

Speech of Patriarch John X

Te Deum enthronement of metropolitan Saba Isper,
New York 13 May 2023

Beloved,

In this blessed day, the whole Church of Antioch celebrates the fulfillment of what the Holy Spirit inspired the Holy Synod of Antioch to do, in light of what was expressed by the faithful people of the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America. What I mean is the enthronement and offering of the arch-pastoral staff to His Eminence Metropolitan Saba Isper, who was elected as the Metropolitan of this Archdiocese by the Holy Synod, on February 23rd of this year.

On this occasion, I address the faithful of our Archdiocese to express my sincere paternal love in the Risen Christ. In prayers and supplications, I share with you this solemn event from afar, from the motherland of Antioch.

Beloved sons and daughters,

This celebration comes during the blessed Pentecostarion period, in which the Church reads from the book of Acts of the Apostles. The one who follows the events mentioned in the book of Acts is able to perceive that the Spirit Who led the Apostles

after Pentecost is leading His Church in Her Apostolic ministry.

To Sayedna Saba, I send this fraternal Paschal greetings and say:

On this day in which the arch-pastoral staff is offered to you in order for you to care for our Antiochian Archdiocese of North America, there is an icon that is envisioned before my eyes and in which I see you in it: it is the icon of the Good Shepherd. The iconographer portrays Jesus, the glorious Lord, with the Cross behind Him and the pastoral staff laid on His forearm, having His hands carrying a white lamb, and fastening round Him the girdle of service.

Sayedna Saba: you have been in your life a fine icon of the Good Shepherd. Remain as you are. Many are the spiritual sons and daughters whom you have carried in your heart and prayers as a priest in Lattakia, and later as a bishop in Bosra and Houran. Fasten round you again the girdle of service to show forth the face of Christ throughout our Antiochian Archdiocese of North America.

I cannot but remember the clergy and members of the Archdiocesan Board of Trustees, and most especially my brother hierarchs in their blessed episcopate. I would like to congratulate all of you and thank you for your hard work in serving this Archdiocese.

Last but not least, as brothers from various other Orthodox and non-Orthodox churches gather with us,

we again entrust you with the message of love and peace that we launched from above the rubble of Saints Peter and Paul's Cathedral. The devastating earthquake that struck the city of Antioch demolished this cathedral. However, it did neither affect the peoples' steadfastness nor their adherence to their faith and to the Church of Antioch.

With the same Resurrection power that we experienced at the Feast of Pascha in Antioch, we embrace you in this celebration, crying: Arise, O God, judge the earth.

Christ is risen!