

## Memorial of Metropolitan Philip

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 23 March 2014 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 April 2014 06:47

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His Eminence, Metropolitan George (KHODR) of Mount Lebanon, celebrated the Divine Liturgy and memorial service for Metropolitan Philip (SALIBA) of trice-blessed memory, in St. Nicholas church - Shreen, Mount Lebanon, on the third sunday of Great Lent which fell on March 23, 2014. Among presence were Metropolitan Elias (KFOURY), bishop Athanasius (SALIBA), family members, and parishioners from Shreen town and surrounding areas.

In his sermon, his eminence gave the following, excerpted, eulogy:

“As we celebrate the memorial service of this great hierarch, Philip, the son of this town from his mother’s lineage — and the son of the Church of Antioch through Holy Spirit. We give thanks unto God, Who bestowed him with abundant talents in the reality of his priesthood, becoming a great blessing for Antioch and the diaspora.

We fed our children, here and in the diaspora, the same Christ. This good and generous brother (Philip) knew this, he learned it all from the Gospel. The bishop is solely entrusted to give the Gospel, he has no riches from his own — for he is a son of a man and woman, from this world by birth — but called great in the Kingdom of God, if he was a trustworthy servant, and Philip served greatly, for he came from the gospel laid-open over his head when he was ordained to episcopacy...

We, in the american diaspora — the sons and daughters of Antioch — were the pioneers of Gospel-keeping amongst orthodox peoples. We distributed it indiscriminately to our flock, arabs and americans. We sought business when we immigrated, but God called us to be servants for His Gospel...

I knew well this great departed brother, Philip, I felt his great affection towards our Lord Jesus Christ, he liked many aspects of his new country, but he understood that the greatest is the love of Jesus. He lived and fell asleep on that love...

Brethren, sons and daughters of Antioch, recalling the “Dear Book” — we remember that in Antioch, the disciples were first called Christians — two millennia have passed. And we became a little folk. Nonetheless, we perceived that Antioch was the herald of Christ outside Palestine

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unto the whole world. Antioch gave forth the greatest saints and theologians in the Church of Christ here. The 'whole' christendom of the first millennium was here, and we remained faithful to it, we remained faithful to Jesus despite the developments of the times. Time could not change us, because we remained faithful to the 'eternal Jesus'. We belong to eternity, we are not from this world. We will remain, no matter what the count of our numbers may become; counting is of human nature, but we were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (cf. John 1: 13).

Philip (SALIBA), the descendent of this town, knew, from his early life, since he was trained to the ministry in this church, and understood that he was the bearer of a great mission — which he fulfilled, and declared, and we have learned on him great deal. He 'conquered' North America with a handful of men and women, he became a pioneer among american orthodoxy; Antiochians were now well established in America and shall remain protected there, by the grace of God. God shall root us in His love and knowledge. We shall continue here, to bear the Gospel to the Arab world. This is our honour: to bear the Gospel of Christ, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (cf. 1 cor 15: 50)...

Brethren, we will carry the message, the same which was delivered to us. We will dearly remember Metropolitan Philip of trice-blessed memory, we will remember him with those before him who conquered the new world. Our children there continue today the mission of love, knowledge and giving..."

(tranlated from Raiati Bulletin no.14, 2014. Original Arabic <http://goo.gl/PZZyWH> )