



Volume 32, Number 3  
**MARCH 2023**

# The Cathedral Messenger

*A Publication of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral*



His Eminence Metropolitan

## SABA

Elected Metropolitan of North America

At an extraordinary session on Feb. 23, 2023 in Balamand, Lebanon the Holy Synod of Antioch elected His Eminence, the Most Reverend Saba Esper, formerly of the Diocese of Bosra Hauran in Syria, as Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

Metropolitan Saba is well known to us at St. George Cathedral. He first visited here in November 1995 when still a priest, soon after Bishop Basil took up his residence at the Chancery, and stayed there until Pascha 1996. He returned again as a Metropolitan in 2007 for another visit.

Metropolitan Saba was born in Latakia, Syria in 1959. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Tishreen in Latakia, and a bachelor's degree in theology from the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology in Balamand. His Eminence is fluent in Arabic and English.

His Eminence was ordained a priest in 1988 and elevated to the dignity of archimandrite in 1994. He pastored St. Michael the Archangel Church in the Archdiocese of Latakia until 1998. During that time, Metropolitan Saba edited and published the Orthodox Christian magazine Farah geared toward children and families.



**METROPOLITAN SABA & BISHOP BASIL**  
at St George Cathedral in Wichita  
2007

In 1998, Metropolitan Saba was elected and consecrated as an auxiliary bishop to His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV of thrice-blessed memory. In 1999, His Beatitude and the Holy Synod of Antioch elected him as metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Bosra, Hauran and Jabal Al-Arab in Syria.

Simultaneously with his pastoral and episcopal duties, from 1995-2006, His Eminence served as instructor of Pastoral Care and Introduction to the Old Testament

at the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology in Balamand.

During his tenure as Metropolitan of Hauran, His Eminence cofounded The Hauran Connection with the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. This charitable project enhances Orthodoxy in this ancient Christian land in the face of strife. More than \$1 million has been raised in more than 15 years.

Developmental projects and charitable endowments for the Bosra Archdiocese under Metropolitan Saba include a medical clinic in As-Suwayda, dormitories for 150 university students in As-Suwayda and Daraa; 48 studios for retirees in The House of Love; the Bethany Spiritual Retreat Center in Kharaba;

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## LETTER FROM PATRIARCH + JOHN X



To our Beloved in the Lord, The Hierarchs, Priests, Deacons,  
Members of the Board of Trustees, and Spiritual Children  
of our Holy Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America,

**Beloved,**

After the Holy Synod of Antioch convened in its extraordinary session at the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand, I send you this letter from Antioch that is ravaged by the earthquake that struck its depth, repeating what I often said during my last visit a few years ago to your God-protected Archdiocese, that we are steadfast in the mother land of Antioch, no matter how many challenges beset us, even if we are struck by an earthquake.

Yes, we are steadfast in our mother and native land, so that our children, wherever they are abroad, can rightly say: "Our origins and roots are in Antioch, and these Antiochian roots remain alive in us and before us."

At every crossroads in the life of our Church of Antioch, we are reminded that we have something that makes us unique and united: our Antiochian roots founded by the Apostles Peter and Paul, which our fathers in the Mother Church preserved with all preciousness and care, even by the shedding of blood. These were kept by their disciples, the Holy Fathers, who set out with the Good News to all ends of the earth.

Your fathers traveled to the New Land and cultivated in it the lofty spiritual values upon which they were brought up in the Antiochian East. They did this with great faith and deep spiritual struggle, and they built their churches as they built their homes. We are altogether today blessed by the grace that God has given you which you preserve with physical labor and spiritual vigilance, just as we are blessed by those who have seen in Antioch a Church, a mother in whose bosom they have taken refuge, and they received grace upon grace.

The Fathers of the Holy Synod of Antioch gathered in the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand and flocked from the Archdioceses spread all over the world, from every part of the earth where the Lord willed for Antioch to have a holy dwelling place. This time, the Synod Fathers gathered for your beloved Archdiocese of North America, in order to elect for her a shepherd who will stand in your midst and watch over your care.

It is noteworthy for us, from our patriarchal position, that you be aware of the vision that unites the Synod Fathers every time they convene for one of the Antiochian Archdioceses. This vision is based on the following fixed precepts:

- Each Archdiocese is a unique and complete member of the Antiochian Body and her concerns are the concerns of the entire Church of Antioch.
- When dealing with issues and concerns related to a particular Archdiocese, the Synod Fathers unite their minds and hearts with the minds and hearts of the faithful in the concerned Archdiocese. These concerns are transmitted to the Holy Synod by the Archdiocese's Metropolitan in the case of ordinary sessions, or by the Patriarchal Vicar in the case of the extraordinary sessions, when the Archdiocese becomes vacant.
- The Synod Fathers are fully convinced that each Archdiocese has her own specificity and her distinct administrative needs, but they are also ecclesiastically convinced that the starting point is one and the same: the single Antiochian ecclesiastical tradition which is enshrined in the texts governing the life of the Antiochian Church throughout the Archdioceses.

In this spirit, the Synod Fathers gathered at the last extraordinary session and listened to the report presented by the Patriarchal Vicar, His Eminence Metropolitan (Al Sourì), and reviewed the papers of the Archdiocesan Special Convention held last January and the outcome of its work. The Holy Synod elected from among the three nominees given by the Convention His Eminence Saba Isper.

We are certain that His Eminence Saba Isper will be a finest shepherd for a finest flock. With him you will write a new chapter in the glorious history of your Archdiocese, consolidating the vision that has guided the Archdiocese through her close association with the Mother Church, having a distinct solid structure that unites her parishes throughout North America. Thus, you give an authentic Orthodox Christian Antiochian witness, which provides the healing answer given by the Orthodox faith to all the existential questions posed in our contemporary world filled with temptations and challenges.

As we wish for His Eminence Metropolitan Saba Isper success in his ministry, we ask the Lord Almighty, through the intercessions of the Mother of God, to grant him strength in this blessed ministry, for the good of the Archdiocese and the sanctification of the shepherds, along with the beloved faithful.

With our Apostolic blessings and paternal love.

Balamand, 23 February 2023.

+ **JOHN X**

Patriarch of Antioch and all the East



## MEMORY ETERNAL

**Jacqueline Kouri, 1/23**  
**Joe Stevens III, 1/29**  
 (brother of Sandi Barrese & Judy Sayfie)  
**Elva Elkouri, 2/4**  
**Nicholas Zayat, 2/4 of Beirut, Lebanon**  
 (father of Estephan Zayat and Mayssa Zayat Khalife)  
**Freedra David, 2/9,**  
**Shae Steven Franklin 2/10**  
 (granddaughter of Violette Ammar)  
**Bob Laham, 2/13**  
**Robert George Khayat, 2/15 of Beirut, Lebanon**  
 (father of Patou Hourani)  
**Carol Farha, 2/24**

MANY YEARS!

## MABROOK! BLESSINGS!

### Baptism

Uriah David Moore, 1/14  
 son of Luke & Kennadi Moore

### Chrismations

Jason & Cassandra Moore and  
 Luke & Kennadi Moore, 1/14  
 Jeffrey Alan Wilson, 2/18

## Food for the Hungry



"When you see a poor person, remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ by which He declared that it is He, Himself who is fed. For though that which appears be not Christ, yet in that person's form, it is Christ Himself who receives and begs."

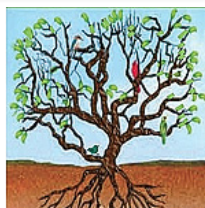
--St. John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Mathew" #78.

We urge you, during this season of prayer, self-discipline and fasting, to be very generous in your contribution to this campaign. As we practice the virtues which cleanse our souls, let us not forget or refrain from the "greatest of the virtues." As important as prayer and fasting are, they are of no avail to us if we fail to give to those in need.

If you would like to give, please make your check payable to **St. George Cathedral - earmark "FFHP"**

## March is Antiochian Women's Month

Nurturing the Seeds of Orthodoxy Across North America



## Presanctified Pot Luck Suppers

**Please remember to bring a dish to share on these Wednesdays**

**March 1**  
**March 8 @ St. Mary Church - Do Not Bring**  
**March 15**  
**March 22**  
**Thursday, March 30**  
**April 5, HERE with St Mary Church**

## The 20th Annual Men's Lenten Retreat-2023

Mark your calendars now for this year's Men's Lenten Retreat, **to be held March 10-12** welcoming this year's presenter, **Fr. James Coles** from St Ignatius Church - Mesa, Arizona



Topic:  
**May It Be Blessed! The Life & Teachings of Elder Symeon**

to register click this link <https://tinyurl.com/3rcfd2ev> or visit [stgeorgecathedral.net](http://stgeorgecathedral.net) **Event Registration button**



## 2023 PARISH COUNCIL NEW OFFICERS

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Kim Farha</b>
<b>Vice-Chair:</b>	<b>Justin Elkouri</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Nick Pohlenz</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Christopher Farha</b>



## MARCH FASTING



The Great Fast continues during which we abstain from all meats, dairy products, and flesh fish. Fish is allowed following the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25.

## THE REASON FOR LENTEN PROSTRATIONS

When visitors are present at the Lenten Divine Services, they are bound to see many of the faithful making full prostrations during the prayer of St Ephrem, and at other times. As could be expected, reactions to this practice are often mixed, and may include a measure of surprise, or amusement, or even scandal. Why then do we make prostrations?

The very practice of prostrations exemplifies the traditional Orthodox understanding of how our body and soul are interwoven and inseparable. The disposition of the soul must rule the body, and the actions of the body can affect the state of the soul. Many examples could be given of this truth, but suffice it to say that our physical posture during prayer also can affect the disposition of our souls, and aid the attention of our minds.

When it comes to prostrations, one saying of a later Father of the Church, Theoleptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia (+1322) is particularly instructive: “Do not neglect prostration,” he admonishes his spiritual children. “It provides an image of man’s fall into sin and expresses the confession of our sinfulness. Getting up, on the other hand, signifies repentance and the promise to lead a life of virtue. Let each prostration be accompanied by a noetic invocation of Christ, so that by falling before the Lord in soul and body you may gain the grace of the God of souls and bodies.”

### SABA *continued*

Bread for All that distributes food to the poor regardless of religion; ongoing agricultural projects; and The Good Samaritan, a multifaceted charitable organization for parishioners displaced or affected by the recent Syrian war.

His Eminence established a publishing house in the Bosra Archdiocese, the Al-Arabiya magazine for adults, and continued issuing Farah for children. An English version has been produced since 2010. Metropolitan Saba authors weekly articles on his Facebook page and has written on various topics



(adapted from  
an article  
by Fr John Breck)

In other words,  
prostrations contain both an ex-

pression of repentance, and a confession of hope. In bending our knees we assume an attitude of humility before the God to whom we offer our prayer. Kneeling, then touching our forehead to the ground, we acknowledge our sinfulness; we create a living image of our fall into sin. Our very posture represents a confession of that state, a calling to mind of our spiritual poverty, of our susceptibility to passions of greed, lust, anger and malice – all the things mentioned in St Ephrem’s prayer.

Then, as we rise to our feet, we confess that Christ can raise us from our fallen state. As our sinfulness becomes a bodily symbol bowing down, so does our getting up provide an image that change will occur in our life. We commit ourselves to repentance, to a turning from the old Adam to the new, to a new commitment to Christ.

The inner transformation signified by this gesture of course does not come about solely as a result of our prostrations, and not even as a result of our decision to repent, yet it can include and be aided by them. Ultimately, like every aspect of our Christian life, this transformation—the power to act upon our commitment—is a gift of grace that comes down “from above, from the Father of lights.” To obtain this grace is the purpose of Great Lent, and of all its healing traditions.

in Al-Noor, Patriarchal and Al Arabiya magazines. He has authored a number of books in pastoral life and theology.

Metropolitan Saba has also translated a number of titles from English to Arabic, including works by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev and Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko.

His Eminence’s patron saint is St. Saba (Sabbas) the Sanctified, commemorated on Dec. 5.

# Do You Care to Know?

By Fr. Paul O'Callaghan

"My people are destroyed by a lack of knowledge." This word of the Lord to the Prophet Hosea (4:6) reveals a spiritual principle that is eternally valid. Ignorance precipitates disaster. The Apostle Paul warned of the same danger when he advised six times in his epistles, "I would not have you be ignorant, brethren ...". The Apostle Peter does the same once. Our Savior emphasized this very risk when he said, "If the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matt. 15:4).



To know the Faith, to be formed in the truth, to be immersed in God's word, is essential to spiritual thriving. Those who are content to remain in ignorance are susceptible to being carried off by heresies, false teachings, and delusions.

For decades now, the clergy at St. George Cathedral have labored to provide broad and systematic instruction in the Faith in its various aspects and at all levels. Catechesis is provided on a continuous basis, multiple bible studies are held, study groups meet frequently, and adult education presentations are a regular feature. Yet relatively few participate.

To be sure, the recovery pathway from COVID shutdowns has been difficult and is only now reaching completion. A fair number of our parishioners have not found their way back into regular participation in church life. Yet this does not fully explain the phenomenon. I believe many of our people simply aren't interested. They just don't care. Or even worse, they have already sold out to a set of false beliefs.

This Fall and Winter we have been hosting a series on the Book of Genesis. Yet we have only had a handful of people attend in person; another handful watches it live, while yet another handful watches later on Facebook or YouTube. It appears to me that this lack of interest derives from a common prejudice: "What can an Old Testament book have to teach us modern people today? We have progressed so much in science and sophistication that such ancient works are irrelevant."

The immense popularity of Dr. Jordan Peterson's lectures on Genesis and Exodus is immediate disproof of such superficial notions. *These divinely inspired books of Holy Scripture are ageless and always relevant.*

Yet attitudes like these arise from the fact that many Americans derive their beliefs from what they hear in the media. They simply gulp down the Kool-Aid unthinkingly. Never mind the fact that popular media are continually promoting

neo-Marxist and sexualist ideologies and knowingly propagating outright lies.

"A biological female can be a man." "People are born gay." "The Jews of today are inheritors of the promise to Abraham." "A Christian must support the state of Israel." Every one of these popular delusions is demolished by a solid reading of the

book of Genesis in the light of Christ, the New Testament, and sound science and psychology. And these are just a few items touched on in my lectures. Other profound and relevant themes were brought out by the other presenters in the series. Yet very few parishioners cared to listen and learn. Apathy reigns.

I wonder why we keep doing it if so few care. Few parishioners will likely even read this article. I suppose we do it because this is what priests are supposed to do.

"My people are destroyed by a lack of knowledge." Do you care to know? The stakes are high, as our Lord pointed out: "But as It was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not know until the flood came and swept them all away" (Matt. 24:37-39). "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Farewell Friends



**Blake, Ariam (Gebremichael),  
Lazarus, and Demiana Meier**  
have relocated to Jacksonville FL



Submitted by Jenny Wall,  
Community Support Team Leader

Next Meeting  
Tuesday, March 14th  
12:00 noon in the Library.

**We would love to have you join us!!**

We usually meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at noon. Please consider sharing your gifts and talents with our community. Please contact Jenny Wall at 990-4096 if you would like to be involved.

## COMING UP

### Lenten Drive

During the Lenten season we will be collecting personal hygiene items for our community partner, Giving The Basics. Giving the Basics started in 2011 in Kansas City, and began its first affiliate program in Wichita in January 2019. Giving the Basics distributes free hygiene products through a consistent monthly ordering process and works with nurses, teachers, social workers, counselors, administrators, local pantries, shelters, and other 501(c)3's and the Wichita police department to determine how we can best serve the students in local Wichita schools and children and adults in need in the greater Wichita area. Look for the Blue collection tubs in the church hallways to drop off your donations.

#### Most needed currently:

• Deodorant • Shampoo • Toilet paper

#### Also needed:

• Body soap • Lotion • Conditioner • Tampons  
• Toothpaste • Maxi/Mini Pads • Toothbrushes  
• Wipes

### Calling all Sewers

St. George Sewing Sisters are sewing 30 aprons for the Lord's Diner. Sewing takes place on Thursdays, 10 am – 1 pm in Fellowship Hall. Contact Nancy Claassen if interested in joining.

### 2023 Community Agencies

The Community Support Team appreciates all who took the time to contact us regarding agencies to support in 2023 and other suggestions. After much deliberation, the team has chosen to support our Wichita community through the following agencies during 2023. They were all represented at our Com-

munity Awareness Fair the end of January. Thank you for taking time to visit with the agency representatives. We ask that you pray for each agency, and the Community Support Team, as we begin to interact with them and their needs:

• DUI Victims Center of Kansas • International Rescue Committee • The Lord's Diner • Giving the Basics  
• Kansas Food Bank • The Pando Initiative/Reality U Guadalupe Clinic • Legacy Ministries • The Treehouse • Heroes Academy • PANDO Backpack Project  
• Women's Network/Dress for Success • HopeNet Wichita • Ronald McDonald House

### Kansas Food Bank

On Monday, January 23, a group of 19 enthusiastic St. George parishioners gathered at the Kansas Food Bank to pack bags of food for the Food 4 Kid Program. This program was established for students who are "food insecure", or not getting enough food outside of school on a regular basis. The Food Bank provides food and supplies to Food 4 Kids schools in Kansas which are operated in partnership with community schools.

744 bags of food were packed by this group, which filled 93 boxes. What a joy to know we have contributed to the feeding of children in our city and state.

### Young at Heart Bingo Luncheon

This popular event returned to St. George on Tuesday, February 21, with a Valentine's Day Theme! A delicious lunch prepared by Ilham Saad was enjoyed by all, as well as a variety of ways to BINGO with great prizes! We look forward to the next one – watch the bulletin for details. All parishioners 55 years of age and older are invited to join in the fun!

# *The Cathedral Messenger*

**St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral**  
7515 East 13th Street North  
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[www.stgeorgecathedral.net](http://www.stgeorgecathedral.net)

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Join us at St. George Cathedral:  
Orthros 9:15a  
Divine Liturgy 10:00a  
Brunch to follow in the Fellowship Hall

**His Grace Bishop Basil**  
invites the children, teens, and their families to

## LAZARUS SATURDAY

Outing At The Chancery  
**April 8 from 12:30p - 3:00p**

There will be no parking at the Chancery. Please park at the Cathedral. Buses will be available to provide transportation.

Admission to the outing is a gift to the Treehouse. Please see the back of the flyer for a list of suggested donation items.

Should there be inclement weather, activities will take place at the Cathedral from 12:00-2:30p

On this special day  
please bring  
an item for



### Items requested:

Diapers & Pull-Ups  
(size 5, 6, & 7)

Similac Formula  
(Orange & Blue containers)

Bath Towels, Wash Cloths,  
New Laundry Baskets



The Treehouse offers mothers and babies a brighter future through sharing God's love, basic necessities, education and genuine personal care.