



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, SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2025

ELEVATION (EXALTATION) OF THE HOLY CROSS

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

We must not avoid Communion because we deem ourselves to be sinful. We must approach it more often for the healing of the soul and the purification of the spirit, but with such humility and faith that considering ourselves unworthy... we would desire even more the medicine for our wounds. It is impossible to receive Communion once a year, as certain people do... for when they receive, they think themselves worthy. It is much better if, in humility of heart, knowing that we are never worthy of the Holy Mysteries we would receive Them every Sunday for the healing of our diseases, rather than, blinded by pride, think that after one year we become worthy of receiving Them!

- St. John Cassian

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

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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

On September 14 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Elevation (Exaltation) of the Honored and Life-giving Cross.

Verses

*Creation, seeing the Cross highly exalted,
Offereth Thee high praise in its throat, O Savior.
On the fourteenth the Cross' Wood is exalted.*

On this day, we commemorate two events connected with the Precious Cross of Christ: the finding of the Cross on Golgotha, and the returning of the Cross to Jerusalem from Persia. While in the Holy Land, the Empress Helena learned that the Holy Cross was buried underneath the temple of the pagan goddess Venus built on Golgotha. She demanded it be torn down and the Cross be excavated. The search turned up three crosses. Uncertain which was the true Cross, the Patriarch Marcarius ordered that each cross be placed on the corpse in a funeral procession passing by. The first two produced nothing, but the third brought the man back to life, thus determining that this was the very Cross on which our Savior brought life to the world. Later, King Chozroes conquered Jerusalem, took the people into slavery and carried off the Lord's Cross to Persia. In 628, the Greek Emperor Heraclius defeated Chozroes, and brought the Cross back to Jerusalem with great ceremony. Heraclius was carrying the Cross on his back when, suddenly, he froze. The Patriarch Zacharias saw an angel directing the emperor to take off his robes and walk with the same extreme humility with which our Savior bore His Cross. The emperor complied, and was able to finish the procession to the Church of the Resurrection on Golgotha, where he restored the Holy Cross.

By the power of Thy Cross, O Christ God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF THE FEAST

Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy. Save us, O Son of God, Who wast crucified in the flesh, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

APOLYTIKION OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE ONE

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserving Thy commonwealth.

KONTAKION OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE FOUR

Do Thou, Who of Thine own good will was lifted up upon the Cross, O Christ our God, bestow Thy bounties upon the new Nation which is called by Thy Name; make glad in Thy might those who lawfully govern, that with them we may be led to victory over our adversaries, having in Thine aid a weapon of peace and a trophy invincible.

THE ANTI-TRISAGION HYMN

Before Thy Cross we bow down in worship, Master, and Thy Holy Resurrection we glorify. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

And we glorify Thy Holy Resurrection.

Dynamis!

Before Thy Cross we bow down in worship, Master, and we glorify Thy Holy Resurrection.

Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

September 19, 20, and 21, **40th Annual Mediterranean Festival**

October 12, 2025, **Annual Meeting**, after Divine Liturgy, in the Social Hall.

LITURGICAL TEXTS



Scan 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



Submit your
interest in the
Order here

Ss. Peter & Paul

WhatsApp Community

Join a Variety of Chat Groups
And Receive Parish Announcements



Scan QR Code
To Join

Teen SOYO Community

New & Returning Members

Register to receive
updates on all
Teen SOYO events



Sunday School Registration For 2025-2026

First day of
Sunday School
Today, September 7



Forever Young!

First Friday of the Month

Scan QR Code
To Register



St. Raphael's Table

First Saturday of the Month

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

To Participate
use this QR code



2025 Annual Festival Cooking Sessions

All Sessions begin at 10:00 AM

Potluck Lunch

Wed, Sep 17

Baklava

Thu, Sep 18

Picking Parsley



Amazon Wishlist

for Toiletry Bags
is available here.

Prayer Request

For Living
and/or Departed



September Charity Drive Loudoun County Hunger Relief

We will collect the following items

dry beans healthy cooking oil (olive)
canned meats peanut butter
peanut butter low sodium soup

Items must be unopened and not expired
Grocery gift cards are also accepted



Scan the QR Code For
Online Donations

Pursuing Christ as a Community Bible Study

(8:30 PM/ZOOM)

Sep 16

Oct 7

Nov 4



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

THE EPISTLE

Exalt ye the Lord our God. The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble.

The reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (1:18-24)

Brethren, the word of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35)

At that time, the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. And they came to Pontius Pilate saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no crime in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He has made Himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the praetorium again and said to Jesus, "Where art Thou from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to Him, "Wilt Thou not speak to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to release Thee, and power to crucify Thee?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over Me unless it had been given you from above.

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called "The Pavement", and in Hebrew, "Gabbatha." Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then he handed Him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus and led him away, and He went out, bearing His own Cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew "Golgotha." There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the Cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek.

Now standing by the Cross of Jesus were His mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother, and the Disciple whom He loved standing near, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the Disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the Disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now fulfilled, said, "It is finished"; and He bowed His head and gave up the spirit.

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true.

A Cry from the Wound

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The word Church comes originally from the Greek and, like the Hebrew before it, refers to the People of God. This People of God has diverse gifts and different ministries that must cooperate and complement each other in order to serve the one Body (1 Cor. 12). Among God's people are bishops, priests, monks, nuns, married and unmarried, young and old, women and men. All share in the royal priesthood, sealed in their baptism, and are called to be consecrated to God. It is to this whole community that I refer when I say "the Church" in this article.

There is no doubt that Christians today face real and serious challenges. In some parts of the world, like the Middle East, the challenge is about existence. In other places or cultures, it is about faith and values. Yet, whatever the circumstances, our failure to support one another as expected cannot be justified, no matter what excuses we might offer.

No one can deny the enormous changes globalization has brought to human life, to our inner and outer worlds, and how deeply it affects the modern person.

For example, people are much weaker in the face of hardship than in the past because of the lifestyle of modern city life and the ease created by new technologies. Among Christians, the choice to prefer quality of life over quantity of life has led to smaller families, a decline in numbers, a higher level of secular education, and a greater absorption by urban culture.

All of this has pushed them toward a search for comfort, which often goes hand in hand with a softer way of life typical of developed societies.

Add to this the decline in spiritual life and ascetical living, plus the tendency to settle for outward, social forms of religiosity, and it becomes easier to understand why people quickly grow weary when faced with tragedies around the world, why they lack the strength to endure, and why their spiritual resilience has weakened. We must also recognize that being constantly exposed to images of suffering has desensitized people.

These are only some of the reasons that show how serious and tragic today's challenges are. I mention them only to underline the urgent need for each believer – whatever his or her place, situation, or condition within the People of God – to respond faithfully.

So we ask: What is required of the People of God today? What is our deepest need at this very moment? How do we remove the pile of dirt of our sins and indifference upon the face of the Church, so that the face of her Lord may shine again – saving, embracing, and full of compassion? What must we, the faithful, do in these decisive times? What is the role of God's people – the Church of Jesus Christ, clergy and laity, men and women, together and individually? I call us to reflect on the following:

That we make the Church one community working for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity.

That we reduce unnecessary administrative structures as much as possible, leaving more room for the Holy Spirit to work freely, inspiring new ways of serving today's world.

That we embrace evangelical simplicity as our way of life – recovering ascetic living, rejecting the consumerist society, and being content with the joy of Christ present among us.

That we welcome the gifts of all believers with joy, working together in complementarity, not competition, to build up God's house in accordance with the Gospel.

That we realize we all belong to the same Church, having been baptized into Christ and clothed in Him, sharing the same Spirit. The difference between us lies in the talents bestowed upon each of us, in the sincere effort each of us offers, and in the humility in each of us that allows Christian witness to shine without distortion.

That we cultivate the spirit of cooperation and collective prayer and deepen within ourselves the spirit of personal prayer and meditation. This way, our vision will be made clear, leading toward a strategy to discern our priorities, set them into action, and direct all our available strength and resources toward their fulfillment.

That we embrace in a concrete, practical way those in sorrow – those whom Christ called “the least of my brothers” – not with mere words, but with real action. Do we not see how tired people are of speeches and poetry, and how desperately they need a living, tangible witness?

That we strengthen a culture of sharing and companionship, especially for those dying of loneliness, fear, and disappointment.

That we break the chains with which we have bound ourselves and our Church – chains that have prevented God from working freely among us.

That we implant our incarnational faith deeply in the world, the very world Christ came to save.

That we do not withdraw into the illusion that our beautiful rituals are themselves the Kingdom while Christ is left shivering outside in the cold. We must remember that the liturgy calls us to make the whole world a continuous Eucharist.

How much we need to remember the words of St. John Chrysostom that the Divine Liturgy begins when we walk out of the church. You leave the liturgy carrying spiritual nourishment, ready to enter the service the Gospel entrusts to you, moving from the “mystery of the Eucharist” to the “mystery of your brethren.”

How much we need, in this difficult time, to give priority to building the living temples of God, our brothers and sisters, rather than stone temples, no matter how great or beautiful. Now is the time to recognize the image of God in the faces of “the least of His brethren,” not only in icons and frescoes. Now is the time to build the requirements of active love, which embraces others fully, rather than clinging to outdated institutions.

Let us focus our efforts on illuminating the faces of God's children with the warmth of His love shining through us, not merely with chandeliers and lamps.

Let us use our connections, friendships, and talents to make our Church a ray of the light of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us weave together a network of love, awakening compassion wherever it lies dormant, and channeling all things toward the service and salvation of humanity.

Let us teach one another how to “eat the bread of suffering and drink the wine of the feast” (Olivier Clément) with the broken and poor around us, for we are among them as well.

Let us make the Church a workshop of love and service, never ceasing day or night. “For the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matt. 24:44).

Church History Seventh Century

The Sixth Ecumenical Council

The doctrine of Saint Sophronius, Saint Maximus, and Saint Martin prevailed at the Third Council of Constantinople, known as the Sixth Ecumenical Council, held in 680–681. This council verified their teaching and condemned Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople and his successors Pyrrhus, Paul, and Peter, as well as Pope Honorius of Rome, together with all who defended the false doctrine about Jesus that deprived Him of His genuine humanity. Pope Saint Agatho of Rome (r. 678–681) did much to prepare the way for this council and its decision, whereby communion between Rome and the Eastern Churches was restored.

*The Orthodox Faith
Volume III - Church History*

All TEENS (13-18) are invited to the *Relationship Project to talk about: Identity, Intimacy, and Mental Health.*



MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW AND SIGN UP USING
THE QR CODE

Saturdays: September 27th, November 1st, & December 13th;
2:00-6:00 PM

From the Festival Bakery Committee

Thank you to all who have made a monetary donation or a donation of your time to help make this year's bakery a success once again.

We have one final request - "**Home Made**" **Baked Items!** We have made plenty of the following Arabic pastries: mamoul, baklava, ghrabee, birds' nests, custard triangles, date cookies and knafee, so please, we need **NO MORE of these items.** However, if there is **another type of Arabic pastry** not listed that you would like to make and donate, that would be great. And, we always need **non-Arabic items** (brownies, cookies, cupcakes, pecan tarts, etc.). **Also, sugar free, vegan and gluten free** items are also encouraged.

If you are able to donate a pastry for the weekend, we request:

- no items that need refrigeration
- provide a list of all ingredients used
- if you are bringing the item in a pan, DO NOT cut - allow us to cut the pan so that we can price the item accordingly
- It would be appreciated if all baked goods could be dropped off on Friday or Saturday (rather than Sunday).

Thank you so much for all you do!