



## *Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix*

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We, Most Reverend John S. Pazak, C.Ss.R., Bishop of Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix, and Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, write to you today to inform you of the appointment, made by His Holiness Pope Francis, of Bishop Olmsted as Apostolic Administrator *Sede Plena* of the Eparchy of Phoenix. While Bishop Pazak remains Bishop of the Eparchy of Phoenix, his focus during the time of Bishop Olmsted's appointment will be primarily pastoral and liturgical, while that of Bishop Olmsted will be primarily administrative.

This relationship is therefore intended to be a collaborative one to facilitate the resolution of a legal matter which has arisen within the Eastern Catholic Church in the United States. The Church, founded as one and intended to be one by Jesus Christ as its head and Shepherd, is to be and remain one in Christ. Unfortunately, there occasionally arise disagreements which can become complicated and threaten the peace, unity, and communion to which, we are all called as People of God. Fully aware of this, and bound by our common faith and responsibilities to those we serve, we commit ourselves to a just resolution among all those involved and believe that this present collaboration will be able to effect that. Bishop Olmsted's presence in this effort is therefore welcomed by Bishop Pazak, as is the guidance and concern of the Holy See. We ask, too, that you lend your personal support to our work through your prayers, that all parties may be guided by the Holy Spirit, and be fully open to that guidance.

We believe it is also important to state that this does not involve any personal misconduct on anyone's part. It is a legal dispute which has both canonical and legal perspectives which we and all the involved parties must address. Therefore, as may be somewhat obvious at this point, we will consult, and are consulting, with experts in both these areas so that the eventual solution will be an equitable one worthy of Christ's Church.

Because this is a somewhat complicated situation, Bishop Olmsted's appointment as Apostolic Administrator does not carry a term, or predetermined length of time. This allows for the process to move along prudently, taking the time necessary to understand the issues and thus arrive at the best result. While this takes place, there should be no effect on day to day parish life in our Eparchy and, when the matter is eventually resolved, we will let you know.

Bishop Pazak remains our spiritual father; Bishop Olmsted brings his administrative and pastoral skills to us. Please pray that God will bless our work, which we hope will not only strengthen the relationship among our various eparchies, as these situations can always do when we work together, but that it also may serve in some way to deepen the precious bond of unity within the universal Church. To this we commit ourselves.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend John S. Pazak, C.Ss.R.  
Bishop of Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted, D.D., J.C.D.  
Apostolic Administrator *Sede Plena* of Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix