



The HOLY SYNOD
of the
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

July 10, 2017

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania:
Christ is in our midst! – He is and ever shall be!

With the permission and blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop MARK of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, I am writing to you on behalf of His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON, and the Hierarchs of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, in my capacity as the Secretary of the Synod.

It has come to the attention of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America that an uncanonical “bishop” is reaching out to parishes of the Orthodox Church in America’s Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. This person calls himself “Archbishop Melchisedeck” Musallam (aka Ramzi R. Musallam, aka Monk Elias) and claims to be head of the Archdiocese of Pennsylvania of the so-called “Palestinian Orthodox Church of America.” “Archbishop Melchisedeck” is not recognized as a priest or bishop by any of the Orthodox Patriarchates or any of the Orthodox Autocephalous or Autonomous Churches throughout the world; therefore, he is not to be received as an Orthodox clergyman in Communion with the Orthodox Church.

Please be aware that this man is not a recognized bishop of the Orthodox Church, nor is he a member of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States. The Holy Synod takes this matter very seriously and has appointed Bishop DANIEL of Santa Rosa to independently investigate it, assisted by two clergy of the Archdiocese of Washington: Archpriest John Vitko and Archpriest Gregory Safchuk. Should you have any information about Musallam’s activities or any other issues of concern related to this matter, please contact confidentially Bishop Daniel, Father Vitko or Father Safchuk.

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Archpriest Gregory Safchuk: gsafchuk@hotmail.com, 301-806-3845

With prayerful best wishes and love in Christ,

+ Michael

+ Archbishop Michael of New York and New Jersey
Secretary of the Holy Synod of Bishops

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