



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Office of the Chairman

October 5, 2017

His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of N. America
P.O. Bo 5238
Englewood, NJ 07631-5238

Your Eminence, dear brother and concelebrant, Metropolitan Joseph,

It is with a heavy heart and great sadness that I write to you, and through your person, to the entire Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, to express my heartfelt condolences for the passing of our beloved brother, Bishop Antoun. Certainly, the news of His Grace's passing was difficult to receive, especially since he fell asleep in the Lord just as the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States was preparing to convene in its 8th Annual General Meeting.

Bishop Antoun represents a Hierarch of a bygone era which offered Hierarchs of the Church with seemingly unsurmountable challenges. Bishop Antoun and his contemporaries did not begin their episcopal service with the benefits and services that are available to us today. Indeed, Bishop Antoun is known to have made numerous personal sacrifices for his faithful flock. Despite such challenges, His Grace never lost sight of Christ and of his sacred mission as a bishop of the Church, namely *to go into the world and preach the Gospel to all creation* (Mark 16:15).

His Grace was known for his love of his fatherland and his Church—the Great Church of Antioch—which gave birth to him; which shaped and molded him; which showed him the way to Christ. And while his mind and heart rested in Damascus, Bishop Antoun was committed to planting the seeds that would one day bear great spiritual fruit in his newfound home, the United States of America. As Chairman of our Assembly of Bishops, I extend to you my personal prayers, and those of all your brother Hierarchs, that the Holy Spirit will comfort the aching hearts of the children of Antioch and that Bishop Antoun will find peace and green pasture in the Bosom of Abraham.

With deep fraternal love and esteem, I remain

Yours in the Lord,

Archbishop Demetrios of America

+Archbishop Demetrios of America
Chairman