



# SS. PETER AND PAUL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

*"All Things Are Possible to Him Who Believes" (Mark 9:23)*

Metropolitan SABA  
Primate of the Antiochian  
Archdiocese

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH, 2024**  
**TONE 3 / EOTHINON 3; SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER  
PENTECOST & SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**

**HIEROMARTYR BLAISE, BISHOP OF SEBASTIA, AND  
COMPANIONS**

THEODORA THE EMPRESS; NEW-MARTYR  
GEORGE OF SERBIA

**\*\*Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom\*\***

Everyone should examine himself, whether he's worthy to commune or not. That's not my opinion—it's what the Sacred Scriptures say: Everyone should examine himself when communing of the Body and Blood of Christ. We don't become worthy just because we're in the Holy Land or on Mt. Sinai. We have to be very attentive in preparing for Communion!

*- Elder Pavlos of Mt. Sinai Monastery*

**Great Vespers:** Saturday 6:00 pm  
(Check the Calendar for possible  
cancellation)

**Matins:** Sundays 9:20am

**Divine Liturgy:** Sundays 10:30am

**Confessions:** By appointment

### CHOIR DIRECTOR

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Svitlana Sweat

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### & YOUNG ADULTS

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Jumana Mislch

### GIFT SHOP

Gail Bailey

• We welcome all our guests and visitors worshipping with us at the Divine Liturgy.  
• Please let our ushers know that you are visiting with us today. We would love to stay in touch!  
• Please know that Holy Communion is offered to Orthodox Christians, after preparing themselves through prayers, fasting, & confession.  
• Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to receive blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy & share food with us at coffee hour.

## THE SYNAXARION

On February 11 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the holy Hieromartyr Blaise, bishop of Sebastia, and his companions.

### *Verses*

*Since the throat of Blaise was with the sword clean severed,  
From ailing throats he averteth harmful humors.  
On the eleventh, unyielding bronze cut the neck of Blaise.*

Born in Cappadocia, Blaise (Vlassios) was meek and God-fearing from early childhood. During a period of violent persecution of Christians, Blaise encouraged his flock and visited the martyrs in prison, among them the famous Eustratius. Later in life, Blaise retired to the mountain of Argeos and lived there in a cave. Ferocious wild beasts, recognizing a holy man, came to him and he gently tamed them. Persecutors sent by the emperor Licinius found the saint in that hidden spot and took him for trial. On the way there, Blaise healed a boy who had a bone stuck in his throat and, at the petition of a poor widow, made the wolf that had taken her pig return it to her. The dark judges tortured him, flogging him terribly. By his steadfastness, Blaise brought many unbelievers to the Christian Faith. Seven women and two children were thrown into prison with him. Together, they suffered and were glorified on this day in 316. Blaise's prayers are sought for the health and wellbeing of domestic animals and for protection from wild beasts. He is also invoked against ailing and sore throats.

On this day, we also commemorate Theodora the empress; and New-martyr George of Serbia. By the intercessions of Thy saints, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

### RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

### APOLYTIKION OF ST. BLAISE IN TONE FOUR

By choosing the Apostles' way of life, thou hast succeeded to their throne. Inspired by God, thou didst find the way to divine contemplation through the practice of virtue. After teaching the Word of Truth without error, thou didst defend the Faith to the very shedding of thy blood, O Holy Martyr among bishops Blaise. Entreat the Lord our God to save our souls

### APOLYTIKION OF SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TONE FOUR

O foremost in the ranks of Apostles, and teachers of the world, Peter and Paul, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace unto the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.

### ORDINARY KONTAKION IN TONE TWO

TO protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

**For the Health of these Parishioners**

John & Lily Bitar	Showke George	Christo & Mary Christakis
Suad Shammās	Edward & Rima Rizkallah	Hanneh Daoud
Mike & Dorothy Marge	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Michael Shihadi	Joanna Khoury	Sherrie Zachariah & family
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Ziad, Leila Deeb & family
Qustandi & Nahida Kaibni	Tagreed Tawil & Family	Nour & Anastasia & Sonny
Nuha & family	Yousef & Ghada	Asma Ayoub
Isabel Threded	Ghassan & Zakieh Jweied	Elias, Taylor & Rami
Shakeh Kerjilian & family	Shirley Neri & family	Margo, Sam & family
Steve, Jenn & family	Fred & Grace Saah	Barbara Zamer & family
Brian, Caroline & family	Fadia, Rich & family	Edward & Eleanor Husson

**DEPARTED**

Michael Davis Jr.  
 Charlie Ayoub  
 Helweh & Naim Tawil  
 Issa & Kamra Zanayed  
 Farag Tawil  
 Fuad Sahouri  
 \* Sara Habtemariam

**Special Prayer this Week for**

Maria Zacharias	Wyne-Hareg	Hind, Habib Debs & family
Ruby Maggard	Maha, Flavio & family	Jeannine & family
Gino Michaels & family	Olivia Azat	Lynn & family
Anita & Robert	Jean Yousef & family	Johny, Mariam, James
Nadir, Silvia, Hana Tawil	Victor & Linda Joubbran & Family	Gibran, Larry
Nelly, Jerri Audi & family	Elias, Ghada Taweel & family	Bassam, Georgette Tawil & family
Nawal, Johnny Kazaleh & Family	Jack, Beth, Helena Tawil	Charlie, Reid Tawil

Parish Life Conference, June 27-30, @  
 Antiochian Village  
*Registration is now open*



**Coffee Hour Available Dates**

March 10      April 7  
 March 24      April 28  
 March 31      May 5

Host Coffee Hour



Offer Holy Bread



**Coffee Hour** is offered by **Silvia & Nadir Tawil** for the health of their **Family** and in loving memory of their **Departed Family Members.**

If you want to offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour please use the codes on the side to do so.

## Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Today, February 11th, **Young Adults Grounded in Faith**, @ 12:30 Church Basement.

Thursday, February 15, Book Club Meeting, 8:30 pm (zoom)

Saturday, February 24th, **Young Adults & Teen SOYO A Day of Service, Prayer & Meditation at the Monastery of St. Nina.**

Saturday, March 9th, **Antiochian Women Retreat & Tea with Kh. Janet Shadid.** Sign up & Details on the side.

Saturday, March 9th, **Young Adults Wine & Cheese.**

## Book Club

Thursday 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm

February 15, 29  
March 14, 28



**1st & 3rd Tuesday  
Bible Study  
(8:30 pm/Zoom)**

REGISTER HERE



**Teen SOYO Meeting  
TODAY**

**Antiochian Orthodox  
Women's Retreat  
& Tea**

March 9, 2023



## Forever Young!

**First Thursday of the Month:** March 7th, April 4th, May 2nd,  
June 6th

Please sign up to attend as many of these meetings  
as you can.

In **March meeting**, a **physical therapist** will teach  
us exercises to improve our balance and avoid falls.

Stay tuned for a Zumba meeting in the future!



## PROJECT MEXICO HOMEBUILDING

May 24th through August 14th

Week-long or multiple week construction teams

Great for teens and tweens, adult team leaders!

Contact Svitlana Sweat, Ss P&P missions committee



## February Charity Drive

**Will You Give The Water of Life?**

**Digging Wells for Orthodox Missions in Cameroon**

Our goal as a parish is to dig two wells for two communities in Cameroon. This will cost \$15,000. **A generous parishioner has offered a matching gift of \$3,500 (\$1 for \$1).** Can you chip in a few bucks to make a difference in the lives of hundreds?

To donate online, kindly choose "Charity Drive" from the drop-down list or leave a check with "Charity Drive/Wells" on the memo.



There is a box at the candle stand to donate coins or small bills to the **Orthodox Christian Mission Center**

We are grateful for your generosity!

For online donations, use your phone's camera to scan this code and follow the link to our secure donation portal.



## **THE EPISTLE**

*Sing praises to our God, sing praises. Clap your hands, all ye peoples.*

### **The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:1-10)**

Brethren, working together with Him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For He says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

## **THE GOSPEL**

### **The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (25:14-30, + Luke 8:8)**

The Lord spoke this parable: A man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying: "Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master." And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying: "Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master." He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying: "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master answered him, "You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." As Jesus said these things He cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

# The One Gospel

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

The origin of the word enjeel [“gospel,” in Arabic] is the Greek word evangelion, originally meaning “good news.” This word was associated with the messenger who bears the news of victory. It was customary for him to return immediately after the victory, in order to proclaim it to the people, and he would then prepare the ceremony of welcoming the returning king and army with laurel wreaths. The early Christians applied this word to the bearers of the “Good News” of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the happiest news for humanity—according to the saying of the angels to the shepherds, “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people ... For unto you is born ... a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11). Hence the books that speak of this “good news” bear this name. Their authors were also known as evangelists, and this became a Christian term, widespread in all languages.

The good news of Christ is one. Therefore, the gospel is one—the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is not limited to His teaching and miracles, but is connected to His very person and what He has achieved for the salvation of mankind.

This joyful gospel arrived in four forms. It was written by four of Jesus’ disciples, two of them (Matthew and John) from the Twelve, and two (Mark and Luke) from their disciples. In short, we speak of the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, and by that we mean the proclamation of Christ as narrated by one of these four evangelists. There is only one gospel, not several, in Christianity. In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding, many years ago the new, scientifically scrutinized editions began to use the phrase “the gospel as narrated by so-and-so,” or “according to so-and-so.”

Because the gospel is the proclamation of Christ—to whom be the glory—the four evangelists did not write detailed biography of Christ, but His gospel. Mark thus begins “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Mark 1:1), while Matthew starts with a genealogy that begins with Abraham and ends with Joseph, and then moves on to the birth of Jesus.

Many began, according to Luke the Evangelist, to write the teaching of Jesus Christ, after His resurrection and ascension to heaven (see Luke 1:1–2). In the world of literature, a book is usually attributed to the name of an important figure, in order to be spread and circulated. But the Church, with the Holy Spirit present in her, and based on precise criteria (which this article does not have room to address), distinguishes between authentic writings and those that are false or degenerate. It kept the four versions, known to Christians from ancient times until today, but rejected the rest.

The image of Christ, living and risen from the dead, played the most important role in the compilation of His words, sermons, miracles, and acts during His earthly life, before His crucifixion and death. After Pentecost, the disciples set out to preach the Risen Christ. Three key elements contributed to the compilation of the first versions of His good news.

The first element was preaching, part of which was addressed to the Jews, referring to Jesus “whom you crucified but God raised up, ... and we are witnesses of these things” (Acts 4:10; 5:32). The one account addressed to the Gentiles was centered on the person of Christ the Savior, who came to us, died, and was resurrected. The second element is the Liturgy, which they began to hold at the Lord’s request, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” and which was an occasion to remember and honor what Christ did and said, even up to the words of the Last Supper. The third element was catechism, for which they were obliged to preach the new faith and thus to explain and recall all of the Lord’s teaching and works that they saw and bore witness to.

All these things were done because “we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you too may have communion with us” (1 John 1:3). Those who wrote were present witnesses, because “life has been manifested and we have seen it, and now we bear witness to it and proclaim eternal life to you” (1 John 1:2). In the words of the Apostle Peter, “We heard this voice coming from heaven, as we were with Him on the holy mountain” (2 Pet. 1:18). This writing was inspired by God, not by human motives, “for no prophecy whatsoever came by the will of man, but the Holy Spirit led some people to speak words from God” (2 Pet. 1:20).

Each of the four evangelists wrote the gospel of Christ, for the purpose of proclaiming Christ. This was done by divine inspiration, to reveal the image of Christ and His saving work and teaching more clearly, in greater detail and depth—as when photographs are taken of someone from several angles. Hence is the difference of each book from the others, and although the four books contain a variety of events, they are one, and although they contain many sayings, they are similar. Each of them presented the gospel of Christ in the best way for the hearers to understand, by the inspiration of God, so that it could reach them in its truth.

The evangelist Matthew, for example, who preached in Syria and addressed his book to the Jews, linked the events of Jesus’ life to the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets and quoted verses from their books, to show them that He was the promised Messiah. Mark, who preached to the pagans in Rome, did not mention these prophets, but translated every Hebrew word he had to use into Latin so that his readers could know its meaning. In His book, Matthew places Jesus’ teaching in an order that shows that Christ is the new Moses, who gives the perfect Law (on the mount), which abolishes the old incomplete law, focusing more on this fulfillment than on His teachings themselves (to Him be the glory). Mark, on the other hand, wrote more about Jesus’ deeds than about His teachings, because he addressed the power-loving Romans in order to show them the image of Christ as the most powerful God and to communicate that what Christ did was impossible for the gods they knew.

The ecclesiastical tradition chose a symbol specific to each gospel, taken from the images of the four creatures, which appear in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel. This is because the Church has found a relationship between each symbol and the content of each book. The symbol of Matthew the Evangelist is the likeness of a man, since he spoke so much of Christ as the Son of Man. Mark, who highlighted the power of Christ, was symbolized by the lion, while Luke, because of the many merciful teachings and deeds of Christ, was truly called the Gospel of Mercy, symbolized by the bull, which was offered as a sacrifice of mercy. John, who soared in the heavens of the divinity and incarnation of Christ, is symbolized by the eagle.

The first three books contain many identical events and sayings, so they are called the Synoptic Books, because biblical scholars have placed these events and sayings in parallel columns, in order to compare them. John, who wrote the divine gospel at the end of his days and died a hundred years old, saw no need to repeat what his predecessors had written. His book was distinguished in style and presentation and was called the spiritual gospel, although it highlighted the theology of the Incarnation as no one else had.

The four books richly show the dimensions of Christ’s person and gospel, as no single book could have. Therefore, from the outset, the Church refused to merge these four books into one comprehensive book. The theology revealed by each of the four evangelists in his book cannot survive if they are combined into one book.

You can meditate and be enriched by the person, role, teaching, and saving work of Christ, with immeasurable riches, based on these books you have, which thousands of millions of people have based their lives on before you. “Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

## Epistle

During the solemn singing of the Thrice-Holy Hymn to the Most Holy Trinity, the clergy proceed to the High Place behind the altar table, blessing Christ who “sits upon the throne of glory, upon the cherubim. . .” From this place, as we have already mentioned, the celebrant turns and blesses the people with the Peace of Christ. After the Peace is returned, the Epistle of the Divine Liturgy is chanted, usually by a layman of the Church or one in the minor order of Reader.

The epistle reading in traditional Church language is called the apostle or the apostolic reading. This is so since the reading may be taken from the Acts of the Apostles as well as from one of the apostolic letters of the New Testament scriptures. The word epistle means letter. We should note here that the only book of the New Testament writings which is not read liturgically in the Orthodox Church is the Book of Revelation because of its apocalyptic character.

There is a series of epistle readings prescribed in regular order for each day of the Church Year, with the exception of the week days of Great Lent when the Divine Liturgy is not celebrated. There are also special epistle readings prescribed for particular Church celebrations. Thus at any given Divine Liturgy more than one epistle lesson may be chanted.

Before the actual reading of the epistle, an appointed verse from the Psalter is sung called the prokeimenon, which literally means, “that which goes before.” As usual, the prokeimenon, with its verse, is suited to the particular liturgy and prepares the people to listen to the Word of God.

Connect >>

YOUNG ADULTS  
COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

**Grounded  
in Faith**

EVERY SECOND SUNDAY - AFTER LITURGY

AT CHURCH LIBRARY - BASEMENT

### Young Adults Upcoming events - Save the Dates

**Sunday, February 11:** Grounded in Faith - Post liturgy Fellowship at Church Library

**Saturday, February 24th:** YA/Teens visit to St. Nina Monastery,

**Saturday, March 9:** Wine and Cheese

**Sunday, March 10:** Grounded in Faith - Post liturgy Fellowship at Church Library

**Saturday, March 23:** Vespers followed by discussion with Fr. Luke, hosted by a parishioner

**Saturday, April 13:** Vespers and Dinner - Talk with Fr. Anastasios from Cameron

**Sunday, April 14:** Grounded in Faith - Post liturgy Fellowship at Church Library

**Friday & Saturday, April 19-20:** Mini Lenten Retreat: SOYO + YAM with Fr. James and Kh. Gigi Shadid

**April 28-May 5** Holy Week & Pascha

**Sunday, May 12:** Grounded in Faith - Post liturgy Fellowship at Church Library

**Sunday, June 9:** Grounded in Faith - Post liturgy Fellowship

**Saturday, June 22:** Young Adults/Professionals Gala