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Patriarch John X Commemorating the Bishops' Abduction: "The memory of the bishops of Aleppo, Paul and John, is ever present in our hearts."



In the Paschal atmosphere, filled with the hope of Resurrection and during the feast of Saint George the Victory-Bearer, Patriarch John X, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East for the Greek Orthodox, visited Sarılar village, meeting her resilient faithful who persevere in their faith and land despite adversity.

His Beatitude began the visit by inspecting the construction works of the new Church of Saint George Monastery. Its building is developing through the steadfastness of parishioners and the blessing and encouragement of the Patriarch. His Beatitude observed the progress, declaring these stones as a bold testament of the will to live, defeating destruction.

In the village church, His Beatitude presided over Vespers for the feast of Saint

George, attended by bishops and clergy.

After the service, Metropolitan Ephraim Maalouli of Aleppo and its dependencies delivered a homily, stressing that “Christians are children of the Resurrection” and that “the true manifestation of the Resurrection in our lives is revealed through our sincere love for one another, which is the power that enables us to overcome every trial.”
Mr. Munir Balgajioğlu, director of the parish association, also spoke, recalling with sorrow those who perished in the devastating earthquake, while expressing gratitude to His Beatitude for his paternal care and direct attention to the parish in its darkest hours. He conveyed the joy of the people of Sarılar at His Beatitude and the Holy Synod of Antioch’s decision to elect its native, Archimandrite Paul Ordoglu, as bishop of the region, which they considered a source of pride and honor for every faithful.

His Beatitude delivered a fatherly speech, expressing his great joy at being among his children on the feast of their patron saint and congratulating the village on the election of its native as bishop. He said:
“Blessed are you all, for from this good land you now have a bishop who is your own son. This is not surprising for Sarılar, the village that has given the Church of Antioch great men and priests who served faithfully everywhere, among them the late Metropolitan Gabriel, former bishop of Latakia.”

His Beatitude affirmed that this continuous offering is clear proof that Sarılar is a blessed village, faithful in transmitting the Orthodox faith and the heritage of the fathers across generations with integrity and devotion.

He also commemorated the abducted bishops of Aleppo, Paul Yazigi and Youhanna Ibrahim, on the day of their painful abduction. His Beatitude said with a tone of faith:
“On this very day, the day of our bleeding Antiochian wound, we remember the absence of our brothers, Bishops Paul and John. Though their bodies are hidden, their spirits remain present among us and in every stone of this land. We remember Bishop Paul Yazigi, who left an indelible mark in shepherding this blessed region, and whose voice still echoes in its corners.”

At the conclusion of the service, in a honoring gesture, His Beatitude garned the parish priest, Father John Papasoglu, with a Cross, in recognition of his service, wishing him strength to continue his ministry.

The visit ended with a large, mass gathering, where His Beatitude gave blessing to

all, sustaining their resilience and steadfastness in the land of their forefathers.

The parishioners concluded the encounter by chanting the Lazarus Hymn (the Hymn of the Raising of Lazarus), a traditional folk chant unique to Sarılar.

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