



## ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

### **Antiochian Archdiocese of North America Provides Relief to Earthquake Survivors**

*The clergy and laity continuously offer prayers and precious dollars to save lives in Turkey and Syria.*

On the morning of Feb. 6, 2023, two earthquakes of magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.5 rocked southern Turkey and northern Syria. To date, the death toll has surpassed 41,000 people in both countries and tens of thousands of people are homeless. Countless homes and houses of worship have been destroyed.

Heeding the distress call of His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch and All the East, His Eminence Metropolitan Antonios, Patriarchal Vicar, and the clergy and laity of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America immediately mobilized to express their love, firstly by lifting their prayers for the repose of the souls of the victims, the health of the survivors, and to save those who are trapped in the rubble. The following litany was offered to the divine service:

“For the preservation of all victims of the recent natural disaster in Syria and Turkey, and for the souls of all who have perished, let us pray to the Lord.”

The Archdiocese of North America wired an initial contribution of \$250,000 to the Patriarchate to aid in the relief efforts in Syria and Turkey that provide food, clothing, counseling, temporary shelter, hygiene kits, diapers, medicine and medical supplies to earthquake survivors, some of whom are staying in Antiochian churches and halls. On Feb. 14, a delegation from by His Beatitude arrived in Adana, Turkey to assess the urgent needs and to coordinate relief efforts on the ground.

Complementing the relief efforts, the Archdiocese of North America established an online donation portal. To date, more than \$292,000 has been raised here, with generous donors often paying transaction fees to ensure 100% of their donations will reach earthquake survivors. Additionally, anonymous donors set up a matching grant of \$150,000 for online donations which has now been matched. Therefore, online donations have reached more than \$442,000 at this point.

Furthermore, the churches of the Archdiocese of North America are taking special collections (trays) for earthquake victims on Sundays, Feb. 12, 19 and 26. As this money reaches the Archdiocesan headquarters in Englewood, New Jersey, along with the online and other private donations, it will be wired regularly to the Patriarchate to sponsor relief efforts on the ground.

The Archdiocese of North America ensures that every dollar collected through its mechanisms will reach relief efforts without transactional delays.

Additionally, the Archdiocese of North America applauds the U.S. Dept. of the Treasury for easing sanctions on Syria, authorizing all transactions related to earthquake and humanitarian relief that would otherwise be hindered under the existing sanctions regulations for 180 days. This is good news in the short term that will hopefully raise awareness about the humanitarian and economic crises that have now plagued Syria for over a decade. The Archdiocese stands ready to help the U.S. government find long-term, peaceful solutions.

Keep up with the latest news on the Archdiocese of North America's relief efforts on its online platforms. And please keep giving generously to help our suffering brothers and sisters in Turkey and Syria.



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*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

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