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Patriarch John X from the Cathedral of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Antioch: “Christ, risen from the dead, is the One who will raise and restore this church to its beauty.”



Patriarch John X, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East for the Greek Orthodox, paid an inspection visit to the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, which was destroyed by the tragic earthquake of February 6, 2023. He was accompanied by his delegation, local clergy, association heads, and parishioners.

His Beatitude offered a prayer of thanksgiving, which ended with a memorial service for the souls of parishioners who passed away during the devastating earthquake.
In his address, His Beatitude said:
“It is with deep emotion that we gather today in this place, where our church in Antioch once stood—the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul. God willing, and with the blessing of the Apostles, we will soon gather again under its roof and chant

Christ is risen.

I address you all with the Paschal greeting: Christ is risen.

By the Lord’s grace, the Church of Antioch has always been resilient and will always be. We are proud of the faith of the people of this region, from Antioch to Alexandretta and Mersin. You have preserved the deposit of faith in Jesus Christ.

Do not forget that here, in Antioch, the disciples of the Lord were first called Christians. Our predecessor, Patriarch Elias IV, said that Antioch gave the word ‘Christians’ to the world, as a melody on the lips of whole generations.

I dare say that if Jerusalem is the physical cradle of the Incarnate Lord, then the intellectual cradle of Christianity was Antioch. Here, I especially mention the Apostle Paul, with all the great saints who trod this land, such as Saint John Chrysostom, who became Patriarch of Constantinople.

This is your history; these are your ancestors. We are proud of you and pray for your health and strength—especially in these blessed days when we pray and chant Christ is risen.
Therefore, we all hold to this faith: that the Lord, who rose from the dead, will also raise this church and restore it to its former beauty.

Beloved ones, together with the Reverend Fathers, we are here with you during these days, and we will make a pastoral tour to meet your kind and beloved faces.
Next Saturday, we will have a special occasion, since the priests, association leaders, and parishioners have requested a unified church administration for this region. They have submitted an officially signed request to the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of Antioch.

Out of love and appreciation for you all, the Synod responded to this request. A decision was made and you are now aware of it: the Holy Synod elected a bishop for this cherished region—Father Paul. With one voice and one heart, we pray for our Father and say to him: Axios (worthy).

We thank the Turkish authorities and appreciate all the facilitation they provided to make this visit successful. We affirm that we call for peace, and that we are children of peace.”

After the Patriarch, Mr. Fadi Khourigil, President of the Antioch Association, delivered a speech recounting the history of the church’s construction and its place in the Antiochian soul. He emphasized that Antioch is not merely geography, but

the memory of global faith. He conveyed the heartbeat of the parishioners who cling to hope and trust in rebuilding their church and homes destroyed by the earthquake, affirming that return is the only possible decision.

This visit comes to affirm to the whole world that the Church of Antioch, despite wounds and earthquakes, remains alive, strong, and determined to safeguard the legacy of the Apostles in the land of beginnings.

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