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Patriarch John X addressing the people of İskenderun (Gneido): “You are in the heart of the Church of Antioch, both witness and martyr.”



Amid the Paschal joys, Patriarch John X, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East for the Greek Orthodox, visited İskenderun (Gneido) as part of his pastoral inspection tour. In the village church, he celebrated a prayer of thanksgiving, attended by bishops, priests, villagers, faithful from neighboring areas, and members of the diaspora who had returned to share in this occasion.

In fatherly words, His Beatitude remembered all the inhabitants of İskenderun (Gneido)—those who remain steadfast in their land and those who have emigrated. He affirmed that they are always present in the heart of the Mother Church and in her daily prayers, wherever they may be.

His Eminence Athanasios (Fahd), Metropolitan of Latakia and its dependencies, delivered a speech inspired by the commandment of the Lord Jesus: “This is my commandment, that you love one another.” He emphasized that love is the

defining mark by which the world recognizes us as disciples of Christ, and that it stands as a living testimony within our communities and among our brethren. He stressed that accepting Christ places upon us the responsibility to embody love in deeds, not merely in words. He further affirmed that this region, which has endured earthquakes and wars, continues to bear witness to Christ through its steadfast faith. He noted that the presence of His Beatitude among his children in this village is the highest expression of the enduring Antiochian witness in this land.

At the conclusion of the prayer, His Beatitude bestowed a holy cross upon the parish priest, Father Mousa Babas, in recognition of his ministry in shepherding souls and his tireless labor in the vineyard of the Lord. He wished Father Babas health and strength to continue his priestly mission.

His Beatitude concluded the visit by blessing the parishioners and urging them to remain steadfast in the hope of the Resurrection

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