



The Very Reverend Fr. Joseph Copeland was raised in Maple Valley, Washington, a rural area outside of Seattle. He graduated from high school in 1966 and began his studies at the University of Washington. In 1968, he married his high school sweetheart, Denise (Sophia) and they both taught in the Seattle area after graduation from university. In 1974, after the birth of their first child they moved to buy and operate an apple orchard in the Yakima Valley of Eastern Washington along with the Fr. Mel Gimmaka family who would accompany them into Orthodoxy.

Fr. Joseph grew up in the Protestant Christian tradition and was becoming increasingly disillusioned with Protestantism and was searching for the "authentic" expression of the Christian Faith. After their move to the Yakima area he began earnestly seeking answers to many spiritual questions and embarked on a journey of discovery that would eventually lead them into the embrace of The Orthodox Church. In 1980 Fr. Joseph, along with many others, formed The Evangelical Orthodox Church which finally led them to the doors of the Ancient Patriarchate of Antioch where they were received into the Antiochian Archdiocese of North America by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP in 1987. Fr. Joseph was ordained at that time to the holy priesthood to continue his pastoral work in what became Holy Cross Antiochian Orthodox Church in Yakima.

When possible Fr. Joseph serves each week at the Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Holy Forerunner and Baptist John near Goldendale, WA, where a new mission has also been established and is growing.

Fr. Joseph and Khouria Sophia have four grown children: Makrina, Presvytera, physician, wife of Fr. Michael Shanbour and mother of 1; Thomas, Reader, optometrist, husband of Paraskevi and father of 8; Andrea, mother of 3; Pelagia, Presvytera, wife of Fr. Gregory Edwards and mother of 4; and several others who have become like their own and many beloved spiritual children.