



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
OFFICE OF PLANNING, POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

ANNOUNCING THE VISIT OF HIS BEATITUDE, PATRIARCH JOHN X TO THE U.S., OCTOBER 21-31, 2017



His Eminence, Metropolitan Joseph, Metropolitan and Archbishop of New York, is pleased to announce the visit of His Beatitude, John X, Patriarch of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, to the U.S., October 21-31, 2017.

The purpose of the visit is to meet with leadership of the UN as well as members of the current U.S. Administration to: 1) promote a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis, 2) highlight the current humanitarian crisis, and, 3) discuss the future of Christians in Syria and the Middle East. He is also an honored guest at the "In Defense of Christians" Summit, October 24-26, titled: [American Leadership and Securing the Future of Christians in the Middle East](#).

His Beatitude has grown increasingly concerned over the last six years as the situation in Syria has worsened. One of the key goals of his visit is to ensure that U.S. and International decisionmakers understand that the Antiochian Patriarchate represents a strong network of Christian churches in Syria and the Middle East, and that this is a constituency which is committed to peace. As an historic and highly regarded institution in the Middle East, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church can contribute to a peaceful resolution to the current conflict.

Another one of His Beatitude's goals will be to highlight the very effective humanitarian arm of the Patriarchate, the *Department of Ecumenical Relationships and Development* (DERD). DERD is the largest independent local NGO operating inside Syria and like the Patriarchate, is completely independent of government involvement. DERD seeks to: "offer help to those who are in dire need, ensuring that efforts are made to provide service to all, to spread the spirit of humanity, justice, tranquility and peace among those affected, regardless of race, religion or ethnicity."

While there has been tremendous media interest in the Syrian Refugees (which number approximately 2.5 million), the situation is even more dire within Syria. The UN estimates that there are currently 6.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) inside of Syria with more than half of those being children. It is this population which DERD seeks to reach. DERD now ministers to approximately 3 million Syrians annually, and seeks to go and have mercy, as did the Good Samaritan. In that spirit, almost 90% of those it serves are of the Muslim faith. For a video clip on the organization, visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31c4P_ss_el
To contribute directly to DERD, visit: <http://antiochian.org/syrian-relief-program-introducing-derd>

Information on scheduling and liturgical services at which His Beatitude will be presiding will be available shortly. For questions regarding the visit of His Beatitude, Patriarch John X or for press inquiries, contact: Sonia Tower at: STower@antiochian.org or (212) 308-3696.

[ADDITIONAL INFORMATION]

Background on the Patriarchate of Antioch and His Beatitude, Patriarch John X

The ancient Patriarchate of Antioch was founded by the Apostles Saints Peter and Paul and according to church tradition, represents the earliest Christian community in existence. The Patriarchate was established in Antioch two thousand years ago, and moved to Damascus following the Ottoman invasion of Antioch in the fourteenth century. The head of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, worldwide, is the Patriarch of Antioch, His Beatitude John X. He was elected as primate of the Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East on December 17, 2012. The Patriarchate represents the largest number of Christians in the Middle East, and is wholly independent of the government or any government influence.

Background on the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and His Eminence, Metropolitan Joseph

The Archdiocese was established in the U.S. in 1895, and is based in Englewood, New Jersey. It is led by His Eminence, Metropolitan Joseph, Archbishop of New York and all North America, who was elected by the Holy Synod of Antioch on July 3, 2014. The Archdiocese is one of the fastest growing in the country, increasing from 65 parishes in the mid-1960s to over 270 parishes as of 2015. There is estimated to be close to a million Antiochian Orthodox Christians in the U.S., coming from many different backgrounds. A large number of these are second and third generation Syrian Americans, although the fastest growing segment are American converts.



THE BIOGRAPHY OF HIS BEATITUDE JOHN X, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST

His Beatitude John X was born in the city of Latakia, Syria, in the year 1955. He was raised in a home known for education, virtue and faith. His father, Manah Yazigi, a Syrian, was a teacher of Arabic and a poet. His mother, Rozah Moussi, is of Lebanese origin. His Beatitude has three siblings, one of whom is a Metropolitan and another a nun.

His Beatitude attended the schools of Latakia. He graduated from the University of Teshreen with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering. He is a notable leader of young people and has worked with them in various social and spiritual programs. During his university years he studied church music and excelled in it, forming choirs and training young people in traditional church chants. This led to the establishment of a Byzantine Music School. His work resulted in a great spiritual revival among his generation.

He received the degree of Bachelor of Theology from the Saint John of Damascus Institute of Theology at Balamand in 1978. He then studied at the University of Thessaloniki in Greece and received the degree of Doctor of Theology with Distinction in the year 1983. The title of his doctoral thesis, published in Greek is: "The Service of Holy Baptism: An Historical, Theological, and Liturgical Study." In 1981, and simultaneously with his doctoral studies, His Beatitude earned a Diploma in Byzantine Music from the Conservatory of Byzantine Music in Thessaloniki, Greece.

His Eminence Metropolitan John Mansour of Lattakia ordained John Yazigi a deacon in 1979 and a priest in 1983. As priest, he served in the Archdiocese of Lattakia. Since 1981, he taught courses on Liturgics at the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology at the University of Balamand. During the periods of 1988-1991 and 2001-2005 he served as Dean of the Institute of Theology. In addition, he served as Abbot of St. George Al Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery in Syria. There he founded a monastic community and a school of ecclesiastic studies. He also served as the Abbot of the Our Lady of Balamand Patriarchal Monastery in the years 2001-2005. His Beatitude is the spiritual father of the Convent of our Lady of Blemmana in Tartous, Syria.

In 1995, the Holy Synod of Antioch elected him as the Bishop of Pyrgou, an area called in Arabic Wadi An-Nasara or Al-Hosn. He served there till 2008 when he was elected by the Holy Synod as the Metropolitan of Europe. He was elected by the Holy Synod meeting in Balamand Monastery as Patriarch of Antioch and all the East on Monday December 17th, 2012.

He is renowned for his clear vision, based on truth, and eagerness to find the best solutions for conflicts amongst parties. He is known by his compassionate and friendly character. He is a good listener, and a faithful steward for those in need. Wherever he has worked, His Beatitude has proved to be a man of action and a good sower of the Word of God, seeking to reveal the beauty of the Spouse of Christ and making Her shiny and strong. He is known by his closeness to the Youth and his ability to involve them in the service of the church, their society and their nation. He is a good administrator, and a proven man who knows how to work with others and reinforce institutions. He played a leading role in Higher Education while he was Dean of the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology.

In addition to his pastoral care, His Beatitude is distinguished by his participation in many worldwide activities at the ecumenical, Christian and especially Orthodox Christian spheres. He has participated in many international conferences in Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Cyprus, United States of America, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

His Beatitude is the author of several books on theology, education, music, and liturgy. He published a series on liturgical studies. He edited the liturgical books of the Orthodox Church in Arabic, and more specifically the liturgical books of the archbishops, priests and deacons. In addition, he has translated and written many articles, and gave many lectures in different universities, parishes and institutes.

Published Books:

- *The Service of Baptism: A Historic, Theological and Liturgical Study*, Thessalonica, 1983 [Greek] (in fulfillment of the PHD Thesis Requirements).
- *Principles of Byzantine Music*, Balamand, 1990, Second Edition 2001.
- *The Life of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker*, Lattakya, 1990.
- *Priesthood & Marriage of Priests*, Lattakya, 1992
- *Baptism as a Sacrament of Initiation into the Life in Christ*, Lattakya, 1992.
- *The Liturgikon*, St. George Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery, 2001, Second edition 2005.
- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysotom*, Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery, 2001
- *The Prayers Before and After Holy Communion*, St. George Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery, 2003
- *The Presanctified Liturgy*, Al-Humayrah Patriarchal Monastery, 2001
- *Introduction to the Liturgical Families and Rites* (English) St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, 2003
- *Introduction to the Liturgical Families and Rites* (Arabic) St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, 2003
- *The Service of Matrimony: Past and Present*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, 2003.
- *The Paraklesis Service*, Balamand Patriarchal Monastery, 2004
- *Liturgical Guide in Services and Prayers*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, University of Balamand, 2005.
- *Liturgical Sources*, St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, University of Balamand, 2005
- *Church Praises*, The Diocese of Pyrgou, 2006.
- *Divine Worship*, The Diocese of Pyrgou, 2007.
- *The Service of the Diaconate*, Blemana Convent, 2007.
- *The Service of the Archbishops*, The Diocese of Pyrgou, 2007