

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

DAY	NAME OF THE DEPARTED	ANNIVERSARY
15	Suleiman Nawas	23
17	Raymond Ghandour	4
17	Abraham Ellies	29
17	Ida Jean Shallop	26

ETERNAL LIGHT

- **Jan 19:** For the good health of Ioan-Constantine and family
- **Feb 9:** For the good health of Ibrahim Michael Ghneim from his parents.
In loving memory of Paraskiva Ghneim Agban from Rose & George Ghneim
- **Feb 23:** In loving memory of Adel Younes from his family.
- **Mar 15** In loving memory of Yvonne Younes from her family.
- **Ushers, Jan 19:** Naji El-Achhab, Ramzi Shnoudeh, Nabil Samaan and Samar Shuhaiber
- **Ushers, Jan 26:** Souheil El-Achhab, George Boutros, Issa Bisharat and Maien Qaqish
- Today is **40 days memorial** for **Hani Edgar Zarifeh** offered by his parents Edgar and Suad Zarifeh. May his memory be eternal.
- **One-Year memorial for Jacoub Elyoussef** offered by his wife Salam and her family. May his memory be eternal.
- **The coffee hour** is offered today in memory of **Jacoub Elyoussef** by his family.
- **Please**, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Isabelle, Nassar, Valentine, Lucy, Nina, Sonia, Samer, George and Elizabeth. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- **Check our new website** www.stgeorgeto.org
- **University Students:** Fr. George would like to build a database to keep in touch with our students at the universities. Please, email Fr. George your children name, email and phone number who are attending universities at this time.
- Dates to keep on your calendar: Great Lent begins on March 2nd. Palm Sunday April 12th. Pascha April 19th.
- **ENVELOPES AND CALENDARS 2020:** Please make sure to pick up your **new envelopes** at the back of the church as well as **2020 church calendar**. Have a blessed year.
- **Blessing of Homes:** Father will start blessing homes on **January 7th**. If you like to have your home blessed, please fill out the form for blessing homes.
- Young Adults meeting on Sunday, January 12 after the Liturgy at the centre.
- Sunday School Teachers meeting after Liturgy on Sunday January 19.
- Engaged couple's preparation class on Saturday January 25th at 2:30 PM.
- Bible Study will be stopped during the month of December, we will resume in January again.
- **Preparation for the Bible Bowl** is starting now. We will meet together each week to study St. John Gospel. Please, contact Peter for more information. Email: peter.brubacher@pm.me
- **SAVE THE DATE – On MARCH 6-7, 2020** we will be welcoming **Dr. Philip Mamalakis**, author of **“Parenting towards the Kingdom: Orthodox Principles of Child-rearing.”** Every parent, parent-to-be, grandparent and caregiver will benefit and enjoy Dr. Mamalakis's Orthodox and researched-based, down-to-earth, approach to child rearing. We pray everyone will take advantage of this special opportunity to learn how we can all help the children who are entrusted to us by God to grow as Orthodox Christians.

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 2020
TONE 6 / EOTHINON 9; TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
& TWELFTH SUNDAY OF LUKE

VENERABLE MAKARIOS THE GREAT OF EGYPT, THE ANCHORITE

VENERABLE MAKARIOS OF ALEXANDRIA; ARSENIOS, BISHOP OF KERKYRA; VENERABLE MARK EUGENIKOS,
 METROPOLITAN OF EPHESUS, PILLAR OF ORTHODOXY

Deacon: For Metropolitan Paul, Archbishop John, and for their quick release from captivity and safe return, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

الشماس: مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمَثْرُوبُولِيَّتِ بُولُسَ وَالْمِطْرَانَ
 يُوْحَنَّا وَفَكَ أَسْرِهِمَا وَعَوْدَتِهِمَا سَالِمِينَ، إِلَى الرَّبِّ
 نَطْلُبُ.

الجوقة: يَا رَبُّ ارْحَمْنَا.

- *During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is "O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead..."*

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF ORDINARY SUNDAYS

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, **Who art risen from the dead**; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

هَلِّمُوا لِنَسْجُدَ وَتَرْكَعُ لِلْمَسِيحِ، مَلِكِنَا وَإِلَهِنَا. خَلِّصْنَا
 يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلَّ
 لَكَ. هَلِّلُوبِيَا.

- *After the Little Entrance, chant the apolytikia in the following order:*

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

إِنَّ الْقُوَّاتِ الْمَلَائِكِيَّةَ ظَهَرُوا عَلَى قَبْرِكَ الْمُوقَّرِ،
 وَالْحُرَّاسَ صَارُوا كَالْأَمْوَاتِ، وَمَرْيَمَ وَقَفَتْ عِنْدَ
 الْقَبْرِ طَالِبَةً جَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ، فَسَبَيْتَ الْجَحِيمَ وَلَمْ
 تُجْرَبْ مِنْهَا، وَصَادَفْتَ الْبَتُولَ مَانِحاً الْحَيَاةَ. فَيَا
 مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، يَا رَبُّ الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. MAKARIOS OF EGYPT IN TONE ONE

Thou didst prove to be a citizen of the desert, an angel in the flesh, and a wonderworker, O Makarios, our God-bearing Father. By fasting, vigil, and prayer thou didst obtain heavenly gifts, and thou healest the sick and the souls of them that have recourse to thee with faith. Glory to Him that hath given thee strength. Glory to Him that hath crowned thee. Glory to Him that worketh healings for all through thee.

ظَهَرْتَ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ مُسْتَوِطِناً، وَبِالْجِسْمِ مَلَكَاً،
 وَلِلْعَجَائِبِ صَانِعاً، وَبِالْأَصْوَامِ وَالْأَسْهَارِ
 وَالصَّلَوَاتِ تَقَبَّلْتَ الْمَوَاهِبَ السَّمَاوِيَّةَ. فَأَنْتَ تَشْفِي
 السُّقْمَاءَ وَنُفُوسَ الْمُبَادِرِينَ إِلَيْكَ بِإِيمَانٍ، يَا أَبَانَا
 الْمُتَوَشَّخُ بِاللَّهِ مَكَارِيُوسَ. فَالْمَجْدُ لِمَنْ وَهَبَكَ
 الْقُوَّةَ، الْمَجْدُ لِلَّذِي تَوَجَّكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِلْفَاعِلِ بِكَ
 الْأَشْفِيَّةَ لِلْجَمِيعِ.

- *Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.*

KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، يَا مَنْ بِمَوْلِدِهِ قَدَّسَ الْمُسْتَوْدَعَ الْبَتُولِي، وَبَارَكَ يَدَيْ سِمْعَانَ كَمَا لاقَ، وَأَدْرَكَنَا الْآنَ وَخَلَّصَنَا. إِحْفَظْ رَعِيَّتَكَ بِسَلَامٍ فِي الْحُرُوبِ، وَأَيِّدِ الْمُلُوكَ الَّذِينَ أَحْبَبْتَهُمْ، بِمَا أَنَّكَ وَحْدَكَ مُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَرِ.

THE EPISTLE

(For the Twenty-ninth Sunday after Pentecost)

How magnified are Thy works, O Lord; in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The Reading from the 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.

مَا أَعْظَمَ أَعْمَالِكَ، يَا رَبِّ، كُلُّهَا بِحِكْمَةٍ صَنَعْتَ. بَارِكِي يَا نَفْسِي الرَّبِّ.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ كُولُوسِي

يَا إِخْوَةَ، مَتَى ظَهَرَ الْمَسِيحُ الَّذِي هُوَ حَيَاتُنَا، فَأَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً تَظْهَرُونَ حَيْنئِذٍ مَعَهُ فِي الْمَجْدِ * فَأَمِيتُوا أَعْضَاءَكُمْ الَّتِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ: الزَّنى، وَالنَّجَاسَةَ، وَالهُوَى، وَالشَّهْوَةَ الرَّدِيَّةَ، وَالطَّمَعِ الَّذِي هُوَ عِبَادَةٌ وَتَنٍ * لِأَنَّهُ لِأَجْلِ هَذِهِ يَأْتِي غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَبْنَاءِ الْعِصْيَانِ * وَفِي هَذِهِ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً سَلَكَتُمْ حِيناً إِذْ كُنْتُمْ عَائِشِينَ فِيهَا * أَمَّا الْآنَ، فَأَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً اطَّرَحُوا الْكُلَّ: الْغَضَبَ، وَالسَّخَطَ، وَالْحُبْثَ، وَالتَّجْدِيفَ، وَالْكَلامَ الْقَبِيحَ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِكُمْ * وَلَا يُكْذِبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضاً، بَلِ اخْلَعُوا الْإِنْسَانَ الْعَتِيقَ مَعَ أَعْمَالِهِ * وَالتَّبَسَّوْا الْإِنْسَانَ الْجَدِيدَ الَّذِي يَتَجَدَّدُ لِلْمَعْرِفَةِ عَلَى صُورَةِ خَالِقِهِ * حَيْثُ لَيْسَ يُونَانِيٌّ وَلَا يَهُودِيٌّ، لَا خِتَانٌ وَلَا قَلْفٌ، لَا بَرْبَرِيٌّ وَلَا اسْكِيثِيٌّ، لَا عَبْدٌ وَلَا حُرٌّ، بَلِ الْمَسِيحُ هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَفِي الْجَمِيعِ.

THE GOSPEL

(For the Twelfth Sunday of Luke—"Ten Lepers")

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (17:12-19)

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْبَشِيرِ

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

التَلْمِيذِ الطَّاهِرِ . (19 - 12:17)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، فِيمَا يَسُوعُ دَاخِلًا إِلَى قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَقْبَلَهُ عَشْرَةُ رِجَالٍ بُرْصٍ وَوَقَفُوا مِنْ بَعِيدٍ، وَرَفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَهُمْ قَائِلِينَ: يَا يَسُوعُ الْمَعْلَمِ ارْحَمْنَا. فَلَمَّا رَأَاهُمْ قَالَ لَهُمْ امضُوا وَأَرُوا الْكَهَنَةَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ. وَفِيمَا هُمْ مُنْطَلِقُونَ طَهَّرُوا. وَإِنَّ وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمْ، لَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهُ قَدْ بَرِيَ، رَجَعَ يُمَجِّدُ اللَّهَ بِصَوْتٍ عَظِيمٍ. وَخَرَّ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ عِنْدَ قَدَمَيْهِ شَاكِرًا لَهُ وَكَانَ سَامِرِيًّا، فَأَجَابَ يَسُوعُ وَقَالَ، أَلَيْسَ الْعَشْرَةُ قَدْ طَهَّرُوا فَأَيْنَ التَّسْعَةِ؟ أَلَمْ يُوجَدَ مَنْ يَرْجِعُ لِيُحَمِّدَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا هَذَا الْأَجْنَبِيُّ؟ وَقَالَ لَهُ، فَمُ وَا مَضِ إِيْمَانُكَ قَدْ خَلَّصَكَ.

- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual.*

THE DISMISSAL

Priest: May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; *of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; **of our righteous fathers Makarios the Great of Egypt, the Anchorite; Makarios of Alexandria; Arsenios, bishop of Kerkyra;**

الكاهن: أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا الْحَقِيقِي، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ أُمِّكَ الْكَلِيَّةِ الطَّهَارَةِ وَالْبَرِيئَةِ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ؛ وَبِقُدْرَةِ الصَّلِيبِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمُحْيِي؛ وَبِطَلَبَاتِ الْقُوَّاتِ السَّمَاوِيَّةِ الْمُكْرَمَةِ الْعَادِمَةِ الْأَجْسَادِ؛ وَالنَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ السَّابِقِ الْمَجِيدِ يُوْحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسَيْنِ الْمُشْرَفَيْنِ الرَّسُلِ الْجَدِيرَيْنِ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحٍ؛ وَأَبِينَا الْجَلِيلِ فِي الْقَدِيسِينَ يُوْحَنَّا الذَّهَبِيِّ الْقَمِّ رَئِيسِ أَسَاقِفَةِ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ، كَاتِبِ هَذِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ، وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ الشُّهَدَاءِ الْمُتَأَلِّقِينَ بِالظَّفَرِ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ (فُلَانِ)، صَاحِبِ وَشَفِيعِ هَذِهِ الرَّعِيَّةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ يُوَاكِمَ وَحَنَّةَ جَدِّي الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهِيِّ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ مَكَارِيوسِ الْكَبِيرِ الْمِصْرِيِّ، وَمَكَارِيوسِ الْإِسْكََنْدَرِيِّ، أَرْسَانِيوسِ أَسْقَفِ

<p>and Mark Eugenikos, metropolitan of Ephesus, pillar of Orthodoxy, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.</p>	<p>كوزفوق، عمود الأرتوذكسيّة مرقس يوجينيكوس مَثروبوليت أفسس، الذين نُقيمُ تذكّارَهُمُ اليَومَ، وجَميعِ قديسيك، ارحمنا وخلصنا بما أنك صالحٌ ومُحبٌّ للبشر.</p>
<p>Priest: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.</p>	<p>الكاهن: بصلوات آبائنا القديسين، أيها الربُّ يسوع المسيح إلهنا، ارحمنا وخلصنا.</p>
<p>Choir: Amen.</p>	<p>الجوق: آمين.</p>
<p><i>These texts have been prepared by the Department of Liturgics of the Antiochian Archdiocese</i> Portions of the Archdiocesan Service Texts include texts from The Menaion, The Great Horologion, The Pentecostarion, The Octoechos, and The Psalter of the Seventy, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.</p>	

Upholding the Spirit of the Orthodox Church of Antioch
Very Rev. George Kevorkian

We are the Orthodox Christian Church of Antioch. The same Church which was founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ on the rock of faith, which was the confession of the Apostle Peter that Jesus Christ is “The Christ, The Son of the Living God” (Matthew 16:16-18). The same Church which was born on the day of Pentecost in the year 33 AD as the Apostles were gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4). The same Church which was founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul, and later led by the bishop-martyr St. Ignatius the God-Bearer. The same Church whose members were first called Christians in the great city of Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:26). The same Church which launched the missionary journeys of Sts. Peter and Paul and which supported them with great vigor and energy as they established churches through Asia Minor and beyond.

It is safe to say that we have inherited a sacred tradition and that we also have inherited a truly awesome responsibility. The question for us is: “Are we upholding this awesome and sacred tradition today, in the midst of a secular culture which seeks to destroy all that we believe?” I think that if we are honest about the answer, we will say: “No – there is much work to be done.”

Let us explore more specifically these traditions of Antioch which we are called to uphold:

A Missionary Church

The Church of Antioch was the home base for St. Paul as he embarked on his monumental missionary journeys to establish new church communities. The growth in the early years of Christianity was nothing short of miraculous (not surprising since it was guided by the Holy Spirit!) The Church at Antioch was the first church to send out missionaries in an intentional way. St. Paul planted new churches in a way that was designed to ensure their growth, and as he planted those churches in larger communities, soon the churches spread to the surrounding smaller communities. We are told that the fruit of these labors was that “the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.” (*Acts 16:5*). Clearly, the early Church of Antioch possessed a missionary spirit which was grounded in the teaching of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and which she pursued with zeal and enthusiasm, sparing no resources that were required for the support of the newly founded churches.

An Incarnational Church

From the earliest days of the church, the Christians of Antioch stood fast in the traditions which were delivered by our Lord, Jesus Christ, and His Apostles, and they continued to practice their Christianity as they had for hundreds of years. The priority for the Antiochian Christians was emphasizing the truth that The pre-eternal Son and Word of God became incarnate in human history in the person of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ. This truth was not so much reflected in theories and philosophies, but rather manifested in the living experience of the God-Man. Their strong emphasis was on the love that Jesus Christ has for us and our responsibility to return that love to those who we encounter in our lives. This represents a life of faith and love which follows the command of Jesus Christ: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (*John 13:34-35*). The Christians of Antioch remained rooted in the traditions of the church, as St. Paul taught them: “Therefore brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

A Church Which Embraces all with the Love of Jesus Christ

We read the following in the Book of Acts regarding the earliest days of the Church in Antioch:

But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. (*Acts 11:20-24*)

It is clear that the Church of Antioch was the “Church of the Gentiles,” which presented a unique and serious challenge to the Antiochian Christians to assimilate people from many cultures and diverse religious backgrounds into a unified Orthodox Christian faith. The Church responded, not with hesitation and resentment, but rather by pouring out a large measure of love and compassion which had been commanded by our Lord, Jesus Christ, through His teaching and His example. It is also clear that

the seal of Apostolic authority, represented by the arrival of Barnabas, was required in order for the new church to be integrated into the Universal Church.

The Challenge for us in North America

It would be no surprise to anyone to admit that we live in a culture which does not embrace God but rather seeks to obliterate God from our lives. It is a culture where the word “sin” is no longer used because it would interfere with the spirit of “anything which makes you feel good and makes you happy is acceptable.” Having explored what we might call the “Spirit of Antioch,” what can we say about the challenges that we have in the midst of our post-Christian, secular culture. How do we rekindle that spirit in our church communities, and truly follow the tradition which has been given to us by our Lord and His Apostles?

First and foremost, we must attend to our own houses of worship. We all know that when we are expecting beloved guests to come to our houses, we take great pains to make sure that all is in order and that their experience in our home will be a memorable one. We clean, decorate, arrange, and of course, we make sure that our guests are fed very well. It is essential that we follow this same model in our churches. We must make ourselves completely prepared to receive those who are now strangers, but who will become beloved members of our church families. We must prepare ourselves spiritually through worship, prayer, fasting and education in our Orthodox faith. Our churches must be a place of refuge, peace, and comfort to all who enter their doors. Newcomers must find a pious, worshipping community, which takes its faith very seriously and behaves with decorum and respect in the church. We must be educated in our faith so that we can witness to others in an accurate and effective way. Our churches must be free from gossip, judgment, and dissension, so as not to scandalize our newcomers. In short, we must be holy people, shining with the same light that shone from all of the Saints and Martyrs of the Church. This is truly the Spirit of Antioch.

Second, we must be very generous in our giving to the church – both in material giving and the giving of our service to the church. A dramatic shift must occur in the way we think about giving to the church – not giving what is simply left over, but giving the first fruits of our labor, and in a sacrificial way. Likewise, our service to the church must be strong and generous. The early Church of Antioch did not hesitate for a moment to materially support the work of St. Paul and to send assistance to the newly founded churches which were in need. Only in this way can we move beyond hopeless

discussions around the material needs of our churches and focus on the real work of the church, which is the salvation of every soul.

Third, we must be churches which embrace our visitors and newcomers with the abundant love with which our Lord loves us. From the moment that a visitor or newcomer enters the doors of our churches, they must feel an overwhelming sense of belonging. They must quickly be brought from the status of “stranger” to the status of “loved one”. The power of this behavior cannot be overstated. It is the very thing that our secular culture cannot give to people and the single thing that will capture the hearts and minds of all who enter our churches.

It is the Spirit of the Church of Antioch which was instrumental in the growth and expansion of the earliest churches. It is the Spirit of the Church of Antioch which has upheld the teachings of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and His Apostles in an unwavering manner, against all of the worldly forces which have sought to assault and destroy her. It is the Spirit of the Church of Antioch which not only survives to this day but thrives through her witness to the Orthodox faith. It was the Spirit of the Church of Antioch that animated the missionary activity of St. Raphael of Brooklyn, the decisive leadership of Metropolitan Antony, and the visionary ministry of Metropolitan Philip, and it continues in the focus of our Metropolitan Joseph on saving the souls of the faithful. And it must be the Spirit of the Church of Antioch which will once again reach out to all people and bring them home to the Orthodox Faith.
