

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Eulogy on the Occasion of the Funeral for the very Rev. Boniface Black
August 10, 2016

We are gathered together today to lay to rest our beloved brother in Christ, the Very Rev. Boniface Black. But even more than this, we are here to celebrate his life in Christ, his priesthood, his exemplary and godly lifestyle.

Fr. Boniface has left a legacy in this Archdiocese which will live on for many, many years. He served as the pastor for St. Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church in Souderton, Pennsylvania for almost 30 years, and more recently as the pastor for St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church in Lewes, Delaware. His vibrant activity in the field of missions work is well known, as he served as the Missions Coordinator for his diocese. In that role, he helped to establish seven congregations in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware and Maryland. He was a mentor to many priests, having directly guided seven men who have become priests in this Archdiocese, and having indirectly mentored countless more. It has been rightly said of his work in missions that if Fr. Boniface touched it, it turned to gold. Surely the results of his work confirm this feeling. But what was it about the priesthood of Fr. Boniface that led to these significant accomplishments?

St. John Chrysostom says this about the priesthood:

“The work of the priesthood is done on earth, but it is ranked among the heavenly ordinances since it was not ordained by man, angel, archangel, or other created power, but by the Paraclete Himself.”

It can safely be said that Fr. Boniface elevated his priestly ministry to a higher spiritual place where he, first and foremost, focused on the things

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of heaven, and not the things of the world. Do not misunderstand this comment – we are, of course as our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us, “*in this world*”, but not “*of this world*”. Fr. Boniface made it clear to his flock that although we are called to live in this world and participate in the reality of working in jobs, paying bills, raising children, and dealing with tribulation, we are not called to conform to this world and its misguided paths. Indeed, we are called to take this broken world and to lift it up to heaven. This can only be achieved when the priest, through the example of his life, shows the way to the people by being a strong image of the Only Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the best description of the life and priestly ministry which Fr. Boniface has given to us.

It is now up to us to take the foundation which he has laid, and to continue to build upon it. Those who knew him well knew that Fr. Boniface would not tolerate any lack of action. He was always exhorting people to move forward, to make a strong commitment and to demonstrate that commitment through their deeds. He led by example, and did not rest until the task was accomplished. As recently as this past July, at the Parish Life Conference at the Antiochian Village, he convened the meeting of the Missions Council and encouraged everyone present to do more that they were already doing. This is the spirit of Fr. Boniface, and this is the challenge that he has given to us.

On behalf of myself, the hierarchs of this Archdiocese, the members of the Board of Trustees, and especially his brother priests, we express our condolences and prayers to Khourieh Joyce, their children Jonathan and Anna Mary, his brother Paul, his grandchildren and his entire family. We thank his family for the support which they gave to his ministry, and we ask our gracious and loving Lord to bless them.

May our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ grant rest to the soul of our beloved departed brother in Christ Fr. Boniface, and may his memory be eternal!

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