

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan PHILIP

The Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of All North
America

Diocese of
Wichita and Mid-America

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
OF NORTH AMERICA
Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

1559 N. Woodlawn, Wichita, KS 67208-2429
Telephone (316) 687-3169 * Fax (316) 687-3327
Website: www.antiochian.org * Email: bpbasil@aol.com

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Beloved and Christ-loving priests, deacons, monastics and lay folk of DOWAMA:

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss in the Name of the Lord Christ.

In the Biblical account of the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2) we read of people from a multitude of nations who heard for the very first time and “*everyone in his own language*” (2:6) the proclamation by the Holy Apostles of the Good News. Among those people were “*Arabians*” (2:11) which meant people from Rome’s frontier province of *Arabia Petraea* (the area of modern Syria south of Damascus, the Nabataean kingdom in modern Jordan, the Sinai peninsula and the northwestern tip of modern Saudi Arabia).

Much of *Decapolis* (Matthew 4:25), an area frequently visited by Christ and His disciples, is situated in this Arabia, as is *Caesarea Philippi* (modern Banyas in Syria) where the Holy Apostle Peter confessed Jesus to be “*the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Matthew 16:13-20). It was to this Arabia that, following his baptism in Damascus by St Ananias (9:17 & 18) and his escape over the city’s wall (9:25) that the Holy Apostle Paul fled and spent three years (Galatians 1:15-18). And it was to this Arabia that St Timon, one of the Seventy Apostles appointed by the Lord Christ (Luke 10:1) and one of the Seven Deacons chosen by the Twelve (Acts 6:5), was sent to preach and later served as first bishop of the province’s capital city of *Nova Trajana Bostra* (modern Bosra in Syria).

The Orthodox Christians who today live in much of the territory once known as *Arabia Petraea* – descendants of those converted to faith in Christ Jesus by St Timon – comprise the faithful of the Archdiocese of Bosra, Hauran, Jabal al-Arab and the Golan. The present “*angel of Bosra and successor to St Timon*” is The Most Reverend Metropolitan SABA (Esper). One of the most venerable Archdioceses of our Patriarchate, the Archdiocese of Bosra now finds

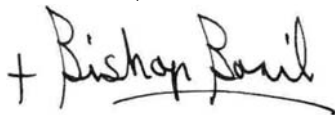
itself facing very difficult times. Because of the area's frequent wars, the occupation of much of its territory by a neighboring unfriendly nation, and the resultant unemployment which plagues that desert region, most of its people have become economic refugees who have relocated to Damascus or have simply left the country for the Americas, Australia, Europe or the Gulf States.

In a gesture of Christian love and support for Metropolitan SABA and his flock, the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America has committed itself to a Sister Diocese relationship with the venerable Archdiocese of Bosra, and many of our parishes and missions have come forward to be paired - or "twinned" - with congregations in Metropolitan SABA's Archdiocese in Sister Parish relationships. To call attention to this project, dubbed "The Hauran Connection," the Sunday nearest July 28th, the feast of St Timon, is observed annually as "St Timon Sunday" throughout our Diocese.

Our second annual "St Timon Sunday" will be August 2, 2009 on which day we ask our congregations to highlight all aspects of our Sister Diocese project. An informational DVD on the Archdiocese of Bosra-Hauran was distributed to each parish delegation at our 2009 Parish Life Conference in Wichita. If you were not at the PLC and so did not receive your parish's DVD or if you would simply like more details about this teaming of Orthodox in America's Heartland with those in Syria's ancient Heartland of Orthodoxy, please be in direct contact with Subdeacon James Kallail (kkallail@cox.net) of St Mary Church in Wichita, KS, vice president of our Diocesan Fellowship and chair of "The Hauran Connection." You can also find wonderful resources for your congregation's "St Timon Sunday" observance online at www.antiochian.org/Hauran

Thanking you for your prayers and offerings for Metropolitan SABA and the clergy and people of our Sister Diocese – The Archdiocese of Bosra Hauran – and assuring you of my continued paternal love, prayers and blessings, I remain

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Basil". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

+B A S I L

Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America