



Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver

September 26, 2006

Protocol 06-19

The Pious Pastors, and
The Esteemed Parish Councils of
the Holy Metropolis of Denver

Beloved in the Lord,

From time to time I am approached regarding the iconography of our holy churches in this Metropolis. To establish a uniform policy, and to provide all clergy and parish councils with the same information, I have prepared this protocol letter.

First and foremost, iconography is an integral part of Orthodox sacred Tradition, and its form, color, and placement is as sacrosanct as the words of Holy Scripture. The language of iconography has its own syntax and grammar which communicate specific theological truths.

Iconography *is not* a decorative religious art form. Iconography *is* part of our theology, and as such it falls within the episcopal teaching office of the hierarchy.

The 2005 Archdiocese Regulations accordingly state:

Parishes shall maintain the architectural, iconographic and artistic integrity of all Church edifices in accordance with Orthodox tradition. For that reason, Parishes shall submit to the respective Hierarchy, for his prior approval related to aesthetic and dogmatic concerns, all preliminary plans for:

- A. The erection of a church structure or other Parish building;
- B. Any major structural alteration to an existing church structure or other Parish building; or
- C. The iconography or any appointments of a Church structure.

(Reference: Archdiocese Regulations, Part Three, Uniform Parish Regulations, Chapter One: Parish and Parish Organization, Article 16, Parish Property, Section 4).

Second, since iconography is a theological expression, the iconographer chosen to execute an iconography project in a parish must also be approved by the hierarchy. In this regard, the following iconographers have done work in the churches of this Metropolis, and in the course of their efforts have worked very closely with me and my office. When going through a selection process of a suitable iconographer for your parish, I ask that you consider these individuals since they have already proven themselves and their work in the Metropolis:

a. Leonidas Diamantopoulos
1853 Pipers Meadow Drive
Palm Harbor, FL 34683
Tel.: 727-781-4474
FAX: 727-784-7101
leodiamantopoulos@verizon.net

b. Athanasios (Tom) Clark
Valtetsiou 1
Voula GR-16673
GREECE
Tel. & FAX: 011-30-210-899-3580
e-mail: pinello@hol.gr

c. Maria Sigalas and Nikolaos Spanopoulos
45 Elinon Axiomatikon Street
Kareas 162 33
GREECE
Tel.: 011-30-010-765-7456
FAX: 011-30-010-760-8104
master@byzarticon.gr

You may also wish to consider other iconographers in regard to work which you plan to have done in your temple. If you do, please send samples to me beforehand, so that I may share my thoughts with you.

Third, parish iconography is typically a long-term process. It usually begins with temporary furnishings and icons in the early years and culminates with a full complement of woodcarving or marble, permanent furnishings, and iconography in the church.

A common mistake is for parishes to acquire "permanent" icons and place them into a temporary or rudimentary iconostasion. This limits the future balance regarding architecture, furnishings, and iconography. With newly-built churches, please do not waste funds by having a finished iconostasion installed; on an interim basis these icons can be prints or laminates placed on tripods or on an inexpensive icon screen.

With Paternal Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

✠ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver