

Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute (PAOI)
(510) 649-3450
paoi@ses.gtu.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAOI SELECTS NEW DIRECTOR METROPOLITAN TARASIOS OF RHODOPOLIS, PRIMATE AND EXARCH OF LAZICA

Berkeley, California, January 20, 2020 — The Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute has announced its appointment of Metropolitan Tarasios of Rhodopolis, Primate and Exarch of Lazica, as its new Director. As Director, Metr. Tarasios will establish and implement a long-term growth strategy in support of the PAOI's mission to educate, communicate, promote and sustain the traditions, values, teachings and culture of Orthodox Christianity. He will lead fundraising efforts and manage the general administration of the PAOI.

The PAOI offers a Master of Arts in Orthodox Christian Studies at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), an ecumenical and interreligious consortium of seminaries and academic centers in Berkeley, California. It also hosts academic lectures and symposia, sponsors the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at the University of California at Berkeley, and provides educational programs to the faithful of the Bay Area. The Institute is an inter-Orthodox endeavor, representing the diversity of Orthodoxy in America: Albanian, Antiochian, Bulgarian, Carpatho-Russian, Greek, OCA, Romanian, Serbian and Ukranian. The PAOI is excited to welcome Metr. Tarasios as its new Director and looks forward to a bright future ahead.

Metr. Tarasios was born in Gary, Indiana, in 1956. His family moved to San Antonio, Texas, in 1960, and young Metr. Tarasios grew up in the Church of St. Sophia in San Antonio. He studied at Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, as well as Trinity University in San Antonio, the University of Notre Dame in Indiana (M.A. in Theology 1983), the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, and the Pontifical School of Paleography and Archives at the Vatican. He served as a lay assistant at St. Nicholas' church in St. Louis, Missouri, beginning in 1980, and eight years later became administrative assistant in the Diocese of Atlanta.

In 1990, Metr. Tarasios became the first American to serve at the Patriarchal court in Constantinople, when he was ordained to the diaconate by Metr. Bartholemew of Chalcedon. He advanced through the ranks of the patriarchate, eventually being appointed as Grand Archdeacon of the Patriarchate. In this role

he oversaw the operation of the Patriarchal Church of St. George (the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch), as well as various functions of the Archdiocese of Constantinople. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 27, 2001, in Prokopi (present day Urgup, Turkey) and to the episcopate on June 3 in Constantinople. He was enthroned in Buenos Aires on July 14, 2001. On November 29, 2019, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate elected Metr. Tarasios to the Metropolitanate of Rhodopolis, Primate and Exarch of Lazica.

Metr. Tarasios speaks English, Greek, Spanish, Italian, and French, and has some reading knowledge of Portuguese. He established close ties with the inter-religious communities primarily of Buenos Aires but also throughout the South American continent, except for Colombia and Venezuela.