

# THE WORD

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# THE WORD

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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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# CHRIST IS RISEN!

BISHOP JOHN

MARCH 19, 2019, MARKED THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPOSE OF OUR BE-LOVED METROPOLITAN PHILIP OF THRICE-BLESSED MEMORY. METROPOLITAN PHILIP SERVED OUR ARCHDIOCESE FOR ALMOST HALF A CENTURY WITH INTEGRITY, DISTINCTION, VISION AND JUSTICE. HE WAS A DIPLOMAT FOR ORTHODOXY AND THE DISPOSSESSED, ON THE WORLD SCENE AS WELL AS AT HOME IN AMERICA. HE HAD GREAT COURAGE TO CHAMPION OUR CAUSES BEFORE WORLD LEADERS, BOTH ECCLESIAL AND POLITICAL, REGULARLY MEETING WITH PATRIARCHS, CHURCH LEADERS, PRESIDENTS AND POLITICIANS. METROPOLITAN PHILIP WAS ALSO VERY DELIBERATE ABOUT PREPARING THE ARCHDIOCESE CLERGY AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTINUE IN CHRIST'S SERVICE AFTER HIS DEATH – WHAT PATRIARCH JOHN X CALLED SAYIDNA PHILIP'S "DISMOUNTING FROM HIS HORSE AND ENTERING INTO ETERNAL LIFE." (PHILIP MEANS KNIGHT.)



Under Sayidna's leadership, the Archdiocese grew four-fold in number of parishes, and in expeditious levels of ministry. Metropolitan PHILIP promoted education, love, integrity, service and generosity in every aspect of his life. Orthodoxy in North America and the Antiochian Patriarchate is in a better place because of this one man's sacrifice and vision.

In the Memorial Homily by Patriarch JOHN X, His Beatitude spoke of Metropolitan PHILIP's heart and soul in poetic terms, which I found most appropriate for our great poet. Patriarch JOHN called Sayidna a valiant soldier "whose spiritual heart is still beating with prayers for the Church of the Antioch, in her homeland and in her dewy branches abroad (America), solidly strengthened by the Antiochian roots, blossoming and growing for the glory of God." The Patriarch continued to hail him saying, "O Sayidna, you have doubled the talent and made it grow new parishes, you raised up an Antiochian Village! ... You planted in the hearts of your children the love of the Church and the love of the hospitable motherland. All these draw you near to the heavenly throne."

Metropolitan JOSEPH at the burial service hailed Metropolitan PHILIP as a man of action, recalling his often repeated call to America to "come home." "America, come home to the Faith of the Orthodox Church! Come home to the faith of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul!" Metropolitan JOSEPH continued to hail the Metropolitan "as the one who not only unified the immigrant children from the Middle East and elsewhere in North America, but went out to the highways and the hedges to seek the lost. He fed his Arabic-speaking flock and their children while at the same time seeking out the lost children of our generation."

Sayidna JOSEPH continued in that homily to remind us that "Metropolitan PHILIP never allowed the status quo to freeze him into silence or passivity. He preached, he acted, he took big risks, all based upon the central ethos of apostolic love. History is not inscribed by clever minds or arm-chair thinkers, but rather, by energetic men and women of action! The deeds of this kind of leader will be trumpeted through the ages!"

Metropolitan PHILIP's spiritual family remembers him with gratitude to God. May God grant this valiant knight of the Church, our light-filled father of almost fifty years, eternal rest with the righteous, and, through Sayidna PHILIP's own prayers at the footstool of Christ, grant us courage and strength to continue Christ's ministry.

The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend  
Bishop BASIL

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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BISHOP JOHN'S PRESENTATION TO THE CLERGY SYMPOSIUM

# Priest as Minister of the Sacrament

I'M NOT A THEOLOGIAN, NOT A PROFESSOR, NOT EVEN A GOOD STUDENT, BUT I SPEAK TO YOU TODAY OUT OF MY OBEDIENCE TO OUR METROPOLITAN AND THE JOY THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED AS A MINISTER OF THE SACRAMENTS. IT IS OUR MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS THAT DEFINES OUR COMMUNITY AND GIVES CHRISTIAN IDENTITY TO OURSELVES AND GOD'S PEOPLE.

In the *Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*, Fr. Nicon Patrinos writes that the term *mysterion* is a composite from the verb *myo*, which means to close one's eyes for the purpose of protecting them. In the holy mysteries, we are closing our eyes from an extraordinary vision of the living, eternal God. *Mysterion* denotes the will and action of God, which is beyond the understanding of man, beyond what we are allowed to see. The mysteries, in other words, are God's actions in our lives, which we are protected from seeing. Were we to see them, we could be blinded by God's glory, like our eyes would be blinded by the sun. Seeing God would surely leave us without defense and would expose the chasm between our sinful state and the glory of God. It is God's mercy toward us that He chooses not to manifest Himself any more tangibly than when his Word became flesh and walked among us. Now, as He hides in the elements of the sacraments, this restraint on God's part is a mercy towards us.

How would we respond were we to see the fire of the Godhead at the water of the baptismal font? Would we plunge the baby into those waters? If, as we were walking down the church aisle on our wedding day, we could see the sleepless nights waiting for a teen to come home with the car, and feel the knots in our stomachs when we get calls from the police, how would we respond? Would we run for the hills? If at liturgy we saw the coals from the fire on tongs being placed in our hands and mouths in the Eucharist, would we be passive and receive Christ? What if we saw the angels and demons, or the raw pain of our parishioners, when they come for confession or counsel? Would we be so non-

chalant? How would we respond?

God has chosen to hide Himself from our eyes, for our safety and good. Yet as God acts in the daily lives of our parishioners, we clergy are in a unique position as ministers of the sacrament to witness regularly, up close and intimately, God's action in our lives and in the lives of our parishioners. We see the epiphanies as people recognize God's action. We witness repentance as Christians surrender to God's will. We see healing of *dis-ease*, as disease evaporates, as God's peace and comfort are allowed into one's heart. How glorious a life! More fun than yachting, golfing, or even making money, for sure. Ministering the sacraments is the great joy of our vocation.

So who are we, the ministers of the sacraments, in relationship to the people that we serve? Archbishop ANTHONY (Bloom) laments the limits of English and some other modern languages as we



make distinctions between clergy and laity. Laity denotes membership in the world, while experts or clergy are called out and separated. There's an old Serbian expression: "Here come three men and a priest," as if the priest is no longer a man. In our Church we are all baptized into the royal priesthood or ministry of Christ. Every Christian is called to work in Christ's own priesthood, of bringing God to man and mankind to God.

Some of us are called to various kinds of servant leadership, such as church educators, choir members or leaders, chanters, ushers, and such. Others are ordered or ordained to serve at the altar as liturgical deacons or servants, and others as presbyters or bishops. No office negates our earlier responsibilities: it adds to them. As Sayidna JOSEPH reminds us, a bishop is still a deacon or a servant. I add that a presbyter is still a Christian, that is, a member of God's *laos*, or laity.

The concern of Archbishop ANTHONY (Bloom) is that to classify the clergy outside of the people, or laity, makes it seem that simply being a person or a Christian is not as good; to be equal to the clergy, the laity would need to be clergy. Such a distinction leads to all kinds of modern ills, including tension and distrust between clergy and laity.

We would do well to help people understand how sacred and wonderful are the humanity and royal priesthood that we share. God embraced this humanity in his Incarnation. He has reclaimed fallen man, first created in the image and likeness of God. Now men and women, through God's action and sacraments, can put God on and share in Him, share in his ministry, and share in his life. We can abide in God and encounter Him, as He abides in us and we do his will.

Being God's people is good, but in English the term *laity* most often denotes being uneducated or untrained, the opposite to the expert of any field. As a layman, I know little about cars and am at the mercy of the expert auto repair technician, who can replace my car's computer. While I still have little strength in arguing with a mechanic, my God became an infant, vulnerable to his world and those who reject Him, and elevated once again the state of being a person. Whether my mechanic admits it or not, I have value beyond what I can pay him, and that value comes from God who embraces me. I also sometimes know when I'm being taken for a ride by a car dealership.

To build up the Church, I believe that we who are clergy need to elevate the minds and hearts of God's people. We need to help people fulfill their priesthood to pray for the world, and to reveal God to their families and cohorts. By helping them to "lift up their hearts," we recruit them to serve God within their order, to sanctify themselves, their homes, their work, and their recreation. We ministers of the sacraments need to live among God's people as examples of Christian life. We need to care for them, serve them, love them, forgive them, and challenge them – perhaps even in that order.

Clergy are sent by the Metropolitan and bishops to be Christian examples among their people. By leading in the sacraments, we touch the lives and hearts of the people. We introduce them to God, to the God in whom they were grafted in baptism. We show them the gifts and fruits of the Spirit of God who dwells in them. Sacraments are opportunities to touch lives and to teach. As such, they must not be overlooked. Every service that we celebrate is an opportunity to build up God's people. By building up the laity, we elevate the clergy and we elevate God's ministry.

When I was sent to New Kensington, church attendance was very poor, and people had found other things to do on Sunday mornings. It was a parish of many older people, and the whole community was as if retired. Almost all of the younger people were moving away for jobs. Funerals were the only access I had to the greater community. Therefore, I preached not only at funerals, but at every gathering around the person, from the hospital or home, to the trisagion service, and to the grave. It was at these times that I was introduced to the families among whom I was sent to live. By showing them God's love for them and showing the joys of being in the Church, many came home to worship, and the church tripled in attendance. Paradoxically, this church grew by having lots of funerals.

Baptisms and marriages also gave me opportunities to introduce the Church to many who had been absent for a while. I met with the families and godparents to read through and explain the theology expressed in baptism and wedding services. I used the sacramental worship of the Church to build up their understanding of who and what we are as Christians. One family at a time, we added to our regular attendees. We introduced people to the Church, and many responded positively.

Brothers, I contend that the reason our people need food festivals and have endless discussions about how to fix the church building is because that is what they're comfortable talking about. Our lay leaders, like us, are created in the image and likeness of God. God gives and serves. Like God and like us, the people we serve need to give and serve. If we want their service to be ministry, we need to teach them about sacramental life – how to do ministry – and thus to lead them in worship and service.

We need to raise their comfort levels by encouraging them to speak about the Church. We need to engage them in worship and send them out to minister. In short, we need to give them the language and understanding necessary to understand and do ministry.

Sacraments offer the opportunity to reveal God and transform our communities. Of course, the sacraments are not limited to seven. Our working definition of *sacrament* is God's action in the lives of our faithful. God is ministering in times of sickness, death, house-blessings, council meetings, hospitality, church camping, Parish Life conferences, and perhaps sometimes in food fairs and bowling leagues. This is real *koinonia*, or fellowship, being the Church that is revealed through the sacraments, being the Church that reveals God's presence, will, and love.

The sacramental life of the priest is one of prayer. Prayer is constant communion or communication with God and his people. It is by definition extremely intimate and personal. When God acts in our lives, we are the most open and vulnerable. We need to show utmost respect for the sacred opportunities we share when we pray with others personally and corporately as Church. We are to remove our sandals because we are in the sacred space of God's presence. We need to approach our parishioners with awe, respect, and humility. How else will they learn the awe of God? When we attend a seminary or are ordained to any of the Church orders, we are perceived by the people to offer them opportunities to connect with the living God, who is accessible through the prayers of our holy fathers *en masse*. They sense that God dwells in his priests.

God is a fervent fire. Do not let false pride or

humility steal from them the opportunities they seek to meet God. Be careful, though, that your own social needs do not make you too familiar to be able to help people meet God. We need to be accessible, but serious and pious enough to fulfill our priestly vocations and offices. We need to be ever-vigilant, because we never know when and where God will use us to minister. We have multiple relationships with our parishioners. We have special relationships when we baptize their children, counsel them in their marriages, go to school functions with them, attend birthday parties at their homes. In other words, we are pastors, family, friends, counselors,

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and so forth. We need to be cautious not to allow these various roles to compromise our priestly role as minister of sacrament. We need to be vigilant and deliberate.

I once stopped for pizza after a hospital visit in Pittsburgh. When I walked into the pizza shop, I was introduced to the owner's father, who was visiting from Syria. The old man began to cry, saying that God had visited him in his time of grief. The day before, his wife of 45 years was buried, and he was unable to get home for the funeral. I couldn't speak words to this man because my Arabic was so poor, yet God spoke through my presence. This man was able to grieve, and his journey to some kind of balance had begun, because a priest came to his son's pizza shop.

The Church is the community called out of the fallen world to follow the way Christ established for us. This way is expressed most perfectly in the gathering of the community for the Eucharist. The Eucharist is God's people being the Church in the world. The clergy connect God's people to God and to each other. We share the same Christ who is our source. The bishops, the Eucharist, and the faith are

the visible expressions of God's "mysterical" expression. I made up that word, "mysterical," to say how we made the world sacramental. We express this in worship: the lives of the saints, the teachings of the faith, and the readings of the Scripture. By being in relationship with our people, symbiotically, we make each other Church. I like to say that without us the community is only a social club, and without the people, the clergy are unemployed. We need each other to be the Church, and we need each other to be Christian. One cannot be Christian alone. We need to work together to be one.

Although we live in a pluralistic society, in which people pick and choose what they want to believe, our Orthodox faith is discrete. It is a system of teaching and relationships that fits together, and bring us into union with God. I believe that our people are capable of understanding more than we typically

**Modern man is self-centered and insists on an individualistic freedom, but such a freedom is not free at all; it is only free from God. This society is running quickly toward complete hedonism or self-pleasing. If we are to call people to Christ, we need to be joined to them, showing them that joining God is the only real love and joy.**

teach them. We can encourage them to discover our teachings in the Scriptures and Fathers by sending them directly to the sources. They are capable of understanding the difficult teachings of the Church. They can see how God's mercy and love transcend the limits of language. They can grasp how we share in God's love. We can call each other to purity, but first they need to experience God's love for them. We can also call them to the fasting and charitable practices of the Church community that help us use our bodies and minds to encounter God.

We have from time to time been accused of clericalism. I don't believe that clericalism is sustainable in the new world. Modern man is self-centered and insists on an individualistic freedom, but such a freedom is not free at all; it is only free from God. This society is running quickly toward complete hedonism or self-pleasing. If we are to call people to Christ, we need to be joined to them, showing them

that joining God is the only real love and joy. We need to be accessible while apart, transcending the life of the culture and revealing God, who is in our midst. We need to be bridges to God, through the one incarnate Word.

By being ministers of the sacraments, we have a front-row seat in the salvation history of each of our parishioners. We share in God's love for us and his people, and we participate in his holy action in his world. We are in a constant state of communion with God and with each other. To be a priest who ministers the sacraments is the greatest of vocations and most blessed of any way of life. May God protect our ministries and bless his people!

**Q1: My question then is educational and sacramental, especially for our young people today. How do we teach our young people? When we introduce them to sacraments and teach them about sacraments, would we say, "Oh, this is fire, this is not water"? That would be confusing. So what is the best way for young people today to learn about those sacraments?**

**Bishop JOHN:** Father, my working definition of sacrament is God acting in our lives. When the deacon comes to the bishop or the *protos*, he says, "It is time for God to act"; another translation is, "It is time for us to do God's work." God is working, and we are interacting with Him, and so together God is manifesting Himself, working, and doing.

I would just try to teach plainly. Help people understand that truth is beyond words, as we see in our apophatic tradition. I think children even can understand that sometimes it's really hard to describe something, and what we want to describe is beyond the limits of the words we use. We have an analogy with the language of the people in the far North, who have names for five different kinds of snow, whereas, in Baltimore, they just have *snow*.

**Q2: Would you please speak more about the meaning of being similar but apart from the people? Because when we are with them, eating and celebrating birthdays and stuff, we feel more close to them, but how can we be apart at the same time?**

**Bishop JOHN:** How do we keep clear the many different relationships that we have with people so that we can be appropriate? I think we all choose things, general kinds of relationships. We need peers, we need "venters," and we need protégés. We

need people who teach us, people whom we can embrace and be comfortable with. We need all three kinds of relationships. We need to pass on our life experiences with others to keep a healthy balance in life. In the parish with the same people, we have lots of different roles that we play. My point is, as Sayidna JOSEPH reminded us, a presbyter is always a presbyter. He should always, in whatever he does, be authentic and be who he is, so we shouldn't, when we're being a friend, do anything that would compromise our primary reason for being in the community, which is to hear the confessions and to help people to Christ.

Peer relationships are very important for us to keep in balance, and friendships take a lot of work. Americans are notably lazy when it comes to friendships and relationships; they don't spend the time or do the work. That leaves us isolated and lonely. So we need to be deliberate about having relationships, investing ourselves, finding people who can meet all three levels of our needs. It's up to us to identify our real needs and to be creative about meeting those real needs and following through.

If you want to share something with a friend who is a parishioner, think about whether or not what you're sharing will compromise your ability to hear his confession, to support his marriage, and to be an icon of Christ. That might mean that you have to call a friend from seminary or from the House of Studies or from the diocese for some of these peer relationships.

**Q3: Sayidna, I was intrigued about your experience in New Kensington, coming there. You mentioned attendance was low, but you used the opportunity of funerals and the preaching especially at funerals to inspire people to become more active. I wonder if you could speak more about the role of preaching in liturgy, in sacraments, and in the formation of community.**

**Bishop JOHN:** The Antiochians were blessed to be able to be the first really to use a lot of English in worship. I think that is because, when the first wave of immigrants came, they weren't nationalistic because they were under Ottoman rule, and Arabic wasn't really our language. That was imposed on us by the Ottomans. So we didn't have the kind of loyalty that the Greeks or the Serbs or the Russians had to their language or their country. So it's a little bit more tribal.

Yet translating into English isn't really enough, because now we need to translate the English so that what's really happening is understood. What does it mean when we say in the liturgy, "A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise"? That's our priesthood; that's their priesthood. Let us pay attention, that we, all together, may offer the oblation in peace. A mercy means God's priesthood, of our priesthood, bringing God to man; and a sacrifice of praise, our praising God. That's what it means for each of us Christians to be priests. What does it mean to mystically represent the cherubim? It means to call to understanding, that we're joining the angels at the throne of God and we're already at Christ's side, and He's feeding us his life. I think we need to help people understand what they're doing when they come to worship, and that becomes exciting.

At one of our NAC meetings, a leader stood up and said, "I don't get anything from church." I said to him: The service isn't there for you to *get*; the service is there for you to *give*, to be the Church, to witness to the world, to manifest Christ's presence, to be gathered as an expression of the heavenly kingdom. Once we're able to help people experience that, then work could be done more easily. I tell folks that we don't baptize people to make them consumers. In our world, they're all consumers. Are they consuming it like a hamburger, like they're entitled to it, because they put fifty cents in the collection? That's not what it is.

So we're soldiers. So what does it mean if you're a soldier and you don't show up for six years? Or you come and choose which army to fight in, for which battle that you like? Or you work for a company and expect a paycheck because you're entitled, but don't go to work? What does it mean? We're not spectators. What the Church gives you, my friend, is the opportunity to give: an opportunity to participate in Christ's ministry, to do what was promised God that you would be in your baptism. Because we meant it, even if you didn't know what you were saying. In baptism, when you spit at the devil, you might not believe in the devil, but the devil believes in you, you know? So let's know that this is serious business. The sacraments are the most serious business. We – all of us Christians – are participating in God and His work and His ministry and His life. It's not right to let them do that without knowing what they're doing.

**Q4: . . . It's not important not to have a bishop who's been married. It used to be an experience to have children . . . through the years . . . What is your experience of having been married and being a bishop. Does it hamper you? Does it add things to you, which I believe it did?**

**Bishop JOHN:** The question is, What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a married bishop, because I'm the only married bishop of Antioch, right? And Constantinople has only one married bishop.

C1: We have had a married patriarch.

C2: You're on your way! [Laughter]

**Bishop JOHN:** We have had a married patriarch, but in the past we've had other bishops who've been married. Here are some advantages. I think I have lots of sermon illustrations. I have the experience of being awakened late at night. God gives each of us different things in our lives that we are able to use for his glory. When my first son was born, his heart didn't make the change to send the blood to the lungs for oxygen, so he didn't breathe properly for five days. He was one of the first survivors of the heart-lung bypass machine that is very popular now. That experience, of watching your child breathe only once a minute . . . of seeing a baby not breathe, is something that helped me in working with people all of my life. So all of the things that God gives us, as difficult as they are when we experience them, offer us opportunities to join with our people. So I would think that having been married for thirty years was a great blessing for me. I don't see any disadvantages.

Now, my children are all grown, and they support themselves. You said that very nicely. It took a little time, but it's all good. Part of that is because of the love and support and cooperation of our hierarchs and our presbyters, because in modern times it's more unusual that the bishop has a family. So all of these things that the Church does, force us to rethink everything: What is holy? What is real? What is God's action and life? Who are we as human beings?

**Q5: Sayidna, I've been a priest for a while, and I look back on my priesthood and my family life, and I know I made lots of mistakes on both sides. When I was younger, everyone was always saying, "You've got to balance your family life with the parish, with the parishioners." How did you do**

**that? For younger priests, with families, from your experience, what advice do you give them?**

**Bishop JOHN:** I think we need to be very deliberate. I read a book – from a Protestant, but some very good advice — about managing time, energy, and finances, which are all finite. We need to budget our energy, our time, and our money. We can only do that by being deliberate. If you don't have endless time, then when you make an appointment, you need not only to make a starting time; you need to make an ending time. "I can see you from 12:00 to 12:50." At 12:50, if the work isn't completed, then they can come back next week, when you have another 50 minutes. So by being deliberate, we can make more things happen in a morning or an afternoon or an evening. That make sense?

Priests are busy, very busy, but we, as priests, have some flexibility. We have to bury people, but if the time we have to bury them is at nine o'clock instead of ten o'clock because of something else, then we can offer opportunities and schedule our times and our energies so that we take care of ourselves, our families, and our parish. When you take care of yourself, you teach your family that God is important to you, and they need also to take care of their relationship with God.

When you take care of your family, you show the parish that family is important, and you model for them how you behave. So taking care of yourself, going to the gym, doing your prayers, doing your spiritual reading – are gifts to the parish! It keeps you balanced, it keeps you fed, it keeps you able to do things.

If you are working so hard at the parish that you're not sharpening the blade, then you're not going to do much cutting. So we need to keep breathing, we need to keep praying, we need to take care of our families, we need to be deliberate about how we use our time and how we use our energy. It's not fair that you give the parish all of your energy so that, when you're home, you're there physically but can't play with the kids or can't talk to your wife and spend time with your wife. That's not fair. And that will end up costing more. So we need to keep our priorities and be deliberate and be serious.

I think sometimes we go from one extreme to the other and we're not going to be balanced. But just count up how many minutes you spend making hospital calls, how many minutes you spend praying,

and so on. Just by making that inventory, you'll start re-balancing . . . Take a look at your checkbook and see where your money is going, and then begin to see where you are, and then you are able to make some choices so that you can be more deliberate about how you use your time, your energy, and finances.

When my wife was sick, it was like God micro-managed my time. I never missed a time when she needed help getting to the bathroom, and I never missed the Liturgy or a service or a hospital visit. It was like God just helped me take care of everything. It was all His. One time, my son was really young, and I came downstairs, and he was going through my checkbook. I thought that was pretty curious, so I said to him, "Honey, what are you doing?" And he was embarrassed that I caught him, and he said, "Well, I was going to ask for something, but I wanted to make sure we had enough money." Pretty sweet. I said to him, "Honey, between your mother and me we have four masters' degrees, and we can't figure out that checkbook." Really, only God knows how we did it, because it never made any sense. I didn't live any better when I was making \$60,000 than when I was making \$12,000. I didn't live any differently. Only God knows how that stuff worked. But I said to him, "This is your turn to be a kid and to play. We have been put in charge of the finances, and we'll decide what we spend money on. And when you have kids, *then* you worry about the finances and what toys you buy and what toys you don't buy." So let's be deliberate that parents are parents, kids are kids. These are the things that we do, and this is how we work.

I'm not saying that you treat your parishioners like little kids. Imagine if I were twenty-four- years old in a parish: I'm not going to go to an eighty-year-old guy, and say, "Son—." [Laughter] Just be yourself, serve your people, and let God work through you. When I went to New Kensington, I had no plans. I had no strategy. I had no mission statement or any of those kinds of things. I'm a priest, I was there to serve the parish. I weeded the parking lot, because the parking lot was full of weeds. I changed 40 light bulbs in the church. Three-quarters of the light bulbs in the church had burned out and nobody noticed. The walls were covered in soot. Nice marble, but nobody noticed that they were covered in soot. The parish had gone to sleep; they were retired. I weeded the parking lot, I changed the light bulbs, and we began to have a different image of

what we were: we weren't retired any more. We had kids who could go to the Bible Bowl and bring us praise. We were people who could win art contests. I started telling them, because at least on the Bowls they had an opportunity, how big and how wonderful they are and what great ministry they could lead. I made all my parishioners co-ministers. I told them they could do anything. They had no idea what God could do in them. They were in their minds in such a ghetto. They really imagined that everyone around them had better theology and better missions and better structures and better everything.

When converts came, the parishioners couldn't understand what the converts wanted, because what the converts had was so much better. They didn't rebuke new people because they thought the people of the parish were too good for them; they rebuked people because they didn't think that their parish was good enough. That's how they saw themselves. They were so excited that the Roman Catholic priest would talk to them; he was so special, and they didn't have anything. So you help them understand what their heritage is and what it means and what the liturgy *is*, and that it is the entrance to the kingdom of heaven.

We had a "full gospel" congregation down the street, and they put on their church sign: "Bible-Based Church." So I thought that was really cute, so I put on my sign: "Church-Based Bible." This minister preached *three sermons* against me by name! I never met the guy! Three *hours* he talked about my arrogance and my idolatry. It was *wonderful* publicity! It opened up a discussion about what it means to be the Church that wrote the Bible that they're interpreting.

I told my parish about my favorite *Saturday Night Live* show. On *Saturday Night Live*, they had a skit about a handwriting expert who had a Ph.D. and could tell better what somebody wrote than the person who wrote it. He knew more of what you meant than you did. "No, that's not what you meant. I have a Ph.D." What a silly notion. We're the Church that wrote the epistles – to our churches, to us! And somebody else knows better what the letter means? We have the live experience of the situation. That's who we are! So I helped people feel better about themselves, and that helped them a little. We changed our idea of who we are and what it means to be the Church.

# THE SECOND PASSOVER: PASCHA

WE CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE EACH SPRING CHRIST'S PASSOVER – PASCHA – FROM DEATH TO LIFE, BECAUSE WE REMEMBER THAT HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY OF ETERNAL LIFE IN HIS KINGDOM.

**B**ut there was an earlier Passover!

Perhaps the most significant event in the Old Testament was the passing, by the Angel of Death, over the blood-anointed door posts and lintels of the homes of the enslaved Israelites in Egypt. In this way, God spared their first-born children and livestock. Not so for Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

This action of God achieved His ultimate objective: rescuing His people from four hundred and thirty years of bondage. This event resonates throughout the books of the Old Testament, and continues to resonate with Jews to this day. This was the First Passover: an action of God in history, a sign of His love and compassion for His people, one

that makes supremely evident the Immortal caring for us mortals.

Yet we mortals have not always acted out of gratitude to Him for His concern. We have not always remembered His saving action, and lived our lives in accordance with His expectations of us. Like Adam and Eve, we continue to disobey Him. God, however, true to Himself, has not forgotten the high point of His Creation – us mortals. He sent His prophets to admonish us concerning our wayward ways, and to remind us of His steadfast love for us. In the fullness of time, He sent His only begotten Son to reach out to us, and to gather us under His wings.

## Pascha, the Second Passover

In this Second Pascha, Christ passed over from death on the Cross to life in His Resurrection on the third day. The Second Passover supersedes the first, in that it opens the gates of Paradise to all people – Jews and Gentiles. It is not exclusive, for one people only; rather, it is potentially inclusive of those from all nations of mankind.

Moreover, this Second Passover took place on the occasion of the celebration of the first. Christ instructed His disciples to prepare the Passover meal of lamb for Him: “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples”’” (Matthew 26:18). Then He became the sacrificial Lamb inaugurating the New Covenant with His blood.

Our God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – desires to be with us, to walk with us, and to talk with us. Little by little, He reveals Himself to us as far as we can understand. We cannot know God on our own, and we will never know God completely;

knowledge of Him is not something we can acquire through our own cleverness. As mortals – created out of dust – we cannot fully comprehend the Immortal, the One who created us from that dust. Can the clay advise the potter? as Isaiah points out (Isaiah 29:16). He is unfathomable. What we do know is what He has revealed about Himself to us.

What He reveals to us through His prophets, but especially in His Son, is a loving, caring, long-suffering, and compassionate Person. Unlike the god of the philosophers – the unmoved Mover of Aristotle, for example – He is a God who works in history for our benefit, so that we may have life, and have it abundantly. He is not distant, but nearby. He is not abstract, but real.

Think of it. He sent His only begotten Son to rescue us, not from Egyptian slavery, but from death itself. As St. Basil the Great puts it in his Anaphora prayer at the high point of the Liturgy, he loosed the pains of death and rose again on the third day, making a way for all flesh unto the resurrection from the dead, for it was not possible that the Author of life should be held by corruption.

What greater love is there than for one to give his life for another? Christ gave His life for all of us.

Moreover, He did not leave us alone, or abandon us after He rose from the dead, nor when He ascended into heaven to return to His Father. St. Basil continues in the Anaphora prayer:

*And he hath left with us, as memorials of his saving passion, these things which we have set forth according to his commandments.*

*For when he was about to go forth to his voluntary and ever-memorable and life-giving death, in the night in which he gave himself up for the life of the world, he took bread in his holy and immaculate hands; and when he had shown it unto thee, the God and Father, and given thanks and blessed it and hallowed it and broken it, He gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying: Take, eat. This is my Body which is broken for you, for the forgiveness of sins...*

*In like manner, having taken the cup of the fruit of the vine and mingled it and given thanks and blessed it and hallowed it, He gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying: Drink of this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins...*

*Do this in remembrance of me; for as often as you shall eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you do proclaim my death and confess my resurrection.*

Christ did not abandon us. He sent His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and He is with us at all times. This is especially true when we partake of His Holy Body and Blood. As He told His disciples and apostles: when you partake of the Eucharist, I abide in you and you abide in Me.

There is no abstraction here. There is reality. There is personal engagement. There is the mortal with the Immortal and the Immortal with the mortal, as a foretaste of our journey to Christ in the Kingdom of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the Kingdom there is no longer suffering, pain, sickness, nor sorrow, but brightness, green pastures, and peace.



Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us celebrate joyfully this Second Passover – this Pascha – this cosmic action of God in history. Christ came into our midst, died for us, reopened the doors of Paradise for us, and allowed us to partake of His Holy Body and Blood. Moreover, He is with us at all times. When we wander off, He waits patiently for us to acknowledge His saving Grace and to return to Him. He does indeed abide in us and grants us life everlasting.

Who is so great a God as our God?

Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

Fr. Michael Massouh, Pastor  
St. Nicholas Church, St. Petersburg, Florida



# INTRODUCING ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH IN GRAND RAPIDS

ON THE HOST OF THE ANTIOCHIAN CONVENTION 2019



The First St. Nicholas Church on Cass Avenue, and the current parish

St. Nicholas Church traces its history back to the early 1900s, when Orthodox immigrants from that part of the Ottoman Empire then known as “Syria” began to come to Grand Rapids, Michigan. Many of these immigrants made their living initially as peddlers, selling their wares door-to-door as the city grew into a center of commerce and industry. As they became more prosperous, they opened stores of their own. Others found employment in the city’s well-known furniture industry.

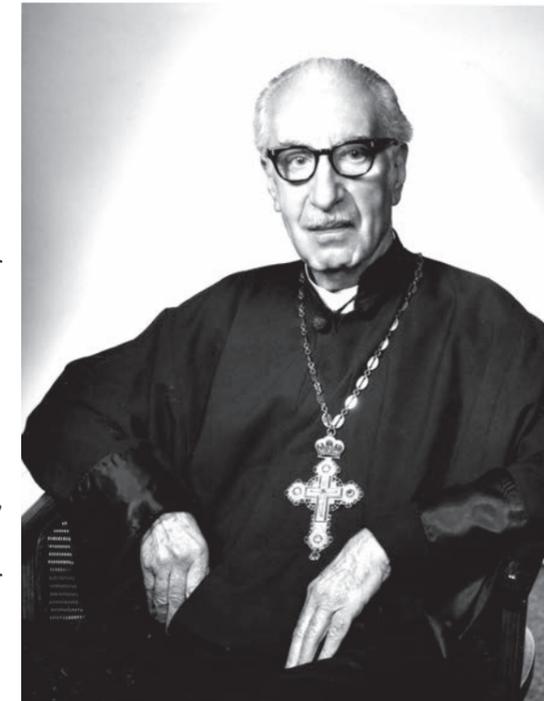
As early as 1906, the community was visited by traveling priests, who served the recently arrived Orthodox immigrants scattered around the Midwest and concentrated in growing cities like Toledo and Fort Wayne. At least twice, Grand Rapids was visited by St. Raphael Hawaweeny, who encouraged the faithful to establish a church and who ordained and trained St. Nicholas’s first Pastor, Father Philipous Abu-Assaley. Father Philipous was ordained in 1908.

The community purchased its first church building in 1908, and incorporated as St. George Church in 1910. Grand Rapids became a center of Orthodoxy in the Midwest, as Father Philipous himself continued to travel around the region, ministering to the faithful. By 1923, however, Grand Rapids’ Antiochian Orthodox community found itself divided by the dispute known as the “Russy-Antaky” split, a dispute over church governance that arose in the aftermath of the repose of St. Raphael and the organizational confusion that ensued throughout American Orthodoxy in the wake of the Russian Revolution.

As a result, St. Nicholas was formed in 1923. St. George Church also remained, and to this day is located on property it purchased at the time of the dispute. St. Nicholas moved to a location on Cass Avenue in Grand Rapids, where it would remain until the 1950s. Then it moved to a suburban location in nearby East Grand Rapids. During this period, the Rt. Rev. Ellis Khouri served as Pastor of St. Nicholas. Beloved throughout the Archdiocese, he was instrumental in fostering St. Nicholas’s involvement in SOYO and other

activities, and later served as *Protosyngellos* of the Archdiocese.

In fact, St. Nicholas has traditionally been actively involved in the national endeavors of the Archdiocese. Two of its current members, Alan Abraham and Dan Abraham, have recently served on the Archdiocese Board of Trustees. Dan Abraham also served as National Chair of the Order of St. Ignatius, a post currently held



by Roger David of the parish. Rob Rinvelt and Kathy Abraham held national offices with NAC SOYO and the Fellowship of St. John the Divine. A son of St. Nicholas, Very Rev. Thomas Zain, is Dean of St. Nicholas Cathedral and Vicar-General of the Archdiocese.

In 1996, St. Nicholas purchased a 12.5-acre parcel of land in Kentwood, located near several major roadways in a developing part of the area. In January 2000, the community began to worship there and on October 15, 2000, its new temple was consecrated.

In 2001, the Very Rev. Daniel Daly became the Pastor of St. Nicholas. The church is marked by its Byzantine-style architecture, featuring a large dome as well as ample classroom, office, and fellowship facilities. It also includes a bookstore and the Chapel of St. Joseph of Damascus. St. Nicholas has been blessed with extensive iconography by the hand of Father Theodore Koufos of Toronto.

Upon Father Daniel’s retirement in 2015, the parish welcomed the current Pastor, the Very Rev. Michael Nasser. Father Michael is well known throughout the Archdiocese from his many years of service, including as director of the Antiochian

Rt. Rev. Fr. Ellis Khouri



Village Camp.

In 2017, St. Nicholas adopted the following mission statement: *St. Nicholas is a worshipping community in the Antiochian Orthodox Christian tradition that preserves, proclaims, and practices the Faith given by Christ to the Apostles, serving Him, one another and our neighbors. We manifest His love through sacramental and liturgical life, education, hospitality, works of mercy, and fellowship.*

As its mission statement affirms, St. Nicholas looks to the future mindful of its past. Consistent with its mission statement, the parish has many active ministries in the areas listed in the statement. Currently, it is also actively engaged in planning for the 2019 Archdiocese Convention. St. Nicholas parishioners have great memories of past conventions they attended, even back to when they were children with their families, and want to make the Convention, once again, a memorable family destination for spiritual development and fellowship.



Top: Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Zain's Ordination

Today St. Nicholas welcomes all who seek and have found the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Our diverse church family has spread from its roots in the early years of immigration from the Middle East to include not only new converts to Orthodoxy from the Grand Rapids community, but also immigrants from Romania, Serbia, Eritrea, Russia, and Armenia, among other countries. Our outreach programs and works of mercy are offered on an ongoing basis to the community as we continue to strive to live our mission.

Reverend Archdeacon David Khorey

## IT TAKES MORE THAN ONE: BUILDING A THRIVING MINISTRY TEAM

Michelle Moujaes

*So the twelve gathered all the disciples together and said: "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."* – Acts 6:24

*"No pastor, not even the best one, can run a parish on his own. With fewer priests, more demands from parish n't do it alone. Every pastor needs a leadership team, a special group of people who are collectively committed to helping him make the parish amazing and bringing more people to Christ and His Church."* – Pat Lencioni, *New York Times* bestselling author

Every day, our clergy serve Christ and His Church by offering themselves selflessly, sacrificially, and completely to their people. They are called to stand in innocence before God's holy altar to proclaim the Gospel of His Kingdom, to teach the word of His truth, and to offer unto God spiritual gifts and sacrifices, to renew His people. Additionally, our clergy must step confidently into the roles of administrator, be consulted in the affairs of the parish, be the advisor to lay ministries, heal conflicts, aid in promoting parish events and activities, and so much more. There's often no limit to the roles a pastor has at any given time. But here's the thing: the needs of a parish community simply surpass what one person can do alone. God knew that and so should we. No pastor should ever think that he is alone.

The need for a team of trusted and competent co-laborers in parish life is significant. While many of our parishes are bustling with thriving teams, every pastor is called to continue in his ministry to help parishioners identify and cultivate their spiritual gifts, so that they too can serve the Body of Christ. Metropolitan JOSEPH recognizes that whether it's hiring a youth worker, finding the right person to serve on the Parish Council, or working with the Church School staff, instruction in key aspects of collaborative ministry and team-building is not only essential for pastoral self-care, but also very

necessary for optimal parish health. He knows that when ministry is shared, the depth of pastoral care can be far reaching within a parish. When the right people collaborate in the right ways, everyone on a team is blessed.

That's why this July, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, His Eminence has enlisted the team at Faithtree Resources to create a practical and unique experience for Antiochian Orthodox clergy throughout North America. From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Faithtree team will cover practical strategies that empower our clergy to build teams and cultivate the spiritual gifts and talents of their people. With eight chosen speakers, and a ton of interactive and multimedia instruction, the event will provide pastors with an opportunity to see how they might develop a collaborative ministry, so that, as the team thrives, so does the pastor. We encourage pastors to register early on-line with Faithtree Resources at [faithtree.org](http://faithtree.org).

Michelle Moujaes is the Founder and Executive Director of Faithtree Resources, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Orthodox pastors develop thriving parish communities.



# 40 Years TO CELEBRATE

Forty is a very biblical number, often representing a long time.

It was the number of days of rain which caused the flood, from which Noah, his family, and the animals were saved in the Ark. The people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty long years, after being set free from slavery in Egypt, and before entering the Promised Land. Jesus fasted and was tempted in the wilderness for forty days, just prior to his earthly ministry, and, in imitation, we fast for forty days of Great Lent. So forty of anything is a long time.

As hard as it is to believe, it is also the number of years that we celebrate the good ministry being done at the Antiochian Village. It was forty years ago, when the total number of campers attending the entire summer was a fraction of those attending any given week these days. It was not known from the beginning as the standard of success that it is now, with over 1,000 campers attending each summer, and whose ministry has contributed to another thousand attending the various camps throughout the Archdiocese each summer.

I'm not the only priest of the Archdiocese who credits the Village for playing a significant part in our answering the call to the holy priesthood; many of us acknowledge Fr. John Namie's enduring influence. Even a few of our bishops would say the same! The number of clergy, youth directors, chanters, choir directors, Church School teachers and Parish Council members (among a myriad of other ministries) who credit their time at the Village as an important inspiration continually grows. The

renaissance in Byzantine chant throughout the Archdiocese cannot

be distinguished from the experience of those who attend our camps. We do indeed have much to celebrate!

Such an important milestone needs a GRAND celebration, and that's just what we've planned for the 2019 Archdiocese Convention taking place July 21–28, 2019, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While we'll have to put up with luxury accommodations instead of sleeping on bunk beds in the cabins (someone needs to make the sacrifice!), this reunion will bring together campers and counselors from the Village's forty years of faith, fellowship and fun. Some of the highlights of what we have planned include remembrances of these blessed years through picture and song. The celebration of this anniversary will be woven throughout the Convention's events, from Thursday's "Evening Program" of the River View & Family Fair, to a special multi-media segment, "The Village Remembered," at the Friday "Antiochian Spotlight: From Broadway to Grand Rapids" musical spectacular, to the Saturday tribute to the Village at "The Light the Night Gala" dinner-dance. Having been a counselor in the 80s and early 90's, and then the camp's director in the late 90s and early 2000s, I find it to be a great blessing to act as the host pastor at the Convention, celebrating the Village's four decades. One highlight for me personally will be the "Wine Down with Fr. Michael," a gathering planned by our camp alumni here at St. Nicholas. I hope to see many of the campers and staff I knew from my Village days.

The impact on each of the thousands of us who entered that sacred ground through the arch is immeasurable, as each encountered God and His Church in new and meaningful ways. It's why that arch is featured prominently in this year's Confer-

ence and Convention logo, and the biblical quote which emblazons it is our theme: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). We're looking forward to seeing campers and counselors from these four decades reunite,



renew their Village bonds, and be revitalized in the faith that we learned to live in deeper ways during our days there. Among our forty years of alumni, of course we have our "Pioneer Villagers" from the 70s (when the staff outnumbered the campers!) and early 80s, those I remember from the "old school" days in the late 80s, and the Villagers who enjoyed a much larger program of the 90s and 2000s. For a while now, we've seen "second-generation Villagers" (campers who are children of those early campers or staff in the 70s and 80s). Now we're beginning to see third-generation Village babies at Family Camp!

We're looking forward to the blessed assembly of all those who met their future spouses at the Village, and a group picture of all the "Village babies."

So we invite you to "come home to the Village" at this summer's Archdiocese Convention! No matter which "country roads" will take you home, or if you need to leave "on a jet plane," we promise you a Convention to be remembered, as we remember our time at the Village.

V. Rev. Fr. Michael Nasser  
St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan



# WHY JOHNNY CAN'T REMEMBER

## MEMORY, FAITH, AND THE GOSPEL

SOME OF THE MORE ENTERTAINING THINGS TO WATCH ON THE INTERNET ARE VARIOUS "GOTCHA" VIDEOS, IN WHICH THE GENERAL PUBLIC (ESPECIALLY YOUNG PEOPLE) ARE ASKED BASIC HISTORICAL AND CIVICS QUESTIONS, WHICH THEN LEADS TO EMBARRASSING GUESSES AND STAMMERING. SIMPLE FACTS, LIKE, "WHO WON THE US CIVIL WAR?" OR "WHAT ARE WE CELEBRATING ON JULY 4?" STUMP THE AVERAGE AMERICAN PEDESTRIAN IN THE SAME WAY AS WOULD MORE COMPLEX QUESTIONS LIKE "WHAT IS THE THIRD LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS?"



**I** imagine that, to answer that last question, you will 'Google it' on the computer or phone. And, this gets me to the point of this article, but I'm not going directly there. We have more to first cover.

In the popular analyses of these videos, the common refrain is that young people these days are "not taught to think." This is a fair

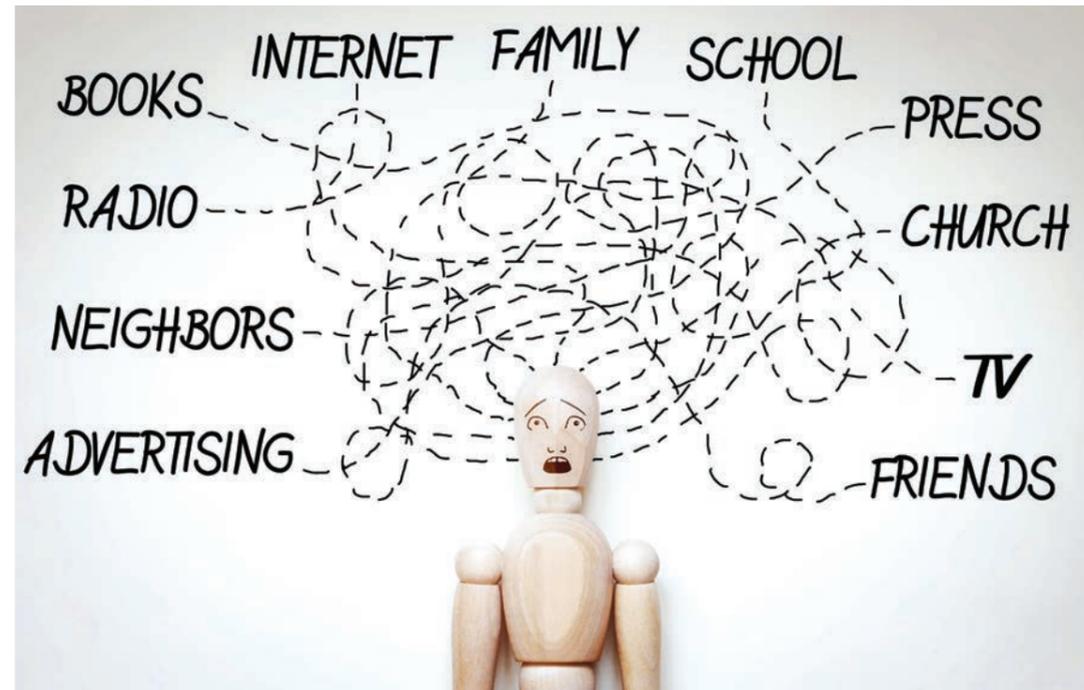
assessment, since many of these "gotcha" videos feature question that require some basic analysis and problem-solving. Yes, you can blame the rather banal, "how-does-this-make-you-feel?" culture of modern schooling, but, to be fair, modern education does preserve some problem-solving aspects. The common criticism is summarized in the title, "Why Johnny Can't Think," and it appears that our education system in America is failing to teach children to use logic

and reason to come to conclusions.

There is, however, an underlying problem that is being ignored. That is, Johnny can think, but he often can't remember enough facts to form proper thoughts. While popular education and society undervalue rational discourse in favor of emotional experience, the truth is that humans cannot avoid thinking. We hunger for reasons and to grasp causal relations. We want to know why things happen, and we all know that, ultimately, "because I felt like it," is a really dissatisfying answer.

The reason most of the people in those man-on-the-street videos can't answer the questions is that they can't remember the answers. They are

Conditioned from early education through undergraduate studies, students learn to "dump the data"—to forget everything they learned from the previous semester to make room for new information. (Most courses are one semester long.) There is only so much information that a student can keep in his working memory, and the rest is shoved off into some dark corner of the mind, or even into complete oblivion. So, the professor was forced to review the previous semester's contents, which was moderately successful, though it was clear that students remembered the terminology, but only small amounts of the content. To this day I only have vague recollections of the topics of that class.



asked for facts that they should have learned years earlier, facts that were often presented with minimal relations to their present circumstances. This is so because modern education requires the phenomenon of "data dumping."

Here is an example from seminary. When my class returned from Christmas break, we gathered for the second half of a year-long course with a certain renowned professor. As he began his first lecture of the new semester, it became apparent that none of the students remembered to what he was referring from the previous semester.

Why do students dump so much information? Well, if you consider the sheer volume of information modern people are responsible for learning in school, and what it competes against, it is no wonder that we forget as much as we do. When I lived in Japan, I was astonished how my Japanese friends occasionally struggled to make out signs we encountered in the streets of Tokyo, often seeming like they were only partially literate. They all gave the same story: they had to memorize dozens of characters each week in school, but promptly forgot them the next week

to get ready for the next round to be memorized. To be literate in Japanese, one must learn three different character systems, with thousands of characters and combinations with distinct meanings: a true feat of memory.

We older folks remembered when most news came through the morning newspaper, and then maybe an hour of TV news in the evening. Now, we have the Internet, with unlimited access to every bit of news (and quite a bit of "fluff") brought to us through Facebook, 4chan, Twitter, and other "social media." We have hundreds of opportunities each day to be exposed to every corner of human knowledge.

Now, when we don't know something, we can "Google it." We don't need to put much effort into mastering a topic. I have built buildings and repaired machinery with YouTube videos. If you asked me to repeat what I did right now, however, I'd be at a loss. As soon as I finished my project, I dumped most of the detailed information. We learn primarily through repetition, and I don't have time for that. A new challenge is here, and I must make room to learn a new task quickly.

People nowadays bounce through numerous jobs and even several careers, except when deep, detailed knowledge is required. Still, it is impossible for anyone to master an entire field. A doctor must specialize in a certain kind of medicine, just as an engineer must specialize in a particular portion of his field. Generalists really don't exist, or they become synonymous with "... master of none."

We are overwhelmed with information, and have little time to digest it. This is why we have become so reliant on pictures and images: we get a lot of information very quickly, with a small dose of brain chemicals that arouse emotions and help us "attach" to that image. We know more about history than our ancestors ever imagined man could. It is simply impossible to remember all the various dynasties of China, all the nations in Africa, all the laws of thermodynamics, the intricacies of classical Greek grammar . . . and have any meaningful interaction with them all. There may be a handful of people out there who can master all of these, but it will be at the expense of lots of other topics.

When it comes to the Church, I have heard much the same thing. I recall a rather annoyed

Sunday School teacher complain loudly that his incoming high school students were learning nothing in the previous classes of Sunday school, though the other teachers responded that they were diligently teaching the Archdiocese curriculum. Indeed, they were. It was simply that, during the summer break at Sunday School, the kids shed their Christian learning the same way they dumped their secular education over the break.

These days, the Gospel is often taught as just another topic, in a school program modeled on modern teaching. So we should expect the same results. Sure, you can work hard to teach the fifth-graders the names of all Twelve Apostles – I'll save you the trip to Google: the list varies in the Four Gospels, so that was kind of a trick question – but we should expect that the next year they will remember only a few of them.

If we expect that Christianity is taught the same way as mathematics or philosophy or grammar, then we should expect similar results. Our children will (and frequently do) forget what we teach them.

Is there any hope? Yes, but it requires us to set aside our present expectations. We need to stop approaching Orthodoxy as a collection of facts. Often, after encouraging inquirers to read about the Faith, I will then ask them to shut the books and just come to services. Why? Because, it is only through immersion in the Faith and routine participation in the services that someone can resist the tidal wave of other information that inundates the modern mind.

The Divine Liturgy centers around the Anamnesis, calling to remembrance the glory and love of God for us and for His creation: "Having the remembrance, therefore, this saving commandment and all things that have come to pass for us . . ." Our worship is a constant act of remembrance, of reminding ourselves of God's mercy and compassion. This is also why, when the devil seeks to destroy a man, he first separates him from worship. He cultivates discontent with the parish community in the heart of the tempted man, and lures him away with dreams, say, of a "purer" parish that will have perfect liturgies with perfect people. He no longer desires to be patient with the failings of others, because he has forgotten the elementary foundation of Christian behavior and morality. He prefers books and



Holy Unction Service,  
St. George Cathedral,  
Pittsburgh, PA

Internet pages to his brethren. After all, the books don't force him to exercise virtue.

Is it possible to read too many Orthodox books? Yes! Some people plunge head-first into a sea of literature, not all of which is accurate or beneficial. The real problem is that, in getting deep into a theological controversy, Christians will dump the basics: love, forgiveness, long-suffering, charity, kindness, refraining from

condemnation, and so forth. Early lessons that stirred them to repentance for their own sins will be replaced by new lessons condemning others. They forget their own short-comings as they read saints who condemned others, and feel themselves to be in alignment with the saints, though certainly without the years of ascetical struggle and repentance the saints relied on to avoid going off the deep end.

Certainly, you can read the writings of a saint who condemns heretics, but does that give you the right to do so as well? Are you God's newly appointed representative of His Church, simply because you have a little knowledge? We certainly do forget humility, as we forget so much else. We even train ourselves to forget: would you enjoy a movie if you continued to remember that each actor is just an actor, and one you've seen in countless other roles? Would you enjoy music if you thought about how Autotune made the singer seem to hit those notes, and how much editing it took to make that song seem in the least bit palatable?

Our hope for the Gospel is that we can become immersed in the daily living out of the Faith, rather than being the keepers of odd knowledge and obscure facts. Our spiritual struggle is through repetition of the basics, which is trying simply to live out a life of virtue through union with Jesus Christ.

Countless children pass through our Sunday schools, and then go off into a world where they will invariably forget much of what we teach them. It is important, then, to make sure some things are repeated enough for them so that they remember their Father, as did the prodigal son. The lesson that will stay with them is our example of love and compassion lived out on a daily basis. Our daily prayer life, regular confession, and routine attendance at services will keep us mindful on a daily basis of the essentials of the Faith, but also provide our children with constant reminders of what is needful. Yet even these can become empty forms, without our intentional effort to remain mindful of what virtue really is, and how far we are straying from it.

You don't need to memorize all the canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils to be an Orthodox Christian, but you do need to remember to forgive those who harm you. You don't need to have vast numbers of Scriptural quotes memorized in order to be charitable to the poor. You don't even have to be particularly studious in order to be patient. But, you do have to remember that to be forgiving, charitable, and patient is essential to the Faith.

If you are worried that Johnny can't remember his Faith, ask yourself whether you are mindful

of your own, and whether you are serving as a reminder to him of what the Faith is.

Archpriest George Aquaro  
Pottlatch, Idaho

# A BIG SHOUT-OUT TO SILENCE

Fr. Joseph Huneycutt

WHY DO WE CALL IT A "RETREAT," WHEN IT'S JUST A FEW TALKS WITH A GUEST SPEAKER? THAT'S THE QUESTION. IN FACT, THAT REALLY WAS MY QUESTION WHEN COMING INTO THE CHURCH YEARS AGO. BACK AT MY DAYS AT NASHOTAH HOUSE SEMINARY, OUR ANNUAL RETREAT WAS SPENT IN SILENCE; THAT IS, NO TALKING, EVEN DURING MEALS. A GUEST SPEAKER GAVE VARIOUS MEDITATIONS ON A SELECTED THEME, BUT THE BEAUTY OF THE EXERCISE, THE TAKE-AWAY, WAS SILENCE.

**M**y intent here is not to disparage all the worthy retreat talks I have attended over the years. Lord knows, though unworthy, I've spoken at my share. Yet many pilgrims have experienced silence and solitude only at monasteries. After nearly three decades in Orthodoxy, I can honestly say that I have attended only one real-deal *silent* retreat. It happened in my own parish. It was Plan C, as two potential retreat speakers had fallen through.

I had long wanted to do a quiet day. Now I had a good excuse. Why would I need an excuse? Well, because advertising a Quiet Day (without justification and explanation) might seem akin to celebrating boredom. Worse still, it can sound kind of "New-Agey," as we old folks used to say.

Also, let's be honest, we're afraid of silence. Once, while praying in the chapel of the Monastery of the Cherubim, high above Damascus, I experienced the most eerie calm and quiet I'd ever "heard." I couldn't stay long; I had to get out of there! Yet I long to return.

*The flyer for the retreat stated –*

This is a silent retreat:

no screens,  
no phones,  
no gadgets ...  
a detox from worldly noise and distractions.  
Adults only; no childcare provided.  
Brief meditations each hour.

*The Ladder of Divine Ascent* read during silent lunch.

See what I did there? Pretty scary. Giving up the addictive gadgets is a challenge. On the day of the retreat, we gathered for breakfast snacks and lively fellowship. No doubt, there was some nervous energy bubbling in anticipation of the silent struggle ahead. We also had folks turn in their phones, smart watches, and so on, which we kept in labeled bags and returned to them at the retreat's end. It is crazy that we've come to this, no?

In a talk given to a conference on digital media and pastoral care, renowned theologian Jean-Claude Larchet said that during fasting seasons Christians ought to reduce their activity on social platforms.

Concerning the consumption of food and sexual activity, the Orthodox Church has established rules of limitation and abstinence for the Lenten periods as well as certain days of the week and of the year.

One of the main purposes of these rules is

to accustom the mind to controlling the bodily and psychic impulses, to reorient and refocus the psycho-physiological forces towards the spiritual life, to establish a state of hunger and desire causing a person to sense their dependence on God and their need for Him, and to establish in the soul a peaceful state disposed to penitence and promoting attention and concentration in prayer.

The abuse of new media, which has become common, produces effects contrary to those sought by fasting and abstinence: the vain exhaustion of energy, permanent external solicitation and dispersion, incessant internal movement and noise, an invasive occupation of time, the impossibility of establishing or maintaining inner peace, and the destruction of the attention and concentration necessary for vigilance and prayer.

Be that as it may, in the weeks prior to our Quiet Day Retreat, I sat in front of my screens and searched up talk upon talk about silence. I wanted to give the retreat participants good reason to long for quiet. It eventually dawned on me: Why don't you provide them with ... silence? Still, I persisted.

The seriousness of the silent affair was a personal challenge. I once gave a short talk following a Lenten service; I wasn't expecting to speak but was asked on arrival while visiting another parish. If I do say so, the talk (an old podcast episode) was a hit. Afterwards, a man came up to me and said, "I just figured out why I don't like you." "Okay," I said, "why?" He said, "Because you're an entertainer, not a theologian!" My protestation, that I never claimed to be a theologian, resulted only in his smile – which was nice enough, as I was staying at his house that night!

My web surfing landed on a worthy article by Fr. John Breck entitled, "Silence, Stillness and Listening to God," wherein he notes:

There is a very familiar little story in the alphabetical collection of traditions that have come down to us from the desert fathers of the early Christian centuries. It is said that one day Abba Theophilus, who was an archbishop, came to Scetis, a desert wasteland and spiritual paradise, where great numbers of monks carried on their unseen spiritual warfare. Archbishop Theophilus made his way to the cell of

Abba Pambo, a man recognized and acclaimed for his humility and wisdom. The brethren who accompanied Theophilus said to Abba Pambo, "Say something to the Archbishop, so that he may be edified." Abba Pambo replied: "If he is not edified by my silence, he will not be edified by my speech."

Of course, one would be hard pressed to find quotes from the Church Fathers on how to conduct a silent *retreat*. Silence, itself, is a retreat. And, much like virtue, silence is its own reward. But the saints of the Church speak volumes *about* silence.

*St. Ignatius Brianchaninov*: The Lord remained silent before Pilate and Herod; He made no attempt to justify Himself. You must imitate His holy and wise silence when you see that your enemies accuse you, with every intention of certain conviction; they accuse only with the purpose of hiding their own evil intention under the guise of judgement.

*St. Joseph of Optina*: Prayer is food for the soul. Do not starve the soul, it is better to let the body go hungry. Do not judge anyone, forgive everyone. Consider yourself worse than everyone in the world and you will be saved. As much as possible, be more quiet.

*St. John Climacus*: The first stage of this tranquility consists in silencing the lips when the heart is excited. The second, in silencing the mind when the soul is still excited. The goal is a perfect peacefulness even in the middle of the raging storm.

*St. John Chrysostom*: Let us always guard our tongue; not that it should always be silent, but that it should speak at the proper time.

*Abba Pimen*: A man may seem to be silent, but if his heart is condemning others, he is babbling ceaselessly. But there may be another who talks from morning till night and yet he is truly silent, that is, he says nothing that is not profitable.

The sayings and other worthy words of others were peppered throughout our Quiet Day Retreat. Yet it was no surprise that what participants found most beneficial were the long periods, thirty to forty minutes each hour, of silence.

Would that we offered more space, more time, for silence – not only in our lives, but in our communities! The Divine Services are not conducive, for therein we offer our vocal pleas, prayers, and praise to the Holy Trinity. Yet, as Fr. Breck notes, without silence we cannot pray, we cannot hear God:

**Endnotes**

1. <https://www.antioch-patriarchate.org/en/page/cherubim-saydnaya-patriarchal-monastery/143/>
2. <https://orthodoxethos.com/post/jean-claude-larchet-calls-for-abstinence-from-social-media-during-fasting-periods>
3. <http://johnrbreck.com/silence-stillness-and-listening-to-god>
4. <http://www.orthodox-churchquotes.com/tag/silence/>

[Silence and stillness] require ascetic discipline, including fasting and ongoing repentance. Some demons can only be driven out by prayer and fasting, Christ tells His disciples. The same is required in order to learn to pray. Paradoxically, we can only learn to pray by praying, by opening ourselves to the movement of the Spirit in the temple of the heart. Yet we can, at the same time, ask for the gift of prayer. In those moments when prayer seems farthest from us, when we walk in a desert wasteland with no sense of God's presence or concern, then we *must* ask for the gift of prayer.

Silence is the prerequisite for inner stillness, and only inner stillness enables us truly to listen to God, to hear His voice, and to commune with Him in the depths of our being. Yet silence and stillness are, like prayer itself, gifts that God can and wants to bestow upon us. The greatest truth about us is that God has created us with a profound longing, a burning thirst for communion with Himself. We can easily pervert that longing into an idolatrous quest for something other than God. Yet God remains faithful even in our times of apostasy. Like the father of the Prodigal Son, he always awaits our return. Once we begin that journey homeward, through repentance and an ongoing struggle against our worst inclinations, God reaches out to embrace, to forgive and to heal all that is broken, wounded and wasted. He reaches out to restore within us the sublime image in which we were made.

At the end of our four hours of quiet together, the retreat participants seemed aglow with praise: "I didn't even miss my phone!" "That was great, we should do it quarterly!" "Abouna, I was sad when it was over!" *Funny*. The same sentiments are often shared by campers at the end of church camp. Although camp might be a far cry from *silent*, our young people are inundated with the worldly pressures – *the noise* – of the ever-present social media. Camp is a way to decompress. Silence is a way to decompress. We all need to decompress.

*St Seraphim of Sarov*: You cannot be too gentle, too kind. Shun even to appear harsh in your treatment of each other. Joy, radiant joy, streams from the face of one who gives and kindles joy in the heart of one who receives. All condemnation is

from the devil. Never condemn each other, not even those whom you catch committing an evil deed. We condemn others only because we shun knowing ourselves. When we gaze at our own failings, we see such a morass of filth that nothing in another can equal it. That is why we turn away and make much of the faults of others. Keep away from the spilling of speech. Instead of condemning others, strive to reach inner peace. Keep silent, refrain from judgement. This will raise you above the deadly arrows of slander, insult, outrage, and will shield your glowing hearts against the evil that creeps around.

Alas, I could say more. I can't say enough. And, ironically, I've said enough.

Fr. Joseph Huneycutt  
Vice-Chairman of the Department of Missions and Evangelism

## The Board of the Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative Plans Third Annual Conference

Over the first weekend in February, the Board of the Orthodox Christian Leadership Initiative (OCLI) convened in Houston, Texas, to discuss the mission and future of OCLI and its work in the Orthodox Church. Sponsored by the Orthodox Vision Foundation, and graciously hosted at The Saint Constantine School, the gathering allowed for fruitful discussion, establishment of purpose, and preparation for the third annual Advanced Leadership Initiative Conference.

The Conference will be hosted over the weekend of September 20–22, 2019, at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. Dedicated to nurturing and empowering Orthodox Christian servant-leadership, OCLI plans to expand its ministry in the coming years by hosting seminars throughout the United States. The Board looks forward to growing OCLI by further cultivating leadership development and fostering community among Orthodox leaders.

# COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

## ST. GEORGE, CORAL GABLES, WELCOMES NEW PRIEST

On Monday, January 7, 2019, St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables, Florida, was blessed with a visit from our Chief Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, as well as Mr. Fawaz El Khoury, Vice Chairman, and Mr. Salim Abboud, Chief Financial Officer of the Antiochian Or-

thodox Christian Archdiocese. In his fatherly wisdom, His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH informed the Cathedral Counsel of his decision to transfer Very Reverend Father Fouad Saba to St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cicero, Illinois, effective February 1, 2019.



thodox Christian Archdiocese. In his fatherly wisdom, His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH informed the Cathedral Counsel of his decision to transfer Very Reverend Father Fouad Saba to St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cicero, Illinois, effective February 1, 2019.

The Cathedral is grateful to have been blessed with Father Saba's fruitful ministry these past seven years. The love, support, and dedication of Father Saba, our sister, Khouria Diana, and children, Katherine and Mousa, are embedded in the hearts of



all the Miami community. They will always have a special place in the lives of those who were fortunate to know them. A Tribute Banquet honouring Father Saba, Khouria Diana, Katherine, and Mousa was held on January 26, 2019. The entire Tribute Committee expressed their love, as did all who spoke on the positive impact that this amazing family has had on our community.

Our beloved Chief Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, continues to bless St. George Cathedral with love and wisdom. The Cathedral is very thankful to His Eminence for providing the Cathedral with another young, energetic, and multi-lingual priest, Father Joseph-Héctor Abouid. Father Joseph comes from St. George Church in El Paso, Texas, with

his lovely wife, Khouria Carol, and son, Aidan Emmanuel. They are expecting their second child this Spring.

Father Joseph-Héctor Abouid was born in 1986 in the City of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, to parents who originated from the small town of Beit-Jala, Palestine (Issa and Lidia Abouid). Father's family moved to the Central American country of Honduras, where he grew up in the city of San Pedro Sula. Here he served at the altar of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, St. John the Baptist, aiding the V. Rev. Fr. Bulos E. Moussa (currently serving St. John Antiochian Orthodox Church in Levittown, New York). At the age of 18, and without knowing one word of Arabic, he was sent by His Eminence Metropolitan ANTONIOS (Chedraoui), Metropolitan of Mexico, Central America, Venezuela, and the Caribbean Islands, to study Theology at University of Balamand (in Lebanon). There, he completed Arabic studies, his Bachelors of Theology, and his Masters in Theology.

Father Joseph was ordained a deacon in 2013 and in 2014, Father and Khouria Carol, moved to Honduras where he served his parish for one year. In 2015, Father and Khouria Carol were assigned to the parish of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cicero, Illinois. Father Joseph was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on Sunday, June 12, 2016. In 2017, Father Joseph was assigned as Head Pastor of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in El Paso, Texas.

The Miami community is excited to welcome and embrace

Father Joseph as the new Dean of the Cathedral and looks forward to continued growth under his spiritual leadership and his vision for the future.

His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast, welcomed and installed Father Joseph as Cathedral Dean on Sunday, February 3, 2019, at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. A celebratory luncheon and program followed as each of the Cathedral's organizations presented Father Joseph, Khouria Carol, and Aidan with gifts of love and welcome.

METROPOLITAN JOSEPH MAKES HISTORIC VISIT TO SAINT ANTONY'S CHURCH, HALIFAX, CANADA

In January of 2019, Saint Antonios Antiochian Orthodox Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia, was blessed with the visit of His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, to celebrate the feast of Saint Anthony the Great, the patron saint of the church.

Upon his arrival to the Halifax airport, Metropolitan JOSEPH, accompanied by Deacon John El Massih, was met by many parishioners who came, led by Archpriest Maximos Saikali along with Mr. Ibrahim Salloum, Chairman of the Parish Council, to give His Eminence a warm welcome in his first visit to the Canadian East Coast.

Metropolitan JOSEPH's schedule, during his few days stay in Halifax, was a busy one. On Wednesday, January 16, the eve of the feast, Sayidna JOSEPH celebrated the Divine Liturgy, while clergy and faithful from sister churches participated. This

was followed by an *Agape* meal prepared by Saint Antonios Antiochian Women in the church hall. On Thursday, Sayidna had dinner with the Parish Council, Archpriest Maximos, Khouria Rita Saikali, former Parish Council chairmen, members of the church construction committee, and members of the Antiochian Women.

On Friday, Father Maximos and many parishioners accompanied Sayidna on a tour of the City of Halifax. The Honorary Consul of Lebanon, Mr. Wadih Fares, and the Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Acadian Affairs and Francophonie, arranged and facilitated the tour. Among the sites they visited were Province House, the Canadian Museum of Immigration (Pier 21), the newly built Halifax Public Library, and the Lebanese Immigrant Monument at the city's waterfront. In the evening, after the *Paraklesis* service, His Eminence held an open discussion session with parishioners. The parishioners had a very cordial and open talk with Sayidna about various issues; in particular, they asked about how to involve the youth avidly in the life of the church. Sayidna commended the parish of Saint Antonios for being an example of keeping the Faith and preserving the traditions.

On Saturday, the Sunday School children gathered in the church for prayer and a discussion with Metropolitan JOSEPH. The children loved Metropolitan Joseph and were eager to hear all he had to say to their thought-provoking questions. He was responded eagerly to the children, calling them up to the front and

asking them to answer their own questions first. The discussion was followed by a brunch in the small hall. On Saturday evening, all of the church committees gathered for vespers prayers and professional photos were taken with His Eminence.

On Sunday, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated with Metropolitan JOSEPH presiding. Serving along the Metropolitan was Father Maximos Saikali, Father George Esber (visiting from Lebanon), Father Theodore Efthymiadis, Deacon John, and the altar boys. With the presence of His Eminence, the Liturgy was quite special,



and the choir chanting under the direction of Khouria Rita Saikali, accompanied by Deacon John, was uplifting. In his sermon, His Eminence thanked the parishioners of Saint Antonios for their warm hospitality and reaffirmed the strong faith and leadership in the parish.

After the Liturgy, The Honourable Lena Metlege Diab, Minister of Immigration, Acadian Affairs and Francophonie,



St. Antonios, Halifax, Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup>

presented Sayidna with an official *Certificate of Welcome* from the Nova Scotia Government to commemorate his historic visit to Halifax.

As every year, on the feast of

Saint Antonios, two parishioners who have served in Saint Antonios for more than 20 years with distinction were recognized. This year, the recognition awards went to Khouria Rita

for her dedication as the head of the choir for more than 25 years, and to Mr. Besim Halef, a former Parish Council Chairman, for his service and generosity. Also, the Parish Council gave special recognition to Dr. Maria Saikali Haddad and Dr. Nada Haidar for their leadership in hosting the Parish Life Conference in Halifax in July 2018. Furthermore, a special award was delivered by Sayidna to the Arroyan family on behalf of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X for their generous contribution to help a hospital in Syria. Everyone was invited afterwards to a celebratory luncheon in the church hall.

Metropolitan JOSEPH ended his visit on Monday, January 21, with a morning Liturgy for the feast day of St. Maximos the Confessor. This historic visit of Metropolitan JOSEPH was truly inspiring and touched many lives. We are grateful to His Eminence for his many expressions of love towards our parish. We pray that God may grant him many years of good health and wisdom.

PARISH WELCOMES RECORD NUMBER OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS

The largest induction ceremony held in recent times for the Order of Saint Ignatius took place on Sunday, January 13, 2019, at Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Little Falls, New Jersey. The day began with the arrival of our chief shepherd and father in Christ, Metropolitan JOSEPH, to celebrate Hierarchical Matins and Divine Liturgy. Concelebrating with

His Eminence were Archpriest Dimitri Darwich, the pastor of the parish of St. George; Hierarchical Assistant Father Nicholas Belcher; Deacon John El Masih, Assistant to the Metropolitan; Archdeacon Emile Sayegh, Chancellor of the Archdiocese; and Deacon Scott Miller.

The formal induction ceremony began after the Liturgy, with the solemn entrance of the 33 candidates for induction into church. After they and their sponsors were each introduced and blessed by His Eminence, Parish Council Chairman Amin Amireh presented His Eminence with a beautiful, shining new pastoral staff on behalf of the parish. The inductees were then sworn in by His Eminence by reciting the pledge of the Order. Five existing members also upgraded their memberships, and two inactive members returned to active status as well. This induction into the Order was the largest in the history of the Archdiocese.

His Eminence expressed his joy and gratitude to all of the inductees, and to Fr. Dimitri for his good work as the pastor of the parish. His Eminence spoke of the many benefits that the Order provides to the Archdiocese and its programs, especially the Antiochian Village, the clergy retirement fund, and missionary work. After the ceremony, His Eminence posed for photos before the iconostasis with the inductees, members, and concelebrating clergy. Finally, Fr. Dimitri invited everyone to a beautiful banquet, prepared by the A-Men fellowship group in honor of His Eminence and the new inductees, clergy, dignitaries, and guests. All of those in attendance were

joyous and thankful to be present for such an exceptional display of stewardship, honor, and faith.

The parish was elated by the presence of several visiting dignitaries. Roger David, the Chairman of the Order, and former Chair Mary Winstanley O'Connor were in attendance, as well as Souhel Shehady, an ambassador of the Order, and Salim Abboud, the CFO/Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the Archdiocese. Doctor Nawaf Salameh, the Founder and Chairman of the international humanitarian organization the Alexandrion Foundation, was also present to witness the induction ceremony. Mr. David praised the inductees for their commitment to the Archdiocese and spoke briefly about the history of the Order, the important programs and activities it supports, and shared testimonials of the many lives positively affected by the Order.

Mr. Amireh, Mr. Shehady, Mr. Abboud, and especially Fr. Dimitri dedicated months of effort to assure that this historic event took place. It was more than just a ceremony or the making of pledges. Most importantly, such a large group pledging to the Order is a testament to their love for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and for the work He accomplishes through the Order. By joining the Order, these new inductees have pledged their trust and support of His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, whose fatherly love, vision, and archpastoral leadership of the Antiochian Archdiocese continues to bear ever more fruit in the vineyard which the Lord has planted in America.



May God grant them all many years, and continue to bless the Order of Saint Ignatius!



**Upcoming Conference on "Isolation, Violence, Hope and Communion"**

The Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion will hold its Annual Conference November 7 – 9, 2019, at Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview, Illinois. Healthcare professionals, therapists, chaplains, theologians, and clergy will discuss the relations between Orthodox healing traditions, and contemporary theories and practices of care. All are welcome! Workshop and paper proposals are due May 1. For more information, please go to [www.ocamp.org](http://www.ocamp.org), or email [ocampinfo@gmail.com](mailto:ocampinfo@gmail.com).

## ANTIOCHIAN HOUSE OF STUDIES MASTER OF THEOLOGY IN PASTORAL CARE & COUNSELING

Are you a clergyman interested in furthering your education in counseling?

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The Church is Our Spiritual Hospital. We're Training First Responders.

For more information, visit or contact us through [www.tahos.org](http://www.tahos.org)

## 2019 DIOCESAN PARISH LIFE CONFERENCES

Diocese of Miami  
June 12-15, 2019  
Hosted by All Saints Church  
Raleigh, NC

Diocese of Wichita  
June 18-23, 2019  
Hosted by St. Peter Church  
Fort Worth, TX

Diocese of Toledo  
June 19-23, 2019  
Hosted by St. Nicholas Church  
Champaign, IL

Dioceses of Oakland, New York and Charleston  
June 26-30, 2019  
Hosted by St. John Chrysostom Church  
York, PA  
Held at the Antiochian Village

Diocese of Ottawa  
July 3-7, 2019  
Hosted by St. George Church  
Richmond Hill, ON

Diocese of Los Angeles and Eagle River  
July 4-7, 2019  
Hosted by St. Anthony Church  
San Diego, CA

Diocese of Worcester  
June 22, 2019  
Hosted by St. Stephen (Springfield) and Emmanuel  
(Warren)  
Held St. George Church, Boston

DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST ANNOUNCES THE 67TH ANNUAL



## 2019 Parish Life Conference San Diego, California! July 2nd - July 7th, 2019

Hosted by St. Anthony the Great Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church  
For a COMPLETE List of Scheduled Events & INFO Visit: [www.AntiochianEvents.com](http://www.AntiochianEvents.com)

### Highlights!

Order of St. Ignatius Reception  
Brunch with Metropolitan JOSEPH  
Metropolitan JOSEPH'S Address  
Workshops  
DJ & Teen Dance

### More . . .

Sunday Hierarchical Liturgy  
Surfing with Abouna-  
(Fr. Nathan Thompson)  
Teen SOYO  
BIBLE BOWL!  
Daily Divine Services

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Nathan Hoppe missionary to Albania for nearly 20 years, now is witnessing the resurrection of the Orthodox faith!



Book Your Room NOW!  
We're ALREADY filling up!  
[www.AntiochianEvents.com](http://www.AntiochianEvents.com)



### DEADLINES:

Hotel Reservations: June 18, 2019  
Early Bird Registration: June 1, 2019  
Souvenir Journal: May 1, 2019  
Creative Festival: April 1, 2019  
Oratorical Festival: June 20, 2019  
Bible Bowl: June 20, 2019

Register Today! at: [www.AntiochianEvents.com](http://www.AntiochianEvents.com) (click on Los Angeles)

## 2019 PROJECT

Antiochian Women - North American Board

"BEHOLD,  
THE  
TABERNACLE  
OF GOD  
IS AMONG  
MEN!"

STEP AWAY

Building a new Cathedral  
for our Archdiocese at the Antiochian Village

## A TABLE IN THE PRESENCE RETREAT FOR ORTHODOX COMBAT VETERANS



Orthodox Christian combat veterans of OEF and OIF:

The dust remains on your boots and in your rucksacks.

Your fallen brothers remain in your hearts and minds.

Combat is a threshold that cannot be uncrossed.

Your stories are not easy to tell. Who can bear them?

BUT GOD KNOWS THEM ALL.  
AND HIS LOVE FOR YOU ENDURES FOREVER.

Your Orthodox Military Chaplains  
and some veteran clergy have planned a retreat.

No cost - just get to us, if you can. We'll take care of the rest.

WE GATHER TO TALK. WE GATHER TO PRAY.  
TO STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER AND TO FACE GOD.

Columbus Day Weekend 2019 at the Antiochian Village

Funding provided by the Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch  
To register, contact Barli Ross at [barli@antiochianvillage.org](mailto:barli@antiochianvillage.org)

## Dioceses of Charleston/Oakland & New York/Washington D.C.

### JUNE 26-30, 2019

Keynote Address:  
"Lay Ministry in the Church"

Fr. Nicholas Belcher

Hosted by St. John Chrysostom,  
York, PA

**FAMILY** ACTIVITIES  
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LODGING: [registration.antiochianvillage.org/2019PLC](http://registration.antiochianvillage.org/2019PLC)  
EVENT REGISTRATION: [antiochianevents.com](http://antiochianevents.com)

## 81<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL PARISH LIFE CELEBRATION

DIOCESE OF WORCESTER AND NEW ENGLAND

Hosted by St. Stephen (Springfield) and Emmanuel (Warren)  
at  
St. George Orthodox Church  
55 Emmonsdale Rd., West Roxbury, MA  
Saturday, June 22, 2019

Celebrating  
the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Antiochian Village,  
60 Years of Western Rite Worship,  
and Over 120 Years of Our Ministry in New England

Theme:  
*I can do all things through Jesus Christ Who Strengthens Me*

8:00 a.m.	Orthros
9:00 a.m.	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (with a mix of Diocese and Village Music)
10:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Awards and General Assembly Brunch
12:45 - 2:15 p.m.	Presentation on Conference Theme: Fr. Seraphim Moslener
2:15 - 2:45 p.m.	Gatherings for Parish Council, Order of St Ignatius and Adults Antiochian Women Mens' Groups Teens Youth
2:45 - 4:30 p.m.	Bible Bowl
4:30 - 5:15 p.m.	Vespers - Western Rite /Winners of Oratorical Contest
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Dinner and "New England Got Talent"

## DIOCESE OF OTTAWA TORONTO PLC 2019

JULY 4 - 7,  
2019

HOSTED BY: ST. GEORGE CHURCH, TORONTO

HOTEL BOOKING NOW OPEN

For more information:  
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Both hotels are located at: 600 Highway 7,  
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