

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Wichita and
Mid-America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

July 2019

Beloved and Christ-loving priests, deacons, monastics and lay folk of DOWAMA:

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss in the Name of the Lord Christ.

In the Biblical account of the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2) we read of people from a multitude of nations who heard for the very first time and “*everyone in his own language*” (2:6) the proclamation by the Holy Apostles of the Good News. Among those people were “*Arabians*” (2:11) which meant people from Rome’s frontier province of *Arabia Petraea* (the area of modern Syria south of Damascus, the Nabataean kingdom in modern Jordan, the Sinai peninsula and the northwestern tip of modern Saudi Arabia).

Much of *Decapolis* (Matthew 4:25), an area frequently visited by Christ and His disciples, is situated in this Arabia, as is *Caesarea Philippi* (modern Banyas in Syria) where the Holy Apostle Peter confessed Jesus to be “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:13-20). It was to this Arabia that, following his baptism in Damascus by St Ananias (9:17 & 18) and his escape over the city’s wall (9:25) that the Holy Apostle Paul fled and spent three years (Galatians 1:15-18). And it was to this Arabia that St Timon, one of the Seventy Apostles appointed by the Lord Christ (Luke 10:1) and one of the Seven Deacons chosen by the Twelve (Acts 6:5), was sent to preach and later served as first bishop of the province’s capital city of *Nova Trajana Bostra* (modern Bosra in Syria).

The Orthodox Christians who today live in much of the territory once known as *Arabia Petraea* – descendants of those converted to faith in Christ Jesus by St Timon – comprise the faithful of the Archdiocese of Bosra, Hauran, Jabal al-Arab and the Golan. The present “*angel of Bosra and successor to St Timon*” is The Most Reverend Metropolitan SABA (Esper). One of the most venerable Archdioceses of our Patriarchate, the Archdiocese of Bosra now finds itself facing very difficult times. Because of the area’s frequent wars – which, as you are well aware, continue to this very day – the occupation of much of its territory by a neighboring unfriendly nation, and the unemployment which plagues that desert region, most of its people have become economic refugees who have relocated to Damascus or have simply left the country for the Americas, Australia, Europe or the Gulf States.

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

In a gesture of Christian love and support for Metropolitan SABA and his flock, the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America has committed itself to a Sister Diocese relationship with the venerable Archdiocese of Bosra, and many of our parishes and missions have come forward to be paired - or "twinned" - with congregations in Metropolitan SABA's Archdiocese in Sister Parish relationships. To call attention to this project, dubbed "The Hauran Connection," the Sunday nearest July 28th, the feast of St Timon, is observed annually as "St Timon Sunday" throughout our Diocese.

This year our annual "St Timon Sunday" will be Sunday, July 28th. On that day we ask our congregations to highlight all aspects of our Sister Diocese project. You can find suggested resources online at <http://ww1.antiochian.org/hauran> Questions? Contact Deacon James Kallail (kkallail@att.net) of St Mary Church in Wichita, KS, coordinator of "The Hauran Connection." Immediately following your congregation's observance of "St Timon Sunday," please send one parish check for the alms collected (payable to "DOWAMA Hauran Account" and earmarked "Bosra-Hauran") to:

Deacon James Kallail
13213 E. Bridlewood Court
Wichita, KS 67230

Thanking you for your prayers and offerings for Metropolitan SABA and the clergy and people of our Sister Diocese – The Archdiocese of Bosra Hauran – and assuring you of my continued paternal love, prayers and blessings, I remain

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Basil". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

+Bishop Basil
Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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