

**His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH**



**Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America**

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

JANUARY 2019

Beloved Antiochian Women of our God-Protected Archdiocese:

We greet you as we have just left the holy season of our Lord's Nativity and Theophany and prepare to enter the all-holy season of the Triodion. These cyclical movements of the Church year remind us of an important theological and ontological reality. This reality is that while we take-leave of these seasons every year, we are nevertheless always assured that the God-man Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the ages, is always with us and dwells with us and in us. Therefore, while the liturgical seasons come and go, the theological truths that we celebrate in them remain with us throughout the year. Let us follow the rhythm of these seasons as we pursue the Kingdom of God in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

Every year, the Metropolitan gives the Antiochian Woman a project for a charitable and worthy cause. Over the decades, we have helped those within and those outside the archdiocese, both here and overseas. This year we have a special project that will touch the lives of both adults and children in our archdiocese. That project is the building of a new Cathedral at the Antiochian Village.

This Cathedral will encompass and be part of the continued growth and expansion of the dream that started in the late 1970's under the inspiration of my predecessor of thrice-blessed memory, His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP. The first phase was a camp for our children. As you know, the camp is the jewel of our archdiocese and has inspired our children to become priests, to marry each other, to remain in the Church and to live their Christian lives in a world that too often encourages them to do otherwise. The next phase was the Heritage and Learning Center. The center boasts 100 sleeping rooms, conference rooms, a library, a museum and meal facilities for pilgrims, retreats, PLC's and the like and allows us to gather and worship in a holy setting at a reasonable price, rather than at a hotel or conference center.

Now we come to today and the dream of a new Cathedral. For many years, we have worshipped with a church for the camp and the chapel for the center, both of which are too small for our campers and our large gatherings like the Clergy Symposium or the Parish Life Conference for our Eastern Dioceses. Likewise, if we truly believe that the Antiochian Village is the "jewel" of our archdiocese as we say, then this "jewel" should have a traditional church large enough to accommodate our needs. Beyond the worship space itself, we intend to build a crypt under the altar for our reposed hierarchs so that our children and their descendants can come, see, and learn about them and their contributions to our archdiocese. We will have in the church itself a special place for the holy body of St. Raphael of Brooklyn so that everyone can venerate the relics of this holy saint who established our presence on these shores. This Cathedral will be built in the traditional

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

358 Mountain Road, P.O. Box 5238, Englewood, NJ 07631-5238
office: (201) 871-1355 Archdiocese@antiochian.org fax: (201) 871-7954

Orthodox style, reflected by the sacred art and proper architecture, so that visitors can truly encounter heaven on earth.

Beyond the Cathedral, we have other phases in mind for the future like a monastery, a senior home and more. The Cathedral is the first step and this is the challenge I have given the Antiochian Women for this year so we can kick-off our fund-raising campaign in a good way. I encourage all of our women's groups throughout the archdiocese to do their best to work hard for this project, as they always do. We are grateful for your efforts and for the efforts of the Village Council and the staff at the Antiochian Village for their continued hard work as we begin our work and cooperative efforts to realize our dreams.

Finally, as we approach Antiochian Women's month in March, be assured you are in my prayers and thoughts.

Wishing you all a blessed Triodion period, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph" with a stylized flourish at the end.

+JOSEPH

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