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)

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

SUNDAY, JULY 21ST, 2024

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost & Fourth Sunday of Matthew

Righteous Fathers John of Edessa in Mesopotamia & Simeon of Homs (Emesa), the Fool-for-Christ

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

If you want to conquer pride, then whatever you do, say not that you do it by your own labors, or with you own strength. But if you fast or stand vigil or sleep on the bare ground or sing psalms or serve in the altar or do a great number of prostrations, say that it was done with God's help and protection, not by your own strength and effort.

-St Ephraim the Syrian

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Primate of the Antiochian Archdiocese

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ST. IGNATIUS ORDER
Jumana Misleh

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 July 21 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our Righteous Fathers John of Edessa in Mesopotamia; and Simeon of Homs (Emesa), the Fool-for-Christ.

Verses

A wise fool wast thou, mocking life, O Father Simeon, escaping even to the end the crafty serpent.
O John, thou chosest to dwell in barren regions, whereby thou didst render carnal passions barren.
On the twenty-first died Simeon the mock-fool and mocker.

Both men received the monastic tonsure at the hands of the Abbot Nicon in the Monastery of St. Gerasimos. They withdrew into the wilderness near the Dead Sea where they lived an austere life of asceticism for nearly thirty years. They mortified their bodies so much that they resembled two withered trees. One day Simeon told John that, according to God's command, he must depart from the wilderness, go among the people and serve God there. John said to Simeon, "Pray to God for me, that He does not separate us, one from the other, in the future life." Simeon went among the people of Homs, Syria as a "fool for Christ," to teach people and to convert them to the Faith of Christ. He pretended insanity before everyone but his heart was the temple of the Holy Spirit and, in that temple, was unceasing prayer. Simeon possessed abundant grace from God and was able to discern all the inner secrets of people, healing them from evil spirits and other ailments. Simeon came across a young fornicator who went out of his mind. Simeon struck him across the face with his hand and said: "Do not commit fornication." At that moment the unclean demon departed from the young man and he became well. Simeon reposed in 570; by the providence of God, John, who had remained in the wilderness, departed soon after. 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 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

O 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.

Commemorations

For the Health of these Parishioners

John & Lily Bitar	Showke George	Christo & Mary Christakis
Suad Shammas	Victor, Linda & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Mike & Dorothy Marge	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Michael Shihadi	Joanna Khoury	Sherrie Zachariah & family
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Nour & Anastasia & Sonny
Qustandi & Nahida Kaibni	Mary Sahouri & Family	Asma Ayoub
Nuha & family	Yousef & Ghada	Elias, Taylor & Rami
Isabel Thredeh	Ghassan & Zakieh Jweied	Margo, Sam & Family
Shakeh Kerjilian & Family	Hind, Habib Debs & family	Barbara Zamer & Family
Lorna Malooley	Grace Saah & Family	Edward & Eleanor Husson
Brian, Caroline & Family	Fadia, Rich & family	Elizabeth Albinger & family
Steve, Jennifer & Family	Marie Hyder	Sylvia & Selma Habib
Hazel & Sawsan Ghurani	Juliana, Metody & family	Joyce Kogok

DEPARTED

Antoine Hanna

CHURCHING

Haifa Mokhiber (Anees & Elizabeth)

Special Prayer this Week for

Timothy Dowse	Wyne-Hareg	Elizabeth Carroll	Jeannine & Family
Milena Paskaleva & Family		Iman Khoury	Ruby Maggard
Gino Michaels & Family		Frieda Shama	Kera Tomlin & Family
		Anees, Elizabeth & NB Haifa	

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

Coffee Hour Available Dates

August 04	September 08
August 11	September 15
September 01	October 06

Host Coffee Hour

Offer Holy Bread

Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Tuesday, July 30th, Seeking Christ in **Bethesda, MD** @ 7:30 pm

Thursday, August 1st, **Start of the Dormition Fast**

Friday, August 2nd, Paraklesis Service to the Theotokos @ 7 pm

Digital Ad Book 2024

- Individual / Family $100
- Business $500

Scan QR Code To participate

Interested in Learning Byzantine Iconography?

Dajana Douglas, a professional iconographer, will join us during coffee hour to share the news of a new school to teach iconography at our neighboring St. Luke Serbian Church.

Do not miss out on this opportunity to nourish the iconographer that has been hiding inside YOU!

Summer Bible Camp

Tue, Aug 6 - Thurs, Aug 8
10:30 AM - 2:00 PM
Ages 4 - 8

Register by July 31st

Seeking Christ in your Neighborhood

July 30th (7:30 - 9:00 pm)
At
Susan & Joseph Sanford's House
in Bethesda MD
You will receive the address in your email when you register.

Scan QR Code to Attend the Meeting

St. Raphael's Table

The First Saturday of the Month

Preparing and distributing meals and toiletries to our neighbors in need.
To join in preparation/ distribution use this QR code

Amazon Wishlist for Toiletry Bags is available here.

Parishioners Survey

Do You Feel at Home at Ss. Peter & Paul?

Part One

Thank you for taking the time to complete this brief survey!

Your honest feedback (positive and negative) is valuable in helping us create a more nourishing, welcoming and connected parish community.

Scan QR Code To Take the Survey

July & August Charity Drive
Backpack Drive

We are collecting funds to support the FOCUS NA backpack drive.
We will collect monetary donations with the goal of purchasing enough backpacks and supplies to fill **75 backpacks**.
Once we have ordered and received everything from FOCUS, we will schedule a backpack stuffing event in August.

For Online Donations, choose "Charity Drive".

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 Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. (6:18-23)

Brethren, having been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (8:5-13)

At that time, as Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching Him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion answered Him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard him, He marveled, and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Young Adults Upcoming events
Save the Date

Saturday, October 19: Young Adults/Professionals Gala

On the Ministry of the Diaconate, Part Two

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

His Eminence presents a three-part series about revitalizing the diaconate in our Archdiocese

The canons of the Council of Ancyra (314) imply that the duties of a deacon at that time, according to commentators, were limited to bringing bread and wine, making petitions and preaching.1 This means their liturgical role was clear from the end of the third century. Canon 23 of the Council of Trullo (692) states that no one — whether bishop, priest, or deacon — may exact a fee for administering Holy Communion, because grace cannot be sold. This implies that deacons could administer Holy Communion to the faithful. The Apostolic Constitutions (380) also state that after the bishop or priest celebrates the Divine Liturgy, the deacon takes the sacraments to commune the laypeople, assisting the priest. This practice is still observed today when a deacon is present with a priest, where the priest gives the deacon the chalice to invite the faithful to partake, saying: "With the fear of God, faith, and love, draw near," and then the deacon returns the chalice to the priest to administer Communion.

The Apostolic Constitutions further instruct: "Let the deacon carry the chalice and as he presents it, let him say: 'The Blood of Christ, the cup of life.'"2

St. Justin the Martyr, in his First Apology, states that the deacons among them distribute the Eucharistic bread, wine, and water to each of those present and take the sacraments to the absent. Another role is the delivery of the divine sacraments to the sick.3 Currently, the priest performs this duty due to the lack of deacons to assist him. Thus, the liturgical and humanitarian roles of deacons were evident from the early centuries.

With the entry of deacons into the administrative domain, new problems arose, such as their elevation over priests due to their proximity to the bishop. This necessitated addressing these issues in church councils.

The First Ecumenical Council stated: "Deacons should not exceed their limits, knowing that they are servants of the bishops and inferiors to the presbyters" 4 – meaning their work was limited to serving the bishop in the diocese and in liturgical services. The Apostolic Canons also state that "priests and deacons should do nothing without the bishop's consent, for he is entrusted with the Lord's people and is accountable for their souls."5

Emphasis on the authority of the bishop is found in subsequent councils, such as the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 (Canons 12, 14), the Council of Laodicea in 363 (Canon 57), and the Council of Carthage in 418 (Canons 6, 7, 41, 50).

St. Ignatius of Antioch (+108) considered deacons as servants of Christ's mysteries, assisting the bishop in worship. According to St. Hippolytus (+236), deacons were ordained by the laying on of hands. The First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD), issued reminders and warnings against deacons' arrogance and superiority over priests, emphasizing that they are merely servants of the bishop.6 The Council of Trullo condemned and excommunicated deacons who claimed superiority over priests due to the honor and distinction they received from their humanitarian service and proximity to the bishop.7

It is important to clearly and strictly distinguish between what is called a rank and what is called a function. The diaconate is one of the three clerical ranks, and it is assigned a specific function, or ministry, according to the Church's system, local situation, and current needs. This function does not

1 Canon 2.
2 Apostolic Constitutions, viii. 13. 15-17
3 First Apology, cc. 65, 67

change the deacon's clerical rank, meaning it does not prevent him from performing his liturgical duties assigned to his rank, nor does the exalted function allow him to perform liturgical duties not assigned to his rank.

The early ordination rites for deacons do not specify a particular gift required for the diaconate, unlike the specific gifts required for a bishop, for example. There is a common belief in the Orthodox Church today that a deacon should have a beautiful voice because his service has become largely confined to liturgical chanting. In the non-Chalcedonian churches, the cantor is often ordained a deacon, yet does not perform a strictly sacerdotal role. There is no specific gift assigned to the diaconate, as there are particular talents for service to which any believer is called.

Even the current ordination rite for deacons does not specify a particular gift. When the bishop ordains a deacon, he lays his hand on his head and asks for the grace of the Holy Spirit to appoint him as a servant in the administration of the Sacraments.

With the evolution and changes in the ecclesiastical situation, the deacon's ministry began to be confined more to the liturgical realm. The prayer recited over the candidate for the diaconate in the ordination rite only refers to assisting the priest in worship, without naming the specific gifts which the bishop confers on him for the diaconate. Another indication of this is the timing of the ordination. A deacon is ordained after the transformation and consecration of the Eucharistic Gifts, while a priest is ordained before this, as he will participate in the sanctification of the bread and wine. The bishop gives the priest the lamb to carry in his hands, preserving this deposit until the Lord comes again, as a sign that he will be accountable for his ministration of the Eucharist. This is not the case with the deacon, however, as he is ordained after the sanctification of the offerings.

One reason for the absence of deacons in many churches today is the insufficient number of priests. The shortage of priests has led to the ordination of deacons as a transitional phase, which may last for a single day or several years, according to the bishop's discretion. This is only if the deacon meets the requirements for priestly ordination. In our Archdiocese, the deacon's service remains confined to the liturgical role.

Over time, this reality led to the absence or reduction of deacons'roles in charitable and pastoral services, replaced by laypeople who have founded charitable and educational associations. Some of these lay brotherhoods played an important and fundamental role in preserving Orthodox faith during times of occupation or decline, such as in Ukraine, Serbia, and the East.

Today, with the development and complexities of life, the Church, in its pastoral care for the faithful, needs to enter the realm of specialized care. It is no longer sufficient for the priest to care for his parish in the traditional manner, despite its importance. Each age group now requires care tailored to its age and the challenges it faces. This would include people with special needs, marital problems, the spread of religious indifference, family problems, psychological issues, the poor, widows, the sick, those with autism, those living in loneliness and isolation, etc.

Without being overly idealistic and overburdening the Church beyond its capacity, we can at least revitalize the service of the diaconate, if there are suitable and willing believers for this service, and if the local church has the resources for them.

Given the availability of many talents in our Archdiocese, entering the realm of specialized care has become urgent and feasible.

(To be continued.)

4 Canon 18.
5 Canon 39; cf. Antioch (341) Canon 24.
6 Canon 18.
7 Canon 7.

Church History - First Century
Christ and the Apostles

The first century of the Christian era begins with the birth of Jesus Christ from the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. Christ lived, preached, did mighty acts, was crucified, rose again, and ascended into Heaven in the first several decades of the first century. After His Ascension into Heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples on the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2), empowering them to take Christ's Gospel to the ends of the known world.

During His life on earth, Jesus selected disciples—first the Twelve (Mt 10.2–4) and then the Seventy (Lk 10.1). He trained them to be the leaders of His Church. After Pentecost, the Apostles preached the Gospel of Christ far and wide. We do not know exactly where all the Apostles traveled, but we know a good deal about the missionary journeys of Saint Paul, which are recorded in the Book of Acts (chs. 13–28). In his extensive travels Saint Paul founded many churches in Asia Minor and Greece. All the Twelve Apostles (including Saint Matthias, who took Judas's place—Acts 1.15–26) except Saint John, as well as many of the Seventy, died as martyrs for their faith in Christ.

The Gospels and Epistles, and all of the 27 writings which the Church eventually selected to be the New Testament Scriptures, were written in the first century. Also in this time, Christian communities were established in the main cities of Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Egypt, and even as far as Armenia and India.

Because the Church in Antioch was growing so much, Saints Paul and Barnabas went there to preach and teach. It was there that the followers of Christ were first called Christians (Acts 11.19–30). Also, this Church sent forth Saints Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13.1). Antioch probably surpassed Jerusalem as the leading Christian center by the time the Christians fled from Jerusalem shortly before the outbreak of the Jewish Revolt against the Romans in 66 A.D.

The Church was also established in Rome. The natural prestige of the Church in Rome as the capital of the Empire was enhanced when the two greatest Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul, were both martyred there under Emperor Nero around 67 A.D. Their graves became important places of pilgrimage, and their common feastday (June 29) was established in the Church by the middle of the second century.

Though the first Christians were Jews, the early Christians wrote in Greek, the prevalent language in the Roman Empire. Even the Church in Rome used Greek until the beginning of the third century.