



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 26TH, 2025

GREAT-MARTYR DEMETRIOS THE MYRRHSTREAMING & SIXTH SUNDAY OF LUKE COMMEMORATION OF THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE IN CONSTANTINOPLE IN 740; VENERABLE-MARTYR JOASAPH OF DIONYSIOU MONASTERY ON ATHOS

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

Metropolitan SABA
Primate of the Antiochian
Archdiocese

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Therefore, whether you call upon the Lord Himself, or His Mother, or the angels, or saints, call upon them with all your heart; whether you pray for anyone living or departed, pray for them with your whole heart, pronouncing their names with heartfelt fervor.

- St. John of Kronstadt

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 26 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the holy, glorious, and rightvictorious Great-Martyr Demetrios, the Wonderworker and Myrrh-Streaming.

Verses

*Spears have pierced Demetrios, O Christ my Savior,
Who emulated Thy pierced side in Thy Passion.
On the twenty-sixth spears did away Demetrios.*

His father was the military commander of Salonica, and, when he died, the Emperor Maximian made Demetrios commander in his place. In doing this, the Emperor, an opponent of Christ, particularly recommended him to persecute and exterminate the Christians in Salonica. Demetrios not only disobeyed the Emperor, but he openly confessed and preached Christ the Lord in the city. The enraged Emperor cast him into prison. Knowing what awaited him, Demetrios gave his goods to his faithful servant, Lupus, to give to the poor, and went off to prison, glad that suffering for Christ was to be his lot. After several days, the Emperor sent soldiers to the prison to kill Demetrios. They came upon the saint at prayer, and ran him through with their spears. Christians secretly took his body and gave it burial, and there flowed from it myrrh by which many of the sick were healed. Demetrios entered the heavenly mansions in 306.

On this day, we remember the great and terrible earthquake in Constantinople in 740. This was a terrifying and long-lasting disaster in the time of Leo the Isaurian, the first of the iconoclast emperors. The people realized that this was God's punishment for their sins, and entreated the most holy Mother of God and St. Demetrios with great penitence, until God had mercy and ended the earthquake.

On this day, we commemorate the Venerable-martyr Joasaph of Dionysiou monastery on Athos. 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 FOR THE EARTHQUAKE IN TONE EIGHT

O Thou Who lookest upon the earth and makest it tremble, deliver us from the fearful menace of earthquake, O Christ our God, and by the intercessions of the Theotokos, send down upon us Thy mercies in abundance, O only Friend of man.

APOLYTIKION FOR ST. DEMETRIOS THE MYRRH-STREAMING IN TONE THREE

A great champion hath the whole world found thee to be when in grave perils; for thou dost put to flight the heathen, O victorious one. As thou didst humble Lyaeus' arrogance and gavest boldness to Nestor in the stadium, thus, O holy Great Martyr Demetrios, do thou entreat Christ God that we be granted 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.

For the Health of these Parishioners

Mike & Dorothy Marge	Victor & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Michael Shihadi	Ibrahim Saah	Wilma Bellone
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Jennifer Brown & Family
Nahida Kaibni	Asma Ayoub	Nour & Anastasia
Mary Ishak	Yousef & Ghada	Abdallah, Christiane & Family
Isabel Threded	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

Special Prayer this Week for

Nicholas Durham	Shane Zolnerowich	Lily Rowe & Family
Chris	Alex	Natalie
Hind	Kreutter Family	Jackson Family
Crowley Family	Assaf Family	Jabbour Family
Basil Family	Kaladjian Family	Maurice & Foutni Naccache
	Henry, Myriam, Emily, and Lilly Sakai	
	Darren, Elizabeth, Desmond, & Emerson West	
	Najo Balian & Habib Hayek & Family	

DEPARTED

Fauzy Ghareeb
 Maya Moufawad
 Elias
 Walid
 Lili
 George
 Madeleine
 Nicola
 Itaf
 Assad
 Kenneth & Jean Jackson
 Steven Headly
 Richard & Claudine Seikaly
 Sadie Hier
 Catherine Bolus
 John Bolus
 Malek, Amale, Steve, Rateb,
 Bahjat, Nicole, Euginy, and
 Saad
 Fr. George Kevorkian

MEMORIAL

Richard Seikaly (1 year)
 Claudine Seikaly (18 years)

CROWN REMOVAL

Andrew & Margaret Awad

Coffee Hour & Holy Bread are offered by **Maurice & Foutni Naccache** for the health of **their Family**.

Holy Bread is offered by **David & Lydia Jackson** for the health of **their Family** and in loving memory of their **departed Family Members**.

Holy Bread is offered by **Natalie Seikaly Khoriaty** in loving memory of **Richard Seikaly** for his 1-year memorial, and of **Claudine Seikaly** for her 18-year memorial.

Holy Bread is offered by **Najo Balian & Habib Hayek** for the health of **their Family** and in loving memory of their **departed Family Members**.

Holy Bread is offered in loving memory of **Catherine Bolus** by her **loving Family** on her 10-year memorial.

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

Coffee Hour Available Dates

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

Host Coffee Hour

Offer Holy Bread



Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

October 30, @ 8 PM, *Parenting toward the Kingdom*

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

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

November 15, 2025, *Lionheart Retreat for Men* (15+), 2-6 pm

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

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



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



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



Scan the QR Code
For Online Donations

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

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



Prayer Request

For Living
and/or Departed



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



THE EPISTLE

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord. O God, hear my prayer.

The reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy. (2:1-10)

Timothy, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David, as preached in my gospel, the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. But the word of God is not fettered. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (8:26-39)

At that time, Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And as He stepped out on land, there met Him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes, and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What hast Thou to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech Thee, do not torment me." For Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. [For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.] Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged Jesus not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged Jesus to let them enter these. So He gave them leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked Jesus to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so He got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with Jesus; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare all that God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city all that Jesus had done for him.

On Spiritual Fatherhood

By Metropolitan Saba (Ispër)

The Orthodox tradition does not recognize the phrase “spiritual father.” This is a modern term that appeared in Western languages, possibly influenced by Catholic spirituality. The Orthodox tradition uses the term “elder,” which corresponds to *geronda* in Greek and *starets* in Russian.

This term embodies the Orthodox understanding of what is now commonly called a “spiritual father.” One who has grown old in his life with God and has come to know it through personal, living experience is called an elder (*geronda*). This means that he has spent time as a disciple in the spiritual life and has advanced in it to the point of becoming a great expert, capable—through the testimony of recognized and holy fathers—and guiding others in it.

Likewise, the Orthodox tradition does not recognize an academic method that one follows to obtain the role of a spiritual father. The only path is discipleship under an experienced elder for growth in what we call “the life in Christ.” The gift of serving as an elder comes from God, not from studying theology academically or only holding the priestly office.

For this reason, liturgical tradition includes the service of “appointing a priest as a spiritual father.” In this service, the bishop grants a priest the blessing to administer the sacrament of confession. A newly ordained priest performs all priestly functions except hearing confessions until receiving this blessing.

This tradition arises from the Church’s long experience, which affirms that not every priest is fit to minister this sacrament of healing. Some priests may never receive permission to hear confessions due to lack of experience or sufficient maturity. Others may be prohibited from continuing in this ministry if they commit serious errors that are destructive to those who come to confess.

To understand the difference between a confessor and an elder, we must return to the Orthodox concept of an elder. In his book *The Inner Kingdom*, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware explains the Orthodox rule is that an elder is discovered—he is revealed by the Holy Spirit, not appointed nor self-appointed. The faithful recognize his gift and spiritual authority through their experience of him, accepting his advice and witnessing its good fruit. They begin to flock to him, opening their hearts to him. Many times, the elder refuses those who seek his counsel and sends them to others. But under their persistence and out of love, he accepts them and thus discovers his role as a spiritual father (see p. 155).

A confessor, on the other hand, holds a significant position in the Church as institution. He is a canonically ordained priest whom his bishop deems qualified to hear confessions, offering guidance from the Holy Gospel and the teachings of the Church Fathers to help believers walk their Christian path in a way that pleases the Lord.

If the elder is a priest, he may fulfill both roles, serving as a confessor while providing spiritual fatherhood. The faithful, as guardians of true faith, discern who possesses the gift of spiritual fatherhood based on the fruits of his guidance over time.

An elder does not only offer guidance and encouragement with words but also strengthens and comforts the faithful through his living example—and sometimes through his silence. In Orthodox monastic life, there is a well-known saying: “It is enough for me to look at your face, Father.” An elder carries his spiritual children in prayer, interceding for them before God. Many a time, the spiritual children will leave confession without an immediate solution, and later, the answer to their struggles comes from God by the intercessions of the elder’s prayers that provide healing and guidance. The elder does not offer advice from his own intelligence, reasoning, or study, but speaks through the Holy Spirit, which dwells in him. Therefore, an elder’s response may sometimes shock those who seek his guidance, as it may be completely different from what they expect.

St. Basil the Great describes the spiritual father as “the physician of souls who heals with great tenderness according to the teachings of Christ.” He also calls him the “healer of the passions” (Letter 45:5-6). A true elder is a spiritual doctor who heals the soul from its diseases and struggles, liberating the person from the bondage of sinful passions. He focuses on the inner transformation of a person rather than external behaviors. The elder, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, creates a new person in Christ, not the other way around.

One of the greatest qualities of an elder is the gift of discernment. Spiritual guidance requires deep understanding of the human soul, its struggles, and the ways in which the devil tempts people. A confessor who lacks this discernment may offer wrong spiritual advice which can harm rather than heal. Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol, a disciple of St. Paisios the Athonite, states: “Bad spiritual advice is like giving the wrong medicine to a sick person.” He warns that if an elder lacks discernment, he can misguide his spiritual children away from salvation. In one of his talks to nuns, he advised: “You must learn how God works in the hearts of people so that you do not give advice that could harm them” (Gifts of the Desert, Chapter 8).

A true elder is not appointed by certificates or titles but is recognized by his fruits. St. John Climacus advises great caution when choosing a spiritual guide:

“When we, out of humility and a desire for salvation, decide to submit and entrust ourselves to another person in the Lord, let us first examine and scrutinize, and even test our guide, so to speak, especially if we are somewhat malicious or arrogant, so that we do not encounter a sailor instead of a pilot, a sick person instead of a physician, a person enslaved to passions instead of a person freed from them, a sea instead of a port, and thus we encounter the imminent drowning of our souls” (The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 4:6).

Similarly, St. Paisios the Athonite offers this guidance in his letters:

“Strive as much as you can for your spiritual father to be a spiritual person, adorned with virtues in practice, rather than just a teacher. He must be a true captain of souls, not just someone who applies rules to others that he learned through study without having lived them himself. He should be by nature of great love, seasoned with the salt of discernment, so that he shares the sufferings of his children and does not send them directly to paradise in the manner of Diocletian, that is, to die as martyrs. The spiritual father should be very strict only with himself and have great love for others, a love that is not false, but with much discernment, because, if he loses this discernment he will harm his children with his love, similar to the love of Eli the priest (1 Kings 1:2), and thus the wrath of God will descend upon him and his children.”

Church History

Eighth Century

Iconoclasm

Emperor Constantine V Copronymos

Emperor Leo's son and successor, Emperor Constantine V Copronymos (r. 741–775), took a much harsher stance against the icons and their defenders. Even daring to call himself "emperor and priest," he was more determined than his father had been to subject the Church to his own will. He styled himself a theologian, and attempted to present a well-reasoned, theologically informed case against the icons. He systematically pursued the official policy of Iconoclasm, removing Iconodules from the episcopacy and replacing them with Iconoclasts.

By 753 he felt ready to move definitively at the highest theological and ecclesiastical level. He called a major Church council which he intended to be the Seventh Ecumenical Council. It met the next year in Constantinople, with 338 bishops in attendance—all of whom were under severe imperial pressure to support the Iconoclastic position.

This Iconoclastic Council of 754 condemned the making and venerating of icons. The bishops at the council declared that they were only following the first six Ecumenical Councils, and indeed, all of Holy Tradition—though quite obviously, they were ignoring Canon 82 promulgated by the Quinisext Council in 692.

In trying to make sophisticated theological arguments, the Iconoclastic Council asserted that icons of Christ either are Monophysitic (mixing the divine and human natures, if their defenders say that Christ Himself is depicted in the icons), or Nestorian (separating Christ's divine nature from His humanity, if it is stated that only His human nature and not His divine nature is being depicted). In conclusion, the council decreed:

Supported by the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, we declare unanimously, in the name of the Holy Trinity, that there shall be rejected and removed and cursed out of the Christian Church every likeness which is made out of any material and color whatever by the evil art of painters.

It seems that the chief Christological mistake of this council was that it did not properly distinguish between Christ's divine nature and His (divine) hypostasis. The icons do depict Christ in His human nature, which He has forever joined inseparably to Himself through union with His divine Person or hypostasis. But of course the icons do not depict His divine nature, which forever remains invisible and uncircumscribable.

The theology expressed at this false council also reflects a dualistic streak haunting Christianity in various ways through the centuries, which denies the full goodness of the material order. In addition to calling iconography "the evil art of painters," this council also labeled it "a dead art, discovered by the heathen," and "lifeless pictures with material colors which are of no value." It said Christians are forbidden "to imitate the customs of the demon-worshippers, and to insult the saints . . . by common dead matter." And it slanderously accused the iconographer of working "from sinful love of gain . . . with his polluted hands."

Such a negative view of matter cannot help but undermine a proper understanding of the Incarnation of Christ—and hence, of the very nature and scope of salvation itself. As Bishop Kallistos Ware observes,

The Iconoclasts, by repudiating all representations of God, failed to take full account of the Incarnation. They fell, as so many puritans have done, into a kind of dualism. Regarding matter as a defilement, they wanted a religion freed from all contact with what is material; for they thought that what is spiritual must be non-material. But this is to betray the Incarnation, by allowing no place to Christ's humanity, to His body; it is to forget that our body as well as our soul must be saved and transfigured. The Iconoclast controversy is thus closely linked to the earlier disputes about Christ's person. It was not merely a controversy about religious art, but about the Incarnation, about human salvation, about the salvation of the entire material cosmos.

Many in the Church refused to accept the decisions of the Iconoclastic Council. As a result, they were viciously persecuted by the imperial authorities. The time between 762 and 775 is known as the "decade of blood" since hundreds of Christians, mostly monks, were imprisoned, tortured, and even killed for harboring and honoring icons.