

His Eminence, Metropolitan Grigoli of Poti and Khobi

Archpastor, professor, theologian, and spiritual father—Your Eminence, your leadership, teaching and untiring efforts to rebuild the Georgian Orthodox Church truly embody St. Paul’s call to “excel in the building up of the Church.” (1 Cor 14:12)

A son of the Georgian Apostolic Orthodox Church, you were ordained to the holy diaconate in 1989 and to the priesthood in 1990. From that moment you have embraced a life of prayerful study and tireless labor in the vineyard of the Lord. In 1996 you were tonsured a monk, elevated to the rank of archimandrite, and consecrated Bishop of Poti. In 2003 you were consecrated archbishop, and then in 2007 you were consecrated metropolitan of Poti and Khobi.

As a professor you began supervising courses in canon law for theology teachers in Ozurgeti in 1991 and you served as editor of the Orthodox Christian journal, *Tskaro*. Having served as rector of St. Nicholas Secondary School in Poti, Rector of the Phazisi Theological-Philosophical Academy and most recently as rector of the New Georgian University, you have devoted your life to building up theological education and nurturing the vocations of those called to serve Christ’s Holy Church. Through your leadership and vision for strengthening international bonds between Orthodox Christians, in 2019 the New Georgian University entered into partnership with St. Vladimir’s Seminary, the Seminary’s first-ever agreement with an academic institution in the Republic of Georgia, which opens up new possibilities for Georgian seminarians at St. Vladimir’s and the opportunity for new publications and translations.

Following in the footsteps of the great Fathers of the Church you have written extensively in numerous books, articles and edited works, and since 2003 you have led the Publishing and Reviewing Department of the Georgian Patriarchate. Your academic research and publishing serve as a witness to the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As archpastor following in the footsteps of the Holy Apostles you have worked continuously to build and rebuild more than two dozen churches, cathedrals, and monasteries in Poti, Khobi, and Senaki. Additionally, you have led the efforts to establish St. Nino Gymnasium in Ozurgeti; St. Nino Gymnasium/School for Girls in Senaki (Zemo Teklati); St. Nicholas Secondary School in Poti; Poti Theological Seminary; and most recently the New Georgian University.

Therefore, in thanksgiving to God for your service and leadership in the Georgian Orthodox Church, and in gratitude for your witness and inspiration to Orthodox Christians throughout the world, it is the distinct honor and privilege of the Board of Trustees and the Faculty of St. Vladimir’s Seminary, by unanimous decision and by the power vested in them by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, to bestow upon Your Eminence, Metropolitan Grigoli of Poti and Khobi, the degree of Doctor of Divinity (D.D.), *honoris causa*.