

The Messenger

Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church, Lafayette, LA
Metropolitan PHILIP, Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese
Bishop ANTOUN, Diocese of Miami and the Southeast
Fr. Philip Rogers, Pastor



Bishops—What Are They For?

If you have been following the news in our Church you know that this summer at our biannual convention in Chicago, the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America elected three new bishops to assist the Metropolitan in administrating our growing Church. These three men, Fr. John Abdalah (St. George Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA), Fr. Anthony Michaels (St. John Chrysostom, Ft. Wayne, IN), and Fr. Nicholas Ozone (St. Philip, Ft. Lauderdale, FL) will be consecrated to the episcopacy in December. This will bring the total of our bishops in the United States to 9, an amazing feat considering the Archdiocese was administered by only one bishop until 1983. As the number of Churches grew, the need for new bishops arose, which is where we find ourselves today. But, amidst all of this excitement, you can still ask, what are they for? What in the world does a bishop do?

Believe it or not, the word ‘bishop’ is used in the Bible, though you might not find it in some English translations. Instead, the word ‘*episcopos*’ in Greek can, and often is translated as ‘overseer.’ This reveals the first and major function of the Bishop. The Bishop serves as an overseer for the Church. Speaking to the elders in Ephesus St. Paul says, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (*episcopous*), to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). These bishops that Paul was addressing are being charged to properly shepherd and guide the Church. It is their responsibility to maintain order in the Church and oversee every aspect of Church-life, from practical administrative matters to the unity and solidity of the doctrinal teachings of the Church.

Paul’s words in Acts also reveal the continuity of the office of the bishop. When he encourages these men to be overseers and to “shepherd the church of God,” he is speaking to those men whom the apostles had ordained to hold that position. The first overseers and bishops of the church were the Apostles themselves. They in turn, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, ordained others to follow after them to continuously maintain order in the Church although they would not be around any longer. The same has happened for the last two thousand years of Church history. Each bishop, by the grace of God through the “laying on of hands,” ordains other bishops to continue the good order of the Church. By having this line, called Apostolic Succession, the Church is able to guarantee not only a physical connection to Christ and the Apostles, but a connection of teaching from each generation to the next.

How does a bishop do all of this? For starters, by leading through his own example. St. Paul lays out the requirements for a bishop very clearly in 1 Timothy

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Issue Summary

- *With the recent election of Bishops, it is important to know what they are for.*
- *If you are interested in a book about the differences between the Orthodox Church and others, *Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy* is an interesting read.*
- *Bishops wear crowns for a reason.*



Bishops are an important part of our Church.

Bishops-What Are They For?

3: A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence...not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

As the shepherd and overseer of the community the bishop, first of all is a model for the entire flock. By serving as a model, the bishop silently pushes the community to holiness, showing that it is possible to live a life in Christ in the world. Imagine a bishop living with greed, drunkenness, jealousy, violence, ignorance, etc. It would not be a picture of the Church, and many would fall away. The bishop is held up as the model of Christian behavior and witness not only by the words that he preaches, but by the life that he lives each and every day.

Ultimately, the bishop does not and cannot live up to this role as overseer on his own. You might wonder why so many times during each service we pray for “our Father and Metropolitan PHILIP and our Bishop AN-TOUN.” That is simply because to faithfully serve as the overseer, to live up to the high calling of the bishop, each bishop needs our faithful prayers. While serving as the example, the bishop is not the Church, but serves to unite and bring the Church together around Christ. “The bishop provides the center of unity. His authority is not over the Church, but within the Church. He is an icon of Jesus Christ, “the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Peter 2:25)...The Church, with Christ as Head, is conducted like a symphony orchestra, a family, the body of Christ, where all the members in their given offices work together as the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity.” (OSB Article) The bishop attempts to oversee and make this symphony around Christ a reality. Please pray for our newly elected bishops that they might fulfill this high calling!

Archangel Gabriel Reads

Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: Exploring Belief Systems Through the Lens of the Ancient Christian Faith

By Fr. Andrew Damick

“Are you an Orthodox Christian who wonders how to explain to your Baptist grandmother, your Buddhist neighbor, or the Jehovah’s Witness at your door how your faith differs from theirs? Or are you a member of another faith who is curious about Orthodoxy at all?

Look no further. In *Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy*, Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick covers the gamut of ancient heresies, modern Christian denominations, fringe groups, and major world religions, highlighting the main points of each faith. This book is an invaluable reference for anyone who wants to understand the faiths of those they come in contact with—as well as their own.” - From the front cover of the Book

“My hope for this book is to introduce to Orthodox Christians the major elements of doctrine and practice that make non-Orthodox faiths different from Orthodoxy. More detail and nuance than this introduction provides can be found in other works, and I encourage those who wish to pursue those questions to continue exploring them. For those who want a “handbook” to what separates other major faiths from Orthodox Christianity, this (I hope) is the book for you.” - Fr. Andrew Damick in the book’s Preface

Ask Abouna (Father)

Why does the Bishop wear a crown during services? Is he a king?

The crown, or mitre, of the bishop does look like the crown of a king, but he is not a king. A bishop is the person who is chosen to oversee and take care of all of the Churches in a specific region.

While not a king, the bishop does help with making sure that all of the Churches are properly teaching about Jesus Christ. When Bishop ANTOUN is here, notice carefully where he stands during Vespers and special actions that he does during the service. This will help you to know how to properly greet the bishop when you see him. If you have any questions for him, please feel free to ask when you see him!

Announcements

Special Services. Please see the enclosed calendar to keep up to date with the special services that take place during the month of September.

Coffee Cup Conversations with Fr. Philip. If you are looking for an informal way to see and speak with Fr. Philip, on Thursdays from 4—6 pm, Fr. Philip will be at Johnston Street Java ready to speak with anyone who would like to see him about anything, big or small. Come and have a coffee cup conversation with Father!

Bishop ANTOUN to visit. On Sunday, November 13, Bishop ANTOUN will be visiting with our community. Information about the visit will be available soon.

Donations Needed. One of our ongoing projects is providing fresh underwear and socks for Acadiana Outreach as well as stocking up our own food pantry. Please bring by any of these items for distribution.

Volunteers Needed. Are you looking for an opportunity to help out our Church community? Do you see a need that is not being addressed that you would like to help with? Please let any Parish Council Member or Fr. Philip if you would like to help out with any ongoing projects in the Church community.

Parish Council Update

With the return of the normal schedule of meetings the Parish Council is taking on exciting new projects for the upcoming year:

- 1) **Bishop's Visit.** Lord willing, Bishop ANTOUN will visit with our community the weekend of November 13. This is the Sunday closest to our parish feast day. Updates will be posted as we draw closer to this event. If you would like to help in the planning phase, please speak with Fr. Philip or Mr. Tony Nassour who is chairing the event.
 - 2) The Parish Council will meet on Sunday, September 18. If you have any thoughts or new ideas for this coming fall, please do not hesitate to speak with Fr. Philip or any member of the Parish Council.
 - 3) If you are going out of town for the summer, please do not forget about the Church and continue to fill your pledge in support of the Church. Also, use the opportunity if you are away to visit another Church, that is always a good experience.
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**Please visit our website:
www.stgabrielorthodox.org**

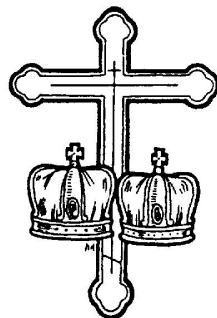
Birthdays

Sebastian Qaisieh-9/3
Thomas Marckese-9/7
Sarah Qaisieh-9/12
Karl Ashkar-9/12
Violette Karhbet-9/16
Ghyass Rizk-9/17
Maria Uliantzeff-9/13
Srboljub Popratnjak-9/22
Alice Khlaifat-9/22
John Michael Sheridan –
9/24
Eli Long- 9/27
Nahla Malek-9/28

If your birthday is not listed
and it should be, please see
Fr. Philip and let him know
to include you!

Anniversaries

Jock and Meghan Sheri-
dan – 9/16
Nader and Rachel Qai-
sieh-9/20



Teachings of the Church Fa- thers

“Not every person is
able to achieve the
highest state of tran-
scendent soul; but it
certainly is possible
for everyone to find
reconciliation with
God, and it is this
that will save them.”
- St. John Climacus

