

*www.spyridon.net*

**The Lonely Path of Integrity  
Spyridon, Archbishop of America (1996-1999)**

by Justine Frangouli -Argyris

ERA 5 (Greek State Radio) - January 14, 1999

**Reactions To Patriarch's Decision That Spyridon Should Stay**  
By Justine Frangouli

**GOAL, "Patriarchal friends" and Metropolitans**

The church pressure group known as GOAL (Greek American Orthodox Leaders), as of Wednesday, has moved on to a personal attack upon the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew. It thus revealed in an undisguised manner what has always been its real agenda: the removal of Archbishop Spyridon of America by whatever means.

Immediately after the session of the Patriarchate Holy Synod last Tuesday, GOAL, in a lengthy letter, launched a virulent attack upon Patriarch Bartholomew, charging him with imposing Spyridon not for the good of the Church, but because of his loyalty to the Patriarchal Throne. At the meeting, differences between the five Metropolitans and the Archbishop of America were discussed, a peaceful solution to the disputes was decided upon and it was resolved that Spyridon should remain in office.

In its letter –headed "Black Tuesday"– GOAL goes so far as to make dark insinuations about the circumstances in which the late Patriarch Demetrios died.

At the same time, the so-called "Patriarchal friends", in order to win the battle over perceptions, are preparing a strong attack on Patriarch Bartholomew, because, the way they tell it, he did not replace Archbishop Spyridon in spite of the fact that up to the last minute he had assured them that he would do so.

The five Metropolitans are also compromised now in the eyes of public opinion. From the beginning of their quarrel with the Archbishop they had brought GOAL onto the scene of the crisis, contributing towards the pressure group's main demand: the removal of Archbishop Spyridon. They pressed this demand strongly at the Holy Synod meeting last Tuesday in Constantinople.

However, the five Metropolitans' group now presents a picture of division, since Anthony (San Fransisco), Iakovos (Chicago) and Isaiah (Denver) have decided to obey the orders of the Patriarchal Synod and find a jointly acceptable solution to their demands at the next session of the Eparchial Synod on January 25. Nevertheless, Maximos (Pittsburgh) and Methodios (Boston) continue, it seems, to take a hard line, with Maximos letting it be understood, according to journalistic sources, that the letters sent in October had the Patriarch's approval, who last Tuesday, in spite of this, left them out in the cold.

**Conflicts at the top**

In the light of such developments, the prospects for the Archdiocese of America can only be described as somewhat ill-omened, at least for the immediate future. GOAL and the former "Patriarchal friends" will attempt through a barrage of attacks on the Patriarch and the Archbishop

to intensify the climate of crisis by using the much-discussed issue of autocephaly as their spearhead.

Other circles, discontented by the decision that Spyridon will remain as Archbishop of America, will put forward the argument that the Church of America must join the jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Church of Greece –arguments which likely to create friction not only on Archbishop Spyridon's upcoming trip to Athens but also on the Patriarch's first official visit to Greece.

One thing is for sure: the current Archbishop's dedicated opponents will not back down easily. They will attempt to create an oppressive atmosphere for the Patriarchate and continue to depict a picture of deepening crisis in the Archdiocese of America.

As to the Archbishop himself, he has already agreed to discuss with the Metropolitans about their demands, to go ahead with a revision of the Archdiocese Charter, and, should there be difference of opinions, to accept the Phanar's intervention. Archbishop Spyridon, in a spirit of reconciliation towards all parties, plans to meet with the individual groups who have expressed dissidence.

Nevertheless, the great mass of Greek Americans play no part at all in these events and follow at a distance this high level conflict of forces. Will it perhaps not be this peaceful Christian flock that in the end will be called upon to pay the price for the conflicting interests of an Archdiocese elite?

#### **Message of unity from Archdiocesan Council President John Catsimatidis**

Meanwhile, in a message of support to both Archbishop Spyridon and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, John Catsimatidis, President of the Archdiocesan Council, has voiced the need to achieve unity and solidarity within the Church in America.

Mr Catsimatidis noted that His All-Holiness the Patriarch has indicated that Archbishop Spyridon is to lead the Church of America into the new millennium and that all should be ready to meet the challenges of our times.

“Our Church opens her embrace,” said the Archdiocesan Council President, “to welcome all without criticism, with the sacred love of Christ as an example. Come, let us clear the air and make a new start.”

*[Translated from Greek]*

---

This material comes from Spyridon.Net  
<http://www.spyridon.net/>

The URL for this document is:  
<http://www.spyridon.net/EN/author/2Ed-Era5.html>