

الكلمة

The Word

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Antiochian Orthodox Saints

contents



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COVER: APRIL'S COVER IS DEDICATED
TO THE WOMEN OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH.
Courtesy of Iconographer Janet Jaime

TOP ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: St. Margaret of Scotland,
St. Olivia, Righteous Rachael (Old Testament), St. Barbara
SECOND ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: St. Mary Magdalene,
Theotokos (large center icon), St. Elizabeth & Forerunner
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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, in hard copy, on disk or e-mailed, should be double-spaced for editing purposes.

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THANK GOD FOR
April Showers, Snow and Ice

April showers bring May flowers, and our Lenten efforts bring Paschal celebrations, but what about April snow and ice? What kind of Pascha comes from those kinds of intense surprises? I suppose it depends on a number of things. April snow and ice may be likened to all those events in life that we don't like and don't want. We may see no possible good coming from them, and no joy or benefit from enduring them. They may be temptations that arise from sickness, or unhappy people in our lives, or perenially dissatisfied folks who chair church committees, or judgmental do-gooders with weak boundaries, invading our personal space and butting into our business. What do you do with such things? John Dalack and his daughter, Khouria Leila Ellias, told a group of New England retreat-goers in Norwood last month that you thank God for it. All of it! This concept of thanking God for everything that we endure is sewn within the rich fabric of our Orthodox Christian heritage. God loves us and we can use all of April's snow and ice to prepare us for Pascha. I heard a young man thank God for the cancer that claimed his mother's life, for cancer was the instrument of her "translation" into heaven. As a pastor, I saw many mothers deliver their children to God as their children's suffering ended, along with their lives; they thanked God for accomplishing everything that we need to be rejoined with our loved ones in Him. I have seen people lose jobs and get better or healthier ones. I have seen others repeatedly knocked down, and have myself been knocked down, only to get up stronger and wiser each time.

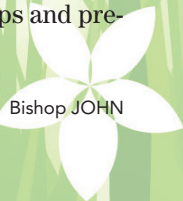
Lent is an opportunity to reflect on our lives

and be more deliberate about how we think and how we live. The best way to be and live is in a state of thanksgiving. Thank God for everything that happens. God will use them for good. Thank God for everyone in your life, especially those who annoy you, as they will help you detach from your pride and selfish thinking. Thank God for His forgiveness, and you will be able to free yourself from your resentments by forgiving others. Thank God for your losses, because in God there are no losses; every relationship endures and is perfected in Him.

Lent is an opportunity to worship. Worshiping allows us to relate to God in the only reasonable and acceptable way. Without worship, we make no room for God, and the void is filled with ourselves and sin. Worship allows us to kneel before God who loves us and lifts us up in a loving embrace. This can't happen without worship, because without worship we are not in a right posture for a relationship with God. Our relationship is with God. Man's relationship with God includes man worshiping God. Some may taunt you and accuse you of hypocrisy when you worship. Thank them for this and use it to grow.

Lent is an opportunity to serve others with thanksgiving and, in serving the poor, we are able to see, know and serve God. We share with God in His mercy and experience His love as we participate in His love for the poor ones. Making time when we don't have time, and sometimes being mocked or slandered for it, allow us to turn such snow and ice into a Pascha that develops and prepares us for our liturgical Pascha.

Bishop JOHN



Curriculum Vitae of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

His Beatitude JOHN X was born in the city of Latakia, Syria, in 1955. He was raised in a home known for education, virtue and faith. His father, Manah Yazigi, a Syrian, was a teacher of Arabic and a poet. His mother, Rozah Moussi, is of Lebanese origin. His Beatitude has three siblings, one of whom is a bishop and another a nun.



His Beatitude attended the schools of Latakia before enrolling in the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Tchrin, in Latakia. He has studied church music and excelled in it, forming choirs and training them in traditional church chants. He has been a notable leader of young people and has worked with them in various social and spiritual programs.

He received the degree of Bachelor of Theology from the Saint John of Damascus Institute of Theology at Balamand University in 1978. He then studied at the University of Thessaloniki in Greece and received the degree of Doctor of Theology with Distinction in the year 1983. He published his doctoral thesis, *The Service of the Holy Baptism: A Historical, Theological, and Liturgical Study*, written in Greek. While in Greece he also studied church music and received a Diploma from the Higher Institute of Byzantine Music in Thessaloniki.

His Beatitude was ordained a deacon in 1979 and then a priest in 1983 in the Archdiocese of Latakia by His Eminence Metropolitan YOUHANNA (Mansour). From 1981, His Beatitude taught courses on liturgy at the Saint John of Damascus

Institute of Theology. In due course he was appointed Dean of the Institute of Theology at the University of Balamand, his first appointment being from 1988 to 1991, and his second from 2001 to 2005. In addition, he served as Abbot in the Patriarchal Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand from the year 2001 to 2005. He served as Abbot of the Saint George Al Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery in Wadi Al-Nadarah, Syria, from 1993 to 2005. He founded a monastic community there and established a School of Ecclesiastical Studies that serves the Patriarchate as a whole. In addition, he participated in the founding of the Convent of Our Lady of Blemmena in Tartous, Syria.

His Beatitude was elected Bishop of Al Husun, Wadi Al-Nadarah, in the Archdiocese of Akkar by the Holy Antiochian Synod in the year 1995. He served in this position until 2008, when the Holy Synod elected him Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Europe. In addition to his work within the Orthodox Church, His Beatitude also played an important role outside the Church, not least through attending religious seminars and international conferences.

His Beatitude is famed for the clarity of his

views and his strict adherence to all that is true and just in human relations. He has excelled in bringing people together, through dialogue and conciliatory approaches to people of differing views. He is known for his compassion, friendliness, generosity, social concern and, last but not least, readiness both to listen and to offer help.

Wherever His Beatitude has served, he has brought revival, awakening the youth and calling them to the service of both Church and society. He is particularly noted for his wisdom in managing institutions and conducting church affairs. He has played a crucial role in encouraging vocations to the ordained ministry, maintaining leadership in this regard.

On the death of His Beatitude Patriarch IGNATIUS IV, Metropolitan YOUHANNA (Yazigi) was elected to the Patriarchate by the Holy Antiochian Synod in an extraordinary session held on December 17, 2012, in Balamand Monastery. The new Patriarch was designated His Beatitude JOHN X, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East for the Greek Orthodox.

Publications

His Beatitude JOHN X is the author of books on theology, education, music, and liturgy. On the last topic, he has published a series of liturgical studies. He has further edited liturgical manuals of the Orthodox Church in Arabic and, specifically, liturgical works pertinent to archbishops, priests and deacons. In addition, he has translated and written many articles and given many lectures in universities, institutes and parishes.

Books

- *The Service of Baptism: A Historic, Theological and Liturgical Study*, Thessalonica, 1983 [Greek] (in fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph.D.).
- *Principles of Byzantine Music*, Balamand, 1990, second edition 2001.
- *The Life of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker*, Lattakya, 1990.
- *Priesthood and the Marriage of Priests*, Lattakya, 1992
- *Baptism as a Sacrament of Initiation into the Life in Christ*, Lattakya, 1992.
- *The Liturgikon*, St. George Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery, 2001, second edition 2005.
- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery, 2001.
- *The Prayers Before and After Holy Communion*, St. George Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monas-

tery, 2003.

- *The Presanctified Liturgy*, Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery, 2001.
- *Introduction to the Liturgical Families and Rites (English)*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, 2003.
- *Introduction to the Liturgical Families and Rites (Arabic)*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, 2003.
- *The Service of Matrimony: Past and Present*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, 2003.
- *The Praklesis Service*, Balamand Patriarchal Monastery, 2004.
- *Liturgical Guide in Services and Prayers*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, University of Balamand, 2005.
- *Liturgical Sources*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, University of Balamand, 2005.
- *Church Praises*, The Diocese of Pyrgou, 2006.
- *Divine Worship*, The Diocese of Pyrgou, 2007.
- *The Service of the Diaconate*, Blemena Convent, 2007.
- *The Service of the Archbishops*, The Diocese of Pyrgou, 2007.

Translations

- *The Life of Our Holy Righteous Mother Makrina*, by St. Gregory of Nyssa, An-Nour Publications, 1984.
- *For Those Who Believe in Justification by Works*, by St. Mark the Monk, in *Chapters in Prayers and Spiritual Life*, An-Nour, 1990.

Papers

- “The Meaning of the Church from an Eastern Point of View,” The Institute for Orthodox Studies, Cambridge, 2002.
- “The Mystery of Repentance,” Conference on Eastern Liturgics, Holy Spirit University – Kaslik, 2000.
- “The Hymnographic Contribution of the Antiochian Orthodox Church to the Byzantine Liturgical System during the Sixth and Seventh Centuries,” University of Balamand, 1999.
- “The Byzantine Divine Liturgy,” Conference on Liturgics, Holy Spirit University, Kaslik, 2004.
- “The Unmerceneries: Healers of the Church – A Lecture on the Occasion of the 125th Anniversary of the St. George Hospital,” Beirut, 2002.
- “Antioch: Its Theology and Pastoral Care – A Lecture on the Occasion of the Annual Priestly Convention of the Antiochian Christian Archdiocese of North America,” Pennsylvania, 2002.

Statement issued by the Holy Synod of Antioch

March 13, 2013



The Fathers of the Holy Synod of Antioch held a meeting on Wednesday, March 13, 2013, in the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand. The meeting was chaired by His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X. The Fathers discussed the situation arising from the election of Archimandrite Makarios by the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem as the “Archbishop of Qatar,” on March 4, 2013. This election is against the Ecclesiastical Canons of the Orthodox Catholic Church. After deliberations and the approval of the Holy Synod Fathers in the Mother lands and abroad, the following statement was issued to be distributed to all the faithful and to all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

The Statement

In the midst of much suffering and pain that our region is going through, His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X convened the bishops of the Holy Antiochian See in the region and deliberated with the bishops who are abroad about the hurt that has been caused by the election of Archimandrite Makarios as “Archbishop of Qatar” by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. His Beatitude began the meeting by sharing all the steps that he made as soon as he knew about the issue through the media. After discussing the matter with all the bishops of the Antiochian Holy Synod, His Beatitude sent a verbal message to His Beatitude, the Patriarch of Jerusalem and His Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch. He then sent a written letter to both primates expressing surprise “regarding the decision of the Holy Synod of Jerusalem to elevate the priest sent to Doha City to the office of the episcopate, giving him the title of the ‘Archbishop of Qatar’”. This has been without any contact with the Antiochian patriarchate. Qatar falls within the geographical jurisdiction of Antioch. It is the lawful prerogative of Antioch to appoint a bishop to that land, especially since we have a canonical Metropolitan ruling all the Arab Gulf countries, His Eminence Metropolitan CONSTANTINE.” His Beatitude pleaded for a reconsideration of this decision, asking “not to allow this episcopal consecration to occur since our Antiochian Apostolic See cannot accept any bishop in its territory, coming from outside its canonical jurisdiction.” He also expressed that, “Our hearts are wide open to meet with you and deal with this subject, and all other matters, fraternally in Christ’s spirit Who alone unites us.”

Since His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X did not receive any reply to either of his letters, he later on sent a copy of the above mentioned letter to the primates of all the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches. Despite these brotherly efforts and fraternal approach, the consecration of Archimandrite Makarios occurred on Sunday, March 10, 2013.

The Holy Fathers affirmed all of the efforts undertaken by His Beatitude and declared unanimously the following position:

1. The decision of the Jerusalem Patriarchate to establish an Archbishopric on a territory which belongs to the Holy Synod of Antioch is, without question, an illegal interference from the Jerusalem Patriarchate in the territorial jurisdiction of the Antiochian Church, thus breaking the ecclesiastical canons that regulate the relationship among Orthodox Churches.

On the other hand, the Orthodox parish in Doha, Qatar, is composed of Orthodox faithful from various nationalities. We are grateful that Archimandrite Makarios provided all necessary pastoral care to this particular parish, but it was a temporary arrangement to facilitate this pastoral activity, no more and no less. This pastoral arrangement cannot be taken as giving any ecclesiastical privilege, of any sort, to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem or to any other Orthodox Church. Again, the Arab Gulf falls under the canonical and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East.

The Antiochian Church refuses to accept the action taken by the Jerusalem Patriarchate, and will not recognize any bishop on the territory of the country of Qatar outside the authority of the Antiochian Apostolic See, and asks that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem should resolve this matter as soon as possible. The Antiochian Church hopes not to have to take a stand leading to the breaking of communion with the Jerusalem Patriarchate. She also hopes not to have to reconsider the principles governing the Orthodox Church relations and the Geneva agreements which have been set by the preparatory committees of the upcoming Great and Holy Orthodox Synod, especially those dealing with the Orthodox worldwide (Diaspora).

2. The situation which Christians are enduring today encourages us to set aside all that threatens the unity of the faithful and their common witness. The Arab Christians are called to strengthen their intercommunication in order to face the great challenges that threaten their countries, so that they might be the yeast leavening peace and fraternity. The Antiochian Church is aware of Her historic and leading role in the region and elsewhere and will persevere in that role.

3. The continuous disregard of the situation on the ground caused by the consecration of the Archimandrite Makarios as the Archbishop of Qatar will make it inevitable for the Church of Antioch to take certain actions which She is trying to avoid on account of the love that ought to govern the relationship among the Orthodox Churches. Since Love is “patient and kind” (1 Cor. 13:4), and in order to open the way for peaceful efforts to resolve the issues and return them to their natural and canonical state, the Church of Antioch is planning to intensify Her efforts with the Sister Churches in order to explain Her position and work on unifying Her work in facing all the dangers that are threatening the Orthodox Catholic Church.



بطريركية أنطاكية وسائر المشرق للروم الأرثوذكس
PATRIARCAT GREC - ORTHODOXE D'ANTIOCHE ET DE TOUT L'ORIENT

Synodal Decision

Issued on March 13, 2013

The Holy Synod of Antioch took the decision to forbid Archimandrite Makarios from performing any ecclesiastical service throughout the canonical territory of the Antiochian See, whether in the mother lands of the Patriarchate of Antioch (including Qatar), or abroad since he was consecrated a bishop by the Holy Synod of Jerusalem for a territory belonging to the Church of Antioch, taking the title of Archbishop of Qatar. The Holy Synod of Antioch will inform the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, and the Antiochian clergy and faithful about this decision.

Secretary of the Holy Synod

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PATRIARCAT GREC - ORTHODOXE D'ANTIOCHE ET DE TOUT L'ORIENT

قرار مجمعي

صادر بتاريخ ١٣ آذار ٢٠١٣

قرّر الجمع الأنطاكي المقدّس منع الأرشمندريت مكاريوس المسام أسقفاً على أرض تابعة للكنيسة الأنطاكية من قبل الجمع الأورشليمي المقدس، بلقب "رئيس أساقفة قطر"، من القيام بأية خدمة كنسية على أراضي الكرسي الأنطاكي وطناً (بما في ذلك قطر) وبإبلاغ البطريركية الأورشليمية بذلك مع سائر الكنائس المستقلة وكذلك الإكليروس الأنطاكي وأبنائنا الأنطاكيين.

سكرتاريا المجمع المقدّس

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بطريركيّة أنطاكيّة وسائر المشرق للروم الأرثوذكس

PATRIARCAT GREC - ORTHODOXE D'ANTIOCHE ET DE TOUT L'ORIENT

بيان صادر عن المجمع الأنطاكي الأرثوذكسيّ المقدّس

في العاشرة والنصف من صباح يوم الأربعاء الواقع فيه الثالث عشر من آذار ٢٠١٣، اجتمع آباء الجمع الأنطاكي المقدّس في دير سيدة البلمند البطريركي برئاسة صاحب الغبطة البطريرك يوحنا العاشر، لتدارس الوضع الناجم عن انتخاب قدس الأرشمندريت مكاريوس من قبل الجمع المقدّس لبطريركية الأرثوذكس المقدسية الأورشليمية بصفة "رئيس أساقفة قطر" يوم الإثنين في ٤ آذار ٢٠١٣، لأن هذا الانتخاب يخالف القوانين الكنسية الأرثوذكسية الجامعة. وبعد التداول وموافقة أعضاء الجمع المقدّس في الوطن وبلاذ الانتشار، صدر عن الاجتماع البيان التالي والذي عُدّ على كافة المؤمنين وعلى سائر الكنائس الأرثوذكسية المستقلّة.

البيان

بدعوة من صاحب الغبطة البطريرك يوحنا العاشر، وفي ظل الظروف العصيبة والألام التي تعصف بمنطقتنا والتي يعاني أبنائنا منها، اجتمع مطارنة الكرسي الأنطاكي المقدّس في الوطن بعد أن تداولوا مع إخوانهم مطارنة الانتشار المرح الذي سببه انتخاب ورسمه الأرشمندريت مكاريوس بصفة "رئيس أساقفة قطر" من قبل البطريركية الأورشليمية، وقد استهلّ صاحب الغبطة الاجتماع باستعراض الخطوات التي قام بها فور سماعه خبر الانتخاب عبر وسائل الاعلام. إذ، بعد الاتصال بكافة المطارنة أعضاء الجمع الأنطاكي المقدّس، قام في مرحلة أولى بتبليغ رسالة شفعية لغبطة بطريرك أورشليم وقداسة البطريرك المسكوني، أتبعها برسالة خطية لهما عبّر فيها عن تفاجئه "بقرار الجمع الأورشليمي المقدّس برفع الأب المرسل إلى مدينة الدوحة إلى درجة الأسقفية وإعطائه لقب "رئيس أساقفة قطر"، وذلك بمعزل عن البطريركية الأنطاكية التي تقع دولة قطر ضمن حدود مداها الجغرافيّ القانونيّ. حيث أنه لا يسوغ أن يُسَقَف عليها مطرانٌ تابعٌ

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لكنيسة أرثوذكسية أخرى، خاصّة وأن البطريركيّة الأنطاكية مطراناً شرعيّاً على كلّ منطقة الخليج العربيّ، سيادة المتروبوليت قسطنطين". وقد رجا صاحب الغبطة في رسالته المعنيين بأن يُعيدوا النظر بقرارهم "وإلا تتمّ هذه الرسامة، لأن كرسيّنا الأنطاكيّ الرسوليّ لا يمكنه قبول أيّ أسقف على أرضه، من خارج نطاق سلطته الكنسيّة القانونيّة..." وقد عبّر أنّ "قلوبنا مفتوحة للقائكم ومعالجة هذا الأمر، وأيّ أمر آخر، كأخوة بروح المسيح الذي وحده يجمعنا".

وإذ لم يتلقَ صاحب الغبطة أي ردّ على رسالتيه، قام في مرحلة لاحقة بتعميم هذه الرسالة على رؤساء الكنائس الأرثوذكسية المستقلّة. وقد أبلغ صاحب الغبطة المجتمعين أنه وبالرغم من كل الجهود والمساعي الأخوية تمّت الرسامة يوم الأحد في العاشر من آذار الجاري.

أتى الآباء على جهود صاحب الغبطة، وعبّروا بإجماع الحاضرين وموافقة جميع مطارنة الانتشار عن الموقف التالي:

١ - قرار البطريركية الأورشليمية بإنشاء رئاسة أساقفة على أرض تُعتبَر كنسياً تابعة للكرسيّ الأنطاكي المقدّس، يعتبر، بشكل لا يقبل الجدل، تدخلاً عن غير حقّ من قبل الكنيسة الأورشليمية على أرض الكنيسة الأنطاكية، وبالتالي يشكّل تجاوزاً للقوانين الكنسية التي ترعى علاقات الكنائس الأرثوذكسية إحداها بالأخرى.

من ناحية أخرى، الرعية الأرثوذكسية في الدوحة، في دولة قطر، مُكوّنة من أرثوذكس من جنسيّات مختلفة. وقد سهر قدس الأرشمندريت مكاريوس، مشكوراً، على تأمين حاجاتها الرعائيّة، دون أن يخرج ذلك عن إطار التدبير الكنسيّ الموقّت الذي يهدف إلى تسهيل العمل الرعائيّ الكنسيّ، لا أكثر ولا أقلّ. وبالتالي لا يحتمل هذا التدبير الرعائيّ أيّ تأويل لجهة منح أيّ حق كنسيّ، من أيّ نوع كان، للبطريركية الأورشليمية أو لأيّة كنيسة أرثوذكسية أخرى، على هذه المنطقة من الخليج العربيّ التي تقع ضمن نطاق السيادة الكنسية القانونيّة لبطريركية أنطاكية وسائر المشرق للروم الأرثوذكس.

لذلك، ترفض الكنيسة الأنطاكية خطوة البطريركية الأورشليمية، ولن تعترف بأسقف على أرض دولة قطر من خارج نطاق سيادة الكرسيّ الرسوليّ الأنطاكيّ، وتطلب من البطريركية الأورشليمية إصلاح الوضع في أسرع وقت. وتأمّل أن لا تضطرّ إلى اتخاذ مواقف تصل إلى قطع الشراكة مع الكرسيّ الأورشليميّ، وإلى إعادة النظر في العلاقات الأرثوذكسية وفي اتفاقيّات حثيف الحاصلة من قبل اللحان التحضيرية للمجمع الأرثوذكسيّ الكبير المقدّس، ومن ضمنها ما يعود إلى الانتشار الأرثوذكسيّ.

٢ - الوضع الذي يعانيه مسيحيّو المنطقة يحتمّ علينا العمل على تفادي كل ما من شأنه أن يهدد وحدة المؤمنين وشهادتهم. فللمسيحيون العرب مدعوون لتدعيم التواصل بينهم لمواجهة التحديات الكثيرة التي تشكّل خطراً على أوطانهم، فيكونون خميرة سلام، وأخوة. وتعي الكنيسة الأنطاكية الدور التاريخيّ والرياديّ الذي تلعبه في هذا المجال، وطناً ومهجراً، ولن تتخلّى عنه أبداً.

٣ - إن الاستمرار في تجاهل الواقع الذي أحدثته رسامة الأرشمندريت مكاريوس رئيس أساقفةٍ على قطر، سيحتم على البطريركية الأنطاكية أن تتخذ مضطراً إجراءات في المستقبل تؤدّ أن تستعيدّها بسبب الهبة التي تريد أن ترعى العلاقات بين الكنائس الأرثوذكسية. ولذلك وبسبب هذه الهبة التي "تتأقّى وترفّق" (١ كور ٤:١٣)، وإنساحاً في المجال أمام المساعي السلامية التي نرجو أن تعيد الأمور إلى نصابها القانوني، فإن الكنيسة الأنطاكية ستكتفّ تواصلها مع الكنائس الشقيقة لشرح موقفها، علّها تنفادي ما يمكن أن يتهاد الكنيسة الجامعة من مخاطر.

صدر عن المقرّ البطريركيّ في البلمند، في ١٣ آذار ٢٠١٣



THE MOST REVEREND
METROPOLITAN PHILIP

ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK AND
METROPOLITAN OF ALL
NORTH AMERICA



The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese OF NORTH AMERICA

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February 4, 2013

His Beatitude JOHN X
Patriarch of the Great City of Antioch and all the East
Via fax: 011-963-11-542-4404 and 011-961-6-930-304

We regret very much that difficult circumstances prevent me and a delegation of my brother bishops from participation in your blessed enthronement to the Holy See of Antioch.

Rest assured that neither oceans, nor mountains, nor distances can separate us from our Eucharistic unity with you in the same Sacred Chalice and in the same Holy Bread.

May the Shepherd of shepherds, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, grant you length of days, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, crown all your endeavors with success.

I, the bishops, the clergy, and the faithful people of our Archdiocese extend to you a cordial invitation to come and preside over our biennial convention this coming July and in the city of Houston, Texas.

Please let us know if you are able to accept our invitation so that we may do the necessary arrangements.

Once again, we shout with Antioch, Eis Polla Eti Despota!

Your servant in Christ,

Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

"...the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." ACTS 11:26

A RESPONSE TO THE ENCYCLICAL OF HIS BEATITUDE YOUHANNA X

*"IN GRACE WE GROW, IN SERVICE WE TRANSCEND,
AND IN LOVE THE STRUCTURE IS STRENGTHENED."*

PATRIARCH YOUHANNA X

Your Beatitude's Encyclical came down to us and was received like the manna that came down from heaven to the wanderers in the desert. We were hungry for heavenly words — for a vision — and they have descended on us through your first encyclical letter, which was envisioned by God' wisdom and in the light of the Gospel — the Good News. Yes Master, your words have descended on us from your throne, as the Good News gave the world the news of salvation.

When I read your encyclical, tears flowed from my eyes. Your letter reminded me of the lyricism of Romanos, the Semitic spirit of Ephraim and Isaac the Syrians, the theology of John of Damascus, the Pastorship of John Chrysostom, the dignity of Maximos the confessor and the transcendence of Gregory Palamas. They were not nostalgic tears, but rather they were the tears of joy that the 158th Patriarch of Antioch has gathered in his spirit this rich Orthodox Antiochian Tradition and will be implementing it cautiously in the twenty-first century, continuing the work of the great predecessor's patriarchs and theologians.

Our father and Patriarch,

Indeed, your encyclical echoed the words of the Holy Fathers with a modern language, yet Pentecostal and Eschatological. It did brighten us with hope and gave us the assurance that God did not leave His Church. It came out as a wakeup call and a command for rolling up the sleeves to re-emerge, once again, in the way of transcendence and to *"share equally the responsibility for our church"* and to *"employ our capabilities for the service of all."* It did certainly ensure my vision that we are all one family and we should *"not spare any effort to make every believer feel that the Church is ready and to benefit from his knowledge, experience and abilities in promoting parish life, and Church life as well."*

Your vision — your plan — Sayidna, is like the voice of a prophet reminding his clergy of their main responsibility to tend the sheep in love and because they love the Lord. It is like the trumpet calling the faithful to *"affirm [their] identity among many identities and to raise [their] voice in the midst of many voices"* because they are the witness of truth in the world. As well, it is stressing the fact that *"the institutions are a helping hand extended to the neighbor,"* not a place of self-interest and a tool in the hand of economy, but rather *"a place to shine the divine light"* and a center of help to the community in particular and to the society in general.

It is indeed refocusing us on our goal and giving us direction in the path of Jesus Christ through the basic tools that will strengthen the structure, by becoming a *"Responsible Priesthood"* for it is *"a divine call emanating from the fullness of God's love ... that no man deserves it."* This comes by *"participating in the priesthood as a commitment to serving the people of God, to the work of faith, to the toil of love, and the patience of hope."* By making the liturgy *"not a rigid thing to be repeated unconsciously [but rather] as an expression of the human's need to talk to the Lord and to thank Him for His grace ... [Our] Liturgy is a precious gem."* As well, by employing and using the contemporaneous language of technology to spread the Gospel, the Living Word, to the youth and to all humankind and certainly to take care of the Youth, the Women who have many talents by *"inventing new ways to strengthen their service in brotherhoods working in the world, in monastic orders, and in different social activities,"* the family who is *"the cornerstone in the structure of the society,* the poor and the people of special needs."

Yet Your Beatitude did not forget the effectiveness of unceasing prayers and the importance of monasteries, the monks

and the nuns. They are the unseen power which works in solitude given strength to the faithful and making from the deserts and the top of mountains a paradise. And while the faithful are questioning their belonging to Paul, Cephas or Apollos, you confirmed and attested the unity of the Antiochian See through the Holy Synod where consultation takes place and where *"lives the reality of the fathers' love to their children and ensuring communication with the Church community."* As well, this oneness and unified Patriarchate is only realized by the involvement of every believer and this comes by *"not sparing any effort to make every believer feel that the church is ready to benefit his abilities."*

The modern man and science were also not absent from your concerns. In the encyclical you requested to provide answers to his questions regarding cloning, genetics and other thorny issues. As well, by emphasizing the positive role of *"science, thought, and art [that] emanate from the essence of our Christian thought, which believes in man and in his constructive role in respecting creation and protecting it"* believing that *"Modernity cannot deny the essence of the human entity, nor its particularities, nor the upright relations between the members of society"* you highlighted a guide line to the scientists and researchers.

The sacramental unity of the Christians was another great concern in your thought. You know that the unity of all the Christians of the East makes the presence of Christ more evident and powerful and who else can pioneer in this direction unless history of salvation backs and supports him with wisdom? This point has guided us to the necessity of concentrating on what unites us as Christians, not what differentiates us. It makes us focus on Christ as the Cornerstone of the Church, not a stumbling block.

As you highlighted on our co-citizenship, you opened our eyes to a reality that was missed or lost by our fear and, as such, you are commanding us to become co-builders of our society and *"to seek to live love."* We were blinded and we forgot that we are the core of this society's knit and that we have a responsibility towards it. This will be accomplished only by dialogue among all religions of this society and by knowing the other because *"ignorance is the enemy of all."*

Your Beatitude,

Reading your encyclical made me understand that I am in front of a renewal, a kind of re-baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who is dwelling in His Church is revealing once again as a new Pentecost. It made me like a drunken man, but how it could be in this early hour (Acts 2:15)? As a new student, it attracted my attention and made me wonder with the many jewels that were discovered in our Holy Tradition.

Thank you Master, for this guideline and wake up call. We hope and pray that we can be good pupils and workers for God's harvest ad remembering your enlightening words. It is necessary, Your Beatitude, to revisit from time to time your vision and check it in order to keep us focused and not get trampled by the worldly desires, but instead looking forward to the heavens to receive God's grace.

The Resurrection is our goal and you are the Shepherd of God's flock guiding us by your Pastorship's voice to Deification. Amen.

Many years Master, and many encyclicals to come.

Eispola Eti Despota

Economos Antony Gabriel
St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church, Montreal
Chairman — Antiochian Heritage Foundation

Christian Burial, Graves and Cemeteries

Introduction

In the last four articles we examined the origin and meaning of death, how the cultivation of the remembrance of death is a fundamental virtue in the Christian life, what a Christian perspective on aging is (preparation for translation to the next life), what constitutes a good death, the basic practical steps from death to burial, and we explained in detail the Funeral Service. Here we turn our attention to the subject of Christian burial, graves and cemeteries.

Christian Burial

Christians have one consistent response to the death of a loved one, and that is to mourn the departed, pray for them, and bury them. This is what we do. This is how we live. There is no better explanation, no more sublime model for how we ought care for the body of the departed, than the example provided us by the Mother of God, by the Myrrh-bearing women, and by the holy and righteous Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea at the time that our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, died in the body on the precious and life-giving Cross.

The sublime actions of these who loved our Lord in death have inspired the hymnody of Great and Holy Friday, as well as sacred iconography. The icon of the Taking-Down-From-the Cross, displayed at the Vespers of the Un-nailing, shows our Lord's body being un-nailed, and given into the arms of His Mother. She washes Him with her tears. His body is anointed and wrapped, and finally placed in a new tomb, into the heart of the earth. The icon of the *Epitaphios* likewise shows the care of a multitude of saints for our Lord's dead body. The Mother of God is often depicted cradling her Son's head, and St. Mary Magdalene with her arms thrust upwards in an expression of great lamentation, while Ss. Joseph and Nicodemus are bent over our Lord's precious body.

Michelangelo's *Pieta*, executed in 1498–99 and a masterpiece of Renaissance sculpture (and the only piece that Michelangelo ever signed), depicts the dead Christ in the arms of His Mother. This statue greets visitors to St. Peter's in Rome on the south-west chapel, and it is rightly named *Pieta* – because this devotion is the expression of a sublime piety. The pious care for the departed, as the Mother of God cared for her Son, our Lord.

The care shown our Lord Jesus Christ by those who loved Him at the time of His repose is the model for how we care for our departed. It is how we love the dead. Listen to this hymn from the Vespers of the Taking Down of the Body of Christ from the Cross. "Joseph of Arimathea took Thee down from the Tree, the Life of all, cold in death. Bathing Thee with sweet and costly myrrh, gently he covered Thee with linen so fine, and with sorrow and tender love in his heart, he embraced thy most pure Body."

The Sin of Cremation

Part of living the Christian life is the humble acceptance of aging, death and a return to the earth in Christian burial. The reverent burial of the departed is the Christian tradition, and it is simply unthinkable that the Mother of God, the Myrrhbearers, or Ss. Joseph and Nicodemus could have simply considered our Lord's body to be worthless, and consigned it to the fire as is done today in the practice of cremation.

The Holy Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob practiced burial. When Jacob reposed in Egypt, he placed Joseph under an oath to care for his bones and return them to the Holy Land. The Old Testament Scriptures explicitly forbid the people of God to burn their departed. Cremation was abhorrent to the Jews as a pagan custom, and as a violent and cruel act perpetrated upon the body. Cremation was a form of extreme punishment for certain types of heinous sins like idolatry and murder. My patron saint, the holy and righteous King Josiah the Tender-Hearted, threw down pagan shrines, smashed idols, and exhumed and burnt the remains of pagan priests (2 Kings 23:19–20). Yet he protected and preserved the graves of the faithful. The Holy Prophet Jeremiah prophesied that the wrath of God would come upon idol-worshippers and that the result would be that the people of God would not be allowed proper burials (Jeremiah 8:1–2). Proper burial in the Old Testament was a witness to the hope of the Jews for resurrection.

Our Lord Jesus Christ described His own death as a grain of wheat falling into the ground, and then springing up to produce much grain. Our Lord prophesied that His sacred voice would penetrate into graves and tombs at the end of time and raise the interred bodies to new life (John 5:25, 28–29). The burial of Christ was a significant action, so significant in fact that it is mentioned in the text of the Nicene Creed. We confess in the Creed that Jesus "suffered and was buried." This affirmation is of tremendous consolation to Christians, to those who are united by faith to the Lord. It is our confidence in being buried ourselves, for we know that we are going into the grave *following Christ*. We confess that He has already been there, and transformed the grave. He has filled it with light, and turned it into

a door into His kingdom.

Our Savior demonstrated what would take place in all Christian cemeteries and to all the graves of the believers at the time of His Resurrection. St. Matthew records, “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His Resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many” (Matthew 27:52–53).

Cremation has been on the rise in America for decades, fueled by the rising costs associated with America’s mortuary industry, to which cremation may appear to be the only financially reasonable alternative. It is also fueled by a progressive loss of Christian teaching on the significance of the body and the Resurrection. Those who have been cremated are not lost forever, and God is certainly able to raise cremated remains. St. Augustine writes, “But even though the body has been all quite ground up to powder by some severe accident, or by the ruthlessness of enemies, and though it has been so diligently scattered to the winds, or into the water, that there is no trace of it left, yet it shall not be beyond the omnipotence of the Creator. No, not a hair of its head shall perish” (*City of God*, v. 2, p. 499).

St. Augustine was describing a cremation or dissolution that was not the will of the deceased, not imagining that a Christian would choose the disgrace of cremation voluntarily. And it is true that most who are buried end up in a relatively short time being returned to dust, to a condition similar to those who are cremated. Yet there is a massive difference between one who is dissolved by death and corruption, and one who voluntarily chooses fire. Not being able to retard or stop the consequences of sin is one thing. Freely choosing sin is another.

The Witness of Tobit

There is one book in the Old Testament that presents the burial of others most magnificently as an act of love and devotion by the faithful, and that is the book of Tobit. This magnificent book opens as a description of the acts of Tobit, the son of Tobiel, a Jew who lived in the days of Shalmaneser, king of the Assyrians, in exile. Tobit was said to have walked in the ways of truth and righteousness all his days, and to have performed many



acts of charity to his brethren and countrymen who had been exiled to Nineveh with him. Tobit describes his life thus: “I would give my bread to the hungry and my clothing to the naked; and if I saw any one of my people dead and thrown out behind the wall of Nineveh, I would bury him. And if Sennacherib the king put to death any who came fleeing from Judea, I buried them secretly. For in his anger he put many to death. When the bodies were sought by the King, they were not found” (1:17–18). For his magnanimous acts of charity in burying the bodies of the faithful, Tobit had to go into hiding, lost all his property, and was constantly in danger of death. His resolve to bury was a measure of this man’s extreme piety. Reverent burial is how we love the departed; not just our own, but all the departed.

Imitating the righteous Tobit, Christians have always considered the care for the departed to be exceedingly sacred. The early church historian Eusebius wrote that Christians were so zealous to care for the departed that they would even rush to care for the bodies of those who had been decimated by a contagious disease.

The Early Christians According to Eusebius

Listen to this amazing passage from Chapter 7 of his *Ecclesiastical History*, where Bishop Eusebius describes the church in and around Alexandria at the time of an epidemic:

“Most of our brother-Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of the danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others with the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains. Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead, turning the common formula that is normally an empty courtesy into a reality: ‘Your humble servant bids you farewell.’ The best of our brothers lost their lives in this manner; a number of presbyters, deacons, and laymen winning high commendation, so that death in this form, the result of great piety and strong faith, seems in every way the equal of martyrdom. With willing hands they raised the bodies of the saints to their bosoms; they closed their eyes and mouths, carried them on their shoulders, and laid them out; they clung to them, embraced them, washed them, and wrapped them in grave-clothes. Very soon the same services were done for them, since those left behind were constantly following those gone before. The heathens behaved in the very opposite way. At the first onset of the disease, they pushed the sufferers away and fled from their dearest, throwing them into the roads before they were dead and treating unburied corpses as dirt, hoping thereby to avert the spread and contagion of the fatal disease; but do what they might, they found it difficult to escape (Church History, Ch. 7, 22.9).

This text reveals the Christian mind, the mind of the Church, with such clarity.

The Witness of St. Marcan

There is a beautiful story in the life of St. Marcan that continues this theme. Marcan would go around at night in the squares and narrow streets of the city concerned where and when he would

find a dead person abandoned because of poverty. Upon finding such a person, he would rejoice as if he had found a precious treasure. He would then take the deceased and would care for him, addressing him as if he were alive and saying, “Come, brother, and communicate the love in Christ.” At this invitation of the saint, God, in order to reward the love of His servant, would permit the dead man momentarily to rise up and greet the caring servant of providence. Immediately after that he would again die (Vassiliadis, p. 340).

The Burial and the Blessing of a Grave

Following the funeral service the departed is processed to the cemetery, the trisagion prayers are read once more, the coffin is lowered into the grave, the grave is blessed with holy water and a special prayer is said – “sealed until the Second Coming of the Lord” – and each of the mourners participates in the burial by placing a portion of dirt upon the casket.

The prayer for the blessing of the grave in an unconsecrated cemetery is as follows:

The Order for the Blessing of a Grave
“O Master, Lord our God, through Whose mercy the souls of the faithful find rest: Do Thou bless the grave(s) of this Thy servant(s), N., and send down Thy holy Angel to guard it, that the body which shall be (is) buried here may find it a habitation of repose until Thy Second Coming and his own resurrection, and that his soul, loosed from every bond of sin, may be counted worthy of eternal joy with Thy Saints in the heavenly courts. For Thou art the King of peace and the Savior of our souls, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

There are also divine services for the Consecration of a Cemetery as well as for the Erection of a Cross over a Grave.

The blessing of graves is something that takes place not just on the initial occasion of a funeral and burial, but on a yearly basis. This usually takes place in the days following Holy Pascha, when the priest will bring holy water, and sing Paschal hymns while blessing graves in the com-

Cremation has been on the rise in America for decades, fueled by the rising costs associated with America’s mortuary industry, to which cremation may appear to be the only financially reasonable alternative. It is also fueled by a progressive loss of Christian teaching on the significance of the body and the Resurrection.

pany of the faithful.
St. John Chrysostom offers these beautiful and comforting words concerning the burial of a loved one: “For just as the light when it sets in the evening is not lost, so man also is given over to the grave as if setting; yet he is preserved for the dawn of the resurrection.” In this light we see that cemeteries are God’s vineyards from which the angels will harvest the great crop into God’s heavenly storehouses. The etymology of the word



“For just as the light when it sets in the evening is not lost, so man also is given over to the grave as if setting; yet he is preserved for the dawn of the resurrection.”

cemetery shows it to be a uniquely Christian word from the Greek word meaning “sleep.” It is the place of those who sleep in the body, waiting to be awakened in the Resurrection.

Graves and Cemeteries

Graves have a mighty message for all human beings. Cemeteries speak and bear witness to the truth, and their placement in the heart of our cities, towns and villages sober all, and speak volumes about life and death. Graves and cemeteries are great civilizing powers, and are the location of the most significant expressions of devotion. I have a neighbor whose wife passed away several years ago, and she is buried just down the street in the cemetery. Every day since her repose, my neighbor has visited his wife’s grave and brought her flowers. This is his own *Pieta*, and it speaks volumes about the nature of their love. I have on occasion driven by the cemetery and witnessed his visits, and the impression I receive is the truth

that love is stronger than death.
The Orthodox cemetery is something to behold. Though we have a great collection of unique funeral customs and traditions from each different Orthodox land, in common we have the commitment to adorn graves, to erect a cross or shrine at the graveside, usually to plant flowers, and to burn lights at the grave. Orthodox cemeteries have chapels consecrated in them, where there is an altar and liturgies served for the repose of the departed – especially on Saturdays – the weekly commemoration of the departed.

There is a beautiful cemetery in Oxford, England, that is home to many Orthodox and many Roman Catholics. I once visited the cemetery in order to go to the graves of a number of famous Orthodox Christian professors who had led their lives at Oxford. I also wanted to visit the grave of the great Roman Catholic author, J. R. R. Tolkein. I visited on a Sunday afternoon, not long after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. I was deeply touched by what I saw. Many parishioners had stopped by the cemetery on the way from Liturgy, and so the lamps were burning and the flowers were fresh. This was just normal custom to visit the relatives and loved ones buried in the local cemetery. Many of the graves had beautiful cross-shrines and headstones, and flowers growing right there on top of the graves. When I came to Dr. Tolkein’s grave it was covered over with exceedingly large rose bushes, and on the headstone there was a new copy of *The Hobbit* and a replica ring of power was lying there. What care. In contrast to this was the grave of C. S. Lewis and his brother, in the Anglican churchyard some miles outside Oxford in their home village. The tomb was starkly barren, cracked, and with no sign of anyone’s care or visit for some time. I could not help but think of how the graves bore witness to the various faiths – the Orthodox faith with such a commitment to meditation upon death and prayer for the departed, and the Protestant faith with so little emphasis on death, and no permission for prayer for the departed whatsoever.

Archpriest Josiah Trenham, Ph.D.



Orthodox Spirituality in an Ungodly Age

More people today than in the past are unaffiliated with any religious tradition, and increasingly describe themselves as atheists or agnostics. The way things are going, people are finding commitment to a traditional religion – especially one which makes exclusive truth claims like Orthodox Christianity – narrow, judgmental, bigoted, even dangerous, because religious “orthodoxy” of any kind is increasingly seen as extremist and hence a danger to secularist values.



Spirituality – a “hot topic”

What’s interesting is that, at the same time that traditional religion is being trashed, “spirituality” is a hot topic in American pop culture. Do you have friends, for example, who have professed to be “spiritual, but not religious?” This is essentially a stance that rejects traditional, organized religion as the sole, or the most valuable, means of furthering spiritual growth.

Reaction against science, naturalism and materialism

I think a lot of the interest in “spirituality” is a reaction against science, naturalism (nature as all there is) and materialism (everything is reducible to matter or energy), and to their failures to give satisfying answers to the important questions about life, death and the self. Many people, however, have been so “turned off” by “organized religions” in the West, that they turn instead to various spiritual ideas, or their own ideas, and cobble spiritual notions together. This response is largely skepticism of science as the absolute purveyor of truth, and at the same time of traditional Western religion, and religious explanations.

Three anti-Christian trends in our culture

I see three dominant trends regarding religion and spirituality in popular culture today, and I think that it is important to identify them, as this is the world we live in. One is *unbelief in God* as He

3 ANTI-CHRISTIAN TRENDS IN OUR CULTURE

- 1. Unbelief in God
- 2. Acceptance of the idea that all religions are of equal value and merit, and that there are no exclusive religious truths
- 3. Questioning, reconsideration or challenging of traditional Christian doctrines by some who profess Christian faith

is known in the Christian tradition, or, if not outright unbelief, then what I would call “soft belief”: a very passive belief in the existence of God and what God demands, to the extent that it has little to no meaning. We see this in what has been called “moralistic therapeutic deism” – a trend among the young. When thousands of young people were polled about their “religious beliefs,” the majority said they believed that a creator god exists, that this god wants people to be good, and that good people go to heaven when they die, regardless of specific creeds or doctrines about God. Clearly this is a shadow of what was once a robust Judeo-Christian worldview in our culture, fading in strength and clarity!

A second trend is *acceptance of the idea that all religions are of equal value and merit, and that there are no exclusive religious truths*. In this notion, called “religious pluralism,” it is assumed that all religious truths are merely metaphors to explain an infinite that is beyond any one of them! A third trend is *the questioning, reconsideration or challenging of traditional Christian doctrines* by some who profess Christian faith (especially among the young), because these doctrines, like the idea of an eternal hell, are thought to be overly judgmental or unkind. We see this in books like Rob Bell’s *Love Wins* (2010).

Religion and spirituality

So how do we define “religion: and “spirituality”? I like the definitions provided by Archimandrite Meletios Webber: “Religion is concerned with God’s relationship with the universe; spirituality is focused on the way a person sees his own place in the universe.”

By these definitions, religion is essentially about God – God’s actions, or guidelines and commandments, and how we can live in unity with God – and spirituality (as the term is commonly used today) is about *us*, and our chosen approaches to making sense of life and death, whether they include traditional views of deity or not.

This trend in American spirituality should not come as a surprise! As author Lillian Daniel, author of *Spiritual But Not Religious Is Not Enough*, put it, self-centered spirituality is “the norm for self-centered American culture.” Many of the forms of what is called “spirituality” today could really be characterized as “self-help,” rather than religion.

Virtues reviled

As a result of these trends in our culture, if (or when) you speak to your non-Orthodox peers about virtues like chastity, humility, patience, repentance and self-denial, your words will fall mostly on deaf ears, or won’t make sense in terms of the *so-called* “virtues” of our day – like following your passion, finding your truth, loving yourself, and so forth. The whole idea of “self-denial” is nearly lost to the current generation. What resonates in our culture are (so-called) spiritualities that focus on self, self-esteem, and *making yourself happy*. That, however, is not what true Christianity is all about. C. S. Lewis said it best: “I didn’t go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of port would do that. If you want a religion to make you feel really comfortable, I certainly don’t recommend Christianity.”

‘Spiritual-but-not-religious’ people are more prone to mental illness

Here’s something interesting to consider in this discussion: in addition to lacking spiritual depth, more “spiritual-but-not-religious” people appear to have mental health problems than people with traditional religious beliefs! “People who have spiritual beliefs outside of the context of any organized religion are more likely to suffer from these maladies... (anxiety/depressive disorder; any neurotic disorder)” said Michael King, a professor at University College London and the head researcher on



the project” (CNN Belief Blog; January 9, 2013). My guess is that the more people engage in delusions about themselves and live according to their delusions, the less they have in the way of community and all that goes with it. When they fail to see the nature of reality as it truly is – that the self is not the center of the universe – the sicker they become, in body and soul. Saint Maximos would say that this mental sickness is the result of the darkening of the *nous* (the inner eye of the soul), which is man’s real illness and true ignorance of God.

Positive arguments for religion

One of the positive arguments *for* religion – Orthodox Christian religion – is that it has the truth, preserves the real method of cure, and can guide people to true knowledge of God, which is communion with God. Without communion as our true source of life, there can be no health, now or in the next life.

Spirituality in our culture

As it is important to know where people are coming from, so we can communicate with them more effectively, let’s consider some of the ways in which people think about “spirituality” today

Interaction with spiritual forces or energies in the universe

There is a slew of new or revived spiritualities and spiritual practices today, such as Wicca, Native American Indian spirituality, “New Age” use of crystals for healing and magic, and occult (“unseen”) practices, which includes fascination with ghosts and what is called spirit, or trance, channeling. People who engage in these forms of so-called spirituality generally assume that these forces or energies are benign, impersonal forces, or personal ones (for example, “spirit guides,” or the Buddhist “bodhisattvas”).

Orthodox Christianity teaches that there are no “impersonal” spiritual forces or entities “out there”; they are all very personal – whether they are angelic or demonic – and they have an agenda (for good or evil).

Impersonal “God-within”: the “true self”

If you have read the best-selling book by Elisabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*, you will have seen her definition of *God*: “God dwells within you,

as you yourself, exactly the way you are.” So we are being told that you are God and God is you at some deep level; the job of spirituality, then, is to discover or uncover this already-perfected Truth in yourself!

Often in those spiritualities influence by the Far East and by early Greek philosophy (Plato and the Neo-Platonists), this talk about “God within” means “merging with” the godhead, or “absorption” of the soul into it – either a personal god, or through a more-than-personal experience of enlightenment. In the common “oceanic mysticism” of the East, for example, we hear that, when it realizes its Source, the individual soul becomes like a drop of water that merges in an ocean of consciousness.

Orthodox Christians understand union with God differently. In Christianity we are taught that we are “in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5.17): “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation.” This does not mean that we lose our individual identity or “merge” with God. This is important to grasp, especially when it comes to Orthodox ideas of *theosis* or *theoria*. When we speak of God within, we do not mean that the human soul is, in essence, one with the divine. There remains an infinite difference between the created natures of human beings and the Uncreated Nature of God. It is in and through the *energies* of God that we have communion with the divine.

Connected with this idea of “God within” is one that has been especially prevalent in the “New Age” Movement: that the human soul within us is already-perfected and the source of “higher knowledge.” According to this view (which has its antecedents in Hinduism), all we have to do is connect with this “higher self” within, and we will have found wisdom, God and immortality. The truth, however, is that the human soul is *not God within; nor is it already perfected!* The Holy Fathers (and especially St. Theophan the Recluse) teach that we are a mingled creation: part heavenly, part earthly. On the earthly side, when the sensual passions control us, we become more like the animals than like God, in whose image and likeness we are formed. The human soul, according to Orthodox teaching, *has a lower and higher aspect* in each of its three constituent powers (that is, the intellect, the will, and the heart, or, as the Holy Fathers say, the intellectual, desiring, and incensive powers.) St. Theophan writes: “The human soul, although it resembles the

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animal soul in its lowest part, is incomparably superior to it in its highest part.” When the *nous*, or, as it sometimes called, “the eye of the soul,” is darkened, we become like the animals; when the soul is purified of the passions and united in itself – not scattered – it is made for union with God, in which we become deified by God’s energies. So, when a radio is not operating properly, when its various parts are dysfunctional or blocked, it can’t receive the radio signals from the transmitter – which are the deifying energies of God.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is another term we commonly hear. It is often used to mean “being in the moment,” or we hear that “this moment is all there is.” This concept, derived from Buddhism, corresponds in part with very Orthodox teaching. In Orthodoxy, especially in our monastic tradition, the term *nepsis* in Greek refers to “watchfulness,” or “sobriety.” This involves watching and examining our thoughts, being aware of them moment by moment, being present in the moment, so that we do not become the slaves of our thoughts, or confuse who we really are with our endless stream of thoughts (Greek – *logismoi*).

There’s a Zen Buddhist story about a man on a horse that illustrates the idea in a humorous way. The horse is galloping fast and it appears the man on the horse is going somewhere quickly. Another man on the road, shouts: “Where are you going?” The man on the horse replies: “*I don’t know! Ask the horse!*” The point is that most of the time our thought habits and patterns just pull us along. We believe we are our thoughts, but we are not! Our thoughts are like smoke, or clouds in the sky. They have no substance or real being. This is why the monastic fathers tell us we must be ever watchful! There are specific exercises to help us gather our thoughts and to calm our minds.

Compassionate living and being
a ‘good person’

Last, many people think of spirituality merely as being a “good person”: treating others with compassion and decency (though usually they except the unborn!); being nice or kind, seeing the good in people, not judging, seeking “social justice” and sometimes advocating for the rights of animals or nature. Have you heard people say, “I am a good person; why do I need religion”?

How do they compare with Orthodoxy?

So how do these all views of spirituality compare with our Orthodox Christian religion? Actually, I think that Orthodox spirituality – the fruit of our religion, not in contrast to, or separable from it – can appropriately acknowledge all of these spiritual trends within the context of our spiritual tradition, if we understand what we teach and how to communicate that in the spiritual idiom of the day!

In the Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition, we have (both) an authentic religious *and* spiritual tradition – which we call Holy Tradition. Religion – despite what it is sometimes understood to be – isn’t merely a set of doctrines, laws and ceremonial rites, although it includes them. *It is a way of life; it’s a spiritual path that we take, and something shared in our communities.* As we journey together, we learn to see and discern things spiritually, through spiritual eyes, as they are purified and opened. Orthodox spirituality is not some separate, abstract, emotional, or psychological state. As Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos tells us, it is “the experience of life in Christ, the sphere of the new man, regenerated by the grace of God.” This transforming process happens in the Church, holistically and sacramentally, where we participate in this life, with God and with others.

Religion and spirituality are inseparable. Christ is inseparable from the Church which he founded; religious doctrine and dogma point to Christ, and to the Holy Trinity – the true nature of God. It is through proper understanding (*Orthodoxy* = “right doctrine,” or “right teaching”) and, through our participation in the life-giving mysteries of the Church and her ascetic disciplines – that our heart becomes soft and eventually purified so that God Himself is revealed to and within us. Not God as another delusion, or a made-up god of our own invention, but the True God, Who has been revealed to us.

As I have said, our potential for illumination is derived from the *super-essential* life of Christ; it is not from some already-perfected “higher self” within us (which, of course, can be a delusion). The light and life of Christ imparted to us can lead to spiritual transformation in individuals that exceeds anything I have seen in the spiritualities of Hinduism, Buddhism, or the so-called New Age.

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The Eucharist is more ‘mystical’ than
Zen or Yoga

We can sometimes forget the incredible power of what we are given! A well-known writer and practitioner of comparative spirituality, Lex Hixon, who personally practiced Hinduism, Islam, Zen and Tibetan Buddhism, and later became a student of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, makes this point when he says this of the Holy Eucharist: “Communion is an intensely mystical practice of Christianity. In fact, it’s more mystical than meditation. People have somehow forgotten that communion is a level of mysticism even more advanced than yoga and Zen in other cultures.”

So “religion” (versus abstract, or individual spirituality) provides the framework for authentic spiritual growth, transformation and accountability; and, our deep and rich tradition of “spiritual experience,” cultivated and nurtured by our monks and nuns and available to all, keeps our Holy Tradition vital and alive. Religion and spirituality balance each other and cannot exist without each other.

Theosis or deification –
the core of Orthodox spirituality

The core of our spirituality is *theosis* or *deification* (taught by Ss. Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Irenaeus, Basil, and Cyril, and later Gregory Palamas; cf. 2 Peter 1:3). It means that through participation in the Holy Spirit (the divine nature) creatures that are not holy by nature can become holy and become partakers of God’s glory. As St. Gregory put it, the “attainment of likeness to God and union with him so far as possible” Unlike the Mormon teaching of “exaltation” – which unfortunately sometimes is confused with the patristic doctrine of theosis – we do not teach that we become gods of flesh, bone and marrow on our own planet (as in the Mormon teaching regarding the planet Kolob).

The monastic Fathers refer to theosis most often in connection with the Transfiguration of Our Lord on Mount Tabor. The Transfiguration is a foretaste of the world to come and is identified with our salvation. This event recounted in Holy Scripture speaks to the real goal of the Orthodox Christian

spiritual path – the purification and transformation of the senses, so one can be truly illumined. This is why it is one of Holy Church’s major feasts.

Let me quote to you a description of this experience of *theoria* or transfiguration, which is connected with the process of deification, from a book titled *Monastic Wisdom: The Letters of Joseph the Hesychast*. Elder Joseph was a monk and esteemed spiritual father on Mount Athos, the holy mountain, who reposed in 1959. Although he speaks of this as if it were someone else’s experience, it is widely acknowledged that he is speaking of himself.

I know a well-known brother who encountered many temptations one day, and he passed the entire day with tears and without eating at all. As the sun was setting, he was sitting on a rock and looking at the Church of the Transfiguration on the peak of Mount Athos. With tears and pain he was imploring God, saying: “O Lord, as Thou wast transfigured to Thy disciples, transfigure Thyself also in my soul! Stop the passions and bring peace to my heart! Grant prayer to him who prayeth and restrain my unrestrained *nous*.”

While he was saying such things with pain, a subtle breeze full of fragrance came from the church, filling his soul – as he told me – with joy, illumination and divine love; and from within, the prayer began to flow ceaselessly from his heart like honey.

So he got up and went inside the place where he was staying, for it was already night. Then he bent his head upon his chest and began eating the sweetness that gushed forth from the prayer that he had been given. Immediately he was caught up into *theoria* and was totally beside himself. He wasn’t confined by walls and rocks; he was beyond all volition – without body and with a deep tranquility, in extraordinary light, and unlimited breadth. His *nous* contemplated only this thought: “May I never return to the body but remain here forever.” This was the first *theoria* that brother ever saw, who then returned to himself and continued struggling for his salvation.”

No parallel or way superior to Orthodox spirituality

So my main point is that for serious spiritual seekers Orthodox Christian spirituality, in my view, has no parallel or superior. We need not look anywhere else for illumination or enlightenment, or for the state of “deathlessness” as the Buddhists call it. By the way, do you know what actually happened to the Buddha, historically-speaking? Did he disappear in a blissful state of Nirvana? No! He died of food poisoning! He ate bad food. And he was said to be clairvoyant and omniscient, so by these standards he should have known that he would be served bad food that would kill him! He was a mortal. This comes from authoritative Buddhist literature. We, however, follow the path of the True Deathless and Immortal One – Jesus Christ – who rose from the dead, and through whom we ascend in deathlessness, too. As St. Paul tells us, “if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile” (1 Corinthians 15:17).

I have focused on the ways Orthodox spirituality fulfills the needs of modern spiritual seekers, but the key point I want to make is one made by Elder Sophrony Sakarov. He was the contemporary disciple of the great modern Elder, Saint Silouan of Mount Athos. Before he became an Orthodox priest-monk, Elder Sophrony practiced Hindu asceticism (yoga) in Paris, before renouncing it and going to Mount Athos. His testimony is especially powerful, because he had many self-described “spiritual experiences” as a yogi. Of Hindu yoga, impersonal asceticism, contemplation and spiritual experience, he said, “All contemplation arrived at by these means is self-contemplation, not contemplation of God. In these circumstances we open up for ourselves created beauty, not First Being. *And in all of it there is no salvation for man.*”

So the question we must ask of ourselves and others who are involved in these various “spiritualities” is – What are you looking for? Are you looking for self-contemplation, or contemplation of created being, which does not lead to the deathless state? Or are you looking for the Uncreated, He who transcends the created? This is true “spirituality” and this is the goal of the Holy Orthodox Christian faith.

Kevin Allen
Host of the live Sunday call-in program, “Ancient Faith Today, with Kevin Allen,” on Ancient Faith Radio

Sharing the Faith

News from the Department of Christian Education



Beloved in Christ

With Pascha not scheduled for another few weeks, it hardly seems appropriate to speak of the coming school year, yet the best Church Schools begin planning for the coming year before the current one ends. I would like you to do so in particular this year, as the departmental staff members and I will all be at the National Convention in Houston at the end of July. There are some new initiatives to launch and, most importantly, Diocesan Orthodox Institutes and OCEC training sessions to plan. The Department is now in a position to defray some of the costs of these events. I am asking Directors and Pastors to communicate to their Diocesan Christian Education Coordinator if they are willing to host an event, or simply need a visit or training. I’ve listed the staff below. The convention will give us the opportunity to speak with pastors in order to put these ideas into a schedule for the coming year.

We are ready to announce the 2013 Orthodox Institute theme and keynote speaker: “*Blessed is the Kingdom: Acts 2:42 – Church Past and Present*,” with Metropolitan SAVAS of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, who has recently completed his term as the Chairman of the Committee for Church and Society of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America. (See the article that follows.) We also have a report on the continuing success of the Houston Pan-Orthodox Vacation Church School program. The Christian Education website features helpful resources for Lent and Holy Week.

Dating Easter

The date for Easter (Pascha) is frequently different for the Orthodox and Western Churches. Here is a simple explanation. As the Jewish Passover is an integral part of the Holy Week account, the dating of Easter or Pascha (which comes from the Hebrew *Pesach*, or Passover) is directly con-

nected to the dating of Passover. Passover dates are determined by the ancient Jewish lunar calendar and based on the first full moon of spring. That calendar, however, eventually proved astronomically incorrect, leading to the use of a formula for calculating Easter. This calculation was then combined with the Julian calendar in an *ecclesiastical calendar* with a table of dates. When the Julian calendar proved astronomically incorrect, the Gregorian calendar was made, a second formula for calculating the date was employed and a new *ecclesiastical calendar* developed. The canonical Orthodox Churches follow the Gregorian calendar, except in the dating of Pascha, for which we use the older method of calculation and the Julian calendar. While western Easter has the advantage of being scientifically more correct, Orthodox Easter will never occur before Passover. In brief, Easter (Pascha) must be 1. the first Sunday after the first full moon of Spring (March 21), and 2. (*with the Orthodox formula*) after Passover.

For a complete explanation of why the two Churches differ on the date, see <http://www.go-arch.org/ourfaith/faithandlife/pasch.pdf>.

Wishing a Blessed Pascha to all,
Carole A. Buleza, Director

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What are you looking for? Are you looking for self-contemplation, or contemplation of created being, which does not lead to the deathless state? Or are you looking for the Uncreated, He who transcends the created? This is true “spirituality” and this is the goal of the Holy Orthodox Christian faith.

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Last fall, the Department accepted the resignation of Joseph Tershay, who served for over 20 years as the Coordinator for the Diocese of Los Angeles, and two years ago, that of Kh. Linda Funk who served several years and with great enthusiasm on behalf of the Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest. We are grateful to both for their love of and dedication to Orthodox Christian Education.

While you've seen the list of Diocesan Christian Education Coordinators many times, you may not be aware of the Associates, each of whom has a particular task. Like the Coordinators, the Associates are volunteers, and the Department's success is due to their dedication.

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As for additional personnel, Rosemary Shumski has been an excellent Administrative Assistant for the Department for the past 12 years. She has been active at our parish and in the Fellowship of St. John the Divine, particularly with the Creative Festivals. Now that we have reviewed and reworked the Creative Festivals, I've asked Rosemary to handle the program on the departmental level. In addition to Rosemary, Shelley Pituch comes into the office to assist with the website and the many details of the Orthodox Institute. As for me, I continue to work on the foundation for a new curriculum, and the Holy Land Exhibit. My poster project will produce four posters this summer, available at the PLCs and the National Convention. In addition to two new Holy Land posters, there will be a map of the patriarchates and traditionally Orthodox lands, and Rublev's Icon of the Trinity.

The Holy Land Exhibit
Connecting Us to the Reality of Christ

As a part of the 2012 Orthodox Institute, the exhibit "Scripture Through the Lens of the Holy Land" was created. It has traveled since then to several churches: Holy Resurrection in Tucson, St. George of Phoenix, St. George Cathedral in Coral Gables, St. George of Niagara Falls, and St. Sophia in Syracuse. The 7-foot banners and large photos and illustrations immerse the spiritual seeker in history, but more importantly, in a special time – "kairos," or sacred time – when the present moment touches eternity.

The exhibit consists of 20 three- and four-foot retractable banners that extend to a height of 7 feet. The exhibit's footprint is 10 by 40 feet; 20 by 40 feet is the *minimum* that will permit viewing by 15 to 20 guests at a time. To envision the space required for the alcoves and viewing area, picture four circles ten feet in diameter next to each other. A miniature paper version is shown below. It is best viewed in a hall, but there is some flexibility,



keeping in mind that the banners that separate the alcoves are back-to-back. Provided with the exhibit are clay replicas of an oil lamp and a jug; a coat stand that serves as a "spice tree"; and a CD for the music. A banner sign, and a guest comment book are also included. Tour guide pages have been developed for five levels of students, and one for adults, although we recommend that a few parishioners serve as guides.

The host parish pays for the shipping of the exhibit, about \$200 if ten days are allowed for its travel. Beyond that, to help defray the actual considerable cost of making the exhibit, any donation to the Department of Christian Education is greatly appreciated.

Why host the exhibit? The human reality of Jesus has always been stressed by the Antiochian Church (incarnational theology). In the early centuries of the Church, it balanced the viewpoint of those who emphasized His divinity, seemingly at the expense of His humanity. We face the same challenge today, and we must insist to our "spiritual, but not religious" neighbors that God became *this* man, a man who lived *two thousand years ago and lives still*. Consider reading and sharing Fr. Patrick Henry Reardon's *The Jesus We Missed: The Surprising Truth about the Humanity of Christ* (available on Amazon) with the faithful ahead of time, since its goal is similar, and so they can truly appreciate the exhibit. The exhibit is dedicated to all in the Archdiocese whose roots in the Middle East have given the Antiochian Department of Christian Education the particular privilege of presenting the Holy Land in word and image. For further information, including promotional materials, please contact aodce@antiochian.org, or visit www.antiochian.org/HolyLandExhibit.

His Eminence, Metropolitan SAVAS of
Pittsburgh, Keynote Speaker

The 2013 Orthodox Institute, "Blessed is
the Kingdom: Acts 2:42 – Church Past and
Present"



Metropolitan SAVAS (Zembillas) graduated in 1984 from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts (M.Div. with highest honors). He continued his studies at Oxford University, England, under the supervision of then-Bishop Kallistos Ware. Prior to his election to the throne of Pittsburgh, Metropolitan SAVAS served as the titular Bishop of Troas (2001–2011). During his tenure, he also served as the Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (1999–2009) and Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Church, Society and Culture (2009–2011). He was enthroned as Metropolitan of Pittsburgh at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Pittsburgh on December 8, 2011.

Metropolitan SAVAS has been an active participant in the digital social networks, with over a thousand followers on Facebook, engaging the issues of contemporary, culture and society from an Orthodox Christian perspective. He recently concluded his term as Chairman of the Committee for Church and Society of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America.

"Blessed is the Kingdom: Acts 2:42 – Church Past and Present" will offer courses on the persons and early writings that shaped the vision of the Church, on the heresies from the first centuries and what became of them, on the Eucharist, and finally on how the Church is living the vision now. The conference is for the person who wishes to learn about ecclesiology (the study of the Church), its beginnings and its contours today. Mark your calendars for October 31 – November 3, 2013, at the Antiochian Village.

Houston’s Pan-Orthodox Vacation Church School

Susie Sobchak of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church got involved in her church’s Vacation Church School (VCS) program in 1998. At that time, her church was already partnering with Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral, also in Houston, for a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional VCS. They had been using a Protestant VBS program by Group Publishing. It was a very engaging program, using rotation through learning centers and teen helpers. As Susie recalls, “Eventually, though, the theme got too broad, and very hokey. It was always, ‘God loves,’ ‘God forgives,’ and we started losing core teachings.” Not long after that, Group Publishing began producing the Holy Land series. This was exactly the kind of “meat and potatoes” curriculum that Susie and her friend, Irene Cassis, had been yearning for in their VCS program and they have used it now for several years. The Holy Land package is set up like a marketplace, with a different scriptural theme. It includes dramatic play, games, crafts, and songs. Irene and Susie have found many opportunities for Orthodox modification. For instance, when talking about forgiveness, they add confession; when learning the program songs, they add relevant Orthodox hymns or the Orthodox children songs of Khouria Gigi Shadid.

The Houston Pan-Orthodox VCS effort certainly takes advance planning, enthusiasm, and dedication. They do not skimp financially. There is a charge of \$30 per child, which is waived for those who have financial difficulties. Typically, at the end of the week they break even, but last year their small profit went to a local charity. In the months leading up to VCS, they hold team meetings and plan substitute activities with discussion, photography, extra crafts, or service projects, if necessary. Modifications are made, and when possible, they

make it a priority to use clergy to help with delivering the dramatic story-telling or teaching. Reflecting on the success of their VCS, Susie stated, “We are Pan-Orthodox and have such good volunteers – now it runs like a well-oiled machine!” And with all well-oiled machines, Susie, Irene, and the rest of the 50 to 70 volunteers stick to a routine and schedule that works well for them. By February of each year, Susie and Irene have met to review the package. From that point on, they meet almost every week.

They choose to hold their VCS program right after school ends, at the beginning of June and before families have left for vacation. The 150 to 200 children come Monday through Friday for a daily three-hour period, 9:30-12:30. The program materials suggest two hours, but organizers add the extra hour to expand the time allotted for each center. The three-hour time is organized by dividing the children into “families” of 10, with an adult leader for each “tribe.” A dramatic story-telling session is followed by three stations. A snack is included during that time, and it is related to the theme. Each year, organizers take what the Holy Land program has to offer, see if it is relevant, and modify it accordingly. If it engages the children actively, so that they remember what they have learned, the week’s goals have been met.

As Susie Sobchak observed, “You don’t have to reinvent the wheel. The Bible teachings are basic, and you just decide which activities to use.”

Shelley Pituch



Archdiocese Office

ORDINATIONS:

ISSA, Dn. Damascinos, to the holy priesthood, by Bishop JOHN on March10, 2013, at St. George Orthodox Church in Norwood, Massachusetts. He is attached there while he finishes his postgraduate studies at Holy Cross Seminary.

BEAN, John, to the holy diaconate, by Archbishop JOSEPH on March 3, 2013, at Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Salt Lake City, Utah. He is assigned to that parish.

ELEVATIONS:

SMITH, Father Peter, to the dignity of Archpriest, by Bishop BASIL on March 2, 2013, at St. Sophia Church in Dripping Springs, Texas.

WILLIAMS, Father Thomas, to the dignity of Archpriest, by Bishop BASIL on February 15, 2013, at St. George Cathedral, Kansas.

DONATIONS TO THE WORD
February 2013

Mr. Jason John Dudum	\$100
S. A. Tweel LTD	\$100
Mr. and Mrs. Sabeh Abou-Mrad	\$100
Lilly Abboud	\$100
Mr. Philip A. Ayoub	\$100
Elia and Micheline Lakkis	\$100
Mr. and Mrs. Nicola Qawwas	\$50
Dr. and Mrs. Ziad A. Al Assaad	\$50
Mr. and Mrs. Malek Barroody	\$50
Mr. Georges N. Nehme	\$50
Ms. Christine Ayoub	\$50
Ms. Janvieve Fasheh	\$50
Mrs. Georgette Zaccak	\$50
Simon and Julie Saba	\$50
Ms. Nadia Chaber	\$50
Mr. Jack T. Jacobs	\$50
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Salloum	\$30
Ms. Maria Angela Sepulveda	\$30
Ms. Odette Sawiris	\$25
Mr. Richard Abodeely	\$25
Mr. and Mrs. Fred R. Abdelahad	\$20
Mr. Michael J. Rosson	\$20
Mrs. Margaret Kramer	\$10
Mrs. Mary S Greene	\$10

Mariam Obeid donated \$ 50.00 for the good health of Elsie & George Nassor in honor of their 60th wedding anniversary.

DAILY DEVOTIONS
MAY 2013

V. Rev. George Alberts

1. EXODUS 2:11-22; JOB 2:1-10; MATTHEW 26:6-16 (FAST)
2. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-32; MATTHEW 26:1-27:2 (FAST)
3. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-2:2 HOLY AND GREAT FRIDAY (STRICT FAST)
4. ROMANS 6:3-11; MATTHEW 28:1-20 (FAST)
5. ACTS 1:1-8; JOHN 1:1-17 HOLY PASCHA
6. ACTS 1:12-17, 21-26; JOHN 1:18-28
7. ACTS 2:14-21; LUKE 24:12-35
8. 1 JOHN 1:1-7; JOHN 19:25-27; 21:24-25
9. ACTS 2:38-43; JOHN 3:1-15
10. PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11; LUKE 10:38-42; 11:27-28
11. HEBREWS 7:26-8:2; MATTHEW 5:14-19
12. ACTS 5:12-20; JOHN 20:19-31
13. ACTS 3:19-26; JOHN 2:1-11
14. ACTS 4:1-10; JOHN 3:16-21
15. ACTS 4:13-22; JOHN 5:17-24
16. ACTS 4:23-31; JOHN 5:24-30
17. ACTS 5:1-11; JOHN 5:30-6:2
18. ACTS 5:21-33; JOHN 6:14-27
19. ACTS 6:1-7; MARK 15:43-16:8
20. ACTS 6:8-7:5, 47-60; JOHN 4:46-54
21. ACTS 26:1-5, 12-20; JOHN 10:1-9
22. ACTS 8:18-25; JOHN 6:35-39
23. ACTS 8:26-39; JOHN 6:40-44
24. ACTS 8:40-9:19; JOHN 6:48-54
25. ACTS 9:20-31; JOHN 15:17-16:2
26. ACTS 9:32-42; JOHN 5:1-15
27. ACTS 10:1-16; JOHN 6:56-69
28. ACTS 10:21-33; JOHN 7:1-13
29. ACTS 14:6-18; JOHN 7:14-30
30. ACTS 10:34-43; JOHN 8:12-20
31. ACTS 10:44-11:10; JOHN 8:21-30



THE TREEHOUSE

Works of The Order in Action

Ten short years ago in Wichita, Kansas, a group of Orthodox Christians wanted to reach out to struggling moms who had chosen to let their babies live. In addition to praying for them, we wanted to provide tools to help moms take their lives in a positive direction. The Treehouse was born.

Today, we have celebrated 15,755 birthdays and helped change over a quarter million diapers! Our goal is to practice our Orthodox faith daily in everything we do at The Treehouse, teaching moms that they are not alone in their struggles. We want them

to know that, when their world seems like a very dark place, they have somewhere to turn for hope. We provide them and their babies with positive Christian role models and basic necessities, such as diapers, formula and an inexpensive thrift store. We offer, too, educational classes to nurture our moms so that their babies can flourish.

This Orthodox ministry, called The Treehouse, started out in a small space in the middle of Wichita with one faithful employee. That first year in 2002, she served 300 women. Ten years later, the staff has grown to four full-time employees and 3,500 volunteer-hours. In 2011, we served 1,200 moms. The needs are diverse, and we prayerfully ask God to guide us in His work. Each day He reveals new steps for us to take, that we may move our ministry forward and have a positive, loving impact on the lives of mothers and their babies.

We certainly haven't done it alone. Since our inception, The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the Wichita Orthodox churches, and individuals in the Orthodox community throughout the country have supported The Treehouse, financially and physically, and with prayer. For more than five years, The Order of St. Ignatius has played a large role in building our continuing education programs. With regular

grants from The Order, we have grown our offerings to include support groups and Bible studies, as well as parenting education and classes on relationships and life-skills. Two-thirds of the membership of the Board of The Treehouse are practicing Orthodox faithful, and several of our board members are members of The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch; their efforts on behalf of The Treehouse are a testimony to the Orthodox faith!

Recently we have been blessed by the presence of an old friend at The Treehouse. Yuri Rodriguez was one of the first moms helped by a gift from The Order of St. Ignatius. When Yuri came to The Treehouse, she had just one simple request – guide her to become the mom she wanted to be. Yuri joined our support groups, watched every parenting video in our library, clothed her son with quality, inexpensive items from our thrift store, and asked us to pray for God's guidance in motherhood. Now she is giving back as a Treehouse volunteer while she completes her nursing degree. We have been blessed to witness Yuri and her two children as they blossom into a thriving, dedicated, God-loving family.

Like Yuri, when moms embrace our programs to the fullest, learning new skills and adapting their parenting habits, we joyfully witness generations of lives changed for the better, forever.

I have witnessed The Treehouse grow and mature, from its beginning as a ministry of Wichita's St. George Cathedral, to its present place as a highly respected Pro-Life agency endorsed by our city's entire Orthodox Christian community and supported by the prayers, contributions and hard work of people of all faiths. The Tree House makes the light of Orthodox Christianity shine brightly throughout the heartland by putting our Holy Faith into compassionate action, matching our words with deeds.

Rt. Rev. Bishop BASIL
Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

For more information on this ministry: www.wichitatreehouse.com; for more information on The Order of St. Ignatius: www.orderofstignatius.org

Renee Croitoru Scott
The Treehouse, Founder & Executive Director

Preliminary
Food for Hungry People Program 2012
and World Food Day Pounds of Food Collected

	FFHP 2011	WFD 11-lbs	FFHP 2012	WFD 12-lbs		FFHP 2011	WFD 11-lbs	FFHP 2012	WFD 12-lbs
RECORDED THROUGH FEBRUARY, 2013									
OTTAWA, EASTERN CANADA AND UPSTATE NEW YORK					St. Andrew, Lewes	\$290.00	All Year	\$296.96	All Year
NOVA SCOTIA					MARYLAND				
St. Anthony, Halifax	\$600.00		\$500.00		St. Mary, Hunt Valley	\$0.00		\$25.00	
UPSTATE NEW YORK					Holy Cross, Linthicum	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. George, Albany	\$445.00		\$975.00		St. James The Apostle, Westminster	\$936.02		\$315.00	
St. Michael, Geneva	\$329.00		\$567.00		St. John the Baptist, Lewistown	\$180.00		\$201.00	
St. George, Niagara Falls	\$25.00		\$461.00		PENNSYLVANIA				
St. George, S. Glens Falls	\$207.00		\$52.00		St. George, Allentown	\$2,000.00		\$1,765.86	
St. Elias, Syracuse	\$316.99		\$271.00		St. George, Altoona	\$445.00	300	\$195.00	
St. George, New Hartford	\$368.50	386	\$278.00		St. Mary, Chambersburg	\$870.00		\$1,050.00	
ONTARIO					St. John Evangelist, Beaver Falls	\$3,000.00		\$2,600.00	
Holy Transfiguration, London	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. George, Bridgeville	\$1,233.00	All Year	\$1,246.00	All Year
St. Elias Cathedral, Ottawa	\$4,989.00	2,562	\$5,134.00		St. Ellien, Brownsville	\$0.00		\$250.00	
St. George, Richmond Hill	\$25.00		\$125.00		St. Anthony, Butler	\$46.00		\$127.00	
St. Mary, Mississauga	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Paul, Emmaus	\$470.00	All Year	\$294.94	All Year
St. Ignatius, Windsor	\$0.00		\$30.00		St. Michael, Greensburg	\$1,282.43		\$1,038.25	
St. Ignatius, St. Catharines	\$30.14	133	\$211.35	182	St. Mary, Johnstown	\$1,407.00	386	\$2,827.00	
Christ the Savior Mission, Waterloo	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. John Chrysostom, York	\$2,538.89	520	\$2,671.81	All Year
QUEBEC					St. Michael, Monessen	\$141.50		\$863.00	
St. Mary, Montreal	\$500.00	All Year	\$550.00	All Year	St. George Cathedral, Pittsburgh	\$4,575.00	2,000	\$425.00	3,000
St. George, Montreal	\$4,135.00	All Year	\$4,590.00	All Year	St. Philip, Souderton	\$2,029.86	All Year	\$1,884.60	All Year
St. Nicholas, Montreal	\$500.00	All Year	\$775.00	All Year	St. George, Upper Darby	\$75.00		\$114.00	
St. John the Baptist Mission, Laval	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Mary, Wilkes-Barre	\$3,240.00	200	\$2,810.00	250
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND					Holy Ascension Mission, West Chester	\$208.02		\$0.00	
Ss. Peter & Paul, Charlottetown	\$0.00		\$350.00		VIRGINIA				
TOTAL OTTAWA, EASTERN CANADA AND UPSTATE NEW YORK					St. Patrick, Warrenton	\$200.14	112	\$208.27	
NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, DC	\$12,469.64	3,081	\$14,869.35	182	St. Basil the Great, Poquoson	\$477.00		\$296.20	
CONNECTICUT					St. Raphael of Brooklyn Mission, Chantilly	\$757.85	255	\$700.00	
St. Nicholas, Bridgeport	\$1,270.00		\$1,085.00		Holy Trinity, Lynchburg	\$191.16		\$373.06	
St. George, Danbury	\$595.96	All Year	\$465.07	All Year	WEST VIRGINIA				
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA					St. Nicholas, Beckley	\$290.00		\$145.00	
St. Gregory, Washington, DC	\$120.50		\$2,900.00		St. George, Charleston	\$5,350.00	All Year	\$5,465.00	All Year
St. George, Washington, DC	\$20.00		\$511.75		Church of the Holy Spirit, Huntington	\$400.00	All Year	\$350.00	All Year
MARYLAND					TOTAL CHARLESTON/OAKLAND & MID-ATLANTIC				
Ss. Peter & Paul, Potomac	\$680.00		\$780.00		\$35,221.87	3,973	\$30,905.45	3,533	
NEW JERSEY					TOLEDO AND THE MIDWEST				
St. Anthony, Bergenfield	\$1,465.00	267	\$1,055.00	362	IOWA				
St. George, Little Falls	\$270.00		\$2,278.00		St. George, Cedar Rapids	\$1,500.81	All Year	\$1,020.00	All Year
St. Stephen, S. Plainfield	\$0.00		\$317.00		St. Raphael of Brooklyn, Iowa City	\$375.79	All Year	\$165.62	All Year
NEW YORK					ILLINOIS				
St. Mary, Brooklyn	\$1,384.70	600	\$1,920.65	25,000	St. Nicholas, Urbana	\$816.90	All Year	\$1,562.00	All Year
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Brooklyn	\$538.56		\$1,325.24		St. George, Cicero	\$707.25		\$999.25	
St. John the Baptist, Levittown	\$373.00	125	\$230.00		All Saints, Chicago	\$3,420.32	3,995	\$5,004.70	6,673
Church of the Virgin Mary, Yonkers	\$100.00		\$400.00		St. Elias, Peoria	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. James Mission, Poughkeepsie	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. George, Spring Valley	\$475.00		\$570.00	
St. Anthony, Melville	\$0.00		\$0.00		Holy Transfiguration, Warrenville	\$295.23		\$233.05	
TOTAL NEW YORK & WASHINGTON, DC					St. Mary, Palos Heights	\$1,319.00		\$468.09	486
CHARLESTON/OAKLAND & MID-ATLANTIC	\$6,817.72	992	\$13,267.71	25,362	NDIANA				
DELAWARE					All Saints, Bloomington	\$1,032.36	20,000	\$1,344.00	37,551
St. Athanasius, Claymont	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. John Chrysostom, Fort Wayne	\$2,131.00		\$949.87	
					Holy Resurrection, Hobart	\$0.00		\$0.00	
					St. George, Indianapolis	\$1,855.41	381	\$1,261.01	476
					St. George, Terre Haute	\$100.00		\$400.00	



St. Mary, Goshen	\$393.56		\$203.30		ARKANSAS				
St. Mary of Egypt, Greenwood	\$300.00		\$285.00		St. Nicholas, Springdale	\$0.00		\$40.51	
KENTUCKY					Holy Trinity, Little Rock	\$100.00		\$231.33	
St. Andrew, Lexington	\$800.00		\$800.00		Ss. Peter and Paul Mission, Hot Springs	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Michael, Louisville	\$1,540.00	80,000	\$1,725.00	85,000	FLORIDA				
Holy Apostles, Bowling Green	\$308.21		\$0.00		St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables	\$500.00	420	\$1,272.00	
MICHIGAN					St. Philip, Davie	\$240.64		\$360.65	
Holy Incarnation, Lincoln Park	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Andrew, Eustis	\$30.00		\$0.00	100
St. Mary, Berkley	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. George, Jacksonville	\$1,182.00		\$1,670.00	
St. George, Troy	\$670.00		\$1,550.00		Our Lady of Regla, Miami	\$75.00		\$105.00	
St. George, Flint	\$1,340.29	All Year	\$1,031.00	All Year	St. Anthony the Great, Melbourne	\$101.22		\$235.27	
St. George, Grand Rapids	\$990.24	386	\$925.00		St. Peter the Apostle Mission, Fort Myers	\$0.00	1,000	\$0.00	1,000
St. Nicholas, Grand Rapids	\$3,442.00	All Year	\$2,650.00	All Year	St. George, Orlando	\$215.00	20,000	\$293.00	32,560
St. Mary, Iron Mountain	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Basil, Silver Springs	\$200.00	240	\$200.00	300
St. Simon, Ironwood	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Nicholas, St. Petersburg	\$100.00		\$760.85	750
St. Mary, Livonia	\$25.00		\$100.00	500	St. Mary, W. Palm Beach	\$995.50		\$1,497.00	340
St. James, Williamston	\$110.50	172	\$332.00		Holy Cross, Ormond Beach	\$966.56		\$976.76	
St. Catherine of Alexandria, Ypsilanti	\$225.00		\$100.00		St. Paul, Naples	\$1,454.00	386	\$100.00	
Holy Cross Mission, Dorr	\$0.00		\$398.23		St. Andrew the Apostle, Pensacola	\$509.70		\$614.75	
Holy Incarnation, Allen Park	\$0.00		\$0.00		GEORGIA				
MINNESOTA					St. Elias, Atlanta	\$1,069.45		\$1,123.00	
St. George, West St. Paul	\$611.98	1,654	\$470.76		St. Stephen, Hiram	\$600.00	2,214	\$500.00	2,064
MISSOURI					LOUISIANA				
All Saints of North America, Maryland Heights	\$587.25	887	\$168.39	3,000	Archangel Gabriel, Lafayette	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. John the Theologian, Cape Girardeau	\$200.00		\$300.00		St. Basil, Metairie	\$1,096.00		\$1,204.00	
OHIO					MISSISSIPPI				
St. George, Akron	\$650.00		\$650.00		St. George, Vicksburg	\$1,069.72		\$1,697.72	
St. George, Canton	\$745.00		\$228.00		St. Peter, Madison	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Luke the Evangelist Mission, Chagrin Falls	\$611.00		\$142.00		NORTH CAROLINA				
St. George, Cleveland	\$1,796.00	All Year	\$932.00	All Year	Ss. Peter & Paul, Boone	\$31.00	1,587	\$0.00	2,207
St. James, Loveland	\$100.00		\$0.00		All Saints, Raleigh	\$2,335.40	1,006	\$924.00	1,780
St. Matthew, N. Royalton	\$596.00		\$745.00		SOUTH CAROLINA				
St. Elias, Sylvania	\$350.00		\$250.00		St. Catherine, Aiken	\$100.00		\$0.00	
St. George Cathedral, Toledo	\$681.50	5,782	\$668.44	11,156	St. Barnabas, Lexington	\$150.00		\$236.90	
St. Mark, Youngstown	\$1,190.00	All Year	\$1,113.00	All Year	St. Nicholas, Myrtle Beach	\$80.00		\$135.00	
St. Barnabas, Sunbury	\$160.80	200	\$522.41	All Year	Christ the Savior, Anderson	\$365.00	3,638	\$398.75	7,001
WISCONSIN					TENNESSEE				
St. Elias, La Crosse	\$324.52	77	\$287.69	103	Holy Resurrection, Johnson City	\$126.23		\$106.00	
St. Nicholas, Cedarburg	\$1,100.00	19,186	\$843.00		St. Ignatius, Franklin	\$1,003.00		\$533.88	
St. Ignatius, Madison	\$100.00		\$50.00		St. John, Memphis	\$200.00	All Year	\$517.00	All Year
TOTAL TOLEDO AND THE MIDWEST	\$33,977.92	132,720	\$31,447.81	144,945	St. Elizabeth, Murfreesboro	\$397.10		\$0.00	
WORCESTER AND NEW ENGLAND					TOTAL MIAMI AND THE SOUTHEAST	\$15,312.52	30,491	\$15,773.37	48,102
MASSACHUSETTS					WICHITA AND MID-AMERICA				
St. Michael, Cotuit	\$629.38		\$627.50		COLORADO				
All Saints, S. Weymouth	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Luke, Erie	\$2,052.82	1,357	\$1,338.84	
St. Mary, Cambridge	\$747.16	All Year	\$1,439.14	All Year	St. Augustine, Denver	\$206.00		\$278.00	
St. John of Damascus, Dedham	\$3,232.38		\$2,591.11		St. Elias, Arvada	\$10,898.67		\$10,000.00	
St. George, Lawrence	\$130.00		\$459.00		St. Mark, Denver	\$575.00	1,843	\$200.00	367
St. George, Lowell	\$2,800.00		\$1,825.00		St. Columba, Lafayette	\$257.00		\$219.88	
St. George, Norwood	\$2,871.25	1,324	\$3,546.39	937	St. James, Fort Collins	\$347.47		\$180.69	
St. George, W. Roxbury	\$1,782.00	6,500	\$2,025.00	6,500	St. John Chrysostom, Golden	\$483.00	580	\$443.75	
St. George Cathedral, Worcester	\$4,353.08	14,000	\$4,005.53		IOWA				
St. Stephen, Springfield	\$0.009		\$0.00		St. Thomas, Sioux City	\$0.00		\$100.00	
Emmanuel, Warren	\$0.00		\$0.00		KANSAS				
RHODE ISLAND					St. Michael Mission, Wichita	\$64.08		\$214.89	
St. Mary, Pawtucket	\$2,200.00		\$2,200.00		Ss. Peter & Paul, Topeka	\$54.97		\$117.25	
TOTAL WORCESTER AND NEW ENGLAND	\$18,745.75	21,824	\$18,718.67	7,437	St. George Cathedral, Wichita	\$610.00	10,000	\$1,065.00	13,000
MIAMI AND THE SOUTHEAST					St. Mary, Wichita	\$50.00	All Year	\$0.00	All Year
ALABAMA					All Saints, Salina	\$0.00		\$0.00	
Church of the Annunciation, Birmingham	\$20.00		\$40.00		St. Mary Magdalene, Manhattan	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Michael Mission, Dothan	\$0.00		\$0.00		Holy Transfiguration, Hillsboro	\$274.50		\$280.00	
					St. Basil, Kansas City	\$0.00		\$0.00	
					Three Hierarchs, Garden City	\$290.65	All Year	\$19.68	All Year

LOUISIANA					St. John the Divine, Lake Charles	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Nicholas, Shreveport	\$244.00	All Year	\$209.00	All Year	NEW MEXICO				
Holy Trinity, Santa Fe	\$408.77		\$215.77		St. George, Kearney	\$311.00		\$254.88	
NEBRASKA					St. Mary, Omaha	\$496.92		\$461.00	
St. George, Kearney	\$311.00		\$254.88		St. Vincent of Lerins, Omaha	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Mary, Omaha	\$496.92		\$461.00		OKLAHOMA				
St. Vincent of Lerins, Omaha	\$0.00		\$0.00		Church of the Ascension, Norman	\$0.00		\$0.00	
OKLAHOMA					St. Elijah, Oklahoma City	\$5,405.07	All Year	\$4,545.03	All Year
Church of the Ascension, Norman	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Antony, Tulsa	\$0.00		\$150.00	
St. Elijah, Oklahoma City	\$5,405.07	All Year	\$4,545.03	All Year	St. Andrew, Oklahoma City	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Antony, Tulsa	\$0.00		\$150.00		St. James, Stillwater	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Andrew, Oklahoma City	\$0.00		\$0.00		SOUTH DAKOTA				
St. James, Stillwater	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. John the Theologian, Rapid City	\$168.05	2,534	\$157.00	41
TEXAS					Holy Apostles, Bullard	\$0.00		\$0.00	
Holy Apostles, Bullard	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Elias, Austin	\$683.31	All Year	\$376.15	All Year
St. Elias, Austin	\$683.31	All Year	\$376.15	All Year	St. John the Forerunner, Cedar Park	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. John the Forerunner, Cedar Park	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Michael, Beaumont	\$300.00	322	\$336.00	
St. Michael, Beaumont	\$300.00	322	\$336.00		St. Ephraim the Syrian, San Antonio	\$507.48		\$1,177.45	
St. Ephraim the Syrian, San Antonio	\$507.48		\$1,177.45		Ss. Constantine & Helen, Dallas	\$1,500.00		\$120.00	
Ss. Constantine & Helen, Dallas	\$1,500.00		\$120.00		St. George, El Paso	\$174.31	All Year	\$126.23	All Year
St. George, El Paso	\$174.31	All Year	\$126.23	All Year	St. Peter, Fort Worth	\$1,151.59	560	\$100.00	All Year
St. Peter, Fort Worth	\$1,151.59	560	\$100.00	All Year	St. Joseph, Houston	\$150.00	All Year	\$0.00	All Year
St. Joseph, Houston	\$150.00	All Year	\$0.00	All Year	St. George, Houston	\$2,111.76	All Year	\$2,897.00	All Year
St. George, Houston	\$2,111.76	All Year	\$2,897.00	All Year	St. Paul, Houston	\$0..00		\$517.44	
St. Paul, Houston	\$0..00		\$517.44		St. Luke, Abilene	\$25.00		\$50.00	
St. Luke, Abilene	\$25.00		\$50.00		St. Anthony the Great, Spring	\$49.61		\$794.84	
St. Anthony the Great, Spring	\$49.61		\$794.84		St. Sophia, Dripping Springs	\$0.00		\$256.05	
St. Sophia, Dripping Springs	\$0.00		\$256.05		Our Lady of Walsingham, Mesquite	\$200.00		\$0.00	
Our Lady of Walsingham, Mesquite	\$200.00		\$0.00		St. Benedict, Wichita Falls	\$322.23		\$423.25	
St. Benedict, Wichita Falls	\$322.23		\$423.25		Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste, Sugar Land	\$0.00		\$0.00	
Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste, Sugar Land	\$0.00		\$0.00		St. Silouan the Athonite, College Station	\$200.00	191	\$294.86	121
St. Silouan the Athonite, College Station	\$200.00	191	\$294.86	121	Christ the Saviour, Jacksonville	\$0.00	27,000	\$0.00	24,690
Christ the Saviour, Jacksonville	\$0.00	27,000	\$0.00	24,690	Mission of the Holy Mother of God, Fredricksburg	\$0.00		\$70.86	
Mission of the Holy Mother of God, Fredricksburg	\$0.00		\$70.86		Holy Cross Mission, Odessa	\$0.00		\$0.00	
Holy Cross Mission, Odessa	\$0.00		\$0.00		WYOMING				
WYOMING					Holy Resurrection, Gillette	\$800.00	475	\$800.00	
Holy Resurrection, Gillette	\$800.00	475	\$800.00		TOTAL WICHITA & MID-AMERICA	\$31,373.26	44,862	\$28,790.80	38,219
TOTAL WICHITA & MID-AMERICA	\$31,373.26	44,862	\$28,790.80	38,219	EAGLE RIVER AND THE NORTHWEST				
EAGLE RIVER AND THE NORTHWEST					ALBERTA				
ALBERTA					St. Philip, Edmonton	\$2,060.08		\$972.89	
St. Philip, Edmonton	\$2,060.08		\$972.89		Church of the Annunciation, Calgary	\$0.00		\$0.00	
Church of the Annunciation, Calgary	\$0.00		\$0.00		Protection of the Holy Theotokos, Ft. Saskatchewan	\$0.00		\$282.00	
Protection of the Holy Theotokos, Ft. Saskatchewan	\$0.00		\$282.00		ALASKA				
ALASKA					St. Herman, Wasilla	\$111.58		\$0.00	
St. Herman, Wasilla	\$111.58		\$0.00		All Saints Mission, Homer	\$100.00		\$0.00	
All Saints Mission, Homer	\$100.00		\$0.00		St. John Cathedral, Eagle River	\$1,161.00		\$1,190.00	
St. John Cathedral, Eagle River	\$1,161.00		\$1,190.00		BRITISH COLUMBIA				
BRITISH COLUMBIA					St. Joseph the Damascene, New Westminster	\$0.00		\$0.00	
St. Joseph the Damascene, New Westminster	\$0.00		\$0.00		Holy Nativity, Langley	\$123.00		\$0.00	
Holy Nativity, Langley	\$123.00		\$0.00		IDAHO				
IDAHO					St. John the Baptist, Post Falls	\$149.00		\$140.61	
St. John the Baptist, Post Falls	\$149.00		\$140.61		St. Ignatius, Twin Falls	\$347.00		\$411.00	
St. Ignatius, Twin Falls	\$347.00		\$411.00		Holy Transfiguration Mission, Boise	\$0.00		\$0.00	
Holy Transfiguration Mission, Boise	\$0.00		\$0.00		Holy Myrrhbearing Women Mission, Bonners Ferry	\$0.00	All Year	\$85.00	All Year
Holy Myrrhbearing Women Mission, Bonners Ferry	\$0.00	All Year	\$85.00	All Year					

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SASKATCHEWAN					
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St. Innocent, Everson	\$376.00	All Year	\$750.00	All Year	
St. Thomas Mission, Snohomish	\$0.00		\$0.00		
Christ the Savior Mission, Spokane Valley	\$10.00		\$25.00		
Three Holy Hierarchs Mission, Wenatchee	\$231.66		\$259.08		124
Saint Katherine Mission, Kirkland	\$54.73		\$0.00		
Prophet Elijah Mission, Ellensburg			\$100.00		
UTAH					
Ss. Peter & Paul, Salt Lake City	\$250.00		\$50.00		
TOTAL EAGLE RIVER AND THE NORTHWEST					
	\$6,948.16	0	\$6,929.64		124
LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST					
ARIZONA					
Holy Resurrection, Tucson	\$263.15		\$301.51		
St. Ignatius Mission, Mesa	\$200.00		\$200.00		
St. George Church, Phoenix	\$710.00	All Year	\$985.00	All Year	
CALIFORNIA					
Ss. Peter & Paul, Ben Lomond	\$266.85		\$0.00		
St. Raphael of Brooklyn Mission, Thousand Springs	\$0.00		\$284.23		
St. Michael, Whittier	\$802.79	350	\$492.00		
St. Luke, Garden Grove	\$981.57	All Year	\$1,019.55	All Year	
All Saints Mission, Rohnert Park	\$0.00		\$0.00		
St. Athanasius, Goleta	\$45.00	1,500	\$20.00		11,875
St. Barnabas, Costa Mesa	\$300.00		\$300.00		
St. Mark, Irvine	\$925.00	200	\$10,050.00		225
Holy Cross, Palmdale	\$64.00		\$0.00		
St. Timothy, Lompoc	\$336.66	All Year	\$312.62	All Year	
St. James, Placentia	\$25.00		\$0.00		
Orthodox Church of the Redeemer, Los Altos Hills	\$70.00	600	\$300.00		400
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles	\$6,657.00	22,000	\$4,843.00		24,000
St. John the Evangelist, Orinda	\$1,197.01		\$1,457.50		
St. Andrew, Riverside	\$65.00		\$100.00		
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St. Athanasius, Sacramento	\$356.00		\$557.40		
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St. Peter the Apostle, Pomona	\$400.00		\$500.00		
St. Nicholas, San Francisco	\$520.00	All Year	\$20.00	All Year	
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St. Matthew, Torrance	\$300.00		\$318.50		
St. Michael, Van Nuys	\$1,440.00	1,000	\$1,970.00		1,400
Holy Virgin Mary, W. Sacramento	\$280.00		\$160.00		
St. Timothy, Fairfield	\$550.55		\$30.00		
St. John, San Juan Capistrano	\$16.00		\$0.00		
St. George, Upland	\$100.00		\$20.00		
St. James Mission, Modesto	\$298.50		\$0.00		
St. Gabriel, Angels Camp	\$250.00		\$200.00		
NEVADA					
St. Michael, Las Vegas	\$15.00		\$50.00		
TOTAL LOS ANGELES AND THE WEST					
	\$19,374.98	25,650	\$23,551.30		37,900
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECORDED THROUGH FEBRUARY 2013	\$4,969.49		\$9,050.00		
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$185,211.31	263,593	\$193,304.10		305,804

Communities in Action

Bishop THOMAS Visits Saint John the Baptist Mission for their Patronal Feast

On the weekend of August 29, 2012, prior to the commemoration of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, Bishop THOMAS of the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic, made an episcopal visit to the faithful at Saint John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Lewistown, Maryland. Bishop THOMAS presided at Vespers on Saturday, August 25, and at Matins and Divine Liturgy on Sunday, August 26. The visit marked the fourth time that Bishop THOMAS has visited the mission since it was established by Metropolitan PHILIP on March 20, 2009. St. John the Baptist Mission, located about 65 miles from Baltimore and Washington, is the only Western Rite Antiochian Orthodox church in Maryland.

During the weekend celebrations, Bishop THOMAS shared with the people how the commemoration had personal significance for him, since he had served his first Divine Liturgy as a newly ordained priest on the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist. Bishop THOMAS proclaimed that the patron of the mission was not one who was politically correct, but was rather one who was bold in the faith – who had “guts” and was willing to stand for the truth – and who, like the Theotokos, was willing to say Yes to God, no matter the cost. Bishop THOMAS encouraged the people of St. John the Baptist to follow the example of their patron, the Forerunner of Christ.

For Saturday Vespers, the mission’s priest and pastor, Father James Hamrick, was joined by

visiting priests Father Nicholas Alford (and wife, Khouria Rebecca, St. Gregory the Great Church, Washington, D.C.) and Father Stanley Nield (and wife, Khouria Mary, Antiochian Orthodox Mission, Wellington, New Zealand). Father Stanley and Kh. Mary were guests of the Alford family and were able to visit St. John the Baptist Mission just ahead of their journey to their residency at the Antiochian House of Studies at Antiochian Village near Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

Following Divine Liturgy on Sunday, Father James and the people of St. John the Baptist hosted a dinner at the nearby Lewistown United Methodist Church for Bishop THOMAS. The bountiful spread of food included Bishop THOMAS’s favorite: fresh strawberries! *Many years, Master!*

Students from Fifth to Eighth Grade Prepare for the Nativity at the St. Herman Retreat

Thirty-two middle school students and ten chaperones gathered for a weekend of spiritual refreshment, fellowship and fun at the Antiochian Village Conference Center during the annual St. Herman Retreat, December 14–16, 2012. In its fifth year, the St. Herman Retreat is a pan-Orthodox program designed for students in fifth through eighth grades, and organized and facilitated by Antiochian Village staff. The most recent retreat theme, “Reading the Holy Scriptures:




Weaving Ourselves into the History of God’s Love,” was taught through interactive presentations and discussions led by guest speaker, Fr. Noah Bushelli, pastor of St. Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church, in Souderton, Pennsylvania. Other activities included games, campfires, an outdoor supplication service to St. Herman of Alaska, a service project for the St. Herman House of Hospitality in Cleveland, Ohio, candle-dipping, geocaching (a treasure-hunting game involving a GPS device), and weekend liturgical services.

The distraction-free environment of the Village, combined with the spiritual focus of the retreat, provided a wonderful opportunity for participants to prepare themselves for the Feast of the Nativity while reflecting on these encouraging words from St. Herman: “From this day, from this hour, from this minute, let us strive to love God above all and to fulfill His holy will.”

The 2013 St. Herman Retreat is scheduled for December 13–15. Registration information is available on www.antiochianvillage.org. To learn more about volunteering as a chaperone, contact Barli Ross, Director of Program Development for the Conference Center, at 724.238.3677, extension 425.





20th Annual Parish Life Conference

New Orleans, Louisiana
June 12 – 16, 2013

Diocese of Miami and the Southeast

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www.stbasilneworleans.org

Beginning January 1, 2013

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OR

www.hilton.com/en/hotels/personalized/MSYAHHH-RDO-20130612/index.html?WT.mc_id=POG

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Single/Double Occupancy:	\$104.00
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Quad Occupancy:	\$139.00
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Rates good 3 days prior and after PLC	
Room Reservations:	1 (800) 872-5914

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Parish Life Conference 2013

EVENTS & MEETINGS

- Fellowship of St. John the Divine
- Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch
- Antiochian Women
- Teen SOYO
- Bible Bowl
- Divine Liturgy
- Creative Arts Contest
- Fine Dining New Orleans Style
- Tours: City, River, and the Bayous

NEW ORLEANS

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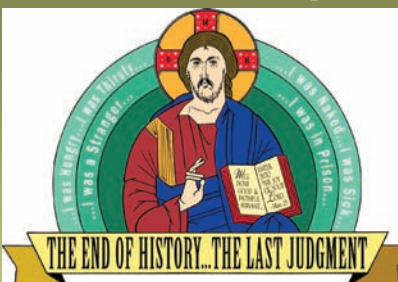
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- Order of St. Ignatius Luncheon
- Children's Vacation Church School
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- Cruise on the "Belle of Louisville"
- Senior Presentation with His Grace Bishop ANTHONY
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and tell them you are going to the Midwest Parish Life Conference



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Eastern Dioceses of Charleston & New York
July 3-7, 2013

HOSTED BY:
St. Paul
Emmaus, PA

AT THE
Holiday Inn Conference Center
Lehigh Valley, PA

Event Highlights

Wednesday, July 3
Ironpigs Baseball Game, 6pm

Thursday, July 4
Lost Arabic Orthodox Saints
Samuel Noble, 3-4pm

Friday, July 5
Oratorical Presentations, 11am-1pm
Bible Bowl, 8-10pm
Teen Mixer, 10pm-12am
20/40 Wine Tasting Event, 10pm-12am

Saturday, July 6
Orthodox Christian Parenting Workshop
Rev. Fr. Noah Bushelli of St. Philip, Souderton, 1pm

Keynote Address by
Dr. Christopher Veniamin
Prof. of Patristics at St. Tikhon's Seminary
3-4:30pm

Banquet/Haffi Fusion
6:30pm-12am

Sunday, July 7
Hierarchal Divine Liturgy, 10am

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Lehigh Valley

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mention Eastern Dioceses PLC when booking

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Children and Teen Activities, Kids Club, Workshops,
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Order of St. Ignatius Dinner,
Friday Evening Family Dinner & Entertainment,
Bible Bowl & Ice Cream Shoppe Social,
Awards Lunch/Choir Festival

For Event Registration, Conference forms,
and more detailed information,
please visit www.PLC2013.org
Early Bird Event Registration Deadline May 1, 2013

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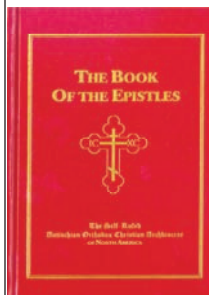
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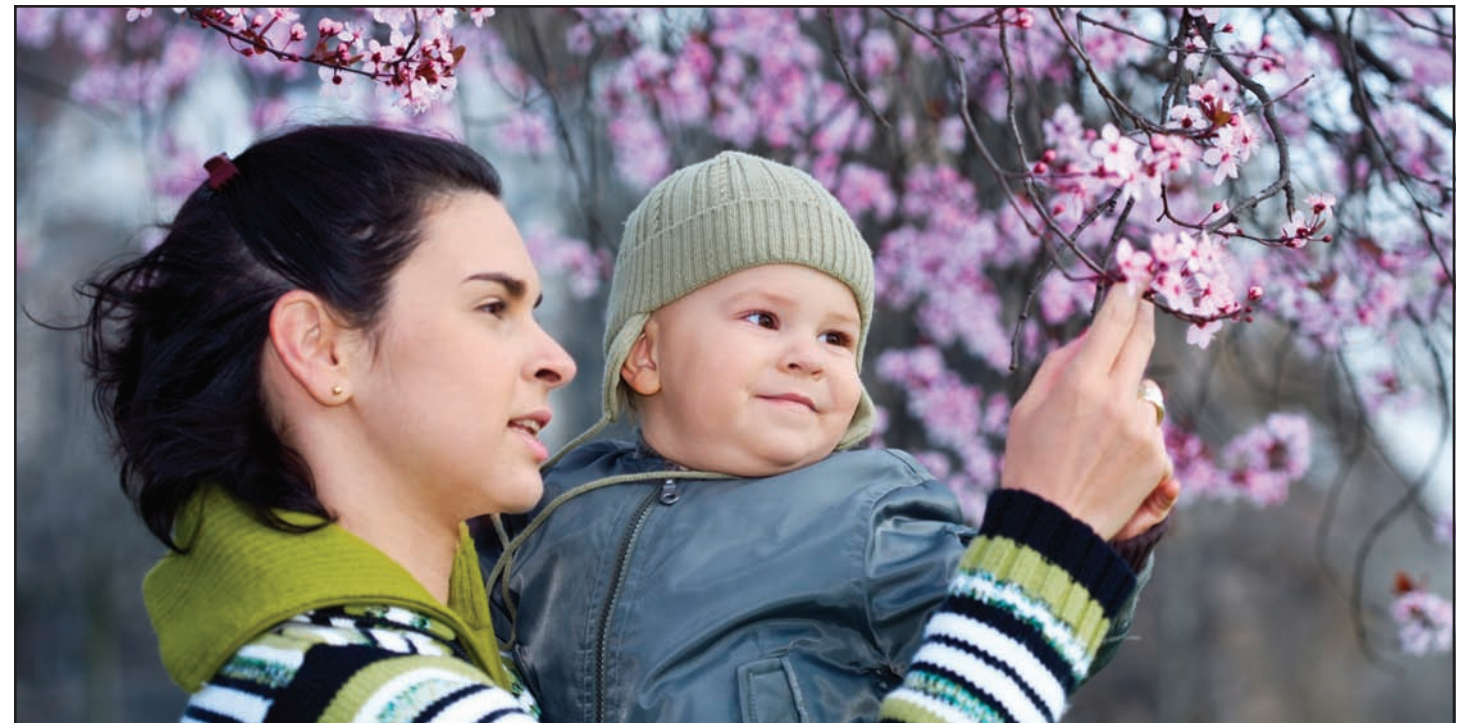
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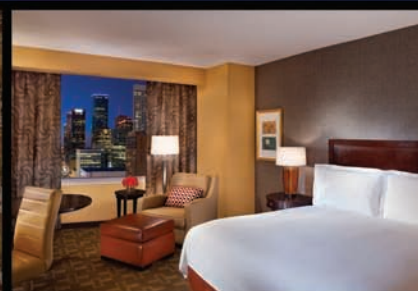
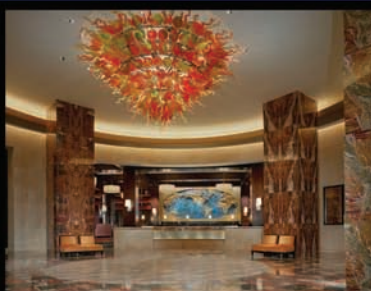
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