

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

June 20, 2017

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of the Archdiocese of Mexico, Central America, Venezuela, and the Caribbean Islands:

Greetings to you and your families during this most difficult time. On behalf of the hierarchs, clergy, Archdiocese Board of Trustees and all the faithful of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, we express to you our most sincere condolences at the passing of your beloved shepherd and leader of thrice-blessed memory, Metropolitan ANTONIO.

We, your brothers and sisters in Christ to the North, share in your sorrow. In many ways, we feel your loss and pain more than others because we recently went through a very similar experience in the Archdiocese of North America, having lost our long-time shepherd and good friend of Metropolitan ANTONIO, His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP of thrice-blessed memory. Both hierarchs served their respective archdioceses for many decades, working to build up the body of Christ. They were classmates and very good friends and talked frequently. Because of that brotherly relationship, we often saw Metropolitan ANTONIO at our conventions and many of our own clergy and faithful came to know him as a good friend of our archdiocese.

Having shared that similar experience, please know that our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, will lead you through this time and your sorrow will soon turn to joy. While Metropolitan ANTONIO was the face of the archdiocese and the connection to the Patriarchate for most of you, I am sure that he taught you that both you and he are part of something much bigger, the Church of Antioch and the family of Orthodox Churches throughout the world, established on Pentecost and guided by the All-Holy Spirit throughout the centuries. In the days and weeks to come, as you mourn the loss of your long-time shepherd, that same Holy Spirit will inspire you and guide you through a process that will bring you peace and joy once again. Likewise, be assured that our father in Christ, Patriarch JOHN X and the Holy Synod are also with you and will never abandon this important archdiocese.

I am so sorry that I was unable to be with you during your time of loss as I was still in Lebanon for the meetings of the Holy Synod, but be assured that you are all in my archpastoral prayers. I have instructed all of our churches to hold memorials for His Eminence and for all of our clergy to remember him in their personal and liturgical prayers for the next 40 days.

Wishing you God's peace and the hope of the empty tomb of our risen Lord, I remain,

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

+JOSEPH
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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