

+St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
Metropolitan Saba of New York and all North America
V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Pastor
Dn. Nicholas Adranly

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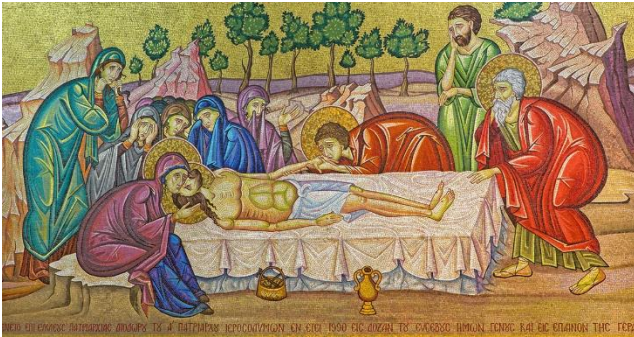
SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026; TONE 2 / EOTHINON 4

THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA: SUNDAY OF MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN, JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA & RIGHTEOUS NICODEMUS

صلاة السحر. الأحد الثالث بعد الفصح

حاملات الطيب، يوسف الرامي المتيقن، والبار نيقوديموس

CHRIST IS RISEN / Χριστός Ανέστη / المسيح قام



On April 26 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Hieromartyr Basil, bishop of Amasea with Venerable Glaphyra; and Stephen, bishop of Perm. On this day, the third Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate the feast of the holy Myrrh-bearing women. And we also commemorate Joseph of Arimathaea, the secret disciple, and Nicodemus, the disciple by night. The women went to Christ's tomb on Holy Pascha to anoint His body, only to discover it empty. We know the names of only eight of these

women: Mary the Theotokos, the "mother" of James and Joses, who were the sons of Joseph the Betrothed from his previous marriage (Matt. 27:56 and Mark 15:40); Mary Magdalene; Mary, the wife of Cleopas; Joanna the wife of Chuza; Salome the mother of the sons of Zebedee; Susanna; and Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. Joseph was a rich and noble man, and a member of the Privy Council of Jerusalem. He dared to ask Pilate for the undefiled body of our Savior, which he took and buried in his own new tomb. Accompanying Joseph to the sepulcher was Nicodemus, a Jerusalemite who was one of the leaders of the Pharisees. Nicodemus brought 100 pounds of myrrh and aloes to scent and embalm the body of Christ.

THE EPISTLE

*The Lord is my strength and my song.
With chastisement has the Lord chastened me.*

The Reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles. (6:1-7)

In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministry. And the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said: "It is not right that we should forsake the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. And we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Próchoros, and Nikánor, and Tímon, and Parmenás, and Nikólaos a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

تُقَوِّي وَتَسْبِحْتِي الرَّبَّ. أَدْبَا أَدْبَنِي الرَّبَّ

فَصْلٌ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الرُّسُلِ الْقَدِيسِينَ الْأَطْهَارِ (7-1:6)

فِي تِلْكَ الْأَيَّامِ، لَمَّا تَكَاثَّرَ التَّلَامِيذُ، حَدَّثَ تَذَمُّرٌ مِنَ الْيُونَانِيِّينَ عَلَى الْعِبْرَانِيِّينَ بَأَنَّ أَرَامِلَهُمْ كُنَّ يُهْمَلْنَ فِي الْخِدْمَةِ الْيَوْمِيَّةِ. فَدَعَا الْإِثْنَا عَشَرَ جُمُهورَ التَّلَامِيذِ وَقَالُوا: "لَا يَحْسُنُ أَنْ نَتْرَكَ نَحْنُ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ وَنَخْدُمَ الْمَوَائِدَ. فَانْتَخِبُوا أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَةُ مِنْكُمْ سَبْعَةَ رِجَالٍ، مَشْهُوداً لَهُمْ بِالْفَضْلِ، مُمْتَلَيْنَ مِنَ الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ، فَنُقِيمَهُمْ عَلَى هَذِهِ الْحَاجَةِ. وَنُؤَاظِبُ نَحْنُ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَخِدْمَةِ الْكَلِمَةِ." فَحَسَّنَ الْكَلَامُ لَدَى جَمِيعِ الْجُمُهورِ. فَأَخْتَارُوا إِسْتَفَانُوسَ، رَجُلًا مُمْتَلئًا مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ وَالرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ، وَفِيلِيبُسَ وَبَرْوخورُسَ وَنِيكَانُورَ وَتِيمُونَ وَبَرْمِنَاسَ وَنِيقُولَاوُسَ دَخِيلاً أَنْطَاكِيًّا. وَأَقَامُوهُمْ أَمَامَ الرُّسُلِ. فَصَلُّوا وَوَضَعُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْيَدَيْنِ. وَكَانَتْ كَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ تَنْمُو، وَعَدَدُ التَّلَامِيذِ يَتَكَثَّرُ فِي أُورُشَلِيمَ جِدًّا. وَكَانَ جَمْعٌ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ الْكَهَنَةِ يُطِيعُونَ الْإِيمَانَ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (15:43-16:8)

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if He were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether Jesus was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that He was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking Him down, wrapped Him in the linen shroud, and laid Him in a tomb, which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid. And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb at the rising of the sun. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back – it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a long white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He is risen; He is not here; see the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him, as He told you." And they went out quickly and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

فَصْلٌ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ مَرْقُسَ الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيذِ الطَّاهِرِ. (8:16-43:15)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، جَاءَ يَوْسُفُ الَّذِي مِنَ الزَّامَةِ، مُشِيرٌ تَقِيًّا، وَكَانَ هُوَ أَيْضًا مُنْتَظِرًا مَلَكُوتَ اللَّهِ. فَاجْتَرَأَ وَدَخَلَ عَلَى بِيلاطُسَ وَطَلَبَ جَسَدَ يَسُوعَ. فَاسْتَعْرَبَ بِيلاطُسُ أَنَّهُ قَدْ مَاتَ هَكَذَا سَرِيعًا. وَاسْتَدْعَى قَائِدَ الْمِئَةِ وَسَأَلَهُ هَلْ لَهُ زَمَانٌ قَدْ مَاتَ. وَلَمَّا عَرَفَ مِنَ الْقَائِدِ، وَهَبَ الْجَسَدَ لِيَوْسُفَ. فَاشْتَرَى كَتَّانًا، وَأَنْزَلَهُ، وَلَفَّهُ فِي الْكَتَّانِ، وَوَضَعَهُ فِي قَبْرِ كَانَ مَنَحُوتًا فِي صَخْرَةٍ، وَدَخَرَ حَجَرًا عَلَى بَابِ الْقَبْرِ. وَكَانَتْ مَرْيَمُ الْمَجْدَلِيَّةُ وَمَرْيَمُ أُمُ يَوْسَى تَنْظُرَانِ أَيْنَ وَضِعَ. وَلَمَّا انْقَضَى السَّبْتُ، اشْتَرَتْ مَرْيَمُ الْمَجْدَلِيَّةُ وَمَرْيَمُ أُمُ يَعْقُوبَ وَسَالُومَةَ حَنُوطًا لِثَابِتَيْنِ وَيَذْهَبْنَهُ. وَبَكَرْنَ جِدًّا فِي أَوَّلِ الْأُسْبُوعِ وَأَتَيْنِ الْقَبْرَ وَقَدْ طَلَعَتِ الشَّمْسُ. وَكُنَّ يَقُلْنَ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُنَّ، "مَنْ يُدْخِرُ لَنَا الْحَجَرَ عَنْ بَابِ الْقَبْرِ؟" فَتَطَلَّعْنَ، فَرَأَيْنِ الْحَجَرَ قَدْ دُخِرَ، لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ عَظِيمًا جِدًّا. فَلَمَّا دَخَلْنَ الْقَبْرَ، رَأَيْنِ شَابًا

جَالِساً عَنِ الْيَمِينِ، لَابِساً حُلَّةً بَيَاضاً، فَاذْهَبْنَ. فَقَالَ لَهُنَّ: "لَا تَذْهَبْنَ. أَنْتَنْ تَطْلُبْنَ يَسُوعَ النَّاصِرِيَّ الْمَصْلُوبَ. قَدْ قَامَ، لَيْسَ هُوَ هَهُنَا. هُوَذَا الْمَوْضِعُ الَّذِي وَضَعُوهُ فِيهِ. فَاذْهَبْنَ وَقُلْنَ لِتِلَامِيذِهِ وَلِبَطْرُسَ إِنَّهُ يَسْبِقُكُمْ إِلَى الْجَلِيلِ، هُنَاكَ تَرَوْنَهُ كَمَا قَالَ لَكُمْ." فَخَرَجْنَ سَرِيعاً وَفَرَرْنَ مِنَ الْقَبْرِ وَقَدْ أَخَذَتْهُنَّ الرِّعْدَةُ وَالْدَّهْشُ. وَلَمْ يَقْلُنَّ لِأَحَدٍ شَيْئاً لِأَنَّهُنَّ كُنَّ خَائِفَاتٍ.

Upcoming Events

April 24th	Vesper Service on Saturday at 6:00 PM
April 26th	One year memorial service for Donna Potter
May 3rd	40 days memorial service for the servant of God Christopher Jaber on Sunday May 3rd. May his memory be eternal!
May 3rd	Ladies meeting after coffee hour. All welcome to join
1st and 3rd Sundays	St. Anastasia's Fellowship for those struggling with substance abuse. 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. 6pm meeting; 7pm Readers Paraklesis at St. John's. Contact Joseph: (310) 227-9848

Coffee Hour

April 26th	Siham Mitry for the one-year memorial for her daughter Donna Potter.
May 3rd	Luis and Joan Henriquez
May 10th	By Men's Fellowship of St. John's in honor of mothers, grandmothers and godmothers.
May 17th	Fairouz and Family in memory of Angel on her birthday
June 14th	Mona Thayer for the good health of Thayer and Messih Families

Holy Oblations

This week, Holy Oblations are offered by:

- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nick Nicola, Sandy Dudum, George Messih, George Adranly, Fred Addas, Henriette Hilal, Souhad Halaka, George Cawog, Rocky Dudum** and **Norma Khalil**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **John Freij**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Ron and Ruth Jeha**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Bradley Yowakim**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Rocky Dudum**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Sue Gideon**. Many years!
- † Jim and Aileen Jaber and family in memory of **Christopher Jaber**. May his memory be eternal!
- † St. John Parish Family in memory of **Sam Nassab**. May his memory be eternal!

Candles for the altar table and in front of the icons of Christ and the Theotokos offered by:

- † Ibrahim Fasheh in memory of Hanada Fasheh for one full year. May her memory be



eternal!

- † Altar Servers: Nathan Sweis, Clayton Morgan, Elias Freij, Angelo Freij, Andrew Freij, Mazyn Haddadin, James Dudum, John Dudum, David Evans, Evan Kavar, Mason Kavar, Jonathan Juha, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola

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St. John Orthodox Church
501 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563

You could use this QR code for your donation



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Announcements

Bake Sale Thank You

Christ is Risen... Indeed He is Risen!

A special thank you and appreciation to the leader of Rose bake sale, Denise Dudum, and all the ladies who from their hearts have donated and baked the delicious sweets sold at Palm Sunday and thanks to our parishioners and guests who purchased and took it home. All the proceed of \$6,984. will be added into the Ladies account. Thank you to the ladies who have read the epistles in Arabic and English and those who delivered beautiful sermonettes during the month of March.

In Christ, Fadwa

Ladies Meeting

Sunday May 3rd: Ladies meeting after coffee hour, all are welcome to join.

St. Nicholas Summer Camp: Three Holy Youths

St. Nicholas is putting on a summer camp; Camp Three Holy Youths will take place Thursday, July 23 through Monday, July 27 at Daybreak Camp in Felton, California. \$300 per camper for ages 8 years and older. Adults can volunteer. The Antiochian Archdiocese has created step-by-step instructions for setting up an account and registering campers. Please see flyer and link. Would be nice to get a group from St. John to join. Here is the link: www.camphy.com

Dave N Buster's Promotion

Dave N Buster's promotion is almost over. Quick way to give back. How it works:

1. Order: Place an order using the link below
2. Support: **50%** of each Dave & Buster's Power Card purchased is donated back to St. John's.
3. Enjoy: Visit any Dave & Buster's location to pick up your Power Card and start playing!

Please pass link to friends and family. Use this link:

https://www.groupraise.com/oc/59958?utm_campaign=ocmp_copy_url&utm_medium=social&utm_source=offers_promo&fbclid=IwDGRjcARDIzIjbGNrBEOXNWV4dG4DYWVtAjExAHNyGMGYXBwX2IkDDM1MDY4NTUzMTcyOAABHhm1OoePvkG_0fm8xawxQJ43Le3RvnyPqfiFnV5Zkdm5K4TwtTfLnYRofAfG_aem_Yb1xQra0Y8JUGO4-9Ra67w

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ST. JOHN FIRST ANNUAL TALENT SHOW

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2026 IN OUR NEW HALL AT
7:00 PM**

**REFRESHMENTS SERVED DURING AND AFTER
THE SHOW**

ALL ARE WELCOME!

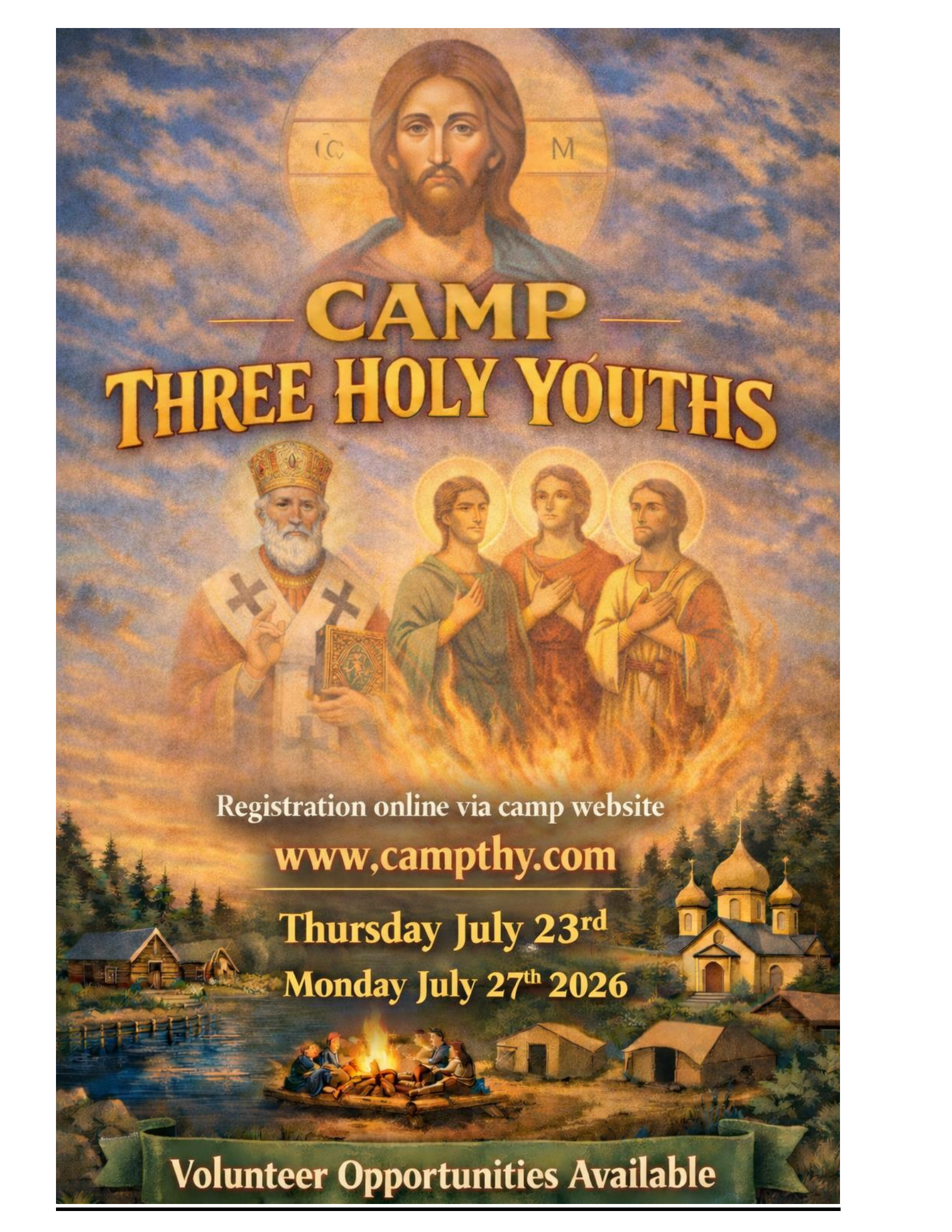


COMING ON

DAVE N BUSTERS
GET TOGETHER
TO HELP OUR FUNDRAISER
SUNDAY MAY 3RD AT 1PM.

2075 DIAMOND BLVD STE. H180,
CONCORD, CA 94520

PURCHASE YOUR GAME CARD THROUGH
ST. JOHN LINK.
INVITE FRIENDS



CAMP THREE HOLY YOUTHS

Registration online via camp website

www.campthy.com

Thursday July 23rd

Monday July 27th 2026

Volunteer Opportunities Available

St. Simeon 10 Year Gala



HONORING

V. Rev. Fr. George Ajalat

— & —

WELCOMING

Rev. Fr. Andrew Andrews

MAY

SATURDAY | **16** | AT 5:30 PM
2026

THE PASADENA HILTON
168 SOUTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE

PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE:

— WWW.SCVORTHODOX.COM/GALA-2026 —

OR SCAN QR CODE BELOW



St. John Financial Snapshot

Year to Date Actual Finances as of 03/31/2026

INCOME		2026 Year To Date	% of Total Income	2025 Year To Date	
	Membership Pledges	\$ 47,675	26%	\$ 38,908	+\$9K difference vs. 2025 YTD. +\$5K difference vs. 2025 Budget.
	Tray Collections	\$ 4,260	2%	\$ 4,271	
	Preschool Contribution	\$ 96,439	53%	\$ 106,280	
	Crab Feed and Festival	\$ 19,854	11%	\$ 21,011	
	Ladies Contribution	\$ -	0%	\$ 5,000	Ladies account to now hold end- of-year balance of \$5K.
	Other**	\$ 12,201	7%	\$ 6,051	
Total Income		\$ 180,428	100%	\$ 181,521	
Total Expenses		\$ 134,228		\$ 159,491	
YTD Net Income		\$ 46,200	26%	\$ 22,031	

**Other includes bookstore, candles, flowers, palms, coffee hour, memorials, weddings, baptisms, weddings, prior year pledges

Hall Rental Revenue Net of Expenses	Current Month	YTD
\$ Amount	\$ 386	\$ (2,809)

Building Fund Balance	\$ 405,697.00
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Those who wish to see the full financial summary should contact Parish Council
Treasurer Andrew Thayer

May Your Humility Receive My Words, Elder Joseph
A Tribute to Elder Joseph of St. Nektarios Monastery of Roscoe, New York
By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The monk is a man of prayer. The power of his prayer is shown by the outpouring of divine grace upon him. This is reflected in an inner peace unshaken by storms, and a warmth of welcome and hospitality surpassing the finest manners of the most polished social circles. It is the hospitality of Christ Himself, free from all human flattery and social formalities.

As for the radiant, cheerful countenance that reflects the clarity of heaven and the Kingdom of God on earth, He grants it to some of His faithful ones. I could see all these qualities in the face of Elder Joseph of St. Nektarios Monastery of Roscoe, New York, upon whom many graces from God were manifest. I dare to speak of them now, after he has gone to the dwellings of the Lord.

This is what I saw in you from the moment I met you for the first time, and it increased throughout three years, up to our last meeting. You did not change, nor were you altered. Even the grievous illness you endured in recent years was not an obstacle that prevented the heavenly light from shining on your face for a single moment; rather, it only increased. Nor did your physical pains conceal the gentle, transparent smile on your face!

How ashamed I felt when I learned that you had postponed receiving your chemotherapy by a day or two in order to hear my last confession, especially when I saw signs of fatigue upon you. I asked you then, "Are you in great pain, Father?" And so that I would not worry about you, you answered roundaboutly, with heavenly gentleness and a smile not of this world: "The chemotherapy dose tires me, and afterward, I spend several days as though I were dead!" Your answer was like an arrow that pierced me with the measure of love you carried!

By your conduct, you taught me the importance of faithfulness to the Lord until the final breath. Through you, I came to understand that faithfulness, and the deeds and labors that accompany it, are what draw forth the grace of God. This is what I had also learned from our Holy Fathers; yet in you, I saw it embodied.

From you, I learned that we struggle while knowing that our ascetical efforts do not grant us “merit” before God; yet He, glory to Him, sees our labors for His sake and grants us His grace, which sanctifies our lives and reflects His light within us. You also taught me, Father, that our God does not always grant this grace so that He may preserve us from pride. But what I witnessed in you was that He poured out His grace upon you abundantly and preserved it in you richly, after He saw your labors before Him and your faithfulness to Him.

His grace appeared in you through the joy that marked your face, which you transmitted to your striving monks. We know, Father, that with joy the Gospel of our Lord began: “I bring you good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10), and with joy it was also concluded: “And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:52). We know that this joy of which the Gospel speaks is joy from God, not from ourselves, yet we often seek it in the wrong places.

But you offered yourself wholly to the Lord of joy, and He in turn granted you this gift, which you tasted to the full. Therefore, we now await you asking it for us, in your love, from the Lord beside whom you have come to stand, that He, through your intercessions, might grant it to us, and especially to your monks, so that your joyful presence may continue among them and, through them, be conveyed to us. This is what consoles your children, Father. I am entirely hopeful that you will not withhold this request from us, knowing how greatly we all need true joy—and that there is no true consolation or gladness except in the presence of the Lord of joy in our midst. You tasted Him best. Your faithfulness to Him and your labors before Him drew His grace upon you in abundance, and your humility preserved it in you always.

O earthly angel, you were the greatest blessing God granted me after my coming to America. You were my greatest consolation in my new ministry. How I will miss you, and how I will miss your advice! Yet, I am confident that your presence in the fathers and monks of the monastery will remain; and within that family, through whom you granted me the blessing of being spiritually one of them, I will find what you always gave me.

Today, after you have been wholly set free and have become entirely His, we all have hope and confidence that He will speak to you His blessed word: “Enter into the joy of your Lord,” for you “were faithful over a little; I will set you over much” (Matt. 25:21). Our consolation for your departure from us is that you now dwell in the light that does not fade, a light whose brilliance will shine in you more and more.

From there, from the Kingdom of God, remember us, the unworthy. From there, I ask you to remember me and the flocks of Christ whose service He entrusted to me, and to forgive me for being unable to attend your funeral.

فليقبل تواضعك كلماتي يا أبت يوسف
في تأبين الشيخ يوسف، رئيس دير القديس نكتاريوس في روسكو، نيويورك
بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

الراهب رجل صلاة. وفعالية صلاته تظهر بانسكاب النعمة الإلهية عليه، ما ينعكس فيه
سلاماً داخلياً لا تهزّه العواصف، وفرحاً عميقاً لا تؤثر فيه الأحقاد، وحسن استقبال وضيافة
يفوقان أرقى الأصول التي تتعاطاها الطبقة المخملية. إنها ضيافة المسيح ذاته، تلك التي
تخلو من أي مجاملة بشرية أو آداب اجتماعية.

أما الوجه المنور والبشوش الذي يعكس صفاء السماء وملكوت الله على الأرض، فيمنحه
الله لبعض الأمناء له. كنت ترى هذه الصفات مجتمعة في وجه الشيخ يوسف الذي تجلّت
فيه نعم من الله كثيرة. أتجراً على ذكرها الآن بعدما صار في ديار الرب.

هذا ما رأيته فيك مذ التقيتك للمرة الأولى وازداد خلال سنوات ثلاث وحتى اللقاء الأخير.
لم تتغير ولم تتبدّل ولم يشكّل المرض الأليم، الذي عانيت منه في السنوات الأخيرة، عائقاً
يمنع النور السماوي من الإشراف في وجهك لحظة واحدة، لا بل كان إلى ازدياد. ولم
تحجب ألامك الجسدية ابتسامة وجهك البالغة الرقة والشفافية!

كم خجلت من نفسي عندما علمت متأخراً بأنك أجّلت تلقّي علاجك الكيماوي يوماً أو اثنين
من أجل أن تسمع اعترافي الأخير، وخاصة حينما رأيت علامات التعب بادية عليك. سألتك
آنذاك: أنتوجع كثيراً يا أبت؟ ولئلا تقلقني عليك، أجبتني مداورة، وبرقة سماوية وابتسامة
ليست من هذا العالم، "تتعبني جرعة العلاج الكيماوي، فأقضي بعدها عدّة أيام وكأني
ميت!" كان جوابك سهماً طعنني بكمّ المحبة التي حملها!

علّمتني بسلوكك أهميّة الأمانة للربّ حتى الرّمق الأخير. ومن خلالك وعيت أنّ الأمانة
وما يصحبها من أفعال وأتعاب هي التي تستجلب نعمة الله. هذا ما كنت قد تعلّمته أيضاً من
آبائنا القديسين، لكّني، في شخصك، رأيته متجسداً. عرفت منك أنّنا نجاهد ونحن مدركون
بأنّ أفعال جهادنا لا تعطينا استحقاقاً أمام الله، لكنّه له المجد يرى أتعابنا من أجله، فيمنحنا
نعمته التي تقدّس حياتنا وتعكس نوره فينا. كذلك عرّفتني يا أبت أنّ إلهنا لا يمنحنا هذه
النعمة دوماً كي يحفظنا من الكبرياء. لكن ما لمستك فيك، أنّه أمطر نعمه عليك بغزارة
وأدامها فيك بوفرة، بعدما رأى أتعابك أمامه وأمانتك له.

ظهرت نعمته فيك في الفرح الذي تميّز وجهك به، ونقلته إلى رهبانك المجاهدين. نعرف يا أبت أنّه بالفرح بدأ إنجيل ربّنا "إني أبشركم بفرح عظيم" (لو ٢: ١٠)، وبالفرح ختم أيضاً "ورجعوا إلى أورشليم وهم في فرح عظيم" (لو ٢٤: ٥٢). ونعرف أنّ هذا الفرح الذي يتكلّم عليه الإنجيل فرح من الله لا ممّا. ومع ذلك كثيراً ما نبحت عنه في الأماكن الخطأ.

أمّا أنت فأعطيت ذاتك بكليتها لربّ الفرح، وهو بدوره منحك هذه العطية التي ذقتها بالملء، لذا فإنّنا ننتظر أن تطلبها لنا بمحبّتك، من الربّ الذي صرت إلى جواره، عساه، بطلباتك، يُنعم بها علينا وعلى رهبانك بالأخصّ، فيستمرّ حضورك الفرح فيما بينهم، وعبرهم ينتقل إلينا. هذا ما يعزّي أولادك يا أبت. كليّ رجاء بأنك لن تبخل علينا بهذا الطلب وأنت العالم بحاجتنا جميعاً إلى الفرح الحقيقي! وأن ما من عزاء وابتهاج حقيقيين سوى في حضور الرب الفرح وسطنا. أنت خير من ذاقه. أمانتك له وأتعابك أمامه استجلبنا نعمته عليك بوفرة، وتواضعك حفظها فيك على الدوام.

أيها الملاك الأرضي، كنت البركة العظمى التي منحني الله إيّاها من بعد مجيئي إلى أميركا. كنت تعزيتي الكبرى في خدمتي الجديدة. كم سأفتقدك وسأفتقد نصائحك! ولو أنني واثق من أن حضورك في آباء الدير ورهبانه سيبقى مستمراً، وأنتي في تلك العائلة التي منحتني بركة أن أكون بالروح واحداً منها، سأجد ما كنت تمنحني إيّاه دوماً.

اليوم، بعد أن تحرّرت بالكلية، وصرت له بالتمام، كلّنا رجاء وثقة بأنّه سيُسمعك كلمته المباركة: "ادخل إلى فرح ربّك" لأنّك "كنت أميناً في القليل سأقيمك على الكثير." عزاؤنا عن رحيلك عتاً، أنّك الآن تقيم في النور الذي لا يخبو، ذاك الذي سيتألق لمعانه فيك أكثر فأكثر.

من هناك، من ملكوت الله، اذكرنا، نحن غير المستحقين. من هناك أرجو أن تذكرني ورعايا المسيح التي سلّمني خدمتها، وأن تسامحني لأنّني لم أتمكّن من المشاركة جسدياً في صلاة تجنيزك.

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