



A Brief History of the Canonical and Autonomous Orthodox Metropolia of Western Europe and the Americas

An Introductory Note

What is presented here is actually a brief history of the evolution of the Metropolia's Western rite communities; interpolated (in *italics*) with an even briefer account of the Metropolia of Milan. These Western rite communities in fact pre-date the formation of the True (Old Calendar) Orthodox Church of Greece. The significance of this fact rests in that, the True (Old Calendar) Orthodox Church of Greece would later give a tomos of autonomy to its own Diocese of Western Europe for the purpose of creating an "indigenous" Church of non-Greeks or Slavs to minister to Western European converts. It was this same European Diocese of the Old Calendar Greek Church that became the Holy Synod of Milan and known officially as the *Autonomous Orthodox Metropolia of Western Europe and the Americas*.

From Rome to Moscow

On March 17th, 1908, Dom Augustine de Angelis (Harding), a Benedictine monk, formerly of the Roman Catholic Abbey of the Sacred Heart, near Shawnee, Oklahoma, founded St. Dunstan's Priory at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Prior Augustine on this day formally received and tonsured Novice William (Henry Francis Brothers).

In 1911, Prior Augustine professed Dom William (Brothers) as a monk. Shortly thereafter, the Monastery of St. Dunstan was moved to Waukegan, Illinois. On October 3rd, 1911, Dom Williams was ordained Priest.

In 1912, Prior Augustine retired and was replaced as Prior by Dom William. He was then elected and installed as Abbot. On April 21st, 1913, Dom William was consecrated "Abbot-Bishop". In 1924, Archbishop William relocated his Monastery and See in New York, as Archbishop of the Western Orthodox Catholic Church.

On June 30th, 1934, at St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in New York City, Archbishop William was consecrated as a canonical Orthodox Bishop by Metropolitan Theophan (Stylian Fan Noli) [1.], assisted by Bishop Christopher (ConteGeorge) [2.]

Rejuvenation of Traditional Orthodoxy

On December 19th, 1960, Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago (USA), together with Bishop Teophil, both of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile, consecrated Bishop Akakios (Pappas) of the Greek Old Calendar Orthodox Church. Bishop Akakios became the second Primate (Chief Hierarch) of that Church.

On March 21st, 1962, at St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in New York City, Archbishop William and his jurisdiction was received into the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate by Bishop Dosifej (Ivanachenko), Russian Exarch for North America, and was named **Exarch of Western Rite Churches for Moscow Patriarchate**. Patriarch Alexi insisted, however, that Exarch William should first come to Moscow and again be consecrated. Exarch William agreed to this, but he delayed his actual voyage to Russia due to fears of Soviet governmental interference in the Church.

On the 20th May 1962 Archbishop Akakios of Greece and Archbishop Leonti of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile consecrated as bishop Auxentios, who became third Primate of the Greek Old Calendar Church. Other Bishops were also consecrated at this time.

In January, 1966, Patriarch Alexis ordered Exarch William to present himself in Moscow for consecration, but, with persistent fears of the role that the Soviet KGB wished to take in using his stay for political purposes, Exarch William resigned from the Russian Patriarchate. He was received (by virtue of his consecration by Metropolitan Theophan) as a Bishop by Archbishop Palladios [3.], Chief Hierarch of the **Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Exile** in communion with Patriarch Athenogoras of Constantinople. In this capacity, Archbishop Palladios sat as one of the Seven Hierarchs on **the Standing Committee of Orthodox Bishops in America** (SCOBA), and was recognized by Patriarch Athenogoras as autocephalous.

In 1967, Archbishop Palladios requested and obtained the permission of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the establishment of an autocephalous Western Rite Synod of Bishops, to be called the **Synod of Orthodox Bishops of the Western Rite**, with Bishop

William as Chief Hierarch and secured approval from the Patriarch for the nomination by Metropolitan William of his candidate as Coadjutor. On April 2nd, 1967, Metropolitan William raised as his Coadjutor the Priest Joseph (Athony MacCormack). On April 8th, 1967, Metropolitans Palladios and William consecrated Archbishop Joseph in Staten Island, New York. Later that year, Archbishop Joseph was installed as Archbishop of San Francisco.

In 1969, Archbishop Palladios reposed in the Lord. Patriarch Athenogoras declined to appoint a successor for the Ukrainian Diocese. Alternatively, the Ukrainian Diocese was placed under the direction of the Greek Patriarchal Exarch, Archbishop Iakovos.

In 1973, the new Ecumenical Patriarch, Demetrios of Constantinople, declared that he recognized the then Roman Catholic Pope of Rome, Paul VI, as the Chief Bishop of Christianity. From this time on, the Synod of Orthodox Bishops of the Western Rite ceased any communication with the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Orthodox Mission Expands to Reach More Souls in the Western World.

In 1977, the Synod of Orthodox Bishops of the Western Rite received the Old Catholic Diocese of Texas, and, February 20th, Archbishop Joseph was chief consecrators for their former bishop making him Archbishop. Archbishop Hilarion (Robert Lloyd Williams) was named Bishop of Texas.

Archbishop Auxentios, together with Metropolitans Gerondios, Kallistos, and Antonios, consecrated Bishop Gabriel of Lisbon on 18th June 1978 for the Western European Diocese of the Greek Old Calendar Orthodox Church

In 1979, Metropolitan William reposed in the Lord on July 21st. Subsequently, Archbishop Joseph was installed as Chief Hierarch.

In 1980, on September 21st, Archbishop Hilarion and Metropolitan Joseph consecrated Schema-Abbot John (LoBue) as Bishop of the Northeast, with monasteries and parishes in New York and New Jersey. On September 2nd, 1982, Bishop John was designated as Secretary of the Synod of Bishops.

On 17th March 1984 Archbishops Auxentios and Gabriel, together with Metropolitans Maximos, Kallinikos, and Gerasimos, consecrated Bishop Tiago (James) of Coimbra in Portugal.

On May 28th, 1984, the Old Catholic Diocese of Belgrade, Yugoslavia was received under the Synod. It is today a metachion.

Archbishop Gabriel and Bishop Tiago (James), on 9th September 1984, consecrated Bishop Evloghios of Milan. On 23rd September 1984 they then consecrated Bishop Gregorio of Turin. On 30th September of that same year, Metropolitan Gabriel and Bishop Tiago consecrated Bishop Teodoro of Evora in Portugal.

On September 27th, 1984 Archbishop Auxentios of Athens granted, in the name of the Holy Synod, a decree of Autonomy to their Archdiocese of Western Europe. Archbishop Gabriel of Portugal was named as the first Primate of this Autonomous Metropolia of Western Europe.

In 1986, the Synod of Orthodox Bishops of the Western Rite assigned the Diocese of Great Britain to Metropolitan Joseph, and Bishop John was assigned to the Diocesan offices previously held by Metropolitan Joseph within the continental United States not currently within the jurisdiction of Archbishop Hilarion.

In 1990, Metropolitan Joseph reposed in the Lord on July 8th, having previously designated Bishop John as "Locum Tenens" for the office of Chief Hierarch until such time as an election was secured.

After Archbishop Gabriel, and the other Portuguese Bishops, had left the Metropolia for the Orthodox Church of Poland, the remaining Bishops of the Holy Synod of Autonomous Orthodox Metropolia of Western Europe elected Archbishop Evloghios of Milan, director of foreign affairs of the Church, as Metropolitan and second Primate of the Metropolia. On 28th September 1990 Metropolitan Evloghios, together with Archbishop Gregorio and Bishop Vigile, consecrated Archimandrite Lazar as Bishop of Vancouver. He later became Archbishop of Ottawa. Several years later he left the Metropolia and joined another jurisdiction.

Following dialogues with the Holy Synod of Milan (under the presidency of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Evloghios of Milan and Aquileia) the **Synod of Orthodox Bishops of the Western Rite** was accepted and became an organic part of the **Autonomous Orthodox Metropolia of Western Europe and the Americas**. On February 16th, 1997 Metropolitan Evloghios, Archbishop Basilio, and Bishops Lorenzo and Nectarios, accepted, with correction to their ordinations, Hilarion as Archbishop of Austin in Texas and John as Archbishop of New York and New Jersey.