



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, OCTOBER 19TH, 2025

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST & THIRD SUNDAY OF LUKE

THE HOLY PROPHET JOEL; MARTYR VAROS
AND SEVEN MARTYRS WITH HIM; MOTHER
CLEOPATRA OF PALESTINE; VENERABLE
JOHN OF RILA

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

In asking anything of the Lord, or of His Most-pure Mother, or of the Angels and Saints, it is needful to have such faith as the centurion of Capernaum had. He believed that in the same manner as his soldiers obeyed him and fulfilled his words, so much more, at the Almighty Word of the All-merciful God, his request would be fulfilled. If creatures with their limited powers fulfilled that which He asked them to do, then will not the Master Himself through His Almighty power fulfill the requests of His servants who turn to Him with faith and hope? Will not the Most-pure Mother of God, the Angels and Saints, His true servants might through grace and in intercession with God, also fulfill our requests offered with faith, hope, and love? They will indeed; and I believe, with the centurion, that if I pray as I ought, and for what I ought, to any Saint: Grant me this, he will grant it to me; Come to my help, he will come; Do this, and he will do it. This is the simple, firm faith that we must have!

- St. John of Kronstadt

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

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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 October 19 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the holy and glorious Prophet Joel.

Verses

*Joel, who in tragic strains sang the earth's sufferings,
Hath passed from the earth to a place above sufferings.
On the nineteenth, death concealed Joel.*

Joel was the son of Phanuel of the tribe of Reuben. He lived 800 years before Christ, and foretold the misfortunes of the Israelites and their captivity in Babylon for the sins that they had committed against God. He called the people to fasting and the priests to penitent and tearful prayer that God would have mercy on them; and they heard him. Joel also prophesied the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, and the outpouring of His grace on all the faithful. He foretold and described the Dreadful Judgment of God, and also the glory of God's holy Church.

On this day, we also commemorate the Martyr Varos and seven martyrs with him; Righteous Mother Cleopatra of Palestine; and Venerable John of Rila. By the intercessions of Thy saints, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hades with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

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

Mike & Dorothy Marge	Victor & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Michael Shihadi	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Jennifer Brown & Family
Nahida Kaibni	Asma Ayoub	Nour & Anastasia
Mary Ishak	Yousef & Ghada	Abdallah, Christiane & Family
Isabel Threddeh	Zakieh Jweied & family	Christo & Mary Christakis
Shakeh Kerjilian & Family	Hind, Habib & Family	Margo, Sam & Family
Frank & Barbara Ellis	Paul Misleh	Barbara Zamer & Family
Brian, Caroline & Family	Fadia, Rich & Family	Edward & Eleanor Husson
Mary Sahouri & Family	Allison Ayoub	Elizabeth Albinger & Family
Saydeh Shaheen	Michael & Leila	John & Bette Adam
Jesse Daumit	Heidi Saba & family	Antoinette Najmeh

DEPARTED

Fauzy Ghareeb
Maya Moufawad

Special Prayer this Week for

Nicholas Durham	Shane Zolnerowich	Lily Rowe & Family
Marie Hyder	Ann Marie Moses	

**Coffee Hour
Available Dates**

- November 16 December 28
- November 30 January 4
- December 21 January 11

Host Coffee Hour

Offer Holy Bread



If you want to offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour please use the QR Codes on the side.

Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

TODAY, **Teen SOYO Fundraiser**, after Divine Liturgy, in the Social Hall

October 25, 2025, **Mission Walk** with Guatemala missionaries,
Hosts: Mike/Barb Bosworth (Vienna)

November 1, 2025, **The Relationship Project, Part Two**, (2-6pm)

November 8, 2025, **Young Adults & Professionals Gala**, in the Social Hall

December 6, 2025, **Christmas Market**, 11 AM - 5 PM, in the Social Hall

December 7, 2025, **St. Nicholas Workshop**, after Divine Liturgy, in the Social Hall

December 13, 2025, **The Relationship Project, Part Three**, (2-6pm)

December 14, 2025, **Order of St. Ignatius Lunch**, 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

Parenting Toward the Kingdom Project

Are you a parent seeking to connect the wisdom of the
Orthodox Christian tradition to the parenting challenges you
face with your children?

If so, join us for a ten-part discussion/workshop
titled Parenting Toward the Kingdom, based on a
bestselling book by the same name.



Young Adults & Professionals Gala Saturday, November 8, 2025

At the Kogok Hall

6:00 - 7:00 PM Cocktail Hour
7:00 - 10:00 PM Gala Dinner and Dance

RSVP before October 31st



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



Amazon Wishlist
for Toiletry Bags
is available here.



Prayer Request

For Living
and/or Departed



October Charity Drive Montgomery County Family Justice Center

Items to Donate:

- Large Size Diapers (Sizes 3,4,5)
- New Winter Coats (for children)
- New Stuffed Animals

The Center provides coordinated advocacy, government, civil
legal services and social services for victims of domestic
violence and their children in Montgomery County.



Scan the QR Code
For Online Donations

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

Nov 4, 18
Dec 2, 16
Jan 20
Feb 3, 17
Mar 3, 17
April 21
May 5, 19
June 2, 16



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



THE EPISTLE

The Lord is my strength and my song. The Lord has chastened me severely.

The reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (11:31-12:9)

Brethren, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He Who is blessed forever, knows that I do not lie. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands. I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (7:11-16)

At that time, Jesus went to a city called Nain, and many of His disciples and a great crowd went with Him. As He drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” And He came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And Jesus said, “Young man, I say to you: arise.” And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited His people!”

A Bishop's Scribbles

By Metropolitan Saba (Ispër)

This title may surprise many. This article was written to convey the suffering of the bishop who seeks the face of God and the sanctification of his people. It aims to shed light on the suffering of the Church in the East—a Church that, together with her people, lives under harsh conditions, leading the faithful to look upon the Church as a lifeline of salvation. Yet, amid this suffering, they have come to demand from the Church more than she can bear. The article is, in essence, an indirect call for us to intensify our prayers for our Church.

Most believers are used to relating to their pastor in only one direction — he gives and they receive. They expect his hand to remain always extended toward them, carrying whatever they think they need or desire. To them, he exists to fulfill their requests. They often treat him like a “superhuman” or someone who must not make mistakes, get tired, or need rest! Why, they think, should he even have to worry about food or drink? They forget that he is a human being, and that he too needs to feel a living spiritual and emotional connection with his flock and with others. In fact, such connection is not a luxury, it is essential for him to continue his ministry and fruitful service.

For a pastor to endure being forgotten by his people, he would have to be an angel in a body without human limits. But if he is a man with a sensitive conscience and a tender heart, living his priestly calling in sincerity and truth, then he can only accept carrying his cross daily, fixing his eyes on the Lord and seeking from Him alone true comfort and consolation.

The needs of God's people are many and varied — spiritual, social, material, psychological. That is why the role of faithful believers, who are conscious of their responsibility, is indispensable. How can a pastor meet all these needs when so many expect only to be embraced, but few ever embrace him?

I sometimes wonder: what image do believers really have of their pastor? Many are astonished to discover that he is, in fact, human — that he needs human connection, if not also spiritual companionship. In their minds, they place him on a very high pedestal — yet they leave him there alone, excusing themselves from striving for that same holiness to which he and they are equally called.

At the same time, they show him little mercy for any action, behavior, or even word that displeases them. Their measure is not whether his ministry aligns with the Gospel. What matters to them is that he didn't fulfill their request, even if he tried his best and went beyond his strength.

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk described this painful reality from his own experience:

“If a priest guards himself from sin, they call him rigid;
if he grieves over his sin, they call him gloomy;
if he gives alms, they call him a hypocrite;
if he prays much, they call him an extremist;
if he is insulted and forgives, they call him weak;
if he gives generously to the poor, they call him a fool.”

A Romanian metropolitan, whose diocese numbers just over a million people, once confided to me that his greatest suffering lies in how to shepherd his flock according to the demands of the Gospel, when many of them do not want that Gospel, and sometimes even ask him to do what contradicts it.

His words reminded me of the great Saint Isaac the Syrian, who in the seventh century was appointed bishop of Nineveh. Two men once came before him, quarreling over a field. He told them, “The Gospel says so-and-so.” One of them replied, “What do I have to do with the Gospel? I just want my rights.” At that, the bishop said, “Then what am I

doing here? I have no work except the Gospel.” He left the episcopate for the desert, where he became one of the greatest spiritual saints.

Another deep pain for a bishop comes when his flock shows no interest in renewing their lives, purifying their hearts, or growing spiritually, and they are content to remain as they are. For what is the bishop’s role, if not to sanctify the lives of his people and help them walk that path? His primary service is to nurture everything that leads them to progress in living their Christian faith.

Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk served his spiritually and materially poor diocese with selfless devotion. He tried with all the wisdom and strength God gave him to lift up his people spiritually. Yet he wrote in his notes about the preacher he had invited to teach them: “In vain does the poor preacher wear out his voice.” His illness – the reason he gave the Russian Holy Synod when asking to be relieved of his episcopal duties — was no doubt the result of deep suffering among a people unprepared to live the ways of the Gospel and unwilling to learn. He spent the rest of his life in a monastery, devoted to prayer, contemplation, and charity.

People generally treat a bishop more as a social or political figure than as a spiritual father watching over their salvation. They want him to provide for their material needs, not their spiritual ones. In our Eastern lands, where religion and society intertwine, they often expect him to approve whatever they desire, even if it contradicts the Gospel. If he refuses, he’s labeled “strict” or “fanatical.”

This places him in constant inner struggle: How far can his conscience go in accommodating people? Can he look the other way when they insist on imposing their will in matters of faith, twisting or wounding its essence? Has he fulfilled his duty if he guides them according to God’s will and they still refuse to follow?

Some expect him to be a businessman, building projects, launching initiatives, managing investments. Others expect him to be a politician, and by “politics,” they mean securing their own interests and influence. Some want him at their social events, presiding at grand banquets, engaging in all conversations except those that concern his true spiritual mission. Then they call him “charming” or “well-mannered.”

But if he is truly a man of God — pure, prayerful, devoted to visiting his people, strictly faithful to the Gospel commandments — they say, “He belongs in a monastery, not a diocese,” even if he gives his very body to the poor.

Our Christian people in the East have yet to move beyond the Ottoman-era idea of the “strong bishop” — the powerful community chief who, for four hundred years, acted as both governor and representative of his people before the civil authorities.

What most deeply isolates a pastor, however, is when he finds no response within his own diocese, when his flock shows indifference to his preaching, when they abandon their responsibilities toward the Church yet still expect him to produce wonders and achievements. For some to consider the diocese and its resources as the bishop’s personal property shows a complete withdrawal from their faith commitment. But to expect every service and every solution to come from the bishop or priest alone is ignorant at best and tragic at worst.

Many are quick to criticize their pastors “for every little thing,” whether fair or not, whether it concerns something that displeases them or simply doesn’t benefit them personally, while at the same time excusing themselves from any responsibility. They seem to think their only duty is to complain and attack. Worse still, they scrutinize every aspect of the bishop’s personal life, his home, his spending, his daily habits. They watch him and judge him on how he lives, while only a few truly care for him, support him, and connect with him at a deeper level. Those who genuinely want him to be a man of God are fewer still.

And yet, they wonder why he sometimes feels alone in their midst.

Church History

Eighth Century

Iconoclasm

Emperor Leo III the Isaurian

During the winter of 717–718, an Arab fleet of 1800 vessels put Constantinople under siege. The new emperor, Leo III the Isaurian (r. 717–741), a brilliant military commander from eastern Asia Minor, used the secret weapon called “Greek fire” to drive away the Arabs, thus saving Europe from the advancing Mohammedans.

The new emperor, now a popular hero, initiated a number of military, economic, and administrative reforms. Then he turned his attention to the Church, which he blamed for the various problems of the Empire. He had particular animosity towards the monks, who now numbered at least 100,000—a very large number of men who were lost from military and civil service, and the growing monastic estates were free from taxation.

When a dispute about the icons, raised by certain bishops from the eastern provinces of Asia Minor, came to his attention, he took the opportunity to exert his own authority over the Church. Beginning in 726, he issued a number of edicts against the icons and their veneration, for in his opinion they were being worshiped as idols.

It was true that various superstitious abuses had arisen involving icons, and there had always been a certain hesitation about them among a minority in the Church who feared the possibility of idolatry. Since the main thrust of Iconoclasm originated in the eastern provinces of Asia Minor, the part of the Empire closest to the Islamic lands, it is probable that Islam, with its condemnation of pictorial religious art, played a role in influencing the views of the Iconoclasts. And for Scriptural support, the Iconoclasts invoked the second of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (Ex 20.4).

The majority in the Church, including many of the great Church Fathers, defended the icons as important aids in personal and corporate spiritual life and worship. As noted above, the Council of Trullo in 692 affirmed the propriety of making and venerating icons of Christ. Nevertheless, Emperor Leo pressed on with his program, despite the willingness of many Christians, especially the monks, to shed their blood in defense of the holy images—and despite the indignant reaction of the Church of Rome, which held a council in 731 that condemned and excommunicated the Iconoclasts (literally, “icon-breakers”).

The defenders of the icons, called Iconodules, were led theologically by Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (r. 715–730), who was deposed and exiled when he refused to reject the icons, and by Saint John of Damascus (c. 652–749), a great Church Father who extensively quoted previous Fathers in his famous three treatises in defense of the icons, called *On the Holy Images*. Saint John was able to speak out relatively freely because he was a monk at the Saint Sabas Monastery in Palestine, a land which had been under the control of the Arabs since 636.

Saint John’s main point is that icons of Christ are entirely appropriate since He, the Son of God, really took human flesh and became man. Thus He can be depicted in that flesh. Saint John states,

In former times God, who is without form or body, could never be depicted. But now when God is seen in the flesh conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I see. I do not worship matter; I worship the Creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who willed to take His abode in matter, who worked out my salvation through matter. Never will I cease honoring [proskynesis = veneration] the matter which wrought my salvation! (On the Holy Images 1.16).

Saint John carefully distinguishes the relative worship, or—much better to say—the veneration (proskynesis) of the icons, the relics of the saints, the Cross, and the Gospel Book, from the highest degree of worship (latreia) due to God alone. And he reminds the Iconoclasts that the same Lord Who commanded “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image” (Ex 20.4) so that such a thing would not be worshiped as an idol (Ex 20.5), also commanded that golden cherubim be crafted to hover over the mercy seat in the Tabernacle (Ex 25.18–22). He also points out that according to the Holy Scriptures, Christ is the “image (literally, icon—eikon) of God” (2 Cor 4.4; also Col 1.15).

Emperor Leo perhaps was eventually influenced by the strong popular reaction against his Iconoclastic decrees, for he did not actively persecute the Iconodules in the later years of his reign. For political reasons, he allowed freedom to the Christians in southern Italy, then still under Byzantine control, to venerate the icons. Many Iconodules fled there in this era, where considerable Byzantine influence is evident to this day.