

الكلمة

THE WORD

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METROPOLITAN
SABA

THE WORD

الكلمة

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METROPOLITAN SABA

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Letters to the editor are welcome and should include the author's full name and parish. Submissions for "Communities in Action" must be approved by the local pastor. Both may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All submissions e-mailed and provided as a Microsoft Word text or editable PDF. Please do not embed artwork into the word documents. All art work must be high resolution: at least 300dpi.

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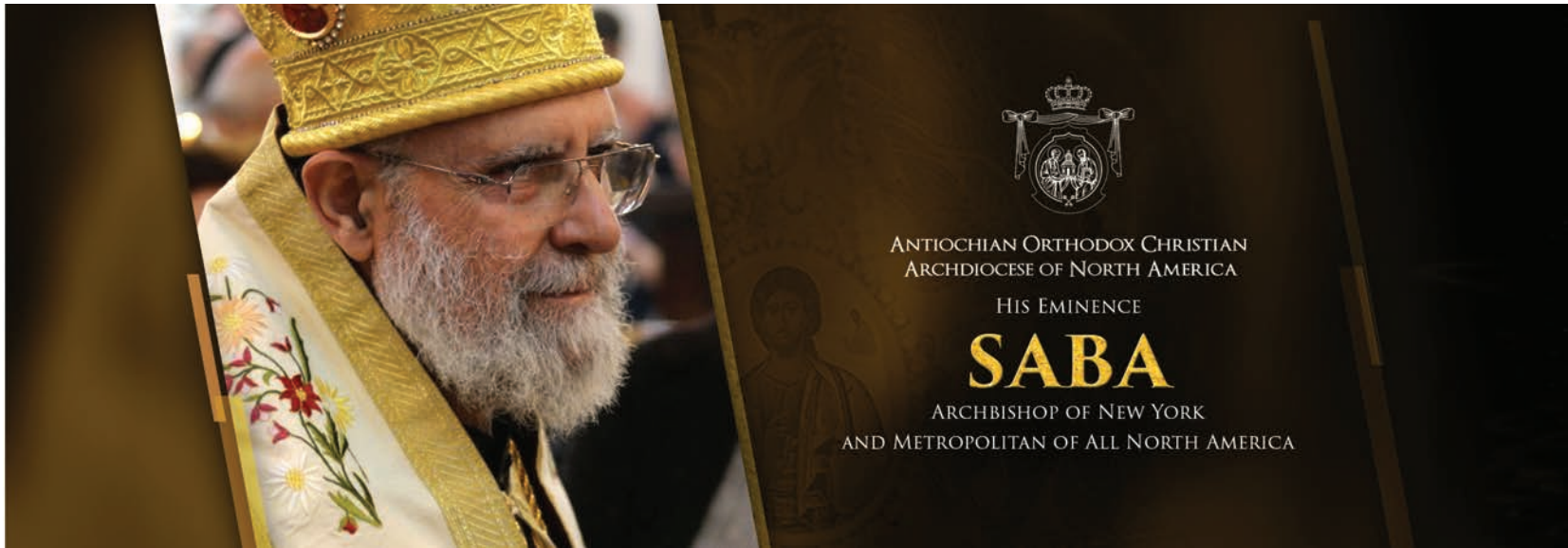
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METROPOLITAN SABA

CHOSEN BY GOD AND THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF
ANTIOCH METROPOLITAN OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK
AND ALL NORTH AMERICA

Bishop JOHN

Bishop NICHOLAS and I were blessed to be the first of the Archdiocese of North America to welcome our new Metropolitan. We were there, as all of the Antiochian bishops from around the world of the Antiochian Patriarchate gathered at the Balamand to do God's work in this election. We were there as the Holy Spirit was invoked and God accomplished His work. I am personally pleased and at peace with this selection, and assured of the stability and future of our Church in America.

Tradition in the Church is often defined as God's action in salvation history. The Scriptures, worship, icons and canons of the Church express God's inspiration and work in our lives. I remember the election of Metropolitan PHILIP. I also

remember the elections of my parish priest, Ilyas Kurban, and other North American priests, Elias Audi, Gibran Ramlawey, and Paul Saliba, who were elected metropolitans for other churches of the Patriarchate. The same or similar nomination and election processes were followed, as is the Tradition of our Orthodox Church.

The assertion of Patriarch JOHN X that the Archdiocese of North America and all the other Archdioceses of the Patriarchate are one was made manifest as the holy fathers of the Patriarchate arrived and interacted with us. They knew our concerns, studied the reports, and met for a night and a day to discern God's will. These men asked about our families, and even knew about the weather in our regions. They understood and

The Right Reverend
Bishop THOMAS

The Right Reverend
Bishop ALEXANDER

The Right Reverend
Bishop JOHN

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY

The Right Reverend
Bishop NICHOLAS

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by Saint Raphael (Hawaweeny)
Founded in English as
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by Metropolitan ANTONY (Bashir)

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felt our challenges and pains, because they naturally took them on as their own. Each has family in America, or has families in their dioceses that have families in America. They read *The WORD* and know how our parishes function. It is obvious to me that they don't just know about us, but they love us and care for us as their own. Patriarch JOHN is correct: we are one Antiochian family, and America belongs to Antioch and Antioch to America.

Metropolitan SABA's reputation is that he is an enthusiastic and learned teacher of our faith, prayerful, and loving. He is a man who is humble and eminent at the same time. He is able to be firm in his leadership and empathetic to the suffering of his clergy and flock. He lives the simple life of a monk, while guiding his flock who are in the world. He listens and he understands. I was totally won over by his demeanor and the love that naturally flows from his person.

Following the election, the bishops all gathered for a meal. Bishop NICHOLAS and I thanked Patriarch JOHN and each of the bishops personally for gathering for us. Apart from a short report on the relief efforts for those in Turkey and Syria, the American Archdiocese was the only agenda item for this gathering. Some Metropolitan traveled for days to get to the meeting from places like Australia, Mexico, and Europe, at considerable personal expense. We in America are, or should be, appreciative of their love and sacrifice.

We are also grateful to Patriarch JOHN and those Metropolitan who listened to the delegations from our Archdiocese, both before and after our nominating convention in Dallas. Fawaz and Salim took time from their busy lives for both of these meetings. We are grateful to them and all of those who went from America to meet with the Patriarch. All the subjects raised were considered, including the comments made to Patriarchal Vicar Metropolitan ANTONIOS during his investigative stay in America. We are grateful to Metropolitan ANTONIOS, who spent months away from his Archdiocese to care for us, and kept us together and focused on our mission by his love and gentleness.

I believe that God has acted for His Church in America through this election. It is now up to us to follow our new Metropolitan SABA, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North American, to build on the good legacy of this Archdiocese. In the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, may Metropolitan SABA lead us *from glory to glory*.

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE HOLY ANTIOCHIAN SYNOD

BALAMAND, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

The Holy Antiochian Synod, His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X (Yazigi) presiding, held its fifteenth extraordinary session, on February 22 and 23, 2023, in Balamand, in the presence of Their Eminences, the Most Reverend Metropolitans:

ELIAS (Archdiocese of Beirut and Dependencies); ELIAS (Archdiocese of Tyre, Sidon and Dependencies); SABA (Archdiocese of Bosra Houran and Jabal AlArab); GEORGE (Archdiocese of Homs and Dependencies); SILOUAN (Archdiocese of Jbeil and Batroun and Dependencies); BASILIOS (Archdiocese of Akkar and Dependencies); EPHREM (Archdiocese of Tripoli, Koura and Dependencies); IGNATIUS (Archdiocese of France, Western and Southern Europe); ISAAC (Archdiocese of Germany and Central Europe); GHATTAS (Archdiocese of Baghdad, Kuwait and Dependencies); SILOUAN (Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland); ANTONIOS (Archdiocese of Zahleh, Baalbek and Dependencies); NICOLAS (Archdiocese of Hama and Dependencies); BASILIOS (Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines); IGNATIUS (Archdiocese of Mexico, Venezuela, Central America and the Caribbean Islands); ATHANASIOS (Archdiocese of Lattakia and Dependencies); JACQUES (Archdiocese of Buenos Aires and All Argentina); EPHREM (Archdiocese of Aleppo, Alexandretta, and Dependencies); and NIFON (Saikali, Metropolitan of Philippopolis and Representative of the Patriarch of Antioch to the Patriarch of Moscow). Also in attendance was His Grace Bishop GREGORIOS Khoury, Secretary of the Holy Synod.

Their Eminences Metropolitans SERGIO (Archdiocese of Santiago and Chile) and DAMASKINOS (Archdiocese of São Paulo and All Brazil), apologized for not being able to attend. His Eminence Metropolitan BOULOS (Yazigi) was also present in the prayers and invocations of the Synod Fathers, despite his physical absence caused by abduction.

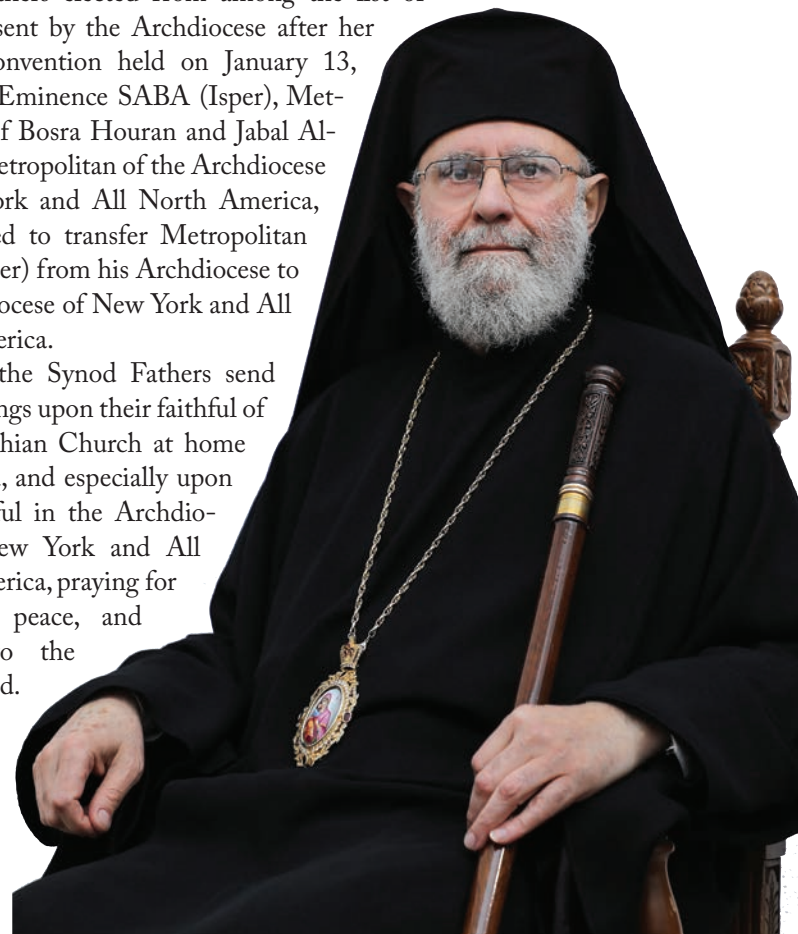
After invoking the Holy Spirit, and begging for divine mercy, His Beatitude discussed with the

Synod Fathers the terrible earthquake that hit the region. The Fathers begged for divine mercies upon the victims who reposed in the Lord, comfort for the wounded and afflicted, and consolation for all those who are grieving the loss of their loved ones after this disaster. They reviewed the situation of the Archdioceses afflicted by the earthquake, especially, the region of Alexandretta and the Archdioceses of Aleppo, Lattakia, and Hama. They affirmed that the Church, in cooperation with many, is making the utmost efforts to stand by everyone in this calamity. The Fathers reviewed the work of the relief efforts in all the afflicted Archdioceses and appreciated the quick response of their faithful and all people of goodwill to the Earthquake Appeal made by His Beatitude, by sending financial and in-kind help.

The Synod Fathers reviewed the situation of the Archdiocese of New York and All North America and listened to a report presented by the Archdiocese's Patriarchal Vicar, His Eminence ANTONIOS (Al Souri), Metropolitan of Zahleh, Baalbek, and Dependencies, who was appointed upon the vacancy of the Metropolitan See.

The Fathers elected from among the list of nominees sent by the Archdiocese after her Special Convention held on January 13, 2023, His Eminence SABA (Isper), Metropolitan of Bosra Houran and Jabal AlArab, as Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of New York and All North America, and decided to transfer Metropolitan SABA (Isper) from his Archdiocese to the Archdiocese of New York and All North America.

Lastly, the Synod Fathers send their blessings upon their faithful of the Antiochian Church at home and abroad, and especially upon their faithful in the Archdiocese of New York and All North America, praying for prosperity, peace, and stability to the whole world.





DECISION OF THE HOLY SYNOD

“Whereas the ‘Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America,’ which constitutes one of the Archdioceses of the See of Antioch, became vacant after the resignation of His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH (Zahlaoui);

“And whereas His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X, by virtue of the Basic Statute and the Internal Regulations of the See of Antioch, had appointed His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS (Al Sour) of Zahleh, Baalbek, and Dependencies, as Patriarchal Vicar for this Archdiocese;

“And whereas His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS (Al Sour) had called for a Special Convention of the Archdiocese, which nominated, according to the Vicar’s official correspondence of January 14, 2023, three candidates listed as follows, in alphabetical order by first name: Bishop JOHN (Abdalah), Bishop NICHOLAS (Ozone), and Metropolitan SABA (Isper);

“And whereas His Eminence the Patriarchal Vicar has submitted a report to the Holy Synod in which he presented the current situation of the Archdiocese and the expectations of her faithful, based on his pastoral visits throughout the Archdiocese and the deliberations of the Special Convention;

“And whereas the Holy Synod has taken note of the petition submitted by the ‘Legal Committee’ in the name of the Special Convention of the Archdiocese, considering Metropolitan ANTONIOS (Al Sour), Metropolitan of Zahleh, Baalbek, and Dependencies, and Patriarchal Vicar for the Archdiocese of New York and All North America, an ‘eligible candidate,’ as received by His Beatitude on January 16, 2023;

“BE IT RESOLVED by the Antiochian Holy Synod Fathers to

- “commend the efforts made by the Patriarchal Vicar, Metropolitan ANTONIOS (Al Sour), which had a positive resonance among the faithful of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in North America;

- “express thankfulness to the Auxiliary Bishops, Clergy, Board of Trustees, and the Archdiocesan Special Convention for their openness and cooperation with the Patriarchal Vicar during the period in which the Archdiocese was vacant;

- “acknowledge the leading role played by the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in North America, and the bonds formed by her faithful with their Mother Church;

- “establish a Joint Committee to articulate a future vision for the role of this Archdiocese and her witness, and to examine her administrative structure

and internal regulations, in order to harmonize her legal, organizational, and administrative status, being an Archdiocese among all the Archdioceses of the See of Antioch, with the provisions of the Basic Statute of the See of Antioch and its internal regulations, and with the decisions of the Holy Synod of Antioch which oversees the work of the Archdiocese of the See of Antioch. The conclusions and recommendations reached by the Joint Committee shall be submitted to the Holy Synod of Antioch in order to take the appropriate decisions thereon.

- “accept and confirm the names of the three candidates nominated by the Special Convention of the Archdiocese held on January 13, 2023, and take note of the position of Metropolitan ANTONIOS who thanked the Special Convention for nominating him while appealing not to be considered a candidate, having been the Patriarchal Vicar who oversaw the nomination procedure.”

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بَطْرِيكِيَّةَ أَنْطَاكِيَّةَ وَسَائِرِ الْمَشْرِقِ لِلرُّومِ الْأَرْثُوذُكْسِ
Patriarcat Grec-Orthodoxe d'Antioche et de tout l'Orient

No: 44/2023

To our Beloved in the Lord, The Hierarchs, Priests, Deacons, Members of the Board of Trustees, and Spiritual Children of our Holy Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America,

Beloved,

After the Holy Synod of Antioch convened in its extraordinary session at the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand, I send you this letter from Antioch that is ravaged by the earthquake that struck its depth, repeating what I often said during my last visit a few years ago to your God-protected Archdiocese, that we are steadfast in the mother land of Antioch, no matter how many challenges beset us, even if we are struck by an earthquake.

Yes, we are steadfast in our mother and native land, so that our children, wherever they are abroad, can rightly say: "Our origins and roots are in Antioch, and these Antiochian roots remain alive in us and before us."

At every crossroads in the life of our Church of Antioch, we are reminded that we have something that makes us unique and united: our Antiochian roots founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul, which our fathers in the Mother Church preserved with all preciousness and care, even by the shedding of blood. These were kept by their disciples, the Holy Fathers, who set out with the Good News to all ends of the earth.

Your fathers traveled to the New Land and cultivated in it the lofty spiritual values upon which they were brought up in the Antiochian East. They did this with great faith and deep spiritual struggle, and they built their churches as they built their homes. We are altogether today blessed by the grace that God has given you which you preserve with physical labor and spiritual vigilance, just as we are blessed by those who have seen in Antioch a Church, a mother in whose bosom they have taken refuge, and they received grace upon grace.

The Fathers of the Holy Synod of Antioch gathered in the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand and flocked from the Archdioceses spread all over the world, from every part of the earth where the Lord willed for Antioch to have a holy dwelling place. This time, the Synod Fathers gathered for your beloved Archdiocese of North America, in order to elect for her a shepherd who will stand in your midst and watch over your care.

It is noteworthy for us, from our patriarchal position, that you be aware of the vision that unites the Synod Fathers every time they convene for one of the Antiochian Archdioceses. This vision is based on the following fixed precepts:

- Each Archdiocese is a unique and complete member of the Antiochian Body and her concerns are the concerns of the entire Church of Antioch.
- When dealing with issues and concerns related to a particular Archdiocese, the Synod Fathers unite their minds and hearts with the minds and hearts of the faithful in the concerned Archdiocese. These concerns are transmitted to the Holy Synod by the Archdiocese's Metropolitan in the case of ordinary sessions, or by the Patriarchal Vicar in the case of the extraordinary sessions, when the Archdiocese becomes vacant.
- The Synod Fathers are fully convinced that each Archdiocese has her own specificity and her distinct administrative needs, but they are also ecclesiastically convinced that the starting point is one and the same: the single Antiochian ecclesiastical tradition which is enshrined in the texts governing the life of the Antiochian Church throughout the Archdioceses.

In this spirit, the Synod Fathers gathered at the last extraordinary session and listened to the report presented by the Patriarchal Vicar, His Eminence Metropolitan (Al Souri), and reviewed the papers of the Archdiocesan Special Convention held last January and the outcome of its work. The Holy Synod elected from among the three nominees given by the Convention His Eminence Saba Isper.

We are certain that His Eminence Saba Isper will be a finest shepherd for a finest flock. With him you will write a new chapter in the glorious history of your Archdiocese, consolidating the vision that has guided the Archdiocese through her close association with the Mother Church, having a distinct solid structure that unites her parishes throughout North America. Thus, you give an authentic Orthodox Christian Antiochian witness, which provides the healing answer given by the Orthodox faith to all the existential questions posed in our contemporary world filled with temptations and challenges.

As we wish for His Eminence Metropolitan Saba Isper success in his ministry, we ask the Lord Almighty, through the intercessions of the Mother of God, to grant him strength in this blessed ministry, for the good of the Archdiocese and the sanctification of the shepherds, along with the beloved faithful.

With our Apostolic blessings and paternal love.

Balamand, 23 February 2023.

+ JOHN X

Patriarch of Antioch and all the East



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Balamand, February 24, 2023

To My Beloved in the North American Archdiocese

**My reverend brother hierarchs,
My sons, the pious priests and deacons,
My daughters and sons, God's faithful of the blessed Antiochian Orthodox
Christian Archdiocese of North America,**

Grace and Peace!

I received the news of my election as the metropolitan of your God-protected archdiocese with silence and feelings of deep emotions. I remembered the day of my elevation to the office of the holy episcopacy twenty-four years ago. At that time, I had said in my address, *"As I stand in Your presence, O Lord, let my hands carry Your gifts to Your people, my feet to lead them to You, my mouth to utter Your words, my heart to extend Your love to them. Make me a good and faithful servant."*

I had never imagined only a few months after that I would be suddenly called by the Fathers of the Holy Synod of Antioch, being thirty-nine years of age, newly ordained to the holy episcopacy, with little experience, to shepherd the Archdiocese of Hauran in Southern Syria.

While serving an archdiocese that suffered from the brutality of history, the divine grace of God supported me tangibly. My mission started with building up the people and erecting construction projects. It was an intense struggle and one that refined my soul. It taught me patience, asceticism, a love of poverty, and not wanting to look toward anything except the bleeding and resurrected face of Jesus Christ.

My quick transfer from serving a distinctive parish to serving an archdiocese forgotten by history, threw me amid severe suffering. However, it also gave me invaluable spiritual consolation. I never imagined for a moment that the Master of the Church would again delegate me from serving my archdiocese to serving another archdiocese with great potential.

Indeed, Your judgments, O Lord, are wondrous, and Your ways are amazing. How far are Your judgments from the judgments of human beings?

I now ask:

Was it a coincidence that God had arranged for me to become acquainted with the beloved Antiochian Archdiocese of New York and all North America since the first year of my theological studies?

Was it a coincidence that after five years of my priestly ministry, God orchestrated for me to visit and spend about six months in the regions of your archdiocese, allowing me to serve the Divine Liturgy in thirteen states as well as in Canada, and to enrich myself with such pastoral experience?

Was it a coincidence that your archdiocese was, and still is, my biggest supporter in restoring life to the Archdiocese of Hauran? Thanks to the God-loving people, of which you are at the forefront, it has become a bride of Christ gloriously adorned with a bridal dress over the past twenty-four years.

Frequently, I used to repeat what the Prophet Amos told, before my Lord and Savior, that he was *"neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but just a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees"* (Amos 7:14). But He used to remind me with His words to the Prophet Jeremiah: *"Wherever I send you, you go, and whatever I command you, you say. Do not be afraid to confront anyone. I am with you to save you... To all whom I send you to, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you. ... Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."* (Jeremiah 1:7,10). I have always tried to walk by the inspiration of this revelation.

Today, He is sending me to you through the commission of the Fathers of the Holy Synod of Antioch as a servant, father, and shepherd. As He honors me to minister to you, I cannot but bow my head obediently and confidently trusting in His support and your cooperation with me. Together, we will *"pluck up and break down"* all evil, and *"build and plant"* every good. We, the shepherds, cannot save the sheep of Christ who were entrusted to us unless we follow the example of the Good Shepherd ourselves.

I will work with all my energy according to the heart of the only Good Shepherd, Christ our Lord, relying on His support and your cooperation with me. Let us together become His faithful disciples so that your remarkable archdiocese may continue to be *"purified with water and the word, and that He presents her to Himself a glorious church without a blemish, wrinkle, or any such thing."* (Eph 5:27).

Let us strive together as bishops, priests, deacons, and faithful laity, so we may truly become the *"People of God's house"* in action. There is much in my heart and mind to share with you, but I will wait until we meet in person with actions, prayers, and tears, so then we will rejoice with the presence of the Lord in our midst.

I ask for your prayers on my behalf as I lift you up in every prayer that I offer to the Lord of the Church and entrust you with the blessing of God the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

I pray that you have a blessed and sanctifying Great Lenten season.

+SABA

Archbishop of New York
and Metropolitan of All North America

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

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MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL
ARCHDIOCESE CONVENTION

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

HELD AT THE HYATT REGENCY HOTEL AT THE DALLAS-FORT WORTH AIRPORT
DALLAS, TEXAS, FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2023

I. Opening Prayer

Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar

At 10:00 AM CST, His Eminence, Most Reverend Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar, opened the Convention with the Trisagion Prayers, the Apolytikion and Kontakion of Holy Pentecost and petitions.

Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Zain, Vicar General, read a welcoming message from our father in Christ, His Beatitude, Most Reverend JOHN X, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East (attached). The Patriarch's letter will appear in the March edition of *The WORD* magazine.

II. Declaration of Quorum

Archdeacon Emile Sayegh, Chancellor

Reverend Archdeacon Emile Sayegh, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, presented the census of delegates and declared that there was a sufficient number of delegates present in person or by proxy to establish a quorum.

III. Appointment of Convention Officers

His Eminence appointed the following Convention Officers:

- A. Mr. Fawaz El-Khoury, Vice Chairman
- B. Rev. Archdeacon Emile Sayegh, Chancellor
- C. Mr. Philip Saliba, Westport, CT (Sergeant-at-Arms)
- D. Mr. Roger David, Grand Rapids, MI (Sergeant-at-Arms)
- E. Mr. Dimitri Zeidan, Ottawa, ON (Sergeant-at-Arms)
- F. Mr. James Moses, Dallas, TX (Sergeant-at-Arms)
- G. Ms. Mary Winstanley O'Connor, Boston, MA (Parliamentarian)

Vice Chairman El-Khoury expressed gratitude to His Eminence for guiding the Archdiocese through the weeks since his arrival and for his archpastoral visits throughout the Archdiocese. He also thanked Mr. James Moses of American Airlines for

helping with travel plans and logistics in Dallas.

Mr. El-Khoury reported that the Antiochian Archdiocese has continued to operate effectively, and he noted that he expected the completion of an external audit by the end of January. This audit would be the first of its kind in the history of the Archdiocese, and he acknowledged the work of Fr. Michael Tassos, Comptroller, and Mr. Salim Abboud, CFO, for bringing it to a successful conclusion. He also thanked the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese for making the effort to participate in the election process.

Finally, Mr. El-Khoury thanked His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN for welcoming the delegation which had travelled to Lebanon, and He emphasized the love and concern for the welfare of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America of His Beatitude and the Holy Synod of Antioch. In thanking Metropolitan ANTONIOS again, the assembly gave His Eminence a standing ovation and sang “Many years!”

IV. General Report of His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar

His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS presented a full resumé of his activity as Patriarchal Vicar from his arrival in November 2022 through January 2023. He further provided the constitutional and canonical bases on which the list of candidates for Metropolitan Archbishop was established, and how the nomination process would proceed. The text of his remarks is attached and will appear in the March edition of *The WORD* magazine.

The Assembly received the report by acclamation.

V. Opening Statement Regarding the Nomination Process of the Three Candidates to the Office of Metropolitan of New York and All North America

Rev. Archdeacon Emile Sayegh, Chancellor, read a statement from Metropolitan ANTONIOS (attached) outlining the voting process. He stressed that each ballot must have a single name designated in order for the ballot to be valid and counted.

VI. Presentation of Eligible Candidates to the Office of Metropolitan of New York and All North America

Vice Chairman El-Khoury introduced the list of candidates and asked those present to stand:

Metropolitan SABA (Isber) of Houran
Bishop THOMAS (Joseph)

Bishop ALEXANDER (Mufarrij)

Bishop JOHN (Abdalah)

Bishop ANTHONY (Michaels)

Bishop NICHOLAS (Ozone)

Archimandrite Maximos (Jamal)

Archimandrite Jeremy (Davis)

Archimandrite Michael (Razzouk)

The Vice Chairman opened the floor for questions and answers. The Parliamentarian, Ms. Mary Winstanley-O'Connor, permitted all questions and comments pertinent to the agenda. The Vice Chairman assured the assembly that no one would be denied an opportunity to speak.

Some delegates emphasized the Archdiocese's need for an indigenous candidate, and the need of the delegates and parishes to have an adequate knowledge of the candidates. Other delegates rose to emphasize that a foreign-born candidate could be just as effective. One delegate noted that “language can be taught, character cannot.”

A delegate noted that, in the correspondence concerning this convention, the documents referred to *regions* rather than *dioceses*, and he wanted to know if there had been a significant change of policy.

Metropolitan ANTONIOS responded that there had not been any significant change, but since there are no diocesan bishops anymore (since 2009), then the word “diocese” cannot be used. He added that the Archdiocesan Constitution clearly requires revision and updating, because the actual organization of the Archdiocese does not correspond to, or match, what is stated in the Archdiocesan Constitution, but that task is beyond the scope of the current agenda. The Archdiocese will take up that matter after the election of the Metropolitan Archbishop, and in cooperation with the Patriarch and the Holy Synod.



Some delegates expressed the need for healing within the Archdiocese, and for more definitive statements from responsible officials concerning the actions of the former Metropolitan Archbishop, to supplant rumors from external sources.

Metropolitan ANTONIOS said that he had heard similar comments in many places. He briefly clarified that Metropolitan JOSEPH had submitted a letter requesting retirement which was published on the website of the Archdiocese, and which the Holy Synod had received. Metropolitan JOSEPH met with Patriarch JOHN for three days and then decided to retire voluntarily. The Holy Synod accepted his request without any investigation. So, for the Holy Synod the case is closed at this level. Mr. El-Khoury added that the Archdiocese Board of Trustees had no standing to undertake a spiritual court and that its only obligation was to steward the Archdiocese in all legal or financial matters.

Some delegates suggested that there had been insufficient information concerning the list of potential candidates and that there was insufficient time at the convention to make an informed choice.

Metropolitan ANTONIOS noted the concern, but pointed out that resumés of the candidates had been widely circulated; parishes and parish councils had ample time to consider their alternatives; social media provided significant information about the candidates; and many people in the Archdiocese had personal information about all of the candidates. Each delegate or parish had the responsibility to become as informed as possible, either prior to or during this convention, before endorsing any candidate.

Some delegates asked to hear the vision of the candidates for the future of the Archdiocese, but the chair ruled that such presentations would not be fair for those who were not present, and he reported that the candidates themselves had chosen not to speak.

In response to a question as to when the Holy Synod would vote, Metropolitan ANTONIOS could not give a definitive response, but he assured the assembly that the Holy Synod would act expeditiously, possibly within 40 days.

A question was asked as to why the Vicar and the Board added names to the list of candidates from outside the Archdiocese and the names of metropolitans, as if the list were not sufficient or as if the list did not have competent candidates for the office of Metropolitan. Metropolitan ANTONIOS answered that the names that were added conformed to the provisions of the constitutions of the Patriarchate and of the Archdiocese, and that adding these names did not mean that the candidates from the Archdiocese were not competent at all. Otherwise, he continued, what would be the meaning and role of this special Convention and that of the Holy Synod? Furthermore, he said, having more qualified and competent candidates will help the Convention and the Holy Synod to choose the most adequate candidate according to the needs and challenges of this Archdiocese.

Many delegates expressed their appreciation for the manner in which Metropolitan ANTONIOS had directed the management of the Archdiocese and for the love he has shown for the people and the Church.

Reverend Deacon Basil Hinkle moved the question, and Reverend Fr. Amin Houli seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

VII. Voting and Counting of Votes by the Appointed Teams

Vicar General Fr. Thomas Zain again directed that delegates designate only one vote per ballot and invited the committee to retire to count the votes.

During the counting His Grace Bishop THOMAS introduced Very Rev. Fr. Christopher Salmay and Sub-deacon Gregory Abdalah of St. George Church in Phoenix, Arizona, to address the assembly concerning the upcoming Archdiocese Convention.

Rev. Archdeacon Emile Sayegh, Chancellor and Chairman of the Department of Legal Affairs,



introduced a resolution of appreciation for Patriarchal Vicar Metropolitan ANTONIOS, sponsored by Very Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef of the Orthodox Church of the Redeemer in Los Altos Hills, California, and Rev. Fr. Nektarios Najjar of St. Elias Cathedral in Ottawa, Ontario:

VIII. Announcement of the Top Three Names in Alphabetical Order by First Name

Metropolitan ANTONIOS announced the names of the three nominees in alphabetical order by first name:

His Grace Bishop JOHN, His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, and His Eminence Metropolitan SABA.

Metropolitan ANTONIOS reported that he had delivered this result to His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X, who sent his love, and who is proud of the work of the special Convention, the bishops, clergy, and parishes. He is happy to know that the Convention was a great manifestation of love of the Lord, His Church, and the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America.

IX. Resolution of Love and Appreciation to Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar

Rev. Archdeacon Emile Sayegh, Chancellor and Chairman of the Department of Legal Affairs introduced a resolution of appreciation for Patriarchal Vicar Metropolitan ANTONIOS sponsored by Very Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef of the Orthodox Church of the Redeemer in Los Altos Hills, CA, and Rev. Fr. Nektarios Najjar of St. Elias Cathedral in Ottawa, Ontario:



WHEREAS, the General Assembly consisting of both its clergy and laity of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, having met in Dallas, Texas, on this 13th day of January, 2023, at a Special Convention called for the election of a new Metropolitan;

WHEREAS, since his arrival to the United States on November 18, 2022, His Eminence, Metropolitan ANTONIOS, having assumed his role as Patriarchal Vicar, has and continues to express his gifts of discernment, wisdom, guidance, and paternal love to the clergy and faithful of this God-protected Archdiocese. As a result, many of the faithful across all North America wish that his name be included on the list of eligible candidates for the office of Metropolitan of this Archdiocese;



WHEREAS, His Eminence, Metropolitan ANTONIOS continues to exert all of his efforts and love while spending considerable time and energy to tend to the spiritual needs of the faithful across this Archdiocese during this time of uncertainty and anxiety, and has brought a palpable sense of calmness and serenity to all;

NOW, THEREFORE, this General Assembly gathered at this special convention called on the 13th day of January, 2023 at Dallas, Texas hereby resolves, as follows:

1. We extend our undivided love, appreciation, loyalty, and obedience to His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS;
2. We offer our humble prayers that our Lord, Jesus Christ, will continue to bless him and grant him many more healthy and productive years to come;

We plead to the beloved members of the Holy Synod, under the leadership of His Beatitude, our father in Christ, Patriarch JOHN X, and guided by the Holy Spirit, that Metropolitan ANTONIOS be considered an eligible candidate to the office of Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of North America.

The resolution was drafted and presented on the convention floor without prior notice, and the Assembly adopted the resolution by voice vote unanimously.

Metropolitan ANTONIOS thanked the convention for their love with which that they have honored him and for the resolution that they adopted. He asked them with great love and appreciation and respect for them to withdraw this resolution and raised a motion in this regard, but there was no second to the motion.

X. Adjournment

Reverend Fr. Fouad Saba of St. George Cathedral in Coral Gables, Florida, moved to adjourn; Very Rev. Fr. Joseph Purpura of St. George Church in Montreal, Quebec, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Closing Prayer and Dismissal

His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS closed the convention with prayer at 1:15 PM CST.

Respectfully Submitted,

Very Rev. Fr. Michael Ellias, Secretary
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of
North America

2023 JACK G. SHAHEEN MASS COMMUNICATIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship Award \$2,500.00

PURPOSE

To recognize and award Arab-American university students who excel in Media Studies.

ELIGIBILITY

University students currently enrolled in the 2023-2024 academic year. Juniors, Seniors and Graduate School students majoring in Journalism, Television, Radio, and/or Film.

APPLICANTS

Mail and include the following items to ADC's Research Institute, c/o Mr. Nabil Mohamad:

1. Two original letters of recommendation signed by your of Mass Communications professors.
2. Print copies and/or email links of your relevant work.
3. Share how Dr. Jack Shaheen's work has influenced you. Include this in your one page statement explaining your goals, and stating you are a U.S. citizen of Arab heritage.

4. Official academic transcripts (minimum 3.0 GPA is required).

5. Permanent home address, mobile number and email address.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.

SUBMIT ALL MATERIALS TO

ADC Research Institute

Attn: Mr. Nabil Mohamad - ADC Vice President
1705 Desales Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20036

Should you have further questions, call (202) 244-2990, or email nmohamad@adc.org.

The Jack G. Shaheen Scholarship Awards will be presented at the 2023 ADC National Convention.

COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

ST. ANTHONY HOSTS INAUGURAL FR. JOSEPH ALLEN MEMORIAL LECTURE

On Saturday, October 8, St. Anthony, Bergenfield, New Jersey, hosted the inaugural Father Joseph Allen Memorial lecture. The evening's speaker was Dr. Gayle Woloschak, the Associate Dean for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at Northwestern University, a renowned scientist and prominent member of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States. Dr. Wolos-

chak was a friend, colleague, and student of Father Joe. She is internationally recognized for her research in cancer, DNA, and the intersection of science and religion.

Dr. Woloschak spoke to a group that included St. Anthony parishioners, area clergy, and guests on highly topical issues involving Orthodox bioethics and pastoral ministry – a topic dear to Father Joe. A lively question and answer session followed the lecture. It was a thought-provoking and educational evening, very much geared to the

Orthodox laity.

Along with Dr. Woloschak's address, the evening began with Vespers, refreshments, and a display of archival materials on the parish's history and Father Joe's 53 years as pastor. Video presentations covered the construction of the Church some 60 years ago and the beautiful iconography. A photo album of the children of the parish singing, made in 1981, played in the background.

The evening was sponsored by the Father Joseph Allen Memorial Fund (FJMF). The group was created at St. Anthony, where Father Joe served for 53 years, to celebrate his legacy and his impact on Orthodox education. Father Joe taught at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and St. Vladimir's Seminary. He was a founder and director of the Antiochian House of Studies and the St. Stephen's Course of Study. He wrote or edited 13 books and numerous articles.

St. Anthony is in the process of developing a learning and media center in Father Joe's memory, including an archive that recognizes St. Anthony's history as the first English-speaking Pan-Orthodox Antiochian parish in the United States. The Father Joseph Allen Memorial Fund plans to make the lecture an annual event. The group continues to grow and seek ways to celebrate the parish's diversity and Father Joe's legacy.





بَطْرِيكِيَّةَ أَنْطَاكِيَّةَ وَسَائِرِ الْمَشْرِقِ لِلرُّومِ الْأَرْثُوذُكْسِ
Patriarcat Grec-Orthodoxe d'Antioche et de tout l'Orient

No: 3/2023

To our Beloved in the Lord, Hierarchs, Priests, Deacons, and Faithful of our Holy Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America meeting at the Special Convention,

In the Nicene Creed, we declare our faith in the Church, describing Her as Apostolic. By this we denote the Church which descends from the Apostles who were gathered in the Upper Room at Pentecost. We also proclaim the mission of the Church in this world as being apostolic, which means that She is called to evangelize the whole world, bringing to all nations the Salvific Word and True Faith. This Faith has been loyally preserved by our Antiochian Church. By the Grace of God, this Church has abided in this Faith, being united with the Mother Church and through Her with all the Antiochian Archdioceses spreading abroad.

One hundred years ago, this Antiochian Apostolic Spirit was at the root of founding our beloved Antiochian Archdiocese of North America. Sowed on the relics of the Holy Fathers from the East and by the hands of great Men of God headed by Saint Raphael of Brooklyn, this mustard seed has grown to become a fruitful tree, an "Antiochian Village," and a blessed image of the Great City of God - Antioch, established on the soil of the New Land of North America.

This blessed Centennial Jubilee of our Holy Antiochian Archdiocese coincides with the meeting of the Special Convention today. This Convention gathers the honorable hierarchs, clergy, and parishioners, under the guidance and love of His Eminence, the Patriarchal Vicar, Metropolitan ANTONIOS (Soury), whom we graciously thank for completing his ecclesiastic mission during the past months with much excellence, performing it with great care and deep love. His Eminence has conveyed the Antiochian Spirit and paternal love, which we, as Patriarch, were keen on extending them to you through him.

You meet to send the names of three nominees as candidates to the care and wisdom of the Holy Synod. The Synod is entrusted to ask the Great Shepherd of our souls to guide our Antiochian Church in choosing an Archbishop to shepherd the Archdiocese during the coming phase, which, as we all discern, shall be full of

باب شرقي، صندوق بريد: ٩ دمشق، سوريا، هاتف: ٩٦٣/١١/٥٤٢/٤٤٠٠/١/٢/٣ فاكس: ٩٦٣ ١١ ٥٤٢ ٤٤٠٤

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challenges in a turbulent world. For this, I ask with you the intercessions of the Holy Theotokos, Saints Peter and Paul the founders of the Church of Antioch, and Saint Raphael of Brooklyn to guide the works of your Special Convention.

I pray with you the inspiring words of Saint Raphael's Troparion, as follows:

"Rejoice, O Father Raphael, Adornment of the Holy Church! Though art Champion of the true Faith, Seeker of the lost, Consolation of the oppressed, Father to orphans, Friend of the poor, Peacemaker and Good Shepherd, Joy of all the Orthodox, Son of Antioch, Boast of America: Intercede with Christ God for us and for all who honor thee."

Last but not least, as I call your eyes to behold the Lord's countenance, your minds to be attentive to His voice, and your hearts to be tendered by His eternal Love, I fervently implore Him to keep you, make His face shine upon you, and give you peace.

Balamand, 10 January 2023.

✠ JOHN X

Patriarch of Antioch and all the East



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GENERAL REPORT TO THE
SPECIAL CONVENTION
OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

DALLAS, TEXAS, FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2023

by Metropolitan ANTONIOS of Zahle, Baalbek, and Dependencies, Patriarchal Vicar

“All the believers were one in heart and mind” (ACTS 4:32)

BELOVED BROTHER HIERARCHS, REVEREND CLERGY, AND CHRIST-LOVING FAITHFUL,
MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL CONVENTION OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN
ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before everything, I thank the Lord for bestowing on me the grace to serve you in this Archdiocese in this very important phase of the life of this blessed Archdiocese.

First, I would like to thank His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X for his great trust in assigning me as Patriarchal Vicar for this God-protected Archdiocese.

Second, I am grateful to the hierarchs, clergy, Board of Trustees, archdiocese staff, and every parish for their love, cooperation, hospitality, and care.

Third, I acknowledged during my visits to the different parishes that this period of transition was not easy, but the Lord works in mysterious ways to comfort and heal His people.

PREAMBLE

Beloved in Christ,

We are gathering today to witness the spirit of unity and proclaim it through living the mystery of being “one in heart and mind” in Christ, and seeking the will of God in the service of His Holy Church, in general, and more specifically through serving in this God-protected Archdiocese.

We are here to complete a sacred mission, and thus we need to approach it in a spirit of prayer and piety. Our essential mission is to witness to the love of Christ our God and Savior, in the same spirit in which He has accomplished His Divine Economy to grant us Eternal Life. This spirit is the spirit of sacrificial love. When we seek nothing but to do His will and to glorify Him, then we are acting

according to the spirit of edifying the Body of Christ – the Church – because this means that we are ready to sacrifice our own interests for the sake of what is best for the Church.

Today we meet to seek to act as an ecclesiastical community in the spirit of unity with our Mother Church and with the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch. This is the experience of the catholicity and internationality of the Antiochian Church, and the seal of our mission and witness to Christ our God in the New World.

Today we celebrate the joy of unity in Christ through serving His Church in the liturgy (the work of the people with the Spirit of the Lord), of nominating three candidates for the office of Metropolitan. This is the offering we will lift up in thanksgiving to the Lord through the Holy Synod, so that the Holy Spirit with the fathers of the Holy Synod will elect for this Archdiocese a lamb for the sacrifice of peace, to carry the cross of love for the Lord and His people.

VISITS TO THE PARISHES

I arrived at the Archdiocese Headquarters in Englewood on Thursday, November 17, and the next day I went to Boston and started my visits to the parishes, and meeting with the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese.

Unfortunately, I was not able to visit our parishes in Canada, because I am still waiting to receive a visa. I hope I can make up for that later, God willing. My deep apologies to the clergy and faithful in Canada.

(This report covers the work and activities of the Patriarchal Vicar from November 17, 2022, until January 12, 2023. From September 23 until November 16, 2022, the Temporary Committee, headed by His Grace Bishop JOHN (Abdallah), managed “the pastoral, administrative, and financial affairs of the Archdiocese” in coordination with His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X.)

Until now, I have visited around forty parishes in the different states, where my meetings with both clergy and laity centered on three main subjects:

(1) the provisions of the constitutions of the Antiochian See and this Archdiocese concerning the election of a new Metropolitan for the Archdiocese;

(2) the upcoming Convention process and preparations; and

(3) the concerns, needs, challenges of the Archdiocese, the faithful, and the clergy, and their aspirations concerning the personal qualifications required for the new Metropolitan to be able to insure the unity, growth, prosperity, and mission of the Archdiocese.

Of course, I welcomed all questions, thoughts, or reflections from anyone, on any subject concerning this period in the life of the Archdiocese.

RESULTS OF THE VISITS TO THE PARISHES

What I can say is that these visits were a great opportunity to meet with the people of God in this blessed Archdiocese. They helped me to assess the current situation and needs of the clergy and faithful, and they had, generally, a blessed effect on me personally and, I think, a comforting, relieving, and advantageous result for the clergy and parishes, by the grace of God.

Of course, the questions, answers, and discussions were entertained in a spirit of peace, transparency, and sincere dialogue.

THE MAIN QUESTIONS AND ISSUES RAISED AND DISCUSSED IN THE VISITS, AND THE ANSWERS GIVEN

Here are the main questions raised and the answers given in these visits:

1. How was the list of candidates for the office of Metropolitan for this Archdiocese drawn up?

First, upon the receipt of the retirement letter of Metropolitan JOSEPH on September 17 by His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X, His Beatitude appointed, “in accordance with the pertinent Antiochian Laws and Regulations,” on September 23, a Temporary Committee composed of His Grace Bishop JOHN (Abdalah) (Committee Chairman); Mr. Fawaz El Khoury (Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees); Mr. Salim Abboud (Chief Financial Officer); Archdeacon Emile Sayegh (Chancellor);

and Archpriest Thomas Zain (Vicar General), to manage “the pastoral, administrative, and financial affairs of the Archdiocese.”

Second, when the Holy Synod approved the retirement of Metropolitan JOSEPH, the Archdiocese was declared officially vacant. The timeframes stated in the Archdiocese constitution were then applicable from October 17.

Third, on October 24, His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X assigned a Patriarchal Vicar, who assumed his responsibilities actually and effectively on November 17, 2022.

Timeframes were respected concerning the preparations for the Convention and the Board meetings with the Patriarchal Vicar (see Archdiocese Constitution, Article 1, Section 5.A–C) and the issuing of the list of candidates eligible for the office of Metropolitan for the Archdiocese “as per the list of nominees kept in the records of the Patriarchate and the Holy Synod and including the names of those qualified under Section 4 of this article” (see Section 5.D). All the preparations and the call for the Convention and the Board meetings were in compliance therewith.

Section 4.A states the qualifications required for the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese. The problematic points in this issue are the following:

Archdiocese Constitution, Article 1, Section 4.A(2): “He must be fluent in the English language and have a good working knowledge of the Arabic language”;

Antiochian See Bylaws, Article 60, Clause (c): “He must be at least 33 years old and not above 65 years.”

The Archdiocese Constitution, Article 1, Section 4.D(1), states that: “The patriarchal vicar and the board of trustees shall prepare a list containing all the names of the worthy clergyman who are qualified for nomination as per the list of nominees kept in the records of the patriarchate and the Holy Synod, and including the names of those qualified under Section 4 of this Article.”

The latest version of the list of nominees from the Holy Synod was issued in October 2022. This list contains all the names of the bishops of this Archdiocese, even those who are above 65 years old. According to Article 6 of the Bylaws of the Antiochian See: “The Holy Synod is the one who decides in all aspects of the faith, the legislative body of the

Church and the supreme court of the Church. The decisions of the Holy Synod are mandatory for the clergy, monastics and laypeople.”

The Archdiocese Constitution, Article 1, Section 4.A(5), states that the candidate “must have ... served some time, as a clergyman [pastor] in the Archdiocese.”

Hence, for all the previous reasons, the Patriarchal Vicar and the Board of Trustees finalized the list of candidates for the office of Metropolitan from the list approved by the Holy Synod, and this is the list we have for the ballot for this Special Convention.

2. How were the names of metropolitans added to the list of eligible candidates for the office of Metropolitan for this Archdiocese?

Referring to Article 6 of the Antiochian See By-laws (see above) and Article 67, “The Holy Synod undertakes selection, nomination and election processes if there is no ‘conference’ in the Archdiocese or if it is not possible to convene it, or if the integrity of the Archdiocese calls for it,” it is clear that the Holy Synod has the right – in case of need and for the wellbeing, peace, unity, integrity, prosperity, and growth of the Archdiocese – to transfer a metropolitan from one archdiocese to another.

Since a metropolitan is elected for an archdiocese and has the canonical eligibility, wisdom, experience, and knowledge, according to the Antiochian See Constitution and the Archdiocese Constitution (Article 1. Section 4.A[1–5]), then it is an added reason to have his name on the list of candidates.

Furthermore, in the canon laws of the Church and decisions of the ecumenical councils and local synods, the great legislator and interpreter of the Church canons, Balsamon, “distinguishes between three types of transfer or auto transfer of bishops. The first is if a bishop known for his knowledge and piety is forced to move from a small archdiocese to a large one so that he can perform a greater and more honorable service to the Church. Of this kind was the transfer of St. Gregory of Nazianzus from Sasimeh to Constantinople. The second type is when a bishop is transferred from an archdiocese whose status has deteriorated as a result of invasions and wars to a vacant archdiocese. The third type is when a bishop, who has an archdiocese or does not have one, takes advantage of the existence of a vacant archdiocese and moves to it on his own. And this third type is the one that was prohibited by the

Council of Sardisia and imposed a severe penalty on the violator” (Archimandrite Hanania Kassab, editor and translator, Arabic version of the *Encyclopedia of Canon Law*, Beirut, 1978, pp. 84–85).

Accordingly, due to the special circumstances (and the early retirement of Metropolitan JOSEPH), during the meeting of the bishops and the Temporary Committee with His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X in Balamand on November 9–10, 2022, His Beatitude indicated the possibility of considering the transfer of a metropolitan from one archdiocese to another, as a conceivable option.

For all these reasons, the Board of Trustees considered and proposed the addition of the names of metropolitans who served “for some time” in the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America.

3. Why didn't the Board of Trustees along with the Patriarchal Vicar adhere to the provisions of the Patriarchate and Archdiocese Constitutions concerning the age limit and the Arabic and English language requirements?

In 2014, the Convention approved unanimously a list that was prepared by the then Patriarchal Vicar (Metropolitan SILOUAN) and the Board of Trustees. Both the Board of Trustees and the Special Convention (2014) also approved the report of His Eminence Metropolitan SILOUAN, the Patriarchal Vicar, in which he discusses and elaborates the legal and canonical arguments behind the existence of candidates who are above 65 years of age and that do not have the “working knowledge of the Arabic language” on the list prepared by himself and the Board of Trustees. (For more details, please see the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 14, 2014, and the Minutes of the Special Convention on June 5, 2014.) So this list included nominees that were above 65 years of age and did not have a “working knowledge” of the Arabic language. That became a precedent due to special circumstances. Fast forward to 2023, the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America is under special circumstances. In order to keep peace and not to exclude bishops who are above 65 years of age or do not have working knowledge of the Arabic language, we decided to keep the same principle as an *economia*. Accordingly, this decision was taken by the Patriarchal Vicar and the Board of Trustees.

4. Why are some names of potential eligible candidates from this Archdiocese not included on the list of the Holy Synod?

Every year, each metropolitan has to send a list of eligible candidates for the episcopacy to the “Committee of Eligibility for Episcopacy” of the Holy Synod (Bylaws of the Antiochian See, Article 22, clause 5). This committee will prepare a list of eligible candidates for episcopacy from all the Antiochian See to be presented to the Holy Synod for approval and issuance accordingly. The names that are not on the list of nominees for the election of the Metropolitan for the Archdiocese of North America are names that were not received by the Holy Synod’s committee.

5. The Retirement of Metropolitan JOSEPH and the Position of the Holy Synod

Metropolitan Joseph sent his retirement letter on September 17, 2022, to His Beatitude and the Holy Synod. The Holy Synod of Antioch convened on October 17 and decided the following:

First: To consider the retirement submitted by His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH (Zehlaoui) effective from the date of its submission on September 17, 2022.

Second: To consider the Metropolitan See of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America vacant from the date of the issuance of this resolution, with all the effects of this vacancy as provided in the Antiochian rules and regulations.

Third: To consider the retired Metropolitan JOSEPH (Zehlaoui), Former Metropolitan of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, no longer to be a member of the Holy Synod of Antioch.

Fourth: To request from Metropolitan JOSEPH (Zehlaoui), in accordance with the practiced ecclesiastical procedures upon a bishop’s retirement, absolutely not to perform or participate in any clerical ordination, and to determine, in coordination with the Patriarchal Vicar upon his appointment, and with the Metropolitan of the Archdiocese upon his election, the parish church in which he will permanently celebrate the Divine Liturgy; and to request from him absolutely not to perform any liturgical, sacramental, or sanctification service, within the Archdiocese of North America, and in any other Archdiocese, except by obtaining the necessary permission from the Metropolitan of the Archdiocese, in accordance with the known ecclesiastical procedures; provided that he mentions in the divine services the name of the Patriarch of Antioch followed by the name of the Metropolitan of the Archdio-

cese. Also, it generally applies to the retired arch-pastor whatever applies to arch-pastors in terms of their travel or service in another church and in terms of foreign relations.

As a reminder, Metropolitan JOSEPH stated in his letter of retirement that he maintained a personal principle throughout his life to “never allow anything to hurt the Church,” and that is why he retired.

In conclusion, the Holy Synod decided to open a new page and look to the future of the Archdiocese.

6. Why didn’t the Archdiocese issue any clarifying statements concerning the investigation and retirement of Metropolitan JOSEPH?

The public-relations firm hired by the Archdiocese ensured that the priority of the Archdiocese is to protect the investigation and respect the privacy of the different concerned parties, especially for such a sensitive topic. All the communications of the Patriarchate were posted immediately. The public statements released by the Archdiocese never responded to misinformation, speculation, or rumors. Rather, they stuck to facts and the timeline of events, which can be seen in previous posts on Antiochian.org.

7. During my visits I heard some comments and skepticism regarding the decisions of the Holy Synod and the Board of Trustees.

First of all, the Holy Synod is the Synod of the Fathers of the Antiochian Church. They are constantly responsible in front of God to preserve the integrity of the faith, the faithful, and the Church through the grace of the Holy Trinity. They are entrusted with the Church as the bride of Christ. Their responsibility is to lead the faithful to salvation. The Holy Scriptures state in Ecclesiastes 10:20, “Don’t bad-mouth your leaders, not even under your breath, and don’t abuse your betters, even in the privacy of your home. Loose talk has a way of getting picked up and spread around. Little birds drop the crumbs of your gossip far and wide.”

It is well known that the Holy Synod had, and has, and will always have Holy Fathers who are revered and praised in the whole Orthodox world. Therefore, the gossip about His Beatitude and the fathers of the Holy Synod will actually and eventually hurt those who are spreading the gossip. This is something against the Spirit of God, the Holy Church, and Christian love. We pray for those who were ensnared by doubts about the soundness and

sincerity of the decisions of the Holy Synod, which seeks the best for the Church, and we hope that the Holy Spirit will fill their hearts with His light, love, and peace.

As for the Board of Trustees, especially all the executive committees and the Temporary Committee of the Archdiocese, their actions speak for themselves. We have no doubt that those who know their deeds and everyday activities will realize that they are giving from their family time, leisure, and efforts for the sake of the wellbeing of the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocese sends an Annual Financial Report every year to all the parishes with detailed information about all the activities. During the General Convention, which is held every two years (as you all know), everyone is welcome to discuss, comment, and share their concerns regarding the financial status of the Archdiocese.

In all cases, board members are present in every area of this Archdiocese and they are practically spread all over the Archdiocese. They can also be of help to you at any time.

Furthermore, you can also send through your pastor and parish council any comments or questions or interrogations to the Archdiocese, as you have been doing.

As you all know, in the last three years, the Archdiocese launched the internal audit procedure on a yearly basis. Actually, there is now an independent external audit that was launched a while ago and will be completed very soon.

CONCERNS, NEEDS, CHALLENGES, AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE CLERGY AND FAITHFUL CONCERNING THE ARCHDIOCESE AND THE NEW METROPOLITAN

The beloved-in-Christ clergy and faithful of this God-protected Archdiocese expressed in general the concerns, needs, and challenges they are facing and their aspirations for the new Metropolitan.

I may summarize some of the major points raised during these discussions as follows:

1. Concerns about the integrity and unity of the Archdiocese were raised, along with questions about any intentions of the Holy Synod to divide the Archdiocese.

Of course, no such intentions or proposals were ever raised in the Holy Synod about this issue.

Neither did His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X bring up this subject in any session.

2. Concerns about the willingness of the Holy Synod to choose a new Metropolitan from the three candidates that will be nominated by the Special Convention.

Of course, the Holy Synod respects the voting of the Convention, and it will choose from the names that will be submitted to it by the Patriarchal Vicar as the result of the voting process. However, the Holy Synod has the authority, as the governing body of the Holy Church of Antioch, to make nomination and have elections from names that were not on the Convention's ballot, if there is a very serious and essential reason to do so, with regard to the unity and integrity, peace and wellbeing of the Archdiocese.

3. Concerns about the future Metropolitan and the need that he be a spiritual father both to clergy and laity, be approachable, humble, and meek, visionary, and missionary, a man of courage and administration, who can speed up the healing of the souls – this is from one side. From the other side, the new Metropolitan needs to be a bridge between Antioch and this Archdiocese, filled with the spirit of Antioch and able to transmit it. He needs to unite in himself the Antiochian See and this Archdiocese, so that in his presence in this Archdiocese he reveals the presence of the Church of Antioch and its legacy and spiritual inheritance, and, in his presence in the Antiochian See, he bears the truth of this Archdiocese and its unity with the Mother Church.

4. There is a need for a Metropolitan who will face the internal and external challenges that are confronting this Archdiocese concerning its mission and witness to the truth of the faith against the moral, ethical, and social realities, regulations, and legislation that oppose the Church, the faithful, and the faith conscience in the Archdiocese – this is on one hand. On the other hand, challenges are facing the Archdiocese concerning preserving the unity and integrity of its faithful against what seems to be the establishment and emergence of new ethnic parishes through the encouragement of division. Of course, this is related to the common pan-Orthodox witness (in the geographical space of this Archdiocese) of the different Orthodox jurisdictions for Orthodox unity, through the Assembly of Bishops and the other ways in which the different Orthodox

Churches interact.

5. The need is for a Metropolitan who can be a spiritual leader for the Archdiocese and in the pan-Orthodox space, who, by God's grace, is able to reinforce the internal unity and integrity of the Archdiocese and the unity of the Archdiocese with the Mother Church and to grow its mission.

CONCLUSION

In general, I tried to summarize the most important points of my work and visits since my arrival in Englewood until now. It was a great time for me, as I enjoyed the love of the Lord and His divine grace, through your love to God and to me, and your longing to be in the presence of the Lord in His Church, in liturgical services and in spiritual words. Your yearning for unity with your Mother Church and your eagerness to live in the spiritual inheritance and Holy Tradition of the Antiochian Church were a great source of strength and empowerment for me. You taught me to serve you with more divine joy through your welcoming and loving meetings, discussions, and receptions, and through your kind generosity.

Beloved in Christ, I thank the Lord for giving me the chance to be with you and for endowing us with the blessings of being together and preparing with the Board of Trustees and the Temporary Committee this very important Special Convention.

I thank His Beatitude our Father and Patriarch JOHN X for trusting me with the present task and for appointing me as Patriarchal Vicar to serve you during this time.

I thank the Lord for every one of you, those whom I met and got to know, and those whom I didn't meet yet, clergy and laity.

I thank all those who carried me in their prayers from everywhere in the Antiochian See, because without them I wouldn't be able to fulfill this responsibility and bear both the spiritual and physical burden.

I thank my brothers and concelebrants, the hierarchs of this Archdiocese, for their support and cooperation, and for their help and prayers with which they embraced me.

I thank the clergy for their loving witness.

I thank the Board of Trustees for their diligence.

I thank the whole body of this Archdiocese for its beautiful witness.

I thank all those who prepared for this Convention practically and logistically, especially the members of the Temporary Committee and the staff of the Archdiocese.

I thank all the delegates of this Special Convention for travelling and expressing their commitment to make manifest the unity of this Archdiocese.

Wishing you and your families, in the name of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X and on my own behalf, a blessed Special Convention, for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Antiochian See and this God blessed Archdiocese, I remain,

Yours in Christ,
Metropolitan ANTONIOS
Metropolitan of Zahle, Baalbek, and
Dependencies
Patriarchal Vicar of New York
and All North America



PURSUE THE HIGH STARS

Fr. Peter Kavanaugh

OPTA ARDUA PENNIS ASTRA SEQUI.

“DESIRE TO PURSUE THE HIGH STARS ON WINGS.”

A great Roman poet wrote this line, forever expressing the prick in our conscience. We were made for the stars. We can never be content on earth because it burns in our hearts. All life is pregnant with this vocation. The Church begins each year with the same message, through Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and the holy days ahead. Let every breath and action be an attempt to reach up.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age . . .” Doing what? “Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11–12).

“God has appeared to us.”

The star shone above the stable to reveal that a light much brighter than all the stars had been born. The light of lights cooed in a manger. God had become man, to bridge forever the gulf between humanity and divinity.

“God has appeared to us.”

Will we ever understand this? Can we possibly fathom the implications that God has appeared? The pagans were nearly right to worship the stars, for they recognized in them something high and beautiful. But Christmas comes and what happens? Those lofty stars came down to worship something even higher. All the splendor in the universe bows down to earth, because earth has welcomed the Maker of the universe.

Socrates explained that philosophy was born when men first started looking to the stars. They looked up, above society, above industry, above the earth, and longed for something higher. They were so awestruck by the stars twinkling at night that they abandoned everything to listen and wonder. How much more should we listen and wonder at Christmas time, at the birth of our Savior?

“The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.”

God has appeared, for what? He has appeared

to bring salvation. Salvation from what? Salvation from ungodliness, from passions, and every trace of wickedness in our hearts. God has appeared with a mission for us, to renounce evil and pursue holiness. In the epistle quoted, St. Paul begins with a lofty vision, and immediately brings it down to earth in practical advice. How do we pursue the stars? We pursue them in little things – in daily habits and spiritual exercise, aspiring “to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives.”

It is tiring work and disappointing. Advent and Lent always humble us. If we set our goals high enough, we will quickly fall short of them. Times of fasting and penitence remind us how weak we are. I began writing this sermon a little depressed, when I first sat down to work it out. I started out Advent with a great number of goals. I fell short of many of them. First, my own will proved weaker than I hoped. My passions and desires are stronger than I realized before. Second, my body got in the way. When head colds, sore throats, and flus come around, our plans and schedules get thrown out the back door.

We are weak. How can we pursue the stars in this body and this world? St. Paul answers this in his next line: “The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.” How? By “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Waiting for our blessed hope. This is the ticket. “προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν.” *Prosdexomenoi* implies a constant, burning waiting. It is the kind of happy waiting that a fiancé feels, waiting for the wedding day. King David describes this on an existential level: “My soul waits for the Lord more than the watchmen for the morning” (Psalm 130:6). St. Paul writes to the Colossians: “If you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” *Prosdexomenoi* sums up the real Christian life. We are waiting, expecting, hungering for Christ’s return in everything. Anticipation is the fuel for holiness. Anticipation is the essence of our faith.

Prosdexomenoi epitomizes precisely how we are supposed to feast in all the holy days of the year

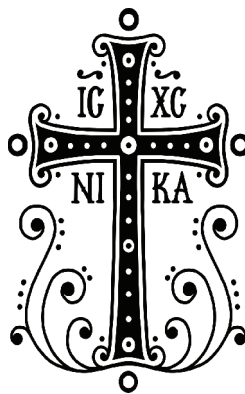
ahead. Every delicious meal is delicious because it is not quite perfect. A dish is delightful because it reminds us of something else. It reminds us of the perfect meal we hope to eat at the heavenly banquet. Every beautiful melody touches our hearts and wounds us — a holy wound. A good song always leaves you empty. You want more, resolution, perfection. The soul waits for its maker. Every sunset retreats, and beautiful moments fade, and something in the heart says, we were made for more. We are not home until we find it. In these and every little thing in life, we wait and yearn for our Lord.

“Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” We can rejoice. How and why? We rejoice because we are waiting. Our hearts ring with anticipation, and that anticipation overflows into everything. We are betrothed, and Christ is coming. For now, every drink, every song, every merriment is a foretaste of that longed-for heavenly wedding. Our home is among the stars.

“Opta ardua pennis astra sequi.”

Available from Archdiocese Bookstore at Antiochian Village

THE LITURGIKON



THE BOOK OF DIVINE SERVICES
FOR THE PRIEST AND DEACON

FOURTH EDITION

STRUGGLE: NOT THE POINT, BUT THE PASSAGE

Fr. John Oliver

Let's step back to 2010 and to a cultural movement called Meatless Monday, which, as the name conveys, was an attempt to prod Americans to eat less meat. The idea was that this would be better for the biosphere, and better for the body. Carnivores tend to feel a meal to be incomplete without meat, so this was an attempt to show citizens that we could experience delicious, filling, meatless meals at least one day each week.

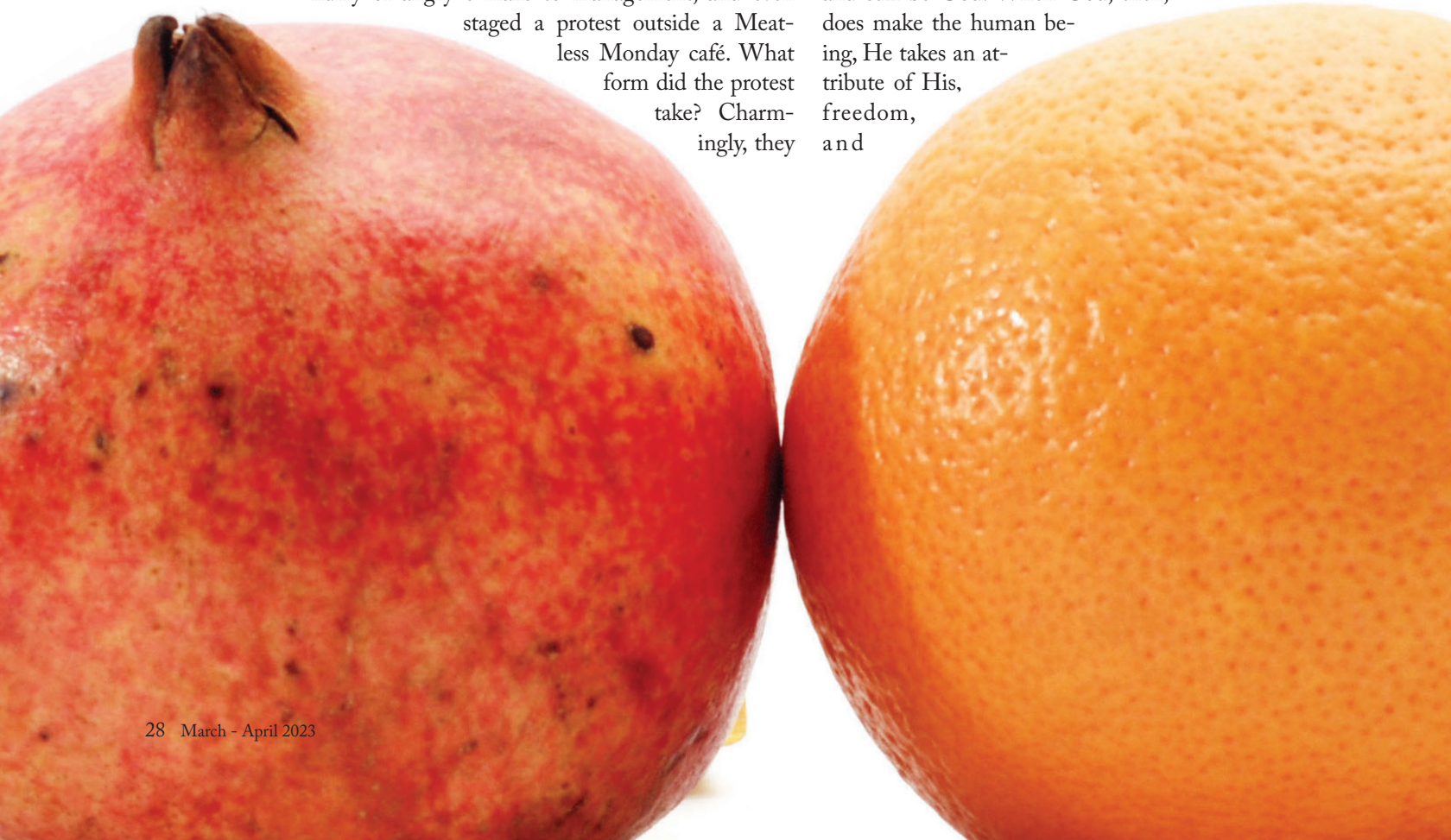
Who picked up this idea and ran with it? Google headquarters, Mountain View, California, tested Meatless Monday as a pilot project on Mondays during the month of September. Two Google cafés at headquarters would stop serving beef, chicken, and pork. Do the math: twenty-four cafés pepper the Google campus, so twenty-two of them will still serve meat. Those who choose not to participate have other options, and plenty of them.

How was Meatless Monday received among some Google employees? The disgruntled sent a flurry of angry e-mails to management, and even staged a protest outside a Meatless Monday café. What form did the protest take? Charmingly, they

hosted a barbecue. Google got the message and the Meatless Monday experiment came to an end.

After it was all over, researchers ran a post-mortem with employees: the real issue was not the absence of meat, but the way the whole project was presented and framed. Management didn't intend for the initiative to look this way, but the message the employees internalized was this: *we are taking your meat away*. It emphasized *loss*. Even though all other cafés offered meat, employees still felt judged for wanting meat in the first place. All those feelings – the perceived loss of freedom, the feeling of judgment, the top-down expectation of deprivation – kicked some employees into rebellion mode. To anyone familiar with the tangled mysteries of the heart, that's not a surprise.

Now, let's move farther back than 2010. It is the teaching of Christian faith that God was under no necessity to create: no earth, no universe, no human beings, nothing. He could have never made anything and still be God. When God, then, does make the human being, He takes an attribute of His, freedom, and



makes it an attribute of us who are made in His image and likeness. He embeds freedom, or, more precisely, self-governance, into our humanity, and we can discern what this freedom is by discerning what it is not. True freedom is not emancipation from all restraint, or the unlimited capacity to choose, as a value in itself. Freedom is not behavior without boundaries. After all, having a speed limit is for the public good, no matter how fast one wants to drive; having a law against theft is for the public good, no matter how much somebody wants your stuff.

True freedom, then, is not unlimited independence. Rather, it is unlimited *dependence on God*. The human being is truly free when he is free from all that would restrain him from realizing the proper goal for which he was created: to become godlike. If he cannot surrender his wealth, the rich man is no freer than the drug addict; if she cannot detach from her beauty, the attractive woman is no freer than the disfigured; if we cannot lay down our devices to take up a bit of prayer, parishioners are no freer than prisoners. True freedom is freedom from sin.

Every late-winter, the holy Church invites us to take a fresh look at true freedom. It's a time of year difficult for many Christians not because of Great Lent, but because of what those very words summon from deep within us, even before the first day of Lent arrives.

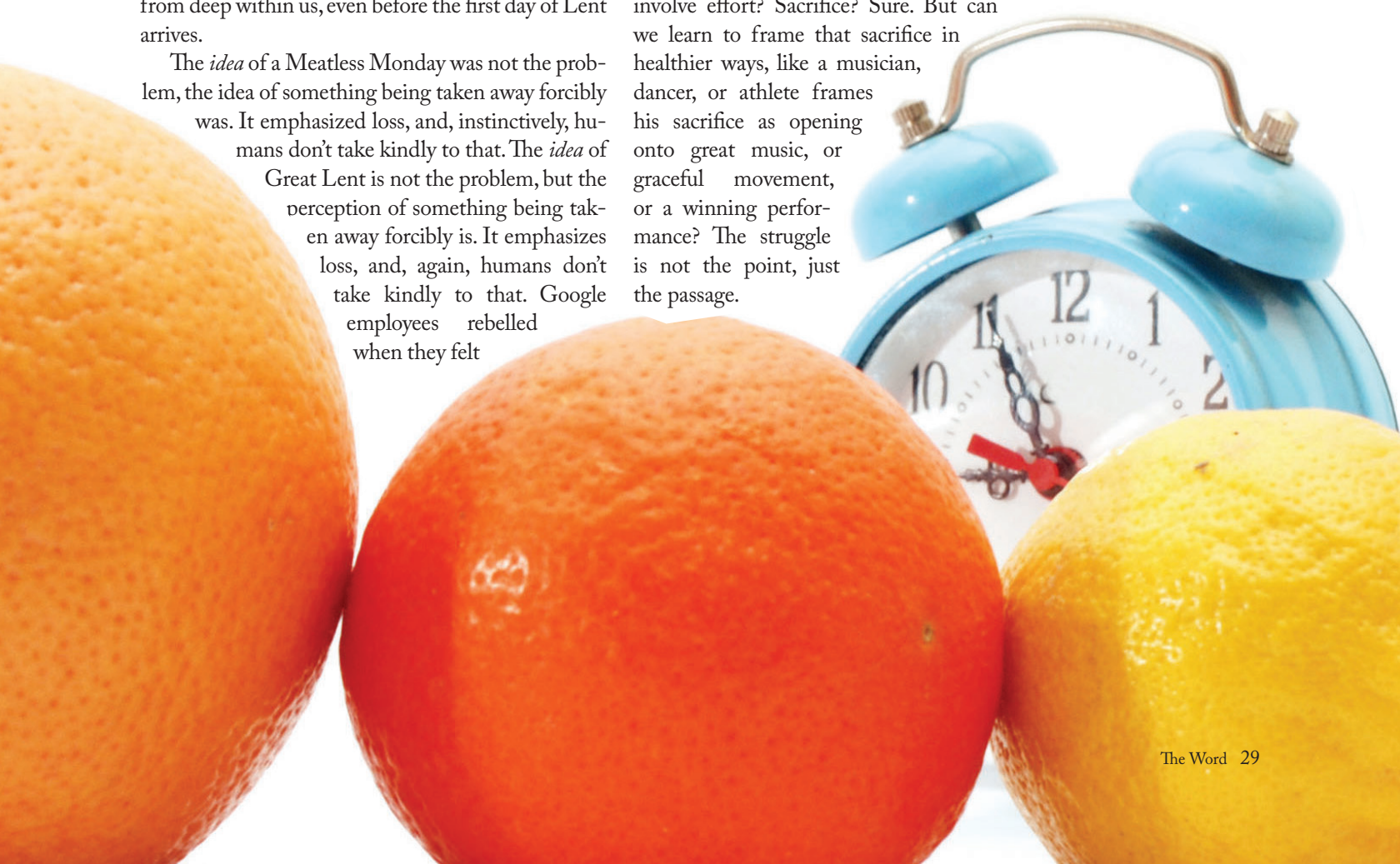
The *idea* of a Meatless Monday was not the problem, the idea of something being taken away forcibly was. It emphasized loss, and, instinctively, humans don't take kindly to that. The *idea* of Great Lent is not the problem, but the perception of something being taken away forcibly is. It emphasizes loss, and, again, humans don't take kindly to that. Google employees rebelled when they felt

management was taking their meat away. Christians rebel when we feel management is taking our meat away.

Our entire lenten experience, then, depends on *what we tell ourselves about it*. Our experience is formed by how we frame it to ourselves, which brings us back to our firm foundation laid by the Creator Himself: *we are free*. Free to drive the speed limit or not drive the speed limit; free to do the lenten things, or not; free to pray, or not pray; free to fast, or not fast; free to participate in church services, or never walk through the door; free to give alms, or never open your hand. No one is taking anything away from us.

Self-determination means that we are free to determine what the self will become. Built into every choice are consequences, some good, some bad. Great Lent is a series of choices leading to good consequences. By inviting – not forcing, but inviting – her children to deeper prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, the Church helps us discover what we might be in bondage to, what might be keeping us from true freedom. We will be shown whatever on earth is keeping us from a sense of heaven.

Management is not taking our meat away. Management is inviting us to seek true freedom. Will it involve effort? Sacrifice? Sure. But can we learn to frame that sacrifice in healthier ways, like a musician, dancer, or athlete frames his sacrifice as opening onto great music, or graceful movement, or a winning performance? The struggle is not the point, just the passage.



OUR BATTLE WITH ACEDIA

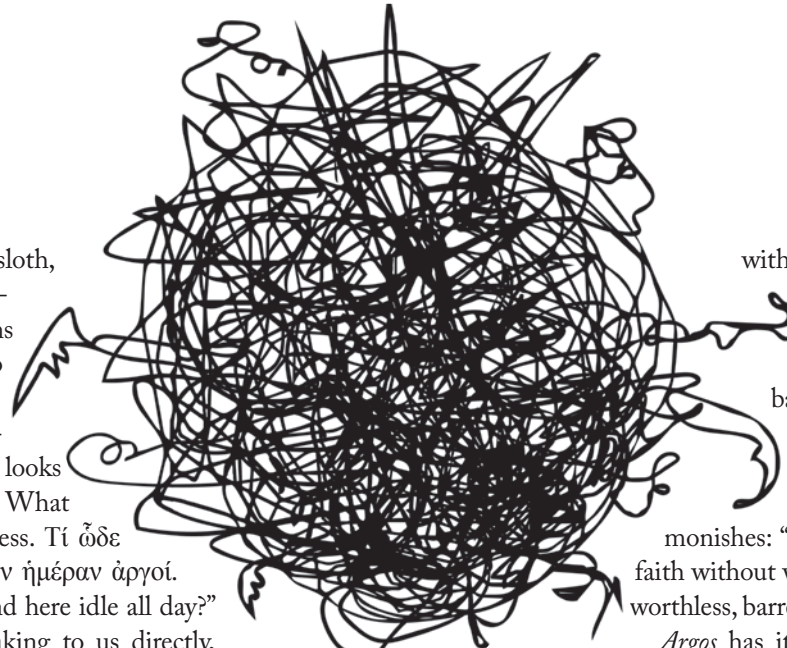
Fr. Peter Kavanaugh

"I THINK IT LIKELY THAT MUCH OF THE RESTLESS BOREDOM, FRANTIC ESCAPISM, COMMITMENT PHOBIA, AND ENERVATING DESPAIR THAT PLAGUES US TODAY IS THE ANCIENT DEMON OF ACEDIA IN MODERN DRESS" (KATHLEEN NORRIS).

Restlessness, sloth, depression, escapism: these are terms we know all too well. On the first Sunday in pre-Lent, the Church looks into our heart. What does it see? Idleness. Τί ὧδε ἐστήκατε ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἀργοί. "Why do you stand here idle all day?" Our Lord is speaking to us directly, with compassion and urgency.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place. . . . Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. . . . And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'" (Matthew 20:1–16).

Idleness. The Greek word is *argos*. It has two elements: the *a* means "without," and *érgon* means "work," or "energy." A person suffering from *argos* lacks drive. Originally, the word was associated



with loafers, hired workers wasting time. It also implies barrenness and death. In his epistle, St. James admonishes: "O foolish man, faith without works is dead" – worthless, barren, *argos* (2:20).

Argos has its equivalent in the Hebrew word 'āšēl, meaning sluggard, or slothful man.

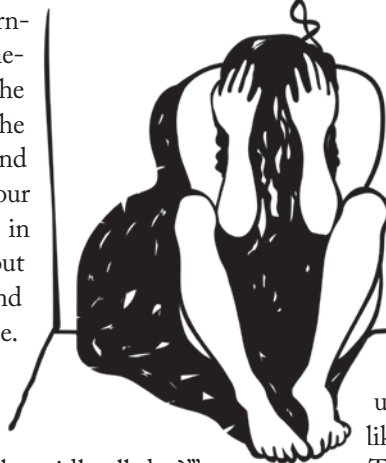
The Book of Proverbs states:

"I passed by the field of the slothful man . . . the man without sense; And behold! It was all overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall broken down. And as I gazed at it, I reflected; I saw and learned the lesson: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest –

Then will poverty come upon you like a highwayman, and want like an armed man" (Proverbs 24:30–34).

The Church Fathers often prefer another word: *acedia*. Evagrius of Pontus wrote about

it extensively: "The demon of *acedia* – also called the noonday demon – is the one that causes the most serious trouble of all." *Acedia* is marked by a lack of care. It makes a man bored with a feeling of



meaninglessness, restless for distractions, critical of others, and anxious for change. “[Acedia] instills in the heart of the monk a hatred for the place, a hatred for his very life itself, a hatred for manual labor . . . [He] leaves no leaf unturned to induce the monk to forsake his cell and drop out of the fight.”

Acedia is far more alive and kicking in our modern life than we realize. In 2010, an author, Kathleen Norris, published a book titled *Acedia & Me: A Marriage, Monks, and a Writer's Life*. She writes about the way she and her husband have battled clinical depression. She began reading works by the Church Fathers, and St. Evagrius in particular, and was amazed at the insight of ancient thinkers. “As I read this,” Kathleen explains, “I felt a weight lift from my soul, for I had just discovered an accurate description of something that had plagued me for years but that I had never been able to name.” Clinical depression, ADHD, and similar diagnoses are quite real. Psychiatry and therapy offer valuable tools for combatting them, but the chemical imbalance is only part of the problem. Underneath, we struggle with a deeper, spiritual ailment, acedia. The Scriptures and Holy Fathers offer volumes of advice on battling acedia.

“He went out and found others standing; and he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’”

How much of our life is marked by spiritual idleness – acedia? When we grumble to do anything, there is acedia in our heart. The minute you pick up a broom to sweep, you are starting a task spiritual and with eternal significance. We do not think that way about sweeping, however, or any of our “insignificant” jobs. The work feels mundane. We grumble, because our heart is clogged up – acedia.

When going to church becomes a burden, when saying our prayers is a bore, when encouraging others at coffee hour becomes unappealing, it is acedia.

When we find ourselves constantly busy and restless, this, too, is acedia. I struggle with this a great deal personally. Growing up on the East Coast with a Type-A entrepreneur as a father, I used to consider busyness to be a virtue and leisure a vice. The opposite is true. Busyness quickly becomes an unhealthy distractedness, closely related to slothfulness. Leisure is the higher form of work. We err when anything distracts us from prayer and mindfulness.

“I wonder,” Kathleen Norris asks herself, “Do

we stay so busy so as to unconsciously flee from the noonday demon of acedia? Do we fill up our time and our lives with endless activity because we feel that dreadful acedia creeping up on us? Or is it the acedia that drives us forward so restlessly to always doing something – anything – because we no longer have the ability to be still, to truly “rest” in God as the saints described a life of prayer and stillness/ *hesychia*?”

Did you know that to “pray unceasingly” means “to be at rest”? The Church defines spirituality with a single word, *hesychia* – inner quiet. It is not the kind of rest that comes from laziness. It is an interior rest, and a rest acquired in the midst of work and struggle. The medicine against acedia is *hesychia*.

Martha criticized Mary for being idle, but the opposite was true. Martha bounced around from one activity to the other, plagued in her heart with acedia. Mary was working harder, because she was still.

“Why do you stand here idle all day?” Our Lord calls us to a life of holiness. He comes to us in the market street, in our mundane jobs, in our boredom, depression, and busyness. He asks: Why are you paralyzed? Why are you downhearted? Why are you idling your time? Come join me in the field.

“My soul, my soul arise! Why are you sleeping? The end is approaching and you will be confounded. Awake then, and be watchful, that you may be spared by Christ God, Who is everywhere present and fillest all things” (Kontakion, Great Kanon of Saint Andrew of Crete).

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ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE

DEPARTED

His Grace Bishop TIKHON (Fitzgerald), former Bishop of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the West, of the Orthodox Church in America.

After nomination as Bishop of San Francisco at the Extraordinary Diocesan Assembly held in San Francisco's Holy Trinity Cathedral on March 12, 1987, Fr. Stephen was elected Bishop of San Francisco by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America on March 17, 1987. On the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation, he was tonsured a monk with the name of Tikhon at St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, Pennsylvania, and elevated to the rank of Archimandrite on Lazarus Saturday at Christ the Savior Church in San Francisco by Bishop JOB, the Temporary Administrator of the Diocese of the West.

His Grace served as ruling hierarch of the Diocese of the West for nearly two decades, from 1987 to 2006. In retirement, Bishop TIKHON lived quietly at Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral in Los Angeles, where he had resided since his assignment there as a deacon in 1972. While his health permitted, His Grace prayerfully and unassumingly attended the divine services at the cathedral, where he was beloved and esteemed.



CONVENTIONS AND CONFERENCES

The Department of Conventions and Conference Planning oversees the planning and site selection of all Archdiocesan Conventions, as well as all diocesan Parish Life Conferences.

Go to AntiochianEvents.com for easy online registration.

56th Archdiocese Convention

St. George Church, Phoenix, Arizona
July 24–30, 2023

2023 Diocesan Parish Life Conferences

Diocese of Miami

St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables, Florida

June 14–17, 2023

Diocese of Wichita

Sts. Constantine and Helen, Dallas, Texas

June 14–17, 2023

Diocese of Toledo

St. Mary Church, Palos Heights, Illinois

June 28–July 2, 2023

Diocese of Los Angeles

St. Luke Church, Garden Grove, California

June 28–July 2, 2023

Dioceses of Charleston and New York

St. Moses the Black

June 28–July 2, 2023, Antiochian Village

Diocese of Ottawa

St. Elias Church, Syracuse, New York

June 29–July 2, 2023

Diocese of Worcester

St. John of Damascus, Dedham, Massachusetts

July 7–9, 2023

On Wednesday, January 25, 2023, His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar, visited His Eminence Archbishop ELPIDOPHOROS, leader of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, at the latter's headquarters in Manhattan, New York.

They discussed the challenges and hopes of the Orthodox Church in the United States, sharing the



Friday, January 27, 2023 — Metropolitan ANTONIOS Visits Archbishop ELPIDOPHOROS, St. Nicholas Shrine in Manhattan

common concerns for the witness of the faith in a secular society.

From the Antiochian Archdiocese, Metropolitan ANTONIOS was accompanied by Archimandrite Jeremy Davis, Protosyngellos, Archpriest Thomas Zain, Vicar General, and Hieromonk Porphyrios, Secretary to Metropolitan ANTONIOS. From the Greek Archdiocese, His Grace Bishop ATHENAGORAS of Nazianzos and Protopresbyter Nicolas Kazarian also attended the meeting.

Later that day, Metropolitan ANTONIOS toured Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine and the 9/11 Memorial & Museum at Ground Zero.

ANCIENT FAITH MINISTRIES LAUNCHES YOUTUBE CHANNEL FOR KIDS

Ancient Faith Ministries has launched a brand new YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLygv7KoGqM>) dedicated to children. "Ancient Faith Kids" will encourage children and inspire them on their journey to fully knowing Jesus Christ. A community of Orthodox Christian storytellers will provide content that is at once entertaining and nourishing.

On "Ancient Faith Kids," children will learn to draw the furry friends of saints, sing with puppets who teach about the fruits of the Spirit, and maybe even join an Orthodox family on their pilgrimage abroad!

Digital resources such as podcasts and videos will be released on a weekly basis. The first video premiered on Thursday, January 26th, at 3 PM ET. Kids were introduced to Rocko and his puppet friends, and learned about kindness through song.

CHARITIES CORNER

In each issue of *The WORD*, the Charitable Outreach Committee will highlight a grant recipient from the Food For Hungry People and Charitable Outreach Program. This issue's recipient is the **Camp Catanese Food Program, in Phoenix, Arizona.**

Camp Catanese started as a summer camp run by Antiochian Village alumni to give a unique experience to underserved high school students growing up in poverty in Arizona. The program has

successfully turned into a year-round service. Over the years, 250 Antiochian Orthodox young adults have come as counselors and staff members, serving over 1,500 Phoenix youth by helping them gain the necessary tools to go to college.

The mission at Camp Catanese is to help underserved students access opportunities that they otherwise would not have. A completely volunteer Orthodox staff serves at the camp. The Antiochian Village alumni recreated their summer camp experience to give to these students. The vocation of Camp Catanese volunteers is to provide housing, food, and educational programming. The goal is that all of their students can rise out of poverty by getting a college education, and in return, help their families to do the same. Since they started this program in 2016, they have seen 100 percent of their participating high school seniors graduate, and over 90 percent of them attend college. This is huge for inner-city Phoenix, where only 37 percent of high school graduates currently attend college. We are grateful to be able to support the efforts of the Camp Catanese Program.

FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE AND CHARITABLE OUTREACH (FFHP)

The 2022 collections for FFHP have been completed. Look for a full report in an issue of *The WORD* later this year. Donations are accepted from churches, organizations, and individuals throughout the year, either online at Antiochian.org under the Charitable Outreach Committee tab, or by check sent to

Food for Hungry People and Charitable Outreach
c/o Robin Lynn Nichols
4237 Dundee Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 90027

CHILDREN'S RELIEF FUND (CRF)

The CRF assists over 360 children in Palestine and Lebanon through donor donations each year, *currently 172 in Palestine and 193 in Lebanon.* New donors are always welcome. A donor (individual, church, organization) can sponsor a child in need for \$400 per year. Children are selected based on need by our volunteers in Lebanon and Palestine who assist us in securely delivering the donations to the children and providing communications



from the children to the donors. Donors may give anytime during the year online at Antiochian.org under the Charitable Outreach Committee tab, or by check to



Children's Relief Fund
 c/o Deborah Brown
 P.O. Box 90072
 Brooklyn, NY 11029
 Donations made in 2022 will be distributed to children in the spring of 2023.



METROPOLITAN ANTONIOS
 CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY
 OF FLORIDA PARISH

Sub-deacon Peter Samore

His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar, led the 25th anniversary celebrations of St. Paul Church of Naples, Florida. The pastor, Fr. Paul Girgis, and the faithful welcomed His Eminence and His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast from January 20 to January 22, 2023.



Sayidna ANTONIOS conveyed the love, blessings and congratulations of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X of Antioch and All the East.

The community looked back on a quarter-century of growth and ministry to southwest Florida. They thanked God for the sacrifices of the founding clergy and laity, who began in a converted house. The community now worships in a beautifully adorned temple and has inaugurated the construction of a fellowship hall.

At the conclusion of the Hierarchal Divine

Liturgy on Sunday, Sayidna ANTONIOS inducted six members into the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch.

METROPOLITAN ANTONIOS CELEBRATES HIS PATRONAL FEAST IN ARIZONA

Story and photos by Sub-deacon Peter Samore

“The rich people at his time studied sciences, engineering, medicine, astrology. But since he was a child, Anthony sought the divine science: the knowledge of God.”

His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar, celebrated his patronal feast of St. Anthony the Great during his visit to Arizona January 16–17, 2023. He conveyed the love and blessings of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X of Antioch and All the East.



Sayidna ANTONIOS remarked that this was the first time he celebrated his patron saint in the U.S. On Monday, he met with local clergy, celebrated the divine services and greeted the laity in a reception at St. George Church, Phoenix.



“When he was 20 years old, Anthony sold everything,” His Eminence preached in the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. “He went to live in the desert. What do we find there? The desert and the darkness are places of evil spirits. This means that we, as faithful, should not be afraid of fighting evil spirits and thoughts.”

St. Anthony lived from 250 to 355 and is the

model for monastics, but also for clergy and laity in the world, Sayidna ANTONIOS continued. “In the monastic life, the monk or nun must repeat unceasingly verses of the Scriptures – the gospels and psalms – and ‘the prayer of the heart,’ the Jesus Prayer: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, the sinner.’”

“When we repeat this prayer, God will come into our hearts. We need to repeat this prayer as much as we can. If you are working, repeat it. If you are eating, repeat it. If you are about to sleep, repeat it.”

On Tuesday, His Eminence journeyed to St. Anthony’s Greek Orthodox Monastery in Florence, where Abbot Paisios, the brotherhood, and the pilgrims received his blessing. Sayidna ANTONIOS prayed a Trisagion service for the monastery’s founder, Elder Ephraim. He then presented Abbot Paisios with relics and an icon of St. Raphael of Brooklyn.

“What a blessing to have this monastery in this country,” His Eminence said to Abbot Paisios. He replied that he hoped this would be the first of many visits by His Eminence.

METROPOLITAN NICHOLAS VISITS METROPOLITAN ANTONIOS

On December 28, 2022, His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS, Patriarchal Vicar, welcomed His Eminence Metropolitan NICHOLAS of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) to the Archdiocese Headquarters in Englewood, New Jersey. Metropolitan NICHOLAS was elected to lead ROCOR in September.

The two hierarchs discussed common issues facing their churches and remarked upon the historically good relations between the Patriarchates of Antioch and Russia. They also exchanged gifts.

Joining Metropolitan ANTONIOS were his secretary, Priest Porphyrios Ibrahim; Archpriest Thomas Zain, Vicar General of the Archdiocese; and Mr. Fawaz El Khoury, Vice Chairman of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees. Joining Metropolitan Nicholas was Archpriest Serafim Gan, Chancellor of the Synod of Bishops of ROCOR.

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