



# +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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## PALM SUNDAY:

### ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM

قُدَّاسُ أَحَدِ الشَّعَائِينِ. دُخُولُ رَبِّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ

#### Palm Sunday



On this day in the Holy Orthodox Church, the Sunday of Palms, we celebrate the radiant and glorious festival of the Entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. Jesus came to Bethany on the Sunday falling before the six days of the Mosaic Passover. On the following day He sent two of His Disciples, who brought Him a donkey on which He sat to enter the city. And when the great multitude heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they immediately took palm branches in their hands and went out to meet Him. All cried, "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, King of Israel!" The branches of palm trees were a symbol of Christ's victory over Satan and Death. And the meaning of "Hosanna" is, "We pray Thee, save." The donkey's colt, which was still an untamed animal, and impure according to the law, as well as Christ's sitting thereon, symbolize the former savagery and impurity of the Gentiles; and their subsequent taming and obedience to the holy law of the Gospel.

#### THE EPISTLE

*Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord.*

*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.*

#### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians. (4:4-9)**

Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! Let your forbearance be known to all people. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think about these things. The things which you both learned and received, and heard and saw in me, these things do; and the God of peace will be with you.

#### الرسالة

مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ

إِعْتَرِفُوا لِلرَّبِّ فَإِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولْسِ الرُّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ فِيلِيبِّي. (9-4:4)

يَا إِخْوَةُ، افْرَحُوا فِي الرَّبِّ كُلَّ حِينٍ وَأَقُولُ أَيْضاً افْرَحُوا. وَلْيُظْهِرْ جِلْمُكُمْ لِجَمِيعِ النَّاسِ. فَإِنَّ الرَّبَّ قَرِيبٌ. لَا تَهْتَمُّوا الْبَتَّةَ، بَلْ فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَلْتَكُنْ طَلِبَاتِكُمْ مَعْلُومَةً لَدَى اللَّهِ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالتَّضَرُّعِ مَعَ الشُّكْرِ. وَلْيَحْفَظْ سَلَامُ اللَّهِ، الَّذِي يَفُوقُ كُلَّ عَقْلِ، قُلُوبَكُمْ وَبَصَائِرَكُمْ فِي يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ. وَبَعْدُ أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَةُ، مَهْمَا يَكُنْ مِنْ حَقٍّ، وَمَهْمَا يَكُنْ مِنْ عَفَافٍ، وَمَهْمَا يَكُنْ مِنْ عَدْلٍ، وَمَهْمَا يَكُنْ مِنْ طَهَارَةٍ، وَمَهْمَا يَكُنْ مِنْ صِفَةٍ مُحَبَّبَةٍ، وَمَهْمَا يَكُنْ مِنْ حُسْنِ صِيَّةٍ، إِنْ تَكُنْ فَضِيلَةً، وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مَدْحٌ، فَفِي هَذِهِ افْتَكِرُوا. وَمَا تَعَلَّمْتُمُوهُ، وَتَسَلَّمْتُمُوهُ، وَسَمِعْتُمُوهُ، وَرَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَيَّ، فَبِهَذَا اْعْمَلُوا، وَإِلَهُ السَّلَامِ يَكُونُ مَعَكُمْ.

## THE GOSPEL

### **The Reading of the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (12:1-18)**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus who had died was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with Him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, one of His Disciples (he who was to betray Jesus), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not because he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the moneybox he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of My burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me." When the great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!" His Disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of Him and had been done to Him. The crowd that had been with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Jesus was that they heard He had done this sign.

### **الإنجيل**

### **فصل شريف من بشارة القديس يوحنا الإنجيلي البشير، والتلميذ الطاهر. (12:1-18)**

قَبْلَ الْفَصْحِ بَسِطَةِ أَيَّامٍ، أَتَى يَسُوعُ إِلَى بَيْتٍ عَنِيَا حَيْثُ كَانَ لِعَازَرُ الَّذِي مَاتَ فَأَقَامَهُ يَسُوعُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ. فَصَنَعُوا لَهُ هُنَاكَ عِشَاءً، وَكَانَتْ مَرَّتَا تَخْدِمُ، وَكَانَ لِعَازَرُ أَحَدَ الْمُتَكِنِينَ مَعَهُ. أَمَّا مَرْيَمُ فَأَخَذَتْ رَطْلَ طِيبٍ نَارِدِينَ خَالِصٍ، كَثِيرَ الثَّمَنِ، وَدَهْنَتْ قَدَمَيَّ يَسُوعَ وَمَسَحَتْ قَدَمَيْهِ بِشَعْرِهَا. فَامْتَلَأَ الْبَيْتُ مِنْ رَائِحَةِ الطِيبِ. فَقَالَ أَحَدُ تَلَامِيذِهِ، يَهُوذَا ابْنُ سَمْعَانَ الْأَسْخَرِيوطِيِّ، الَّذِي كَانَ مُزْمِعًا أَنْ يُسْلِمَهُ، "لِمَ لَمْ يُبَعْ هَذَا الطِيبُ بِثَلَاثِ مِئَةِ دِينَارٍ وَيُعْطَى لِلْمَسَاكِينِ؟" وَإِنَّمَا قَالَ هَذَا لَا اِهْتِمَامًا بِالْمَسَاكِينِ، بَلْ لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ سَارِقًا وَكَانَ الصُّنْدُوقُ عِنْدَهُ، وَكَانَ يَحْمِلُ مَا يُلْقَى فِيهِ. فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ: "دَعُوهَا، إِنَّمَا حَفِظْتُهَا لِيَوْمٍ دَفْنِي، فَإِنَّ الْمَسَاكِينَ هُمْ عِنْدَكُمْ فِي كُلِّ حِينٍ، وَأَمَّا أَنَا فَلَسْتُ عِنْدَكُمْ فِي كُلِّ حِينٍ." وَعَلِمَ جَمْعٌ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ أَنَّ يَسُوعَ هُنَاكَ، فَجَاءُوا، لَا مِنْ أَجْلِ يَسُوعَ فَقَطْ، بَلْ لِيَنْظُرُوا أَيْضًا لِعَازَرَ الَّذِي أَقَامَهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ. فَاتَّمَرَ رُؤَسَاءُ الْكَهَنَةِ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوا لِعَازَرَ أَيْضًا، لِأَنَّ كَثِيرِينَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ كَانُوا بِسَبَبِهِ يَذْهَبُونَ فَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِيَسُوعَ. وَفِي الْعَدَدِ، لَمَّا سَمِعَ الْجَمْعُ الْكَثِيرَ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا إِلَى الْعِيدِ بِأَنَّ يَسُوعَ آتٍ إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ، أَخَذُوا سَعَفَ النَّخْلِ وَخَرَجُوا لِلِقَائِهِ وَهُمْ يَصْرُخُونَ قَائِلِينَ: "هُوْشَعْنَا، مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ مَلِكِ إِسْرَائِيلَ." وَإِنَّ يَسُوعَ وَجَدَ جَحْشًا فَرَكَبَهُ كَمَا هُوَ مَكْتُوبٌ: "لَا تَخَافِي يَا ابْنَةُ صِهْيُونَ. هَا إِنَّ مَلِكَكَ يَأْتِيكَ رَاكِبًا عَلَى جَحْشٍ ابْنِ أَتَانَ." وَهَذِهِ الْأَشْيَاءُ لَمْ يَفْهَمُهَا تَلَامِيذُهُ أَوَّلًا، وَلَكِنْ لَمَّا مُجِدَّ يَسُوعَ حِينَئِذٍ تَذَكَّرُوا أَنَّ هَذِهِ إِنَّمَا كُتِبَتْ عَنْهُ وَأَنَّهُمْ عَمِلُوهَا لَهُ. وَكَانَ الْجَمْعُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مَعَهُ حِينَ نَادَى لِعَازَرَ مِنَ الْقَبْرِ وَأَقَامَهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ يَشْهَدُونَ لَهُ. وَمِنْ أَجْلِ هَذَا اسْتَقْبَلَهُ الْجَمْعُ، لِأَنَّهُمْ سَمِعُوا بِأَنَّهُ قَدْ صَنَعَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ.

### **Love Your Neighbor**

**April – Archdiocese Collection for Palm Sunday (April 13, 2025)**

Each year, the Archdiocese asks each parish to take a collection to help support the Patriarchate in Antioch on Palm Sunday. This will be our "neighbor" for the month of April.

### **Flowers for The Bier نِعْشُ الْمَسِيحِ of Christ.**

Offered by

- Jack and Sylvia Dudum and family for the good health of the Dudum and Nazzal families and in memory of John, Misadeh, Audie and Mary Dudum and Elias, Nahiel and Naim Nazzal. May their memories be eternal!
- Sonia and Raif Rihani in memory of Mousa, Mary, Maryate Mar'ashly, Victor, Jameeleh and Raidah Rihani, Raidah Shawneh, Jeries, Widad and Yousef Nesheiwat and Sami Khouri. May their memories be eternal! Also for the good health of Raif, Hani, Sami and Fadi Rihani, Soia Newsheiwat and the Rihani and Nesheiwat Families. Many years!



### **Help with the Easter Egg Hunt**

Our 3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt is fast approaching, coming up on April 19th! We are looking for some volunteers and donations to help make this event a memorable one for all of our youth at St. John's! Please review the SignUp Genius link (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E45A8A929AA8-55762312-stjohns#/>) and sign-up to donate some items or volunteer to help set-up/tear down and during the event!

We have created an Amazon Wishlist for the event, please take a look if you are able to help purchase any items: [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/348DHSJRJZJR8?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/348DHSJRJZJR8?ref=wl_share)

Please reach out to Rania or Kimberly if you have any questions:

[raniamariekaashou@gmail.com](mailto:raniamariekaashou@gmail.com)

[kimberlynicola@gmail.com](mailto:kimberlynicola@gmail.com)

Thank you!

Kimberly Bailey

### **PROJECT MEXICO & ST. INNOCENT ORPHANAGE**

At St. John's, many of our teens have had the opportunity to volunteer to build homes for communities in need in Northern Mexico, just across the US border (about 30 minutes from San Diego). We have some interest in taking a group down this summer, June 12-18th. This is a wonderful, transformative volunteer experience as part of "a mission to build hope, one home at a time" and has been a blessing to participate in. <https://www.projectmexico.org/homebuilding#gl>

The homebuilding program is open to all teens 14 years & above or adults of any age!!! Younger teens under 14 can join along with a parent chaperone. If you're interested or have questions, please contact Rula Adranly [rulaadranly@comcast.net](mailto:rulaadranly@comcast.net) or Nadine Potts [nbhpotts@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nbhpotts@sbcglobal.net).

### **Upcoming Events**

<b>Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM
<b>Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Palm Sunday احد الشعانين at 10 am. The Triumphant Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem!
<b>Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Rose Bake Sale. Please call denise @ 925 360-3350 for pre order of Easter cookies and Fadwa Samara @ 510 909-0119 for pre order of Atayef.

### **Coffee Hour**

<b>April 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Raif and Sonia Rihani for the good health of their family!
<b>April 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Coffee available. No host because of the bake sale.

### **Holy Week Schedule**

<b><u>Wedneseday, April 9<sup>th</sup></u></b>	Presanctified Divine Liturgy at 6:30pm.
<b><u>April 12<sup>th</sup> : Lazarus Saturday</u></b>	Lazarus Saturday Liturgy at 10:00am.
<b><u>April 13<sup>th</sup> : Palm Sunday</u></b>	Matins at 9:00am, Divine Liturgy at 10:00am Bridegroom Service صلاة الختن at 6:30pm
<b><u>April 14<sup>th</sup> : Holy Monday</u></b>	Bridegroom Service صلاة الختن at 6:30 pm
<b><u>April 15<sup>th</sup> : Holy Tuesday</u></b>	Bridegroom Service صلاة الختن at 6:30 pm
<b><u>April 16<sup>th</sup> : Holy Wednesday</u></b>	Holy Unction صلاة الزيت المقدس at 6:30 pm
<b><u>April 17<sup>th</sup> : Holy Thursday</u></b>	Vesperal Liturgy and Washing of the Feet at 10:00am Passion Gospels at 6:30 pm
<b><u>April 18<sup>th</sup> : Holy Friday</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Royal Hours, Vespers and Taking the Body from the Cross – 2:00 pm</li><li>Lamentations تقاريط الجناز at 6:30 pm</li><li>Vigil at Christ's Tomb at 9:00pm</li></ul>
<b><u>April 19<sup>th</sup> : Holy Saturday</u></b>	Vesperal Liturgy at 10:00am Rush Service 10:30 pm followed by the Divine Liturgy
<b><u>April 20<sup>th</sup> : Great and Holy Pascha</u></b>	Agape Vespers at 1:00pm

### Holy Oblations

This week, Holy Oblations are offered by:

- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nick Nicola, George Messih, Sam Nassab, Sandy Dudum Bennett, Fairouz Freij, Henriette Hilal** and **Aida Youakeem**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family in memory of **Rose Freij**. May her memory be eternal!
- † Victor and Angela Husary for the good health of **Chris Husary**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nabil Tovil**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish family for the good health of **Samir** and **Pat Jeha**. Many years!
- † Romley, Farradj and Lawyer families in memory of **Kh. Patricia Romley**. May her 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 Kawar, Mason Kawar, Jonathan Juha, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola
- † Thank you to Ziad and Charlene Nassoura for donating the communion wine.  
God bless you and your children!

- † Palms for Palm Sunday are offered by **Jim and Denise Dudum and Family** in loving memory of John, Misadeh, Audie and Mary Dudum, Jim and Rose Romley and Naim Nazzal. May their memory be eternal!



### **St. John Financial Snapshot**

*Year to Date Actual Finances as of 03/31/2025*

INCOME	2025 Year To Date	% of Total Income	2024 Year to Date	
Membership Pledges	\$ 38,908	21%	\$ 44,387	-\$5K difference vs. YTD 2024. -\$6K difference vs. 2025 Budget.
Tray Collections	\$ 4,271	2%	\$ 3,474	
Preschool Contribution	\$ 106,280	59%	\$ 58,172	
Crab Feed and Festival	\$ 21,011	12%	\$ 23,499	
Ladies Contribution	\$ 5,000	3%	\$ -	Related to prior year. Add'l \$5K expected in December 2025.
Other**	\$ 6,051	3%	\$ 5,221	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 181,521</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 134,753</b>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 159,491</b>		<b>\$ 99,198</b>	
<b>YTD Net Income</b>	<b>\$ 22,031</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>\$ 35,555</b>	

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

Building Fund Balance \$ 761,943.83

Those who wish to see the full financial summary should contact Parish Council  
Treasurer Andrew Thayer

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

You could use this QR code for your donation





His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan SABA



Archbishop of New York  
and Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

**Prot. no.:** 145/2025

Palm Sunday  
April 13, 2025

**To be read from the pulpit and printed in the bulletin.**

Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy and Christ-loving Faithful of this Archdiocese,

Greetings to you and your families on this Great Feast of the Church. As we complete the forty-day fast and prepare to enter into the most solemn week of the Church year, we pause this weekend to celebrate the raising of Lazarus and our Lord's triumphant and radiant entry into the holy city of Jerusalem.

Today, as we celebrate this feast, we also take time to remember our beloved Mother Church, headed by our Father in Christ, His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X. For more than a decade, the lands of the Patriarchate have endured immense hardship, marked by war, displacement, economic collapse, and social instability. In recent months, these trials have deepened, and the remaining Christian communities throughout the region continue to experience heightened vulnerability, uncertainty, and fear. Let us fervently pray for His Beatitude, the hierarchs, clergy, and all the faithful of the entire region as they endure ongoing suffering with steadfastness and faith.

Each year on this special day, we appeal to you—the faithful of our God-protected Archdiocese—for an offering of love to be sent to His Beatitude from his spiritual children across North America. Amid the ongoing difficulties, His Beatitude is burdened with the sacred responsibility of sustaining the life and witness of the Church in conditions of great instability. Our spiritual brothers and sisters are in need—many are hungry, without heat, and lacking opportunities for work. While we lift them up in prayer, let us also offer material support as an expression of solidarity and love.

Wishing you a prayerful Holy Week and a most joyous and radiant Pascha, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Saba', is written over a faint, larger 'Saba' watermark.

**+SABA**

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

*"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)*

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## ROSE'S ANNUAL PALM SUNDAY BAKE SALE

SUNDAY, APRIL 13<sup>TH</sup>



**SPECIAL** – Lenten lunch boxes will be available to go including delicious falafel, hummus, zatar bread and more \$10 each

Please contact Denise Dudum at 925-360-3350 if you'd like to contribute your special baked goods or if you'd like to Pre-Order

## URGENT CALL TO ACTION

# 7 YEAR OLD GAZAN GIRL IN THE US

**NEEDS A STEM  
CELL DONOR NOW**

*Your stem cells could save her life  
or the life of any searching patient*



## ETHNICITY IMPACTS COMPATIBILITY

**A donor match for this Palestinian child is  
most likely an 18-40 year old Arab person in the U.S.**

**[my.nmdp.org/Swab4Palestine](https://my.nmdp.org/Swab4Palestine) | text Swab4Palestine to 61474**

NMDP will send you a free buccal swab kit by mail. NMDP was founded in 1987 as Be the Match and follows the strictest privacy protocols - all data is anonymized and secure

**PLEASE SEND THIS TO 10 ARAB PEOPLE**

ST. JOHN'S  
**PASCHA  
EGG HUNT**

APRIL 19TH, 2025 | AFTER MORNING LITURGY

EGG HUNT, BRUNCH, ARTS & CRAFT, & MORE!!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER AND/OR DONATE  
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OR KIMBERLY BAILEY



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**St. John  
Church**

**Thursday, June 12 at 11AM-8PM  
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California Fish Grill will donate 25% of sales from this event back to the organization. Simply present this flyer, mention the organization upon ordering or **scan the QR code at kiosk.**

IN-STORE USE ONLY



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## Dine & Donate

A dine and donate fundraising event, where a portion of a restaurant's sales on a specific day are donated to our church when mention St. John and/or show the flyer. Essentially creating a win-win situation for both the restaurant and St. John. Plus you can gather with fellow community members and have no mess to clean. Additionally you don't have to cook or worry about what to eat that day. :)



JOIN US!



IS GIVING  
50% BACK TO:

St. John Orthodox  
Church

Thursday, Apr 24  
All day

The Kebab Shop  
2359 Oak Grove Rd Bldg H  
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

To participate in this fundraiser, show this flyer during checkout at the store or order online at [order.thekebabshop.com](http://order.thekebabshop.com) using the fundraiser coupon code below.

Code for online ordering:  
**FUNDRAISER**

This fundraiser event is between St. John Orthodox Church and The Kebab Shop. The Kebab Shop will donate 50% of qualifying food and beverage sales to St. John Orthodox Church. Additional sales exclusions may apply including: Delivery, Catering, any other promotions. Offer valid only on select date(s) and location(s). Offer void if flyer is distributed in or near the store. The Kebab Shop may impose additional terms and conditions.

**FORCE  
4 GOOD**  
FUNDRAISING

FUNDRAISER





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**5/19/25**



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His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan SABA

The Right Reverend  
Bishop ANTHONY



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

Diocese of Los Angeles  
And the West

March 27, 2025

Dear reverend clergy, parish council officers and faithful parishioners:

As you know, every year, in the West and throughout the Archdiocese, in every geographic and administrative area, there have been organized, promoted and established Parish Life Conferences.

In the West, there have been and continue to be dedicated persons who, over the years, have worked to refine and expand these conferences, so all of us can enjoy the experience of sharing, caring and growing in our life in Christ, in His Body, the Church.

The historical beginnings and social pedigree of these Conferences can be generally discovered in the post-World-War-II American experience, where all ethnic and national groups formed the so-called “melting pot” of U.S. political identity. It was at this time when America was not so much multi-cultural as it was an acculturation of all social, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and national peoples. It was the time of the GI Bill, when higher education was available to returning veterans and where that—at the time—uniquely American home expansion called “urban sprawl” and numerous neighborhood subdivisions crowded the city landscapes of urban centers and spread across every state and farm.

Though I am simplifying this development of Conferences, they were planned for us around the senior SOYO organization of our Archdiocese. These early years saw very large conventions and gatherings that celebrated their Orthodoxy along with their appreciation for being here, in what they called a “God-protected land,” as it was known among many immigrant groups.

We have, since then, been blessed with a dynamic addition of—in the words of Scripture—“*the redeemed for God* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5.9b; cf. 7.9). We are more than a big tent; we have a domed stadium!

With that review, our Metropolitan and our Archdiocese still schedule PLCs and expect our clergy and parishes to support, attend, participate in and promote our host parish’s PLCs.

We have many opportunities and obligations that are admirably publicized by the PLC organizing volunteers, as has been mentioned previously.

In this regard, I have taken an informed survey of our priests concerning the overall challenges of time, resources and benefit that come from PLCs today. I have heard of the challenges of costs, which are only increasing, both in general and for attending our Conferences.

*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

454 South Lorraine Boulevard • Los Angeles, California, 90020

This year, as I compose this memorandum, the PLC is three short months away, and we cannot assemble all the desired venues of parish needs, such as: stewardship, teen group development, young adult groups, etc. Be assured, however, that we will work on giving our clergy more tools and resources for their parish needs in future PLCs, as we work to include them.

We need to start to build expectations and participation this year. As we work together to grow and evolve our Conferences in the years to come, this year's PLC will be primarily a social and liturgical gathering, but it will definitely include some workshops and inspiring take-away messages. So, we would *not* want anyone to evaluate its value on preconceived or biased bases. Come and see!

Since I was in seminary, PLCs were obligatory for pastors, and our Metropolitan expected us at the Conference (exclusive of obvious reasons for being absent and pre-excused permission not to attend).

To mitigate costs, we are working with the Order of St. Ignatius and certain individuals who may be willing to help with travel, room and other expenses, so we can come together. *And I believe it is really important for us to be together.* Beyond specific offerings of workshops and such, it is often those conversations on the sidelines, and those relationships we forge when we are together in person, that prove invaluable. Finally and crucially, we can get out of our parochial boundaries at the PLC, as we gather from across the West, clergy and laity around the Bishop, to make manifest the larger Body of Christ.

We must build a spiritual and social camaraderie with each other. In fact, the Divine Liturgy—the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Faithful—may be explained in this way: community of the gathering, for the communication of the Word, to become One in communion with His Body—*community, communication, communion. That's the ideal of Parish Life Conferences, and it is still relevant today!*

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "+ Bishop Anthony". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

+Bishop ANTHONY

**Bishop of Los Angeles**  
**Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**



His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan SABA

The Right Reverend  
Bishop ANTHONY



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

Diocese of Los Angeles  
And the West

April 2, 2025

**TEACHING BY BISHOP ANTHONY  
TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE FAITHFUL**

## Meditation for Great and Holy Wednesday

When events and circumstances align themselves in ways that please us, we say: “Things couldn’t have worked out better. What a blessing!” Sometimes, maybe most of the time, that’s true, but not all the time.

When the elders and priests gathered together to plan our Lord’s arrest and crucifixion and colluded with the Roman authorities to make it happen, Judas broke into this meeting and gave them just what they were looking for, the answer to this problem. And there, from that moment, the Scripture says, “and it was night.” It was the darkest night ever.

These conspirators might have said, “Things couldn’t have worked out better.” They couldn’t have worked out better for the absolute worst!

For us, we should be careful. Maybe when our plans fall apart, and our life takes a stressful turn, and what we expected would be a great success was actually a surprising failure, it was our Lord protecting us, not indulging us. Sometimes, by hindering us, God helps us. Sometimes, not getting a blessing is the blessing!

*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

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