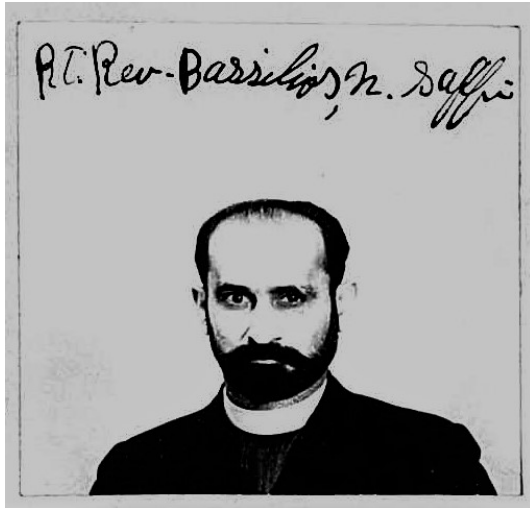


Archimandrite Bassilios Nadar Saffi

Pastor of St. George Orthodox Church of Boston 1942-1944



Bassilios Nadar Saffi, son of Nader and Sadih [Nasr] Ibn Saffi was born in the village of Arsoun in the Mount Lebanon district of Syria on 7 January 1888. He had two known siblings, brothers; Nader and Nathra. He was ordained in Syria prior to 1925. His father is reported to have died in Brazil.

In 1925, Fr. Bassilios, his widowed mother, his brother Nathra and his brother's wife Rose [Bouziane] sailed from Beirut for New York via Cherbourg, France. They arrived in New York aboard the "ss Olympic" on 5 August. His mother, brother and sister-in-law were destined for his brother's home in Danbury, Connecticut. Nathra Nader Ibn Saffi was a U.S. citizen, having lived in the country since 1912. Nathra first

settled in New Jersey and operated a confection shop in Paterson. In America, he dropped the suffix from the family name and was known as Nathra Nader. Later he moved to Danbury and opened a restaurant. In 1925 he returned to Lebanon and married Rose Bouziane of Zahle. Nathra and Rose were the parents of Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate and one time candidate for president of the United States.

The passenger manifest states that Fr. Bassilios was destined for the 'Greek Orthodox Bishop' in Lowell, Massachusetts. His mother, brother and sister-in-law were admitted to the country but Fr. Bassilios was detained for medical reasons. He was taken to hospital the following day and diagnosed with contagious trachoma. The board of medical examiners ordered him deported and on 14 August 1825 he left New York for Cherbourg aboard the "ss Homeric". From France, he returned to Lebanon.

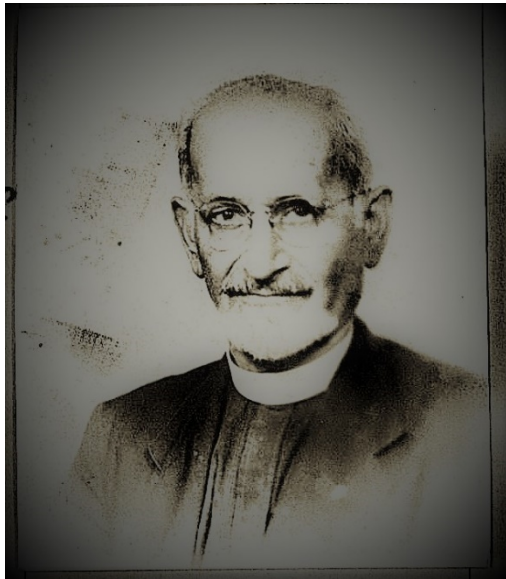
The following year, Fr. Bassilios attempted to return to North America, this time sailing to Canada. He received a passport in Beirut and sailed for Quebec City via Cherbourg, France. Fr. Basilios arrived in Quebec City, Quebec aboard the "ss Empress of Scotland" on 21 November 1926. The ships manifest states that he had 'no relatives left' at home. He had \$250 with him and was destined for 'Archbishop Rev. Michael' at 429 Vigar Ave. in Montreal. The address is around the corner from St. Nicholas [later St. George] Syrian Orthodox Church. He remained in Montreal for almost one year. He entered the United States as Basile Safi at Rochester, New York on 6 July 1927 having arrived aboard the 'ss Ontario' from Montreal.

In 1931 he returned to Canada when Archbishop Victor Abo-Assaley appointed Archimandrite Bassilios N. Saffi to serve at St. Elias Syrian Orthodox Church in Ottawa, Canada. The community was founded in November 1929 under the inspiration of Archbishop Victor who encouraged priests from Montreal to visit there regularly as the community organized and established a parish. Within two years they obtained a suitable property and renovated a former Protestant church. The new church was consecrated in August 1931 and named for St. Elias and Fr. Bassilios was assigned as the parishes' first pastor. He remained in Ottawa for just over one year. He is mentioned accompanying Archbishop Victor on pastoral visits in the 1930's, most notably on a visit to Boston in January 1933 to honor the enthronement of Patriarch Alexander in Damascus. Liturgy was

celebrated by the Archbishop at St. Mary Syrian Orthodox Cathedral on Hudson Street with the pastor Fr. Gabriel Barrows and Fr. Bassilios.

Following the death of Archbishop Victor in 1933 and the consecrations of Bishop Antony Bashir and Samuel David in 1936, Fr. Bassilios appears to have allied himself with Bishop Samuel. He accompanied Bishop Samuel to Charleston, West Virginia in 1936 and is listed as the pastor of St. Michael Syrian Orthodox Church in Louisville, Kentucky.

In 1938 he is listed as the pastor at St. Mary Antiochian Cathedral in Boston. On 14 December 1938, he became a naturalized American citizen in Boston. He was living at 98 East Brookline St. in the South End. He remained at St. Mary until the spring of 1942 when he left to serve as pastor of St. George Syrian Orthodox Church of Boston, a parish under the jurisdiction of Bishop Antony Bashir. He remained at St. George until September 1944. Upon leaving St. George, he remained in Boston taking secular employment and working as a cook throughout the 1940's.



In 1951 he returned to active ministry under Archbishop Samuel and was appointed pastor at St. Michael Syrian Orthodox Church in Geneva, New York before going to St. George in South Glens Falls, New York where he served from 1952 until 1956. Fr. Basilios then was assigned to St. George Syrian Orthodox Church in Phoenix, Arizona where he served from 1957 to 1959. He then served at St. George Syrian Orthodox Church in Michigan City, Indiana in the early 1960's. At some point he was appointed Vicar-General of the Toledo Archdiocese and served with Archbishop Samuel. Throughout the 1950's and 1960' he made several mission trips to the Caribbean visiting the Syrian Orthodox communities in Cuba, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Haiti. He also traveled to Brazil, where he had family. A news article from Kingston, Jamaica notes that he celebrated Liturgy and preached at the Kingston Parish Church in January 1966.

In 1970 he retired to the home of his brother in North Cannan, Connecticut. He died there on 25 July 1971. At the time of his death he resided at 60 Hillside Av. in Winsted, Litchfield Co. Conn.

Compiled and submitted by Fr. Timothy J. Ferguson