



IGLESIA CATÓLICA APOSTÓLICA ORTODOXA
DEL PATRIARCADO DE ANTIOQUIA

ARZOBISPADO DE BUENOS AIRES Y TODA ARGENTINA

"Y los discípulos fueron llamados cristianos por primera vez en Antioquía"
(Hechos 11:26)

Av. Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz 1261 - C1414DNM - Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires - Argentina
Teléfono: + (54) 11 4776 0208 - Fax: + (54) 11 4776 2283
arzobispado@acoantioquena.com - www.acoantioquena.com - Facebook/Twitter: acoantioquena

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Sydney, July 10, 2017

**Tribute to His Eminence, Metropolitan PAUL
of Australia, New Zealand and Philippines**

**Eulogy by His Eminence, Metropolitan SILOUAN
of Buenos Aires and All Argentina**

Saint George Cathedral, Sydney, Australia
Monday, July 10, 2017

*Your Eminences and Graces, Venerable Hierarchs,
Very Reverend Archimandrite Basilios Kodsieh, Patriarchal Vicar,
Reverend Clergy and monastics,
Esteemed members of the Board of Trustees,
Beloved faithful of the Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and Philippines,
Saliba Family,
Esteemed officials of the Australian Government and representatives of all the political parties and
institutions,
Dear brothers and sisters,*

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

First, I convey the love, prayers and condolences of our Father in Christ, His Beatitude, John X, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, to the priests and faithful of this blessed archdiocese. I also convey the condolences of the Hierarchs of the Holy Synod of Antioch, as well as my brothers, His Eminence, Metropolitan Elias of Sidon and Tire and dependencies, presiding over this service, and His Grace John, Bishop of Worcester and New England of the Antiochian Archdiocese of New York and all North America, concelebrating with him. All together, we join you in the prayer for the eternal rest and blessed memory of our brother and concelebrant in Christ, our beloved Chief Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Paul.



I stand in awe before you in this cathedral, which I served 16 years ago, and to which I return today because of a previous invitation of this beloved father, brother and pastor to participate in a clergy symposium and youth retreat of this archdiocese. Nevertheless, I find myself standing among you in order to entrust, together, to the presence of the Lord, him who served this archdiocese with dedication and self-sacrifice for eighteen years.

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Three elements met together in the person of our beloved hierarch, which showed him forth as a wise captain of the ship of the Church and an experienced pastor of the faithful of the Patriarchate of Antioch members of this archdiocese:

First, his experience as a priest in our Antiochian Archdiocese of New York and all North America, as well as in a culture and civilization different from his origins in Lebanon and his theological study in Greece. This had a great impact on his approach to the needs and aspirations of his diocese, something that he manifested on the pastoral level, in planning, administration and running of things.

Second, his spirit of evangelism, manifested in his love for the other and self-sacrifice, along with his desire to “go above and beyond the call of duty,” communicating with those who are near or far. Thus, he embraced the Orthodox of Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian and Jordanian origins, as well as the Australians. Although he began to minister to this archdiocese at the age of 60, he did not hesitate to travel throughout the archdiocese; his desire to “go beyond” and communicate made him answer the call of the Philippines, which is eight and a half hours from the archbishopric: it is the largest flying distance in any Antiochian diocese! This is his spirit of evangelism that sacrifices itself for whom he loves, and wishes to hand over the deposit of the apostolic faith to those hungry and thirsty for Christ’s righteousness.

Third, his will, determination and perseverance were the basis that allowed this spirit of evangelism to maintain its continuous rush in the service and to instill in his collaborators the fire of divine zeal and determination. This contributed not only to keeping the torch of inspiration constantly lit, but also made it multiply and increase. This is what we observe in the faithful of this archdiocese, both at the parish level and the Board of Trustees level. He was able to capitalize on the opportunities and the talents and push them forward.

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Thus, the experience, love and determination formed the triangle on which Metropolitan Paul based and built his apostolic ministry. All this is reflected in the great concerns to which he dedicated his life:

First, the Christian education and preparation of the priesthood. Despite its old roots, the archdiocese remained youthful, because of new refugees and converts. This shepherd paid great attention to the fact that this diocese produces pious servants of the Holy Altar, capable of serving their flock. He spared no efforts in order to set up a theological seminary, which would be the practical arm of spreading the knowledge of faith in the souls of the laity, as well those who determined to devote themselves to the priesthood.

Second, his belief in the need to educate children and embrace young people through Sunday schools and the establishment of youth teams in parishes. He worked to provide teachers for Sunday school and to instill the spirit of initiative in service among the youth so that they could feed their spirit with the ability to serve their church and their neighbor. He saw the future of the church in them, whose actual foundations he struggled with and worked hard to build and make solid. For them, he achieved what I call the crown of his ministry and hardship, that is the acquisition of the "Antioch Village," which is the appropriate place that would host the retreats of all parish groups and church members, developing among them all the spirit of love and brotherhood and sacrificial service. This was part of his broader interest in the family, in newly married couples, in his belief in the role of women in the Church and his encouragement to them to work in Ladies' committees.

Third, he mobilized many coworkers at the level of the parish councils and the Board of Trustees. Combined with his organization, administration and planning abilities, they bore together the responsibility for the growth of parishes and churches, providing a decent life for the priests, the infrastructure and facilities necessary for church services and activities, as well as projects of economic interest in order that the "diaconia" be made in a fitting and orderly way (1 Co 14:40). Thus, we see the projects of building churches and their halls and facilities, classrooms, and many other things.

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All this was possible, historically and spiritually, thanks to St. Joseph the Damascene, the priest of the Mariamieh Cathedral in Damascus. In fact, today the Antiochian Church commemorates him as he was martyred in the massacres of Damascus in 1860 with thousands of his companions, sanctifying the soil of their homeland that Christ irrigated with His Blood prior to them. Since then, many Lebanese and Syrians took the path of



instilling their church and faith in the new lands where they settled. This archdiocese is a living testimony to this faith based on the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is active in the body of the Church, the clergy and the laity alike, in the sacraments and the Divine word. It is the Church of God in every sense of the word, carrying the grace of eternal life. Over time, what was a patriarchal vicariate became a metropolis, and consequently our hierarch, instituted by the grace of the Spirit to minister to this archdiocese, carried the title: His Eminence Metropolitan Paul of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines.

Like any bishop, he carried the cross of commitment with courage and joy. He carried on his shoulders, without hesitation or fear, the concerns of his archdiocese, the concerns of his Antiochian Church and of Orthodoxy in general, in addition to everything related to the Lebanese and Syrian communities. He worked with the Christian and Islamic religious authorities, keen to pay attention to everything related to the affairs of this community at home and abroad. Moreover, he worked with the members of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in Australia in order to witness boldly to the unity of the Orthodox Church.

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Now I wonder in front of you: What teaching of his patron, Saint Paul, really inspired our Chief Shepherd in his ministry? Could it be the following verse that comes to my mind? "I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead... but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Phil 3:13; 12). Now, his face is covered with the veil that covered the Holy Gifts, and he waits to stand in the presence of the Lord, the only one Who has the answer to my bewilderment. From now on, our prayer goes for the one who labored with patience and carried the flame of faith with joy, because we are fully aware that "we have sinned and we have lost the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).

Let us, therefore, raise our praise, in the same manner we raise the Holy Gifts, and let us raise our prayer in the same manner the fragrance of incense is lifted up, for the sake of the eternal rest of our beloved hierarch. Let us thank, together, the gift of God, which we have experienced in the person of this committed, responsible and loving father, brother and pastor. I, personally, have something for which I want to thank him and express my gratitude to him: my priesthood ministry in this cathedral and archdiocese in 2001 helped me to stay firm in the ministry of the archdiocese of Argentina as a High priest since 2006. This is something due, first, to him and, in a second degree, to all of you.



Here are all of you, the members of this archdiocese, gathered and congregated as one body. Here is Metropolitan Paul lying in front of you, while he entrusts to you this Church with its reality, needs and aspirations. He invites you to live this present divine visitation as a call for all to mature in vision and service for the sake that one be for all, and all be for one, individually as well as on the parish and archdiocesan levels. Let each one prefer the necessity of the other instead of his own (Gal 6:2), as one church, “which the Lord bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

The Church of Antioch today and always accompanies you by its prayer. We are brothers, and you are dear to us and very much beloved, even if large distances separate us or the circumstances and difficulties are different. We all pray with you and say:

O Lord, give the rest to our brother and concelebrant in Christ,

His Eminence, Metropolitan Paul,

where the righteous are resting,
and give him eternal life and great mercy!

May his memory be eternal!

+ Silouan

Metropolitan of Buenos Aires and all Argentina