

In March of 1907 Saint TIKHON returned to Russia and was replaced by Archbishop PLATON. Once again Saint RAPHAEL was considered for episcopal office in Syria, being nominated to succeed Patriarch GREGORY as Metropolitan of Tripoli in 1908. The Holy Synod of Antioch removed Bishop RAPHAEL's name from the list of candidates, citing various canons which forbid a bishop being transferred from one city to another.

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy in 1911, Bishop RAPHAEL was honored for his 15 years of pastoral ministry in America. Archbishop PLATON presented him with a silver-covered icon of Christ and praised him for his work. In his humility, Bishop RAPHAEL could not understand why he should be honored merely for doing his duty (Luke 17:10). He considered himself an "unworthy servant," yet he did perfectly the work that fell to him (Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians).

At the end of 1912, Bishop RAPHAEL fell ill while working in his office. Doctors diagnosed him with a heart ailment that eventually caused his death. Yet two weeks later, he felt strong enough to celebrate the Liturgy in his cathedral.

A Missionary Bishop

In 1913 and 1914, this missionary bishop continued to make pastoral visitations to various cities. In 1915 he fell ill again and spent two months at home, bearing his illness with patience. At 12:40 a.m. on February 27, 1915, he rested from his labors. They called him, but he did not answer. They shook him, but he was gone.



Grave of
St. RAPHAEL at the Antiochian
Village in Ligonier,
Pennsylvania

The funeral took place on Sunday, March 7, 1915 at the Pacific Street Cathedral. Bishop ALEXANDER of the American Archdiocese of the Russian Orthodox Church and Metropolitan GERMANOS of Zahle, Lebanon concelebrated the Divine Liturgy and funeral with numerous priests and deacons. Saint RAPHAEL's relics were placed in a specially-excavated crypt beneath the holy table of his Saint Nicholas Cathedral.

When Saint Nicholas Cathedral relocated from 301-303 Pacific Street to nearby 355 State Street, his relics were interred in the Syrian section of Queens Mt. Olivet Cemetery on April 2, 1922. They remained there until they were translated to Ligonier, Pennsylvania on August 15, 1988, for burial in the Holy Resurrection Cemetery at the Antiochian Village.

Saint RAPHAEL accomplished many good things during his earthly life and brought countless thousands of people back to their faith who were spread across the North American continent. It is for this reason he is known as the "Good Shepherd and Apostle of the Lost Sheep in America" and now he joins the holy angels in offering ceaseless prayer and praise to God.

For more information about the Orthodox faith, the Antiochian Archdiocese or Saint Nicholas Cathedral, see www.antiochian.org or www.stnicholascathedral.org.

Through the prayers of the holy Saint RAPHAEL, may we also be made worthy of the heavenly Kingdom. Amen.

From his youth, Saint RAPHAEL's greatest joy was to serve the Church. When he came to America, he found his people scattered abroad, and he called them to unity.

He never neglected his flock, traveling throughout America, Canada, and Mexico in search of them so that he might care for them. He kept them from straying into strange pastures and spiritual harm. During 20 years of faithful ministry, he nurtured them and helped them to grow.

At the time of his death, the Syro-Arab Mission had 30 parishes with more than 25,000 faithful. The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America now has more than 240 U.S. and Canadian parishes.

Saint RAPHAEL also was a scholar and the author of several books. He wrote many of the articles that appeared in the magazine, *The Word*, which he established in 1905. He not only served his own Arabic community, he reached out to Greeks and Russians and spoke in their languages. He also became fluent in English and encouraged its use in church services and educational programs.

Saint RAPHAEL was a gentle father to diverse people. He gained their love and respect by first loving them, and also through his charming personality and excellent character. While he was always kind and merciful with others, he was strict with himself.



St. Tikhon's Monastery
South Canaan,
Pennsylvania

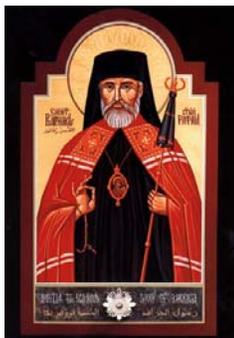
On May 29th, 2000, RAPHAEL was glorified as a saint of the Holy Orthodox Church by the Orthodox Church in America at Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. He helped consecrate the monastery many years earlier. Their Graces, Bishops BASIL and DEMETRI represented the Antiochian Archdiocese at the memorable event with many faithful of Saint Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral, Saint RAPHAEL's first community, in attendance.

Saint RAPHAEL's feast day is now celebrated on the first Saturday of November. With His Grace Bishop DEMETRI present on the eve of the first feast in 2000, His Beatitude, Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, the former primate of the Orthodox Church in America, presented Saint Nicholas Cathedral with a reliquary containing the relics and icon of Saint RAPHAEL. This reliquary remains as a permanent appointment of the Cathedral. (*See cover photo.*)

Saint Nicholas Cathedral will celebrate her 110th anniversary on June 4 and June 5, 2005. At an historic divine liturgy on June 5, His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, will place relics of Saint RAPHAEL in the altar of the Saint Nicholas Cathedral on State Street, in Brooklyn. Thus, a portion of the relics of Saint RAPHAEL will return to their symbolic and original resting place.

Saint RAPHAEL's First Years

Our Holy Father RAPHAEL was born in Syria on November 8, 1860 to pious Orthodox parents, Michael Hawaweeny and his second wife Mariam, the daughter of a priest of Damascus. He was born on the date of his Name Day, the Synaxis of the Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel and all the Bodiless Powers of Heaven.



At the time, there were violent persecutions of Christians. Shortly after the Hawaweeny family's parish priest, Saint Joseph of Damascus (July 10), was martyred with his companions, the family was forced to flee to Beirut for their safety. It was here that the future saint first saw the light of day, and not in the city of his parents. As his life unfolded, it was evident that Saint RAPHAEL would have no continuing city in this world, but would seek the city, which is to come (Heb 13:14).

On the Feast of Theophany in 1861, he was baptized with the name Rafla, and later that spring the family was able to return to Damascus. He attended elementary school and did very well. But in 1874, it appeared that Michael Hawaweeny would no longer be able to afford his son's tuition. Fortunately, help came from Deacon Athanasios Atallah (later Metropolitan of Homs), who recommended to Patriarch HIEROTHEOS of Antioch that Rafla be accepted as a student of the Patriarchate in preparation for the priesthood.

Rafla was such a good student that he was selected to be a substitute teaching assistant in 1877. The following year, he was appointed as a teacher of Arabic and Turkish. On March 28, 1879 he was tonsured as a monk by Patriarch HIEROTHEOS and served as His Beatitude's personal attendant.

Since the Balamand Seminary had been closed in 1840, Patriarch JOACHIM III of Constantinople invited the Patriarch of Antioch to send at least one deserving student to study on scholarship at the School of Theology at Halki, and Saint RAPHAEL was the one who was selected to go.

On December 8, 1885 he was ordained to the diaconate at the school chapel. In July of 1886 the young deacon received his Certificate of theology, and returned to his homeland in the hope of serving the Church there. Patriarch GERASIMOS of Antioch was impressed with Deacon RAPHAEL, and often took him along on his pastoral visitations of his parishes. When His Beatitude could not be present, Deacon RAPHAEL was asked to preach the Word of God to the people.

Deacon RAPHAEL was not satisfied with the extent of his knowledge, and thirsted to learn even more. This did not stem from personal pride or ambition, but came from his fervent desire to benefit others. Truly, the words of King Solomon could be applied to Saint RAPHAEL: "Give an opportunity to a wise man, and he will be wiser; instruct a just man, and he will receive more instruction" (Proverbs 9:9).

Therefore, he asked Patriarch GERASIMOS to permit him to do graduate studies at a school in Russia, promising to return and serve as the Patriarch's Russian-language secretary. The Patriarch gave his blessing, and Deacon RAPHAEL was accepted as a student at the Theological Academy of Kiev.

Saint RAPHAEL in Russia

In 1889 Patriarch GERASIMOS ordered the young deacon to take over as head of the Antiochian representation church in Moscow. He was ordained to the holy priesthood by Bishop SYLVESTER, the rector of the Kiev academy, at the request of Patriarch GERASIMOS. A month later, he was raised to the rank of archimandrite by Metropolitan IOANNIKII of Moscow, and was confirmed as head of the Antiochian



**355 State Street
Interior of St. Nicholas Antiochian
Orthodox Cathedral of Brooklyn**

On the third Sunday of Lent in 1904, Saint RAPHAEL became the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated on American soil. Bishop TIKHON and Bishop INNOCENT performed the service at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn. The new bishop's vestments were a gift from Tsar Nicholas II. Following his consecration, Bishop RAPHAEL continued his pastoral labors, ordaining priests and assigning them to parishes, and helping Bishop TIKHON in the administration of the diocese.

At the end of 1904, Bishop RAPHAEL announced his intention to publish a magazine called *Al-Kalimat (The Word)* as the official publication of the Syro-Arab mission. This would help to link the people and parishes of his diocese more closely together. Bishop RAPHAEL knew that he could not visit all Orthodox Christians across North America in person, but through the ministry of the printed word, he could preach the word of salvation even to people he would never meet. The content was to reinforce people in their Faith, focusing on five primary topics: dogmatic truths, ethical teaching, historical and contemporary ecclesiastical subjects, a chronicle of baptisms, weddings, etc., and official pronouncements. The first issue was printed in January 1905, and Saint RAPHAEL considered this milestone of equal importance to the acquisition of Saint Nicholas Cathedral and the parish cemetery.

In July of 1905 Bishop RAPHAEL consecrated the grounds for Saint Tikhon's Monastery and blessed the orphanage at South Canaan, PA. Three days later, he presided at a conference of diocesan clergy at Old Forge, PA, because Archbishop TIKHON was in San Francisco. Among the clergy in attendance were three who would also be numbered among the saints: Fr Alexis Toth, Fr Alexander Hotovitzky, and Fr John Kochurov (the last two would die as martyrs in Russia).

Tending the Flock

For the next ten years Bishop RAPHAEL tended his growing flock. With the growth of his New York community came an increase in the number of children, and he was concerned about their future. He wanted to establish an evening school to educate them in a Christian atmosphere, because the future of the Church in this country depended upon the instruction of the youth. Children who did not speak Arabic were already going to non-Orthodox churches where Sunday school classes were conducted in English. Bishop RAPHAEL saw the absolute necessity for using English in worship and in education for the future progress of the Syro-Arab Mission.

Taking heed of Saint Paul's words to pray in a language that people understood (1 Cor 14:15-19), Saint RAPHAEL recommended the use of the *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church* (translated by Isabel Hapgood) in all of his parishes.

(Doumani), had been elected Patriarch of Antioch. With great joy, Saint RAPHAEL told his people that for the first time in 168 years, a native Arab had been chosen as primate of the Antiochian Church.

Building Blocks

After the new Patriarch had been installed, Archimandrite RAPHAEL was proposed to succeed MELETIOS as Metropolitan of Latakia. The Patriarch, however, stated that the Holy Synod could not elect Father RAPHAEL because of his important work in America. In 1901, Metropolitan GABRIEL of Beirut wrote to Archimandrite RAPHAEL asking him to be his auxiliary bishop, but he declined, saying that he could not leave his American flock.

First, he wanted to build a permanent church, and to acquire a parish cemetery. The latter goal was achieved in August of 1901 when Father RAPHAEL purchased a section of Mount Olivet cemetery in Queens.



Recent photo of the former
301-303 Pacific Street
Cathedral

In December, 1901, Archimandrite RAPHAEL was elected as Bishop of Zahleh. Patriarch MELETIOS sent a telegram congratulating him and asking him to return. Father RAPHAEL thanked the Patriarch, but again declined higher office. He said that he wished to complete the project of building a temple for the Syrian community in New York.

The following year, he bought an existing church building on Pacific Street in Brooklyn, and had it remodeled for Orthodox worship. Bishop TIKHON consecrated the church to the great joy of the faithful in attendance. Thus, Saint RAPHAEL's second major project was finished.

Since the number of parishes within the North American Diocese was growing, Bishop TIKHON found it impossible to visit them all. The diocese had to be reorganized for more efficient administration. Bishop TIKHON submitted a plan to the Russian Holy Synod to transfer the See from San Francisco to New York, since most parishes were concentrated in the East. Since various ethnic groups required special attention and pastoral leadership, Bishop TIKHON proposed that Archimandrite RAPHAEL be made his second vicar bishop (the Bishop of Alaska would be his first).

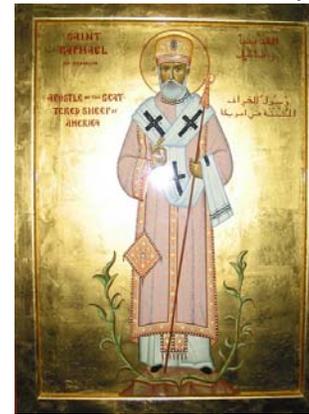
Bishop of Brooklyn

In 1903, the Holy Synod of Russia unanimously elected Archimandrite RAPHAEL to be the Bishop of Brooklyn, while retaining him as head of the Syro-Arab Orthodox Mission in North America. The Holy Synod announced the election to Patriarch MELETIOS, who was pleased by their decision. Bishop TIKHON wrote to Saint RAPHAEL to inform him of his election, and Father RAPHAEL sent him a letter of acceptance. Meanwhile, Father Innocent Pustynsky was consecrated as TIKHON's first auxiliary bishop at Saint Petersburg's Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan.

representation church. After two years, Archimandrite RAPHAEL was able to reduce the representation's 65,000-ruble debt by 15,000 rubles. He also arranged for 24 Syrian students to further their education in Russia, return to Syria and teach others.

When Patriarch GERASIMOS resigned in order to accept the See of Jerusalem, Archimandrite RAPHAEL regarded this as an opportunity to free the Church of Antioch from its domination by foreign hierarchs. Burning with love for the Church of Antioch, and wishing to restore the administration of the church to its own native clergy and people, Archimandrite RAPHAEL began a campaign of writing letters to some Antiochian bishops and influential laymen. He also wrote articles in the Russian press, drawing attention to the plight of Antioch. His courageous efforts did not meet with success, however, and there was a price to pay for his outspoken criticism.

In November of 1891, Metropolitan SPYRIDON, a Greek Cypriot, was elected as Patriarch of Antioch. Many Arabs believed that he had purchased the election by distributing 10,000 lira to several notable people in Damascus. Archimandrite RAPHAEL refused to commemorate the new Patriarch during services at the representation church. As a result, he was suspended from his priestly functions by Patriarch SPYRIDON.



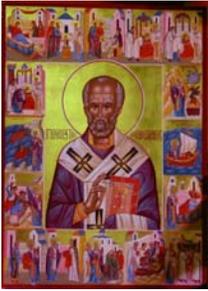
Saint RAPHAEL accepted his suspension, but continued to write articles in Russian newspapers in defense of the Antiochian cause. The Patriarchs of Antioch, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Jerusalem successfully petitioned the Tsar to forbid Russian newspapers from publishing his articles. With this door closed to him, Saint RAPHAEL began to publish his writings in book form.

Eventually, Patriarch SPYRIDON wrote to the assistant overprocurator of Russia, a friend of Saint RAPHAEL's, asking him to persuade Father RAPHAEL to ask for the Patriarch's forgiveness. Saint RAPHAEL did so, and the tension was lifted. Saint RAPHAEL was allowed to transfer from the jurisdiction of Antioch to the Church of Russia and remain there.

He went to Kazan, taking a position as instructor in Arabic studies at the theological academy. He remained there until 1895 when he was invited by the Syrian Orthodox Benevolent Society of New York to come to that city to be the pastor of the Arab Orthodox community. When the holy Apostle Paul had a vision of a man entreating him to come to Macedonia to help them (Acts 16:10), he set off on a great missionary journey. When Saint RAPHAEL heard of the needs of his countrymen who were scattered in a strange land, he crossed the ocean to labor in yet another foreign country.

Saint RAPHAEL Comes to America

SAINT RAPHAEL arrived in New York on November 14, 1895, and was welcomed by a delegation of Arab Christians awaiting him.



On November 17, his first Sunday in America, he assisted Bishop NICHOLAS in serving the Divine Liturgy at the Russian church in New York City. Less than two weeks after his arrival, Archimandrite RAPHAEL found a suitable place in lower Manhattan to set up a chapel, and furnished it with ecclesiastical items he brought from Russia. Bishop NICHOLAS blessed the new chapel, which was dedicated to Saint Nicholas of Myra.

This zealous pastor remained in New York teaching, preaching, and celebrating the divine services for his parishioners. It was not long, however, before he heard of smaller communities of Arab Christians scattered throughout the length and breadth of North America. Since these Arab immigrants had no pastor to care for them, it was not surprising that some should turn to other denominations, or completely neglect their religious duties. This was an ongoing concern for Saint RAPHAEL throughout the course of his ministry. Although he was not opposed to dialogue with non-Orthodox Christians, nor to friendly relations based on shared beliefs, Saint RAPHAEL never lost sight of the clear line of distinction that exists between the Orthodox and other Christian denominations. He always insisted that any church unity must be based on the teachings of the seven Ecumenical Councils.

The Orthodoxy of Saint RAPHAEL's life and teaching was demonstrated over and over again by his words and his actions. He always upheld and defended the spotless Faith, which was "once and for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Although at first, he did not understand some other Christian teachings, he later discovered how far removed they were from Orthodox doctrine.

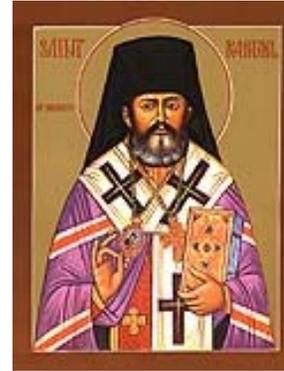
Protecting the Flock

When he realized this, he took steps to protect his flock from harmful influences. He directed his people not to attend heterodox services lest they become confused by "diverse and strange doctrines" (Heb 13:9). He believed it would be preferable for the head of the household to read the hours at home from the service book when it was not possible to attend an Orthodox church.

In the summer of 1896, Saint RAPHAEL undertook the first of several pastoral journeys across the continent. He visited thirty cities between New York and San Francisco, seeking out the Master's lost sheep in cities, towns, and on isolated farms. He fed the spiritually hungry people with the Word of God in each place where he stopped. He performed marriages, baptisms, heard confessions, and celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the homes of the faithful where there was no church building. In other words, he zealously fulfilled his ministry as a preacher of the Gospel, enduring many hardships and afflictions, and he was watchful in all things concerning the care of his flock (2 Tim 4:5).



Saints TIKHON and RAPHAEL



In 1898, with the blessing of Bishop NICHOLAS, Saint RAPHAEL produced his first book in the New World — an Arabic language Service Book called *The Book of True Consolation in the Divine Prayers*. This book of liturgical services and prayers was very useful to priests in celebrating the divine services, and also to the people in their personal prayer life. The English version, published by Archimandrite Seraphim Nassar, is still being used today.

Between May and November of 1898, Saint RAPHAEL set off on his second pastoral tour. During this trip he became convinced of the need for Arabic-speaking priests to serve in the new churches he established. He expressed these concerns to Bishop NICHOLAS, and with his blessing, Saint RAPHAEL brought qualified priests from Syria to America. He also sought out educated laymen whom he could recommend for ordination. Both as an archimandrite and later as bishop, Saint RAPHAEL would appoint pastors only after obtaining the blessing of the Russian hierarch who headed the American Mission.

This was the normal state of affairs in America at the time. Archimandrite RAPHAEL welcomed Bishop TIKHON when the latter replaced Bishop NICHOLAS as the ruling bishop in America. On December 15, Saint TIKHON came to serve the Liturgy at the Syrian church of Saint Nicholas.

Multi-Ethnic America

Saint RAPHAEL told his people that their new Archpastor was one who "has been sent here to tend the flock of Christ -- Russians, Slavs, Syro-Arabs, and Greeks -- which is scattered across the entire North American continent."

At that time, there were not Orthodox Christian jurisdictions based on nationality. The Church united those of diverse backgrounds under the omophorion of the Russian Archbishop. This was the norm until the Russian Revolution disrupted church life in Russia, and also in America.

In March of 1899, Saint RAPHAEL received permission from Bishop TIKHON to start collecting funds for a cemetery, and for building a new church to replace the chapel that was located in an old building on a dirty street. In the spring he left on another pastoral tour of forty-three cities and towns. Traveling by land and sea, and undeterred by the obstacles and difficulties before him, he spent seven months in the northeastern, southern, and midwestern regions of the United States.

Saint RAPHAEL ministered to Greeks and Russians as well as Arabs, performing weddings and baptisms, and regularizing the weddings of Orthodox people who had been married by non-Orthodox clergy. He also chrismated children who had been baptized by Catholic priests.

In Johnstown, PA he reconciled those whose personal enmity threatened to divide the Arabic community. Although civil courts had been unable to make peace, Saint RAPHAEL restored calm and put an end to the bitter feud. While in Johnstown, he received a telegram informing him that Metropolitan MELETIOS