



# 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)*

### SUNDAY, MARCH 1ST, 2026

### FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT (SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY)

VENERABLE-MARTYR EUDOKIA OF  
HELIOPOLIS; VENERABLE DOMNINA OF SYRIA;  
MARTYRS MARKELLOS AND ANTHONY OF  
PAMPHYLIA

**\*\*Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great\*\***

**Metropolitan SABA**  
Primate of the Antiochian  
Archdiocese

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**Great Vespers:** Saturday 6:00 pm  
*Check the Calendar*  
for possible cancellation or changes  
**Matins:** Sundays 9:20am  
**Divine Liturgy:** Sundays 10:30am  
**Confessions:** By appointment

#### CHOIR DIRECTOR

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#### MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Sam Khalil

#### ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

Svitlana Sweat

#### CHURCH SCHOOL

##### Directors

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#### TEEN SOYO

#### & YOUNG ADULTS

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Antiochian Women

Please note that we livestream our  
services on the Church's YouTube  
channel

@SaintsPeterPaulAntiochian

Be humble, kind, and loving before every man born into this world by God... The purpose of life and of this whole visible world is the acquisition of the Kingdom of God, drawing near to God and inheriting Eternal Life. I wish all of you this. I leave you with my blessing, that no one lose the great mercy of God, and that all of you be vouchsafed the acquisition of the Kingdom.

*St. Gabriel Urgebade*

We welcome all our guests 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 we take Holy Communion very seriously and 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 reason is simple following the advice of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 27-31:

*"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning*

## **THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)**

On March 1 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Venerable-martyr Eudokia of Heliopolis; Venerable Domnina of Syria; and Martyrs Markellos and Anthony of Pamphylia.

On this same day, the First Sunday of the Fast, we make remembrance of the restoration of the holy and venerable Icons, which took place through the ever-memorable Sovereigns of Constantinople, Michael and his mother, Theodora, during the patriarchate of Saint Methodios the Confessor.

### ***Verses***

*I rejoice, as I see them fittingly reverence  
The icons formerly unfittingly banished.*

This restoration was accomplished in the year 843. Theodora's husband was an iconoclast. After his death, Theodora venerated an icon of the Theotokos in front of Patriarch Methodios. The other faithful in the church did the same, venerating all the icons, considering them to be representations of their original elements, not idols. Theodora prayed to God to forgive her husband during the first week of Great Lent; and on the First Sunday of the Fast, she led the way in hanging up the icons to adorn the churches.

O invariant Icon of the Father, through the intercessions of Thy holy Confessors, have mercy on us. Amen.

### **RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FIVE**

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

### **APOLYTIKION OF THE FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT IN TONE TWO**

Thy pure image do we venerate, O good One, asking forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God; for by Thine own will Thou didst ascend the Cross in Thy body, to save Thy creatures from the bondage of the enemy. Wherefore, with thankfulness we cry aloud to thee: Thou hast verily filled all with joy, since Thou didst come, O our Savior, to save the world.

### **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 FOR SUNDAYS IN GREAT LENT (AND AKATHIST SATURDAY) IN TONE EIGHT**

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom.



## Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Sunday, Mar 15th, **Outreach Meal Packing**, after the Divine Liturgy

Sunday, Mar 22nd, **Youth Choir Pascha Concert**.

Sunday, Mar 29th, **Sunday School Pascha Workshop**, after the Divine Liturgy

**LENT SCHEDULE OF SERVICES IS AVAILABLE IN THE NARTHEX AND ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR... Mark your calendar and come join us!**

### Book Club

At 8:30 Pm Via Zoom

Thur, Mar 5  
Thur, Mar 12

### Current Book

Thirty Steps to Heaven,  
by Vassilios Papavassiliou

Scan the Multilink QR Code To Register

### Parenting Toward the Kingdom Project

Thursdays at 8 PM Via Zoom

March 12      May 14  
April 16      June 11

Scan the Multilink QR Code To Participate

### Lenten Community Service Project Meal Packing

Sunday, March 15  
After the Divine Liturgy

A Lenten lunch for all volunteers

Hair nets, aprons, and gloves  
will be provided

### SAVE THE DATE

Annual Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC)  
Mission Awareness Dinner

Saturday, May 2, 2026,  
At St. Katherine's in Falls Church

- 4 pm with Vespers
- 5:30pm Social hour
- 6pm dinner

**Detailed Program to Follow**

Discounted pricing for those 25 and younger. Last year's mission dinner at Peter & Paul was a great success, join us to learn more!

### March Charity Drive Fundraiser for Church Lenten Meal Packing

We aim to pack **25,000 meals** for area families in need. With a fundraising goal of **\$10,800** and many hands working side by side, we can reach families in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Your generosity—through time or gifts—makes a real difference.

Scan the QR Code  
For Online Donations

## LITURGICAL TEXTS

Scan the QR Code To Follow  
Along the Service

Got a Question about  
**Orthodox Christianity**  
or Our Faith & Worship

Join Us every Sunday  
**in the social hall**  
after the Divine Liturgy  
for a Catechism Class

## Join the Order of St Ignatius

Scan the QR Code To Submit your  
interest in the Order

## St. Raphael's Table First Saturday of the Month

Preparing and distributing meals and  
toiletries to our neighbors in need.

Scan the QR Code To Participate

## Forever Young!

First Friday of the Month

Scan the QR Code To Register

## Prayer Request

For Living and/or Departed

Scan the QR Code To Request a Prayer

## Pursuing Christ as a Community Bible Study (8:30 PM/ZOOM)

Mar 3, 17      May 5, 19  
April 21      June 2, 16

## Men's Bible Study

*In person and over Zoom*

**EVERY FRIDAY  
8:15-9:45 PM**

Scan the Multilink QR Code To RSVP

## MULTILINK QR CODE

For your online donations, registration for events,  
and participation in activities

- 1- Use **your phone's camera** to scan the QR code
- 2- Click on the Appropriate Link



## **THE EPISTLE**

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.  
For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.*

### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:24-26, 32-40)**

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the recompense of reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and all the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, and turned to flight armies of the aliens. Women received their dead by resurrection, and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a witness through their faith, did not receive the promise, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

## **THE GOSPEL**

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (1:43-51)**

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Jesus, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

# **The Orthodox Liturgy: Its Theology and Spirituality, Part One**

*By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

If we want to speak of the liturgy, we must speak of food. For the liturgy is the food and nourishment of the Orthodox.

The German philosopher Feuerbach defines man as what he eats. This seemingly material concept truly expresses the most prominent religious idea about humanity.

In the creation narrative, man appears as a hungry being, and the world appears to him as food. Hence, when God instructed Adam and Eve to grow, multiply, fill the earth, and dominate it, as in the first chapter of Genesis, He commanded humanity to eat from the earth: "I have given you every plant that yields seed, and every tree that yields seed; it will be your food" (Genesis 1:29).

Man must eat to live; he must partake of the world in his body and transform it into himself, into flesh and blood. He is truly what he eats; the whole world is a universal table for him. The image of the table, throughout the Holy Scriptures, is the central image of life, depicting life at the beginning of creation and at its end and perfection: "...that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom" (Luke 22:30). Therefore, the mystery of the Eucharist occupies the central place in the Orthodox liturgy. From the Lord's table, where the faithful gather with their priest around the chalice placed upon it, the perfect union between man and God is achieved in the body and blood of Christ. The table of the Divine Liturgy is a true image of the coming Kingdom: "For My flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:55-56).

We see in the Bible that the food we eat, and the world we must share with others to live, are both given to us by God as a form of communion with Him. The world, as our food, is not something "material" limited to physical functions that conflict with its spiritual functions through which we connect with God. Everything on earth is a gift from God to humanity, intended to make God known and to make our lives commune with Him.

Human beings are hungry, yes, but they hunger for God. Behind the hunger in our lives lies God.

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The Orthodox liturgy stems from the Orthodox view of humanity, which holds that humankind occupies a unique position in the universe, distinguishing it from all other creatures. Humans alone bless God for all they receive from Him, including the life-giving food; they alone bless God in response to God's blessing.

The only natural, not supernatural, response for humankind after God has bestowed upon it this blessed and holy world is to bless God in return, to offer thanks, to see the world as God sees it, and consequently to know the world, to name everything in it, and to possess it.

Therefore, in the Orthodox faith, man is considered priest, called to present the world to God again after purifying and sanctifying it. Humanity is called to sanctify the world, restoring it to its state before the Fall. Man stands at the center of the world, uniting it and blessing it with God, receiving it from Him and offering it back to Him: "Thine own of Thine own, we offer unto Thee, in behalf of all and for all" (from the Orthodox liturgy).

The Eucharist of the Christian is to transform his life into a life of God and into communion with Him. For this reason, God created the world to be the material and instrument of one universal (catholic) sacrament of

thanksgiving. And for this reason, God created man, to be a priest of this cosmic sacrament.

Humanity is capable of reshaping and modifying the world, of giving it entirely new meaning. Let us remember that the first task given to Adam was to name the living creatures (Genesis 2:19-20). Let us remember that, in the Divine Liturgy, we offer to God the fruits of the earth not in their raw form, but in the form that humanity has given them anew; we do not offer sheaves of wheat on the altar, but bread; not bunches of grapes, but wine.

The Orthodox liturgy plays an essential role in this area, for it aims to establish a living connection between God and humanity. This connection reshapes humanity in the divine image that God intended for it from the beginning of creation. Fallen humanity needs a fundamental transformation to become, as God intended, a priest of this universe. Therefore, Orthodox liturgy places great emphasis on repentance, mentioning it in all services, so that it is difficult for a sincere Orthodox worshipper not to live in constant repentance.

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The Orthodox liturgy is not merely an individual act of worship, nor is it simply a set of ceremonial rituals that remind the believer of the Lord and what He has done for our salvation. It is not merely an outpouring of human emotions before God, nor a set of obligations performed by believers to appease their consciences, to assure them that they have fulfilled their religious duties.

It is much deeper than all of this; it is a **communal, thankful, transformative act**.

It is a **communal** act – the name itself indicates this. "Liturgy" means an act done by a group of people who are transformed into a community with a single, shared identity, whereas before they were a collection of individuals. The whole here is more than the sum of the individuals. This unity is fully realized in the mystery of the Eucharist through union with the Body and Blood of the Lord.

It is also an act of **thanksgiving** – every liturgical service contains complete passages of thanksgiving and praise to God for what He has given us for our salvation. Orthodox liturgical texts constantly praise and thank God, describing Him as the "good and loving God." Remember that the word "Orthodox" means "right glorification."

It is a **transformative** act – those gathered in the Church transform from a mass of humanity into the Body of Christ; the world transforms from fallen to divine. It draws humanity toward the Kingdom and gives it the impetus to begin building this Kingdom here and now.

We are united in our gathering, we give thanks and praise with joy, and we are transformed into divine beings who transform the world, which is in our hands, into a small Heavenly Kingdom, so that Christ's beloved may taste His Kingdom before it is fully realized within them in the next life.

The Church is realized and becomes truly the Church, in the sense that it is the living Body of Christ, in this liturgical communion.

(To be continued.)



## ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

The Sunday of Orthodoxy  
March 1, 2026

Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Fathers, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, and Beloved Faithful in Christ,

Greetings and blessings to you in the Name of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ!

I pray that your Lenten journey has begun with renewed strength and a spirit of repentance. As we enter more deeply into this holy season, I am reminded of the words of St. Isaac the Syrian, who taught: “Enter eagerly into the treasure-house that is within you, and so you will see the treasure of heaven.”

This difficult yet profoundly hopeful exhortation calls us to anchor our hearts in humility while never losing sight of the boundless mercy and love of God. Great Lent offers us a sacred opportunity to cultivate this spiritual vigilance through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy, our hearts turn to the sacred legacy we have received—the faith preserved through the courage of the martyrs, the struggles of the ascetics, the devotion of our spiritual ancestors, and the teachings of the Holy Fathers. God has placed this precious inheritance in our care, that we may keep it alive and radiant for future generations. One of the main ways we do this is through the education and formation of our future clergymen who will be our priests, pastors and fathers.

Our seminarians, together with their wives and families, have embraced a life of sacrifice, faith, and service to Christ and His Holy Church. They are preparing their hearts and minds to shepherd Christ’s flock, to teach the Gospel, and to sustain the very faith we celebrate today. I am grateful for my regular opportunities to meet with them, learning their stories, their hopes, and the unique gifts God has entrusted to them. These encounters assure me that the future of our Church is in faithful and capable hands.

**As we do every year on this day, I ask each parish to offer a generous gift in support of the seminarians and their families. This responsibility belongs to all of us. As they prepare to give their lives for us, let us lovingly support them in advance.**

Wishing you a grace-filled and spiritually fruitful journey to the Passion and the glorious Resurrection of our Lord, I remain,

With paternal love in Christ,

+SABA  
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America