



## **His Beatitude Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, passed away in the Lord**

His Beatitude Ignatius IV, Patriarch of Great Antioch and All the East, Primate of the Orthodox Church of Antioch passed away in the Lord on December 5, 2012, in Beirut.

His Beatitude was born in 1921 at the Syrian village of Mhardeh near Hama to a devoted Orthodox Arab family. From his early childhood he attended divine services and participated in church life. As early as a student at Beirut University, the future Patriarch took up service at one of the churches of the local diocese, first as an altar boy and later as a deacon.

In 1942, he was one of the organizers of the Orthodox youth movement which was developing in Lebanon and Syria during World War II. This movement animated the whole of the Church of Antioch and helped to bring more young people to the Church.

In 1945, the future Patriarch went to Paris to study at the St. Sergius Theological Institute. After his return to the Middle East, he founded an Orthodox Theological Seminary at the Balamand Monastery in Lebanon, in which he acted as dean for many years.

In 1953, he became one of the founders of SYNDESMOS, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth and Theological Schools.

In 1961, he was consecrated as bishop and in 1970 he became the Metropolitan of Latakia.

On July 2, 1979, he was elected the 166<sup>th</sup> Patriarch of Antioch. His enthronement took place on July 8. For over three decades His Beatitude Ignatius stood at the helm of the Antiochian Church boat, staying with his people at the most difficult periods of history. Now the old Chair of Antioch has been deprived of a wise and much experienced Patriarch, a man of prayer and father who loved his flock.

Messages of condolences have been sent to the Holy Synod of the Church of Antioch by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations.

May the Lord give rest to the soul of His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius in the dwellings of the righteous.

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