



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)

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Primate of the Antiochian
Archdiocese

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SUNDAY, MAY 3RD, 2026

FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC MARTYRS TIMOTHY THE READER AND HIS WIFE MAURA OF EGYPT; PETER, ARCHBISHOP OF ARGOLIS

****Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom****
(Search for the text of the Liturgy in the
Service Book in the Pews)

As for those who waste their lives in absurd lusts, even if their soul should constantly be occupied with licentiousness, yet it will not always be able to enjoy it. For satiety stops the greed of the glutton, and the drinker's pleasure is quenched at the same time as his thirst. These all require a certain interval of time to rekindle the desire for the delights, which enjoyment carried to satiety has caused to flag. The possession of virtue on the other hand, where it is once firmly established, is neither circumscribed by time nor limited by satiety. It always offers its disciples the ever-fresh experience of the fullness of its own delights. Therefore, God the Logos promises to those who hunger for these things that they shall be filled.

St. Gregory of Nyssa

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

BYZANTINE CHOIR
Led by Amjad Khalil

USHERS
Jerry Audi
Abe Fannoney
Sam Khalil
Steve Simon

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP
Sam Khalil

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Svitlana Sweat

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Jumana Misleh

GIFT SHOP
Antiochian Women

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

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 Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many die."*

THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)

On May 3 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate Martyrs Timothy the reader and his wife Maura of Egypt; and Peter, archbishop of Argolis.

On this day, the fourth Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the Paralytic and, as is right, we celebrate the miracle wrought for him.

Verses

*The word of Christ was strength for the paralytic;
So that this word alone was the man's full healing.*

Jesus healed the Paralytic at the Sheep's Pool, located near the Sheep's Gate of Jerusalem, where people sacrificed their beasts and washed their insides. The pool had five sides, with a porch and arch on each. A number of people, afflicted with various diseases, passed through them, waiting at the water for an angel to come down and stir it. Once it moved, whoever stepped into the water first was instantly healed. One poor man, whose story is recounted in today's Gospel lection in the Divine Liturgy, waited 38 years for someone to lower him into the water, because he was unable to move into the water himself. However, the Savior merely commanded the man to get up and walk, and he was healed.

In Thine infinite mercy, O Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF PASCHA

In the gathering places bless ye God the Lord, from the springs of Israel. Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Unto the myrrh-bearing women did the Angel cry out as he stood by the grave: Myrrh-oils are meet for the dead, but Christ hath proved to be a stranger to corruption. But cry out: The Lord is risen, granting to the world Great Mercy.

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.

THE KONTAKION OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Wednesday, May 6th, Mid-Pentecost Matins & Divine Liturgy @ 6:30 PM

Saturday, May 9th, **Antiochian Women's 17th Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show**

Wednesday, May 20th, **Leave-Taking of Pascha** Matins & Divine Liturgy @ 6:30 PM

Thursday, May 21st, **Feast of the Ascension** Matins & Divine Liturgy @ 6:30 PM

Saturday, May 30th, **Saturday of Souls** Matins & Divine Liturgy @ 9:30 AM

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 Multilink 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 Multilink QR Code to Participate

Forever Young! First Friday of the Month

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Register

Prayer Request

For Living and/or Departed

Scan the Multilink QR Code
to Request a Prayer

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

May 5, 19
June 2, 16

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Register

Men's Bible Study

In person and over Zoom

EVERY FRIDAY
8:15-9:45 PM

Scan the Multilink QR Code To RSVP

Volunteering at the 2026 Vacation Bible Camp

Use Your Expertise
And Become a Teacher
at the Camp

Scan the Multilink QR Code to Volunteer

Parenting Toward the Kingdom (All Parents Invited)

Thursdays at 8 PM Via Zoom

May 14
June 11

17th Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show

May 9 (11:30 am - 2:30 pm)
Westwood Country Club

**Deadline to Purchase Tickets
TODAY, May 3, 2026**

Scan the Multilink QR Code to RSVP

May Charity Drive

Donations will be divided between the following charities

Tree House Advocacy Center of Montgomery County that is dedicated to reducing trauma and promoting healing for child and adolescent victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect.

World Central Kitchen (Lebanon and Gaza) that is first to the frontlines, providing fresh meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises.

Scan the Multilink QR Code
For Online Donations

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

O chant unto our God, chant ye. Clap your hands, all ye nations.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (9:32-42)

In those days, as Peter went throughout all regions, he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who was bedridden for eight years and paralyzed. And Peter said to him: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise and make your bed." And immediately he arose. And all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned back to the Lord. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha (which means Gazelle). She was full of good works and of charitable deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her, they placed her in an upper chamber. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him entreating him: "Come to us without delay!" So Peter arose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him into the upper chamber. All the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and other garments which Tabitha made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body, he said: "Tabitha, arise!" And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up. Then he called the saints and widows and presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (5:1-15)

At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and troubled the water; whoever stepped in first, after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. One man was there, who had been ill for 38 years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk?'" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befalls you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had healed him.

The Sanctifying Dimension, Part Two

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Some have attributed the decline of the sanctifying dimension in the lives of believers to the neglect of the clergy. Yet to place responsibility on priests alone while ignoring the responsibility of the faithful is not accurate. Not all clergy are saints, nor are all believers. There are many good priests, but they are often discouraged by the pressure placed upon them to be everything except sanctifiers. Thus, while the responsibility of the clergy is indeed great, there is also a great responsibility resting upon the faithful. In the previous article, I referred to the role of all of us, and to the importance of the home in spiritual formation.

For this reason, I would like to expand a little further on this topic and speak about prayer, its role, and some of the current obstacles, especially those caused by believers themselves. I hope to shed light on our shared responsibility, clergy and laity alike, for this absence of prayer, so that together we may rise to a more active life of sanctification.

Let us begin by speaking of the richness of the Orthodox rite, in particular the Byzantine rite. This rite is distinguished by its liturgical richness and by the way it liturgically embraces the full range of human life. The Church accompanies the believer with her prayers from conception to birth, to the child's first entrance into the church, then through Baptism, Holy Communion, and spiritual growth. She blesses life through the divine sacraments, blesses the home through the sanctification of water, and likewise blesses fields and possessions. She accompanies the faithful in sickness, travel, study, engagement, marriage, and even to the moment of departure from this life. Nor does she cease afterward, for she continues to pray for the repose of the soul.

The concern of the Church is to embrace and spiritually nourish the human person, so that he may become a citizen of the heavenly Kingdom, receive the saving and salvific gifts of God, and have the abundant life (John 10:10) which Christ came to give.

For this reason, the Orthodox rite has been enriched with salvific events and with events of daily life that the Church has baptized and clothed with a Christian character, so that they may become spiritual windows contributing to the salvation of the faithful. Thus, the feasts of our Lord, of the Mother of God, and of the saints are distributed throughout the year. There is scarcely a day without one feast or more. Each feast has its own liturgical texts, scriptural readings, and beautiful devotional hymns, though they differ in length, importance, beauty, and popularity.

In addition, this rite has been enriched with many prayers that bless the believer in every aspect of life. There is a prayer for everything. We may mention, for example, the prayers of blessing that encompass one's circumstances, intentions, work, and possessions. There are also blessings for occasions recognized worldwide that may be given a Christian dimension, such as the Day of the Environment, Teacher's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and so forth.

Nor should we forget the daily prayers distributed throughout the yearly liturgical cycle: the compunctionate services of Great Lent, Holy and Great Week, the canons of supplication to the saints, and the prayers of entreaty.

Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), in his book *The Orthodox Church*, writes: "The richness of Orthodox services requires the believer to possess a small library of some twenty important volumes. Though difficult to use at first, these volumes are among the greatest treasures of the Orthodox Church."

In the face of all this richness—which fills dozens of volumes—one cannot but be surprised by the lack of liturgical practice currently found in parish churches, and that the overwhelming majority of believers do not know what exists within their own Church. If we set aside the well-known services of Great Lent and Holy Week, we find that most believers do not know anything of the Church's abundant richness and beauty other than the Divine Liturgy.

Let us consider a few examples.

To my knowledge, most churches in cities and smaller parishes have one or two chanters celebrate Orthros every Sunday morning. How many faithful actually participate in it? Compare the numbers attending Orthros with those attending the Divine Liturgy.

As for Great Vespers on Saturday evening, which carries all the meanings of the Resurrection we commemorate every Sunday, how many pray it together with the priest in the churches where it is served every week? Once, I attended Saturday evening services in Kyiv and another in Moscow. The Slavs celebrated both Vespers and Orthros on Saturday evening, entirely chanted. I was astonished to see the churches full of faithful standing as there were no pews in their churches. Those who did not participate in these services would not approach Holy Communion on Sunday morning, even if they had made their confession that night.

Let us take another example: the daily prayers. How many offer them? Among those who practice confession and seek spiritual guidance, how many raise the obstacles they encounter in their prayer life? From my experience as a confessor, especially when I was serving as a parish priest, I rarely heard complaints about prayer other than distraction of mind. The greater struggle for the overwhelming majority of penitents was perseverance in offering prayer morning and evening, no matter how small or brief the personal rule given to them by their spiritual father.

Observers note greater participation in services that are followed by some social gathering, especially food. For example, attendance at the Presanctified Liturgy celebrated on Wednesday evening is much higher in parishes that offer an agape meal afterward. Is this response rooted in a love for prayer, or does gathering around the table play the stronger role in motivating participation? The answer is up to each person, for our role is not to condemn or judge, but to observe and to awaken.

What would an outside observer understand when invited to witness the celebration of baptism or marriage? Are not social appearances often dominant over the spiritual dimension, sometimes to the point of obscuring it entirely? Are not the music, clothing, flowers, decorations, festivities, and invitations considered the most important things—the ones given time, attention, and even money? What does this mean except that, in our deepest part of our conscience, we often assign little weight to the spiritual reality the Church provides for us, while giving priority to social appearances?

The presence of a bottle of holy water and another of blessed oil on the icon shelf in the home remains common among Orthodox Christians. Anointing the sick with blessed oil is still a natural practice among the faithful, sought for blessing and healing.

Our grandparents were accustomed to setting aside a place for God in their homes: the icon corner and the lamp kept burning before it. This is an authentic and foundational Eastern Christian tradition. Where is it today? How many homes still light the lamp on Saturday evenings or in times of trial and distress? Where has the censing of icons gone? Or the use of incense in family prayer? Do not such traditions cultivate a tangible sense of God's presence—or more than that, a spiritual presence permeated by the divine presence—which becomes planted in the hearts of children and is never erased from their memory?

What do we conclude from these examples? Where is the spiritual practice of the people? Why do so many fail to respond to spiritual activities? If we are honest, should we not say that many do not grant them the same importance they give to social demands? Does the responsibility here rest on the clergy alone? Where is the role of true Christian formation? Where are our spiritual homes that live in piety, fear of God, fidelity to the Gospel commandments, and prayer—and that hand these things on? Where is our role as fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, priests and faithful?

Church History - Sixth Century

The Fifth Ecumenical Council

In addition to rejecting the unorthodox, ambiguous writings listed in the Three Chapters, the Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, with great pastoral concern, strove to find a way to remain faithful to the teachings of the Council of Chalcedon while Non-Chalcedonians. In a long series of statements, the Council affirmed, without ambiguity, the traditional Orthodox understanding that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is “one of the Holy Trinity,” one and the same divine person (hypostasis) Who has united personally (hypostatically) in Himself the two natures of divinity and humanity, without fusing them together and without allowing their separation in any way. In these statements, the Council several times permitted the use of characteristic Monophysite/Non-Chalcedonian language, including the hallmark phrase “one nature of the Word of God Incarnate,” as long as this language is interpreted in an Orthodox way, as explained by the Council.

The Fifth Council also officially condemned the problematic teachings of Origen (d. 254) and his 6th-century disciples who taught and practiced a “spiritualistic” version of Christianity which contained many unorthodox doctrines. For instance, they taught that Christ was the only created spirit who did not become material through sin; that men’s souls were pre-existent spirits; and that all of Creation, including the demons, will ultimately be saved through its spiritualization by God in Christ the Savior.

The Orthodox Faith
Volume III - Church History