



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, JANUARY 21ST, 2024
tone 8 / EOTHINON 11; TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST & TWELFTH SUNDAY OF LUKE

VENERABLE MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR

MARTYR NEOPHYTOS OF NICAIA; VENERABLE ZOSIMAS,
BISHOP OF SYRACUSE IN SICILY

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

They say that the holy angels take on the likenesses of saints, venerable and good men, and they manifest these likenesses to the soul in the dreams of sleep, when her thoughts wander, to bring her joy and exceeding gladness; and during the day the angels continually stir these likenesses in the contemplation of their thoughts.

- St. Isaac the Syrian

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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Amjad Khalil
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MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Sam Khalil

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

Donna Gavin
Svitlana Sweat

TEEN SOYO

& YOUNG ADULTS

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Paula Massouh

ST. IGNATIUS ORDER

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 January 21 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our righteous Father Maximos the Confessor.

Verses

*Being handless and tongueless, hand and tongue thou acquirest;
And into God's hands, O Maximos, thy soul thou givest.
On the twenty-first, mortal destiny covered Maximos his voice.*

Maximos was born in Constantinople. First, he was a high-ranking courtier for Emperor Heraclius and, after that, a monk and abbot of a monastery not too far from the capitol. He was the greatest defender of Orthodoxy against the so-called Monothelite heresy which proceeded from the heresy of Eutyches. He claimed that there is only one nature in Christ (Monophysitism), so the Monothelites claimed that there is only one will in Christ (Monothelitism). Maximos opposed that claim and found himself as an opponent of the emperor and the patriarch. Maximos did not frighten easily but endured to the end in proving that there were two wills as well as two natures in Christ. Because of his efforts, a council was held in Carthage and another in Rome. Both councils anathematized the teachings of the Monothelites. Maximos suffered greatly for Orthodoxy: he was tortured by princes, deceived by prelates, spat upon by the masses of the people, beaten by soldiers, exiled, imprisoned, until finally, with a severed tongue and hand, he was condemned to exile for life in the land of Skhemaris (near Batum on the Black Sea) where he spent three years in prison and gave up his soul to God in the mid-seventh century.

On this day, we also commemorate the Martyr Neophytos of Nicaea; and Venerable Zosimas, Bishop of Syracuse in Sicily. By their intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the threeday burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee .

APOLYTIKION OF ST. MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR IN TONE EIGHT

Thou hast shown thyself, O God-inspired Maximos, as a guide to the Orthodox Faith, a teacher of true worship and purity; O star of the universe and companion of the bishops, O wise one. Through thy light thou hast enlightened all, O harp of the spirit. Therefore, intercede with Christ 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.

KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

Commemorations

For the Health of these Parishioners

John & Lily Bitar	Showke George	Christo & Mary Christakis
Suad Shammass	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 Threddeh	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

Special Prayer this Week for

Maria Zacharias	Wyne-Hareg	Hind, Habib Debs & family
Thomasine, Everett Alvarez & Family		Jeannine & family
Ruby Maggard	Maha, Flavio & family	Joyce, Lynn & family
Gino Michaels & family	Olivia Azat	Chris, Maha, Angelika & Alya
Margo Haddad	Cassis, Haddad, Michail, Aouad & Cadena Families	
Amelia Botsis	Elaine Ghareeb	Judith Cassis

DEPARTED

- Bob Neri
- Vassilios & Alyce Giavis
- George & Josephine Cassis
- Nicholas & Hazel Cassis
- Elias M. Haddad
- George & Hassiba Cassis
- Isaac & Victoria Newman
- Louise Cassis
- Nicholas & Melba Shaheen
- George & Julia Maloof
- Michael Rizkalla
- Frank Cadena
- Georges Nicolas
- Zenovia Varelas

MEMORIAL

Josephine Cassis (7 years)

Coffee Hour is offered by the **Giavis Family** in loving memory of **Vassilios & Alyce Giavis**.

Holy Bread is offered by **Amalia & George Cassis and Jay & Nikki (Cassis) Haddad** in loving memory of **Josephine Cassis** on her 7-year Memorial.

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

Coffee Hour Available Dates

- March 3
- March 10
- March 17
- March 24
- March 31
- April 7

Host Coffee Hour



Offer Holy Bread



Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Today, January 21st, **Make & Distribute Sandwiches**. Following the Divine Liturgy.

Friday, February 2nd, **Feast of the Presentation of our Lord to the Temple**. Matins 6:30, Divine Liturgy 7:30.

Saturday, February 3rd, **Village at Home**, 9:30- 5:45

Saturday, February 3rd, **Young Adult & AV Alumni Gathering**, 5:00 pm

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

Book Club

Thursday 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm
January 11, 25
February 15, 29
March 14, 28



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

REGISTER HERE



Teen SOYO Meeting

On the first Sunday
of every month

Antiochian Orthodox Women's Retreat & Tea

March 9, 2023



Village at Home

For Campers in Grades 3-12

**Saturday, February 3,
2024**

9:30 AM-5:45 PM



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!

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

January Charity Drive

Will You Give The Water of Life?

Digging Wells for Orthodox Missions in Cameroon

We are partnering with Fr. Anastasios Yaounde to raise approximately \$15,000 to dig wells that will radically improve life for hundreds of people and help spread Christianity in the region. As we think about Christ and the waters of Theophany, please consider if you are able to help our sisters. Thank you!

To donate online, kindly choose "Charity Drive" from the drop-down list (no in-kind donations, please).



Alumni & Young Adult Gathering

February 3, 2024

Camp style Vespers at 5:00 PM

Gathering & Pizza
Q&A with
Fr. Chris Shahid
& Fr. Luke Toumi



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



THE EPISTLE

*Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.
God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.*

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians. (3:4-11)

Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (17:12-19)

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Forever Young! New Dates

First Thursday of the Month: Feb 1st, March 7th, April 4th, May 2nd, June 6th

Forever Young is a fellowship for our retired parishioners and their friends, or anyone who can attend!

We will pray together, have lunch and enjoy fellowship (maybe games) and some good speaker/topic/activity!

Bring a friend or two even if they are not parishioners.

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

Feb 1st speaker is Fr. Tim Barkley, a lawyer, who will talk to us on how to get our legal matters in order.



The Little Flock

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Interestingly, in the Gospel, the Lord described His people as a little flock. “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). This may seem that Christ’s flock is not large in number. Even His disciples were few during His short life on earth. But this same description holds true today: those who are faithful to the Lord are not great in number. Many may bear Christ’s name, glory be to Him, but this is not enough.

In this description, the Master presents a concept that began in the Old Testament with Abraham and continued to the New Testament. The Old Testament describes those who are faithful to the Lord as “the faithful remnant.” Not all of those who considered themselves believers and worshippers of God were sincere. Still, in every generation, an elite crop of righteous ones appeared and increased in righteousness until the coming of Christ. They submitted their will to the will of God. They were able to read the signs of the times with faith and know God’s purpose when others tried to replace it with their own intentions and interpretations.

In the New Testament, God’s journey with humanity took an upward, purifying, and edifying direction. Perhaps this journey was for the emergence of this faithful remnant, which would reach its height in the Mother of God. The righteousness of those who were steadfast in faithfulness continued, giving us the Virgin Mary, Joseph the Betrothed, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and many others like them.

Why do the faithful remain few, even though they are the leaven that leavens all the dough?

To the end, the faithful one clings to God and His Word, so God gives him the blessing of reading His unfathomable purposes, even if he does not understand these divine purposes at first.

When the forces of the Assyrian Empire were approaching Palestine (in the eighth century B.C.), and the people faced grave danger, the Prophet Isaiah took the initiative to sharpen resolve and strengthen morale. He called for true repentance, saying: “In repentance and obedience is your salvation, and in quietness and trust is your strength” (Isaiah 30:15). The king also led a major religious reform movement, with the aim of purifying worship and returning from widespread apostasy. The prophet did not pay attention to the king’s movement, because he considered every official and imposed reform to be an external reform that does not affect the human heart. God wants internal reform that changes the human heart. The prophets led this teaching, completed by Christ, when the desired religion becomes a religion of inner purity, of which good deeds are an expression and reflection, and not an end in itself.

Isaiah believed that only a little remnant of believers would listen and be saved from destruction. “If the Almighty Lord had not left us a remnant of survivors, we would have become like Sodom and like Gomorrah” (Isaiah 1:9). “Only a remnant of them will return” (Isaiah 10:22). “Establish prayer for the remnant of the people” (Isaiah 37:4).

More than a hundred years later, in the time of the Prophet Jeremiah, the Babylonians attacked the Holy City (Jerusalem). The prophet called for religious reform, that is, repentance. The rich, under fear and malice, hastened to free their slaves. It quickly became clear that they were not motivated by piety and faithfulness to the Lord and His law. Rather, they sought to appease Him out of fear, and to relieve themselves of feeding the slaves while under attack and the threat of famine. As soon as Nebuchadnezzar ended his attack, and the people felt that the danger had passed, they hastened to re-enslave their slaves.

Like Isaiah, the Prophet Jeremiah was enthusiastic about reform that leads to repentance and salvation. Jeremiah emphasized that the reform that does not begin in the heart remains superficial and fragile and becomes subject to rapid decay. The prophet was convinced that true effective reform is not imposed by force, nor is it implemented by decrees and laws, but rather by radical reform that reaches the heart. He called for circumcision of the heart, not of the body: "Plough your land that is not plowed, and do not sow among thorns. Make a covenant with the Lord in your hearts, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 4:3-4).

In every generation, people want to justify their conscience in various ways, without going into their depths and changing themselves. They keep vacillating between God and the mortal world, or eternal life and temporary life. Humans

want to gain earth and heaven, not based on the teachings of heaven, but rather those of this world. This is why they are enslaved to the demands of ego, the pride of luxurious living, and vainglory. They spend their lives wandering and searching for salvation and meaning.

What Jeremiah said in describing his people is true in every era and place: "Be amazed, O heavens, and tremble, and be astonished at this! My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and they have dug for themselves broken cisterns that cannot hold water" (Jeremiah 2:12-13).

Sincere believers would never trade God for anything else, no matter how much they suffer. They do not honor Him with their lips, but rather with their hearts. You see them washing and purifying themselves, removing the evil of their deeds from before His eyes, and refraining from wrongdoing. They learn kindness, seek justice, help the oppressed, defend the fatherless, and plead for the widow (Isaiah 1:16-17).

You can be an extremely committed believer and a dedicated servant in the church. But do not fall into temptation and think your heart will be the same as the heart of your God. Instead of imitating Him and rising to His level, you distort His image and make it resemble your fallen image, bringing Him down to your level.

If you consider yourself a believer, do not imagine that your faith guarantees His favor. On the contrary, your faith holds you to a greater responsibility, and your account will be based on what you know, as our Lord says in His gospel. Live your faith sincerely in order to be saved and be an example for the salvation of those around you.

Blessed is the Kingdom

Following the prothesis the priest (or deacon) incenses the altar, the icons, and the entire church.

While incensing the altar table he recites lines which confess the fullness of Christ's presence, in the grave, in death, in paradise, at the right hand of the Father, "filling all things, Thyselself uncircumscribed." He also recites Psalm 51: "Have mercy on me, O God."

They recite the angelic salutation: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will towards men."

The first exclamation of the Divine Liturgy reveals the key to the entire celebration:

Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

With these words the celebrant announces the source and the goal of the divine service of the People of God, the very context and contents of the entire liturgical action. It is the Kingdom of God brought to the world by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and mystically reigning already in the faithful disciples of Christ by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

The Kingdom of God is eternal life in communion with God in loving obedience to his divine will. It is life in union with the Blessed Trinity; life lived toward the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. It is the life which Christ has given to men by his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and glorification. It is the life to be lived already in this world by the People of God.

To bless the Kingdom of God means to love it as one's most precious possession. The response of the people to the proclamation of blessing by the priest is with the word Amen, which means so be it. This is the solemn affirmation that indeed the blessing of God's Kingdom is fitting and proper. It is the official confirmation that this Kingdom is indeed the "pearl of great price" for the faithful, which once having found it, they will love it and serve it and desire to have it forever (Lk 13.14).

Only the Divine Liturgy and the other sacraments and services of the Church which were originally integrated into the eucharistic celebration, such as baptism, chrismation, and marriage begin with the solemn blessing of the Kingdom of God.