his conversion and subsequent writings to the fledgling churches. These fourteen letters (Epistles) have been placed in the New Testament canon and make up about half of the books (twenty-seven in total). St. Peter is known not only as the head of the Disciples, but also for his preaching and ability to lead. This is clear and evident in the Acts of the Apostles, where following Pentecost he brings thousands of people to Christ through his words. He too has contributed to the New Testament canon through two letters (Epistles).

As we begin AIOPA's work, though there have been many blessings and positive reactions, there are still some challenges to overcome. The Apostles, whom we celebrate this month – they too had to overcome challenges. We must look to them for guidance along with the grace of the Holy Spirit, the blessings of our Hierarchs and with the support of all of you, so that we can move closer to Christian fellowship.

## A Brief History of Movement Towards Orthodox Unity in the Diaspora

The **Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America (AoB)** is made up of all the active, canonical Orthodox bishops in the United States of America, of every jurisdiction.

The Assembly was established in accordance with the Decision of the 4th Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference, convoked in Chambésy, Switzerland, June 6-12, 2009, at which met representatives from all the universally-recognized autocephalous Orthodox churches. These representatives recognized substantial canonical "anomalies" in the organization and life of the Church in these regions, and realized that, though these anomalies had arisen from specific historical circumstances and pastoral needs, they nonetheless present a number of serious problems for the faithful; moreover, they give an appearance of disunity in the one holy Church. As such, these representatives unanimously agreed to the formation of assemblies of bishops throughout the world to heal, as quickly as possible, these anomalies.

The bishops in the USA, Canada and Central America were originally together in one Assembly, called the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America; in April 2014 it was announced that, in order to best respond to the cultural diversity and pastoral needs in the region, the Canadian and US bishops would form separate assemblies and the Central American bishops would join the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of Latin America.

To accomplish its purpose and vision, the Assembly has as its goals:

- i. the promotion and accomplishment of Church unity in the United States
- ii. the strengthening of the common pastoral ministry to all the Orthodox faithful of the region
- iii. a common witness by the Church to all those outside her
- iv. the organization of the Church in the United States in accordance with the ecclesiological and the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church

In this way, the Assembly is both consultative and programmatic. It is consultative insofar as, while it has no administrative authority, it is a forum for the exchange of ideas and creation of templates, best practices, and models for each Bishop to implement as he sees fit in his own diocese. At the same time, the Assembly is to be programmatic in its goal to coordinate and ultimately unite the common ministries and pastoral practices of the various jurisdictions.

The Assembly meets annually and functions by a consensus of all its members. At its inception, it established a number of committees with specific tasks to help accomplish its goals. Each committee consists of member bishops who are assisted by clergy and lay advisors. The Assembly understands itself to be the successor of SCOBA, and as such, has assumed all of its agencies, dialogues, and other ministries.

*(cont. on pg. 3)*

(cont. from pg. 2) Unlike SCOBA, the Assembly is a transitional body. If it achieves its goal, it will make itself obsolete by developing a proposal for the canonical organization of the Church in the United States of America. This proposal will in turn be presented to the universally recognized autocephalous Churches, gathered in council. Should this proposal be accepted, it is hoped that the Assembly of Bishops will be succeeded by a governing Synod of a united Church in the United States.

One of the 16 committees activating within AoB is the Committee for Canonical Regional Planning. This committee works with pan-Orthodox Clergy Brotherhoods (“Clergy Brotherhoods”) and inter-Orthodox Parish Associations “Associations” (consisting of clergy and lay representatives from all Orthodox parishes) to efficiently facilitate and maintain pan-Orthodox parish-to-parish communications, activities and cooperation (the “One Church Initiative”) in the pilot metro areas. The Committee has identified Atlanta GA and Akron OH as the sites of these first Pan-Orthodox Parish Associations.

**The Atlanta Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood (AOCB) and The Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association (AIOPA)**

**The Atlanta Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood** started informally among clergy from different jurisdictions around year 2000, but quickly grew into a network of relationships that fostered inter-Orthodox events, both charitable and liturgical. With the support of local hierarchs, especially His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, the AOCB established Pan-Orthodox Christmas Concerts,

Sunday of Orthodoxy, Feast Day services and the Loaves and Fishes Food Program. It is from these successful beginnings that the current working Atlanta Inter-Orthodox Parish Association (AIOPA), a committee of the AOCB, has formed to involve both clergy and laity in the process of fulfilling the Committee for Canonical Regional Planning’s pilot metro area goals.

AIOPA was founded in March 2022, following invitations sent to the 18 local parishes that represent 6 jurisdictions. For the most part, each participating parish is represented by two members of the laity (a parish council member and a non-member) and one member of the clergy. The overarching goal of all the members of AIOPA is to foster connections among different parishes and jurisdictions, to develop a strong sense of one local Orthodox Christian Family and, as such, contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church in the United States of America.

## AIOPA updates

The website AIOPA uses for communication is <https://www.atlocb.org>. Updates are now available in the Events, News and About AIOPA sections.

AIOPA was officially formed on March 17 during the **first AIOPA meeting** when approximately one clergy and two laity members from each parish met online. After a quick introduction from Bill Marianes on the reasons for establishing this team, the members shared ideas for potential activities that will support AIOPA's mission. These activities generally fell under five domains: Religious, Charity, Social, Development and Communications.

After the meeting, each team member shared their own interest participating in workgroups dedicated to these five domains. As a result, **five workgroups were formed** with mixed representatives from various parishes and jurisdictions (details at About AIOPA on the website).

During the **May AIOPA meeting**, each one of the five workgroups presented a status of their proposed activities, to socialize them as well as to gather feedback and support.

For the rest of the month, the workgroups started to **run the already planned activities** as well as continued to refine the proposed ones.

Visit  
<https://www.atlocb.org>  
for up-to-date information  
about the AOCB and  
AIOPA and a calendar of  
events.

## Past Events

The Atlanta Romanian Orthodox Youth promoted a hike to Arabia Mountain on March 6. The event was attended by youngsters from Sts. Constantine and Helen (OCA), St. John the Wonderworker (OCA), and St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church (Antiochian).

May 22 was the celebration of the Feast of Sts. Constantine and Helen, Equal-to-the Apostles, and was the occasion for a name-day festival at Sts. Constantine and Helen Romanian Orthodox Church in Lilburn, GA. The festival was Saturday and Sunday and featured traditional Romanian food, live music, children's activities, and a Romanian cultural museum.

As part of AIOPA's mission to celebrate and promote all the different parishes in the Atlanta area, the Romanian Festival was announced at each AIOPA meeting so that members could spread the word to their own family, friends, and individual parishes, and an announcement was put on the AOCB's website. The event was attended by clergy and/or laity from Annunciation Greek Cathedral (GOA), St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church (Antiochian), St. Mary (Romanian Patriarchate) and St. Mary of Egypt (OCA).



**Sts. Constantine and Helen Romanian Orthodox Church Festival May 21-22 was the first major event promoted by AIOPA.**

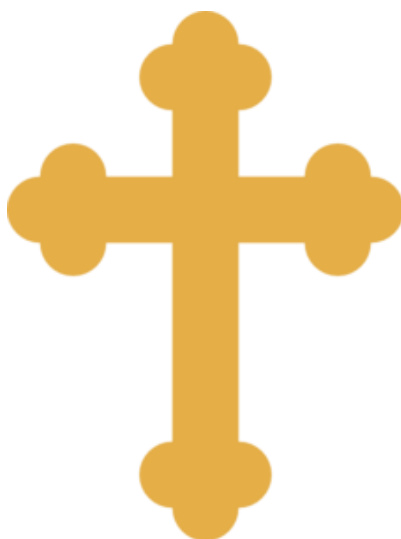


## Upcoming events

**June 5 | Park Liturgy and Activities | Chattahoochee Bend State Park.** Join us for Divine Liturgy at 10AM followed by park activities. Hot dogs and burgers provided!

**June 18 | Young Adult League - Day of Service | Cascade Springs Nature Preserve.** Grab a friend or two and help out a local community. Forest Restoration in Cascade Springs Nature Preserve.

**June 23-26 | AHEPA Centennial | Greek Orthodox Cathedral of The Annunciation.** The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association Mother Lodge Chapter #1 invites you to an amazing, inspirational, and enjoyable “Centennial Celebration Weekend” in Atlanta, Georgia, where AHEPA began.



In His High Priestly Prayer to His Father, Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ prayed for His disciples, the members of the Church that He established ... “that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me” (John 17:21).