

Statement of Bishop-elect Artur Bubnevych

Christ is among us!

By the grace of God and with deep feeling of unworthiness, but with a joyful heart and in utter thankfulness I say YES to the appointment of His Holiness Pope Francis to serve the clergy and the faithful of the Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix as their sixth bishop.

The Eparchy was founded in 1981 as the Eparchy of Van Nuys, which was based in Los Angeles, California. Since 1995 the offices have been in Phoenix, Arizona. This westernmost eparchy of our Metropolitan Province has vibrant parishes, missions, and outreaches from New Mexico to Alaska and Hawaii, with energetic laypeople who make many sacrifices to be able to grow in faith as Byzantine Catholics. The eparchy is known for its attachment to traditional liturgical life and to innovations in evangelization and organization; its embrace of different cultures and languages; its service to others; and its young population in thirteen states.

As the sixth bishop, I pledge to continue to improve the good work of my predecessors by sowing seeds of the Gospel in every kind of soil alongside the clergy of the Eparchy of Phoenix, through my prayer, fasting, and penance with its religious and dedicated service to its laity. I will aspire to be a builder of a synodal and missionary Church and with enthusiasm to commit myself to reach this goal by actively listening to the Holy Spirit and do this in a spirit of sharing and fraternity with eparchial clergy and my brother bishops. I hope to be a listening bishop and a missionary of synodality according to the mandate of the Holy Father Pope Francis given to me at the World gathering of the Parish Priests for the Synod in April-May of this year.

I would like to convey my most sincere gratitude:

To Pope Francis for his trust and confidence in me.

To Bishop Gerald Dino of blessed memory for ordaining me to the order of priesthood and giving me my very first assignment and believing in me.

To His grace Metropolitan William Skurla, Bishop Kurt Burnette, Bishop Robert Pipta, and Bishop John Pzak for their example of leadership support and guidance.

To the eparchial clergy and religious with whom I served for the past 10 years.

I am thrilled to serve you now as your Bishop with trust and respect.

It is very hard to part from my dearly beloved parish family of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Albuquerque. What a joy it has been serving you as your pastor. It has been a time of learning and growth for me. I have truly fallen in love with you and I will miss you all very much!

I am forever grateful to Father Chris Zuger, my spiritual mentor and "a man after God's own heart". Thank you for being there for me in both joys and sorrows.

I thank my parents for the gift of life and my grandparents for the gift of faith.

I thank Almighty God for calling me to the priesthood.

As I start this new adventure in the name of the Lord and under the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos and our bishop-martyr Blessed Theodore Romzha, I open my heart to God's call "to put out into the deep" and I sing with King David, "I will love you O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my rock and my refuge."

Please, pray for me that I be a prudent and faithful steward of the flock entrusted to me by proclaiming the truth of the Catholic Church with love, preserving the Apostolic faith with the authority of the Risen Christ, and be the stronghold of unity and peace by serving the Eucharist and other sacraments.