



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: PV055/2023

February 7, 2023

To be read from the pulpit and printed in the bulletin.

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, reverend Clergy, and Christ-loving Faithful,

Greetings to you in the Name of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

This week we learned with heavy hearts of the devastation wrought by the powerful earthquake in Turkey and Syria. The toll of death and destruction is only slowly coming to light, but it is clear that thousands have died and the lives and livelihoods of many have been wrecked. In these moments, as our hearts break for our fellow man—especially for our brothers and sisters in the Faith—we feel acutely what St. Paul said about the Body of Christ: “When one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).

Brethren, the same apostle teaches us to share what we have with those who are now in need, knowing that a time may come when they can help us. He writes, “It is not that you should be burdened so that others might have it easy. Rather, out of equality, your abundance should now go toward their need, so that their abundance might someday supply your need, so that there might be equality” (2 Cor. 8:13–14). This openhearted sharing is an affirmation of our bonds with those now suffering. It is also an expression of love, which always takes the burden of the beloved upon one’s own shoulders.

I call upon all our parishes to collect contributions each Sunday throughout the month of February for the relief of those suffering as a result of this earthquake. Immediately after each Sunday, each parish should mail a check for the funds collected that Sunday to our archdiocese headquarters and email the total amount to Mr. Daniel Nehme at our headquarters (dnehme@antiochian.org), which will allow us to distribute the funds more quickly. Individuals can also contribute online at antiochian.org/earthquake. We will forward the collected funds to His Beatitude Patriarch John X as they come in, as a demonstration of our love, to be distributed through our patriarchal relief agencies to those affected by this disaster.

With love and prayers for you as we approach the holy struggle of Great Lent, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

✠Metropolitan ANTONIOS

Metropolitan of Zahle, Baalbek, and Dependencies
Patriarchal Vicar of New York and All North America

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

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