



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, DECEMBER 14TH, 2025

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS (ANCESTORS) OF CHRIST

MARTYRS THYRSOS, LEUKIOS AND
KALLINIKOS OF APOLLONIA; MARTYRS
PHILEMON, APOLLONIOS, HYPATIOS AND
ARRIANOS OF ALEXANDRIA

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

When you see an icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, turn your heart to Her, the Queen of Heaven, and thank Her that She appeared so ready to submit to the will of God, that She gave birth to, nurtured and brought up the Redeemer of the world, and that in our invisible struggles Her intercession to help us is never lacking

St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite

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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Led by Amjad Khalil

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Jerry Audi
Michael El Araj
Abe Fannoney
Sam Khalil
Steve Simon

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP
Sam Khalil

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN
Svitlana Sweat

CHURCH SCHOOL
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**TEEN SOYO
& YOUNG ADULTS**
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ORDER of ST. IGNATIUS
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 SYNAXARION

On December 14 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Martyrs Thyrsos, Leukios and Kallinikos of Apollonia; and the Martyrs Philemon, Apollonios, Hypatios and Arrianos of Alexandria. On this day we celebrate the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Ancestors) of our Lord Jesus.

Verses

*Receive joy, O Forefathers which lived aforesome,
As now ye behold at hand Christ the Messiah.
Be glad, O Abraham, for thou art shown to be the forefather of Christ.*

We remember all the holy Patriarchs of the Old Testament who prefigured or foretold Christ: Adam the first Father, Enoch, Melchizedek, Abraham, the friend of God, Isaac, the fruit of the Promise, Jacob and the twelve patriarchs. We then commemorate those who lived under the Law: Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, and the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; the twelve minor prophets; Elijah, Elisha, Zachariah, and John the Baptist; and finally the Virgin Mary, the intermediary between mankind and her divine Son. Indeed, the Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to redeem humanity which bemoaned the weight of evil since Adam; to realize the promise made to Abraham; to change the Law of Fear into the Law of Love; and to give Resurrection and Life to mankind. This feast prepares us for the Nativity of Jesus Christ, placing before us the anticipation and hope for His coming among us.

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 THE FOREFATHERS IN TONE TWO

Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and it was she who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

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.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably, * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.

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
Ann Marie Moses	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

Shahady Khoury
 Ala Ewies
 Naim Issa
 Ghassan Jweied
 Eiad Ady

Special Prayer this Week for

Stacey Franetzki	Abdalla, Jackline Ewies & Family
Olivia Azat & Family	Catrina, Matthew, NB Arthur Gavin & family
Abdallah, Jackline & family	Julia Issa & family

Holy Bread is offered by **Olivia Azat** for the health of **her Family**.

Holy Bread is offered by **Jane Hulaïs** in loving memory of her husband, **Eiad Ady**, for his 6-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

January 11	February 1
January 18	February 22
January 25	March 1

Host Coffee Hour

Offer Holy Bread



Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

TODAY, Sunday, Dec 14, *Children Christmas Program & Order of St. Ignatius Lunch*, after Divine Liturgy, in the Social Hall

Wednesday, Dec 24, **Royal Hours for the Nativity @ 10 AM**
Matins and divine liturgy @ 6 PM

Wednesday, Dec 31, **Circumcision, St. Basil, and New Year** Matins and Liturgy
@ 6 PM

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 QR Code To Submit your
interest in the Order

Ss. Peter & Paul WhatsApp Community

Join a Variety of Chat Groups
And Receive Parish Announcements

Scan the QR Code To Join

St. Raphael's Table First Saturday of the Month

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

Scan the QR Code To Participate

Forever Young!

First Friday of the Month

Scan the QR Code To Register

Prayer Request

For Living and/or Departed

Scan the QR Code To Request a Prayer

Pursuing Christ as a Community

Bible Study

(8:30 PM/ZOOM)

Dec 16

Jan 20

Feb 3, 17

Mar 3, 17

April 21

May 5, 19

June 2, 16

Parenting Toward the Kingdom Project

Join us for a discussion/workshop titled
Parenting Toward the Kingdom, based on a
bestselling book by the same name.

Thursdays at 8 PM Via Zoom

Jan 15	April 16
Feb 12	May 14
March 12	June 11

Scan the QR Code To Participate

DONATIONS FOR THE POINSETTIAS

The **Ladies Ministry** will be collecting
donations for the Poinsettias Project

The Deadline Is Dec 14

*Donations are offered for the health of
or in memory of your family and/or friends.*

Scan the QR Code to fill out the form
and make your donation.

For More Information

Please see Thomaseena Cox or Beth Davis

Sunday School OCMC Coin Boxes Drive

Pick Up Your Box at the Narthex
And Return it on **December 21st**

December Charity Drive Orthodox Christian Mission Center

Dedicated to galvanizing Orthodox Christians in the United States to
advance Orthodox missions around the world. We deploy both human and
financial resources to establish Christ's Church through a uniquely Orthodox
approach to missionary work.

Ultimately, we aspire to bring people into the
fullness of life in Christ.

Scan the 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

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.
For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.*

The reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians. (3:4-11)

Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (14:16-24)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

On Marital Relations
By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

In 2019, His Beatitude Patriarch John X and the Holy Synod of Antioch released an important pastoral letter entitled *Family, the Joy of Life*. This important letter was blessed, authorized and published by the Patriarch and Holy Synod and proclaims the teaching of our Orthodox Faith on family life. As such, it is a great help to all Orthodox faithful to understand the teaching of the Holy Church with regards to family life and so many of the issues that we face in the world today.

There is much confusion in contemporary culture about sexuality, marriage, and parenthood. The most basic assumptions of morality and religion about the relationship between man and woman are being called into question severely. In order for Orthodox Christians to live faithfully in today's context, we must remember how the Lord often used the wedding feast as a sign of the heavenly kingdom (e.g., Matt. 22:1-14) and also turned water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). As St. Paul taught, the relationship between husband and wife is a sign of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:21-33). Marriage is so spiritually profound that the consummation of the heavenly kingdom is described as the wedding feast of the Lamb in St. John's Apocalypse (Rev. 19:6-9).

The use of such marital imagery is not accidental, for the original "one flesh" union of man and woman in Paradise was shattered by their disobedience as a paradigmatic sign of the fall. The narratives of the Old Testament, the pastoral challenges addressed by St. Paul, and common human experience to this day all bear witness to the tragic brokenness of this relationship. As the New Adam, the Lord made possible the healing of this troubled union at the request of the Theotokos, the New Eve, at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. With His blessing, marriage has been restored as a path for man and woman to return to Paradise and as a sign of the salvation of the world.

In the Orthodox wedding service, the bride and groom are crowned in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Their union is not merely a legal contract or social institution, but a vocation to grow in communion with Christ in every aspect of their common life. Joined together as "one flesh" in the Body of Christ, they are called to the martyrdom of dying to the slavery of their passions through their sacrificial, faithful love for one another. The desires of their hearts are purified as they learn to love and serve Christ through and in one another. The many petitions for the blessing of children in the marriage ceremony reflect the expansive nature of the love of God in which they participate as embodied persons. The opportunities for healing from the passions through the ascetical struggles of submitting to one another, caring for their children, putting the interests of the family before their own, and conveying the hospitable mercy of the Lord to their neighbors are virtually endless. As the pastoral letter of our Antiochian Patriarchate *Family, the Joy of Life* states, "Conjugal love is not exclusively expressed in sexual relations, but in everyday mutual love and respect and self-giving that touches upon every aspect of life, bestowing upon it its

glorious splendor” (paragraph 33). St. John Chrysostom taught that husbands and wives who respond faithfully to the opportunities for growth in holiness through marriage may attain a level of “perfection [that] will rival the holiest of monks” (Homily 201).

As implied by the petitions for childbearing in the marriage service, Orthodoxy does not teach that sexual marital intimacy is in any way sinful. Neither does the Church teach that intercourse in matrimony is merely tolerated for the sake of conceiving children, as does the Augustinian tradition of western Christianity. Nowhere in the New Testament does one find a denigration of sex in marriage or the view that it requires justification through procreation. St. Paul does warn, however, against excessive abstinence from marital relations: “Do not deprive each other, except by mutual consent and for a time, so you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again, so that Satan will not tempt you through your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:5). The discipline of marital fasting in Orthodoxy should be embraced freely by mutual agreement between the spouses in light of their current state of spiritual maturity, not as a matter of rigid law. Especially in this most intimate dimension of married life, misguided ascetical strictness may have disastrous consequences that are counterproductive to the healing and wellbeing of all concerned.

While children are certainly one of the great blessings of marriage and the Church encourages couples to “be fruitful and multiply,” there are no canons in the Church that forbid the use of non-abortifacient means of birth control by married couples—and some barrier method contraception was known in antiquity. The canons of the Church have detailed descriptions of sexual offences, but none limiting births apart from the condemnation of abortion. What some identify as the rare patristic condemnations of contraception reflect the identification of them with abortion considering the limited medical knowledge of those times. As Family, the Joy of Life teaches concerning family planning, “each family prayerfully makes its own decision in consultation with the family’s spiritual father or parish priest on the basis of its spiritual, health, economic and social circumstances” (paragraph 33). Doing so reflects the freedom of the spouses as persons who together offer themselves to God as best they can in light of their spiritual maturity and the practical challenges that they face.

Through their free cooperation with the gracious blessing of the Lord, every dimension of the relationship between husbands and wives may become an epiphany of the salvation of the world. With a common life oriented to the heavenly kingdom, spouses journey together along a path for the healing of their souls and the fulfillment of God’s gracious purposes for their children and their family members and neighbors. Those who embrace the struggles and joys of marriage in this way will prepare themselves to accept the invitation to become guests at the wedding feast of the Lamb.

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**



Sunday, December 14, 2025

Beloved in Christ,

Throughout the year, we honor and highlight our various organizations across our sacred Archdiocese. This month is no exception.

Each year, on the second Sunday of December, we honor those who chant praises to God in the Divine Liturgy and the divine services of the Church on this “Musician Appreciation Sunday.” As we ponder the verses above taken from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians, we cannot help but think of the importance of our sacred music in the life of the Church. The hymnography inspires us to contemplate the divine and ponder our own salvation as we are engrossed in the theology that is transmitted by the sacred hymns of the various feasts and resurrectional cycles of the ecclesiastical year.

St. Theophan the Recluse, when commenting on the purpose of church hymns, said, “All of our liturgical hymns are instructive, profound, and sublime. They contain the whole of our theology and moral teaching, give us Christian consolation, and instill in us a fear of the Judgment. He who listens to them attentively has no need of other books on the Faith.”

With that in mind, we are grateful for all those who train, practice, and sing praises to God in our parishes. We thank our thousands of choir members, chanters, readers, and their directors who sing from their hearts to praise God. It is our fervent prayer that not only are they transformed by what they are singing, but that through the beauty of their voices and the content of what they chant, they, in turn, also inspire those who listen.

All this becomes possible through the dedicated efforts of those who train them, led by our Chairwoman of the Department of Sacred Music, Ms. Mareena Boosamra Ball, and her dedicated team. We are grateful for their many efforts in providing sound and correct settings for our sacred music, their biannual Sacred Music Institutes, the Antiochian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Online Music School, as well as the many workshops offered throughout the Archdiocese.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ continue to give them strength, not only on this day in which we honor them, but throughout the entire year!

Your Father in Christ,

+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America