

+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
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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2025 TONE 4 / EOTHINON 7

AFTER-FEAST OF & SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

COMMEMORATION OF JOSEPH THE BETROTHED, DAVID THE PROPHET AND KING,
AND JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD

CHRIST IS BORN... GLORIFY HIM!



On December 28 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the twenty thousand martyrs burned in Nicomedia; and Venerable Simon the myrrh-streaming, founder of Simonopetra monastery on Athos.

On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of God and the First Bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King.

David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. Thus, God was not ashamed to take upon Himself flesh from David's seed. God designated Joseph to protect the Most-holy Virgin, and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. Although Joseph was of the royal lineage of David, he was a humble carpenter in Nazareth. At the age of 80, Joseph took the Most-holy Virgin from the Temple in Jerusalem and into his home. He entered into rest at the age of 110. The Apostle James is called the "Brother of the Lord" because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph, when Herod sought to slay the newborn King.

THE EPISTLE

*God is wondrous in His saints.
In the churches, bless ye God.*

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the Gospel, which was preached by me, is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people; so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

عَجِيبٌ هُوَ اللَّهُ فِي قَدِّيسِيهِ.

فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللَّهَ.

(19-11:1). فَضْلٌ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ غَلَاطِيَّةِ

يَا إِخْوَةُ، أُعَلِّمُكُمْ أَنَّ الْإِنْجِيلَ الَّذِي بَشَّرْتُ بِهِ، لَيْسَ بِحَسَبِ الْإِنْسَانِ، لِأَنِّي لَمْ أَتَسَلَّمْهُ أَوْ أَتَعَلَّمْهُ مِنْ إِنْسَانٍ، بَلْ بِإِعْلَانِ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ. فَإِنَّكُمْ قَدْ سَمِعْتُمْ بِسِيرَتِي قَدِيمًا فِي مِلَّةِ الْيَهُودِ، أَنِّي كُنْتُ أَضْطَهُدُ كَنِيسَةَ اللَّهِ بِإِفْرَاطٍ وَأَدْمَرُهَا. وَأَزِيدُ تَقَدُّمًا فِي مِلَّةِ الْيَهُودِ عَلَى كَثِيرِينَ مِنْ أَتْرَابِي فِي جِنْسِي، بِكَوْنِي أَوْفَرَ مِنْهُمْ غَيْرَةً عَلَى تَقْلِيدَاتِ آبَائِي. فَلَمَّا ارْتَضَى اللَّهُ، الَّذِي أَفَرَزَنِي مِنْ جَوْفِ أُمِّي وَدَعَانِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ، أَنْ يُعْلِنَ ابْنَهُ فِيَّ لِأُبَشِّرَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْأُمَمِ، لِسَاعَتِي، لَمْ أَصْغِ إِلَى لَحْمٍ وَدَمٍ، وَلَا صَعِدْتُ إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ إِلَى الرُّسُلِ الَّذِينَ قَبْلِي، بَلْ انْطَلَقْتُ إِلَى دِيَارِ الْعَرَبِ، وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ رَجَعْتُ إِلَى دِمَشْقَ. ثُمَّ إِنِّي بَعْدَ ثَلَاثِ سِنِينَ، صَعِدْتُ إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ لِأَزُورَ بُطْرُسَ، فَأَقَمْتُ عِنْدَهُ خَمْسَةَ عَشَرَ يَوْمًا. وَلَمْ أَرْ غَيْرَهُ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ سِوَى يَعْقُوبَ أَخِي الرَّبِّ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (2:13-23)

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him." And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the

wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

فَصْلٌ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ مَتَّى الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتِّلْمِذِ الطَّاهِرِ. (23-13:2)

لَمَّا انْصَرَفَ الْمَجُوسُ، إِذَا بِمَلَاكِ الرَّبِّ ظَهَرَ لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْحُلُمِ، قَائِلًا: قُمْ فَخُذِ الصَّبِيَّ وَأُمَّهُ وَاهْرُبْ إِلَى مِصْرَ، وَكُنْ هُنَاكَ حَتَّى أَقُولَ لَكَ. فَإِنَّ هِيرُودُسَ مُزْمِعٌ أَنْ يَطْلُبَ الصَّبِيَّ لِيُهْلِكَهُ. فَقَامَ وَأَخَذَ الصَّبِيَّ وَأُمَّهُ لَيْلًا، وَانْصَرَفَ إِلَى مِصْرَ. وَكَانَ هُنَاكَ إِلَى وَفَاةِ هِيرُودُسَ، لِيَتِمَّ الْمَقُولُ مِنَ الرَّبِّ بِالنَّبِيِّ الْقَائِلِ: مِنْ مِصْرَ دَعَوْتُ ابْنِي. حِينَئِذٍ، لَمَّا رَأَى هِيرُودُسُ أَنَّ الْمَجُوسَ سَخِرُوا بِهِ، غَضِبَ جَدًّا، وَأَرْسَلَ فَقَتَلَ كُلَّ صِبْيَانٍ بَيْتَ لَحْمَ وَجَمِيعِ تَحُومِهَا، مِنْ ابْنِ سَنَتَيْنِ فَمَا دُونَ، عَلَى حَسَبِ الزَّمَانِ الَّذِي تَحَقَّقَهُ مِنَ الْمَجُوسِ. حِينَئِذٍ، تَمَّ مَا قَالَهُ إِرْمِيَاءُ النَّبِيُّ الْقَائِلُ: صَوْتُ سُمِعَ فِي الرَّمَاةِ، نَوْحٌ وَبُكَاءٌ وَعَوِيلٌ كَثِيرٌ، رَاحِيلُ تَبْكِي عَلَى أَوْلَادِهَا، وَقَدْ أَبَتْ أَنْ تَتَعَزَّى لَأَنَّهُمْ لَيْسُوا بِمَوْجُودِينَ. فَلَمَّا مَاتَ هِيرُودُسُ، إِذَا بِمَلَاكِ الرَّبِّ ظَهَرَ لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْحُلُمِ فِي مِصْرَ، قَائِلًا: قُمْ فَخُذِ الصَّبِيَّ وَأُمَّهُ وَادْهَبْ إِلَى أَرْضِ إِسْرَائِيلَ، فَقَدْ مَاتَ طَالِبُو نَفْسِ الصَّبِيَّ. فَقَامَ وَأَخَذَ الصَّبِيَّ وَأُمَّهُ وَجَاءَ إِلَى أَرْضِ إِسْرَائِيلَ. وَلَمَّا سَمِعَ أَنَّ أَرْخِيْلَائُوسَ قَدْ مَلَكَ عَلَى الْيَهُودِيَّةِ مَكَانَ هِيرُودُسَ أَبِيهِ، خَافَ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ إِلَى هُنَاكَ، وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْحُلُمِ، فَانْصَرَفَ إِلَى نَوَاحِي الْجَلِيلِ. وَأَتَى وَسَكَنَ فِي مَدِينَةٍ تُدْعَى نَاصِرَةَ، لِيَتِمَّ الْمَقُولُ بِالْأَنْبِيَاءِ: إِنَّهُ يُدْعَى نَاصِرِيًّا.

Upcoming Events

December 24th	4 pm Orthros/Matins and 5 pm Nativity of Christ Divine Liturgy! قداس عيد الميلاد
February 7th, 2026	Crab Feed: This year we are proud to have our 44th Annual Crab Feed at our NEW St. John Hall. Saturday February 7th, 2026. Please SAVE THE DATE, and let us celebrate together to make it as successful as possible!
February 15th	1 year memorial on February 15th in memory of George Wahbeh. May his memory be eternal!

Coffee Hour

December 28th	Sponsor Needed
January 4th	Samia and Elias Shaheen in memory of Samia's father, Badi بيع Ibrahim, (5 yrs). May his memory be eternal!
January 18th	Yowakeem and Kashou Family for six month memorial of Aida Yowakeem
January 25th	Jill Norgaard for 3 year memorial of Dwight

Thank You for Donating Towards the Bishops Chair and Chanter's Stand

The Bishop's chair has been donated by Raif and Sonia Rihani and family!

The chanter's stand is donated by George Theodosi and family!

Day Trip/Pilgrimage to Holy Assumption Monastery: Saturday, January 17th

[Holy Assumption Monastery](#) in Calistoga, 1519 Washington St., Calistoga

Approximate schedule

11am: Arrive and explore the grounds (the monastery has birds, cats, ducks, a koi pond and a wonderful bookstore)

12:15pm: 6th hour

12:45pm: lunch

1:30pm: children's activities

3:30: Wrap-up & group photo

4:00: Depart

Additionally, there will be a vigil at 5pm and anyone is welcome to stay, but the nuns recognize that with smaller children, it's much easier for families to get home on the earlier side. The monastery will be providing lunch. Donations to the monastery are welcome. Dress is modest. Please [RSVP here](#) so the sisters can make plans for lunch and the craft. If you can include the names of family members attending, along with the children's ages and if there are any food allergies or dietary restrictions that would be helpful. **Please RSVP ASAP by December 17th.**

I hope to see you there! Please let Irene know if you have any questions: Irene Guajardo: 925-413-3242, iyrini.nino@gmail.com

Dave & Buster's Campaign

Our Dave & Buster's campaign got extended so we can maximize on our return. We are currently at \$700.00
How it works:

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

Talent Night

After the holidays I'd like to put together a talent night for anyone who would like to participate. Pianists, instrumentalists, Singers, Dancers etc. I'd like to get an idea if we have any interest in "Putting on a show" in our new hall! Please call me and let me know what your talent is. It's important to share your talents in life, especially with our beloved St John family. All ages welcome. ❤️ Lynn Farradj 925-323-5746

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, Sam Nassab, Sue Gideon, Rocky Dudum and Norma Khalil.** Many years!

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Hala (Sandra) Mitry.** Many years!

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Bradley Youakim.** Many years!

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of all **musicians in our church.** Many years!

† Rania Shuhaiber and in memory of **Mikhail Shuhaiber.** May his memory be eternal!

† Siham Mitry and family in memory **Donna Potter.** 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 Kavar, Mason Kavar, Jonathan Juha, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola



Poinsettia plants to adorn the Royal Doors in Loving Memory of: Nick Sr. And Helen Nicola offered by Nick Jr., Ron Nicola and Georgianna Rishwain and families

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

You could use this QR code for your donation





FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Potluck



Come ready to play, laugh, and
enjoy some time together!





ALL AGES ARE WELCOME!

**SATURDAY JAN. 10TH
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM**



Bring some games to play and
your favorite dish
St. John Banquet Hall





NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DEANERY
ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS

INVITES YOU AND YOUR SPOUSES
TO THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

DECEMBER 18, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

\$60 PER PERSON

CAFE VITALE
987 FREMONT AVE. LOS ALTOS
HILLS, CA 94024

RSVP BY DEC 6TH

KH. JULIANNA YOUSSEF (CO-CHAIR FOR THE
ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS OF THE DIOCESE)
408-375-5539, JULIANNA3DS@GMAIL.COM

OR

CHURCH OFFICE:
OFFICE@ORTHODOXREDEEMER.ORG





An Invitation

"Christianity is not a matter of persuading people of particular ideas, but of inviting them to share in the greatness of Christ. So pray that I may never fall into the trap of impressing people with clever speech, but instead I may learn to speak with humility, desiring only to impress people with Christ himself."

- Saint Ignatius of Antioch

The Ribbon & The Cross Is An Invitation To Become Part Of A Ministry

An Invitation Not Recognition

When you become part of the Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, you become part of a ministry. The Order is not a club that you join. It is not a secular status symbol for recognition. The Cross and the Ribbon that Order supporters wear is an invitation to become part of a ministry. It serves as an invitation to share with one another in the greatness of Christ by giving in a manner that is unconditional and quiet. Supporting the Order's projects, Archdiocese Departments and numerous programs as one group, with Christ in our minds and hearts, should be how we *invite* the world to become part the Order's ministry.

Initiate the Questions of What? & How?

When those supporting the Order wear their ribbon and cross, it is meant to initiate others to inquire about the Order and how they can help strengthen its ministry. When people see the red ribbon and Cross that we wear, it helps begin the conversation to share what the Order does and provide the initial welcome to help expand its ministry. It provides an opportunity to ask, "What does the Order do and how can I help?"

The Order Provides A Lesson In Giving

When you give to the Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, you are giving in a way we are all called to give ... unconditionally. Your gift is not individually recognized. You are not able to designate your gift to a specific need you select. You are giving without recognition, without conditions, without direct gratitude of the Order's recipients. This is the manner in which a "true gift" is made. A gift made in the way Christ directs us.

The Order Teaches Us How To Give

... the Order is teaching us how to share, the Order is teaching us how to give, the Order is teaching us how to sacrifice, and how to reach out for Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike. This is the miracle of The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch."

- His Eminence Metropolitan Philip of thrice blessed memory, Founder of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch



The Order of
Saint Ignatius
of Antioch

Let no man's place, or dignity, or riches, puff him up; and let no man's low condition or poverty abase him. For the chief points are faith towards God, hope towards Christ, the enjoyment of those good things for which we look, and love towards God and our neighbor.

- Saint Ignatius of Antioch

The Order of St. Ignatius Of Antioch | 140 Church Camp Trail | Bolivar, PA 15923 | Email: theorder@antiochian.org | Ph: (724) 238-3677, xt 410

Selfless

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Founder of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

Your gift is selfless. You help support the Order's ministry without recognition or conditions. There are no banquets, plaques or special awards given in your honor. Your gift is given unconditionally to support the Orthodox Faith in North America, the Spiritual strengthening of our youth and to care for our beloved clergy in their Golden years.

\$98.22	Administrative Expense
\$294.64	Youth Programs & Camp Scholarships
\$15.04	Project Mexico
\$15.04	IOCC
\$21.32	Projects & Grants
\$7.52	SOYO Special Olympics
\$6.40	Clergy Symposium & Convention Support
\$15.49	Seminarian Assistance
\$116.54	Archdiocese Departments
\$18.80	Parish Development & Missions
\$97.75	Missions & Evangelism
\$15.03	Archdiocese House of Studies
\$75.19	Internet Ministry
\$203.02	Retired Clergy Fund

How Your Annual Gift Is Allocated

Based On A \$1,000 Knight &/or Dame
Commander Level Annual Gift

61.41%

Of Annual Order Gifts

29.46%

Youth Programs & Camp Scholarships

20.30%

Retired Clergy Fund

11.65%

Missions & Evangelism & Parish Development

*Only 9.82% In Administrative Expense

**Based On Fiscal Year 2024



The Order of
Saint Ignatius
of Antioch

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- Saint Ignatius of Antioch



Dave & Buster's Power Cards to Support St. John Church



50% Donated Back



December 31



<https://grouprai.se/davebusters59958s>

Silent Hands

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

I am struck by the silence in which You entered our wretched world, my sweet Jesus.

You came to us, my Lord, with awe-filled humility. You did not appear in glory and splendor. You turned toward us with a veiled majesty and stillness. You were born in the flesh on a quiet night, in a desolate place where no people dwell. And a great multitude of men was not present at Your birth.

You wished to tell a few shepherds who, in the stillness of the night, were beginning to rest from the day's toil. You sent Your angels to announce to them, with great joy, "Unto you is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And You encouraged them with a multitude of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Did You choose them alone, above all others, because You knew that the simplicity of their lives would grant them the ability to discern Your divinity, and consequently, to accept Your message of salvation?

You said with Your silence, O Christ, that noise does not produce life, and that being satisfied with appearances increases problems, and does not solve them.

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Silence was not only at Your birth, but You willed it to be Your constant companion throughout the years You spent among us. Did You not conceal your Messianic mystery, choosing to reveal it only on the Cross?

And in performing miracles, did you not ask those whom You healed not to spread the news of their healing, but to simply thank God?

You asked no thanks from anyone. You sought neither praise nor glorification.

Even Your glorious Resurrection, O Lord, was accomplished in silence. It was not accompanied by clamor or noise. There was an earthquake, yet no one felt it. We learned of Your Rising from the women who brought spices, who found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

And Mary Magdalene did not recognize you until you called her by name, for she mistook You for the gardener!

Silence, my Lord, is a language understood only by those freed from the noise of their passions. It is the language of the age to come, as your saint, Isaac the Syrian, said.

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You deign to lower Yourself, though You are the Most High Lord. You become humble, though You are the Almighty God. You take on flesh and blood, though You are the Holy of Holies!

You become poor so that we may become rich. You empty Yourself so that we may be filled. You die so that we may live. You distribute Yourself to us so that we may be nourished.

And because You alone are the Compassionate One, You saved us without fanfare. Yes, O Christ, for compassion is born of a full heart, and the full heart needs no adornment.

If we were truly captivated by You, we would no longer seek life from anyone else, our very beings would be filled with Your presence, and we would never again drink water that does not quench our thirst.

If we were to prostrate ourselves at Your feet this feast day to behold Your unique beauty, then the “good portion” would be ours.

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You saw us floundering in pain and misery, so You pitched Your tent in our neighborhood, and it remains there, to open for us the door to true life.

You came to us in absolute simplicity to tell us, through action and not just words, that You are all we need.

You taught us, from your humble manger, that we cannot find You unless our souls are emptied of all worldly glory. How can we know Your worth unless we experience that “money is ashamed to be gathered in the presence of your poverty?”

Strengthen us so that we do not run from confronting ourselves, but rather that we may present ourselves to You as we are, so that Your silence may purify us, and we may join Your angels in praise.

Strengthen us so that we do not flee to what makes us forget our reality, but rather face it armed with Your gentle strength, so that we may find the security we lack and yearn for at the same time.

Be with us, O Almighty and Compassionate Jesus, so that we may not throw ourselves into the noise of the flesh, or money, or pride, or any of the deceptive noises of this world.

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You neither argued nor disputed nor engaged in debates to prove that You are the truth. You simply said, "I am the truth, I am the way, I am the life." And those who believed You discovered the truth of what You said. As for us, Your followers, it is ours to take refuge in the shadow of Your humility, confident in Your power at work within us.

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Teach us, O Lord, on this day of Your birth, to kneel and be silent, so that we may be filled with You.

Teach us, O Lord, to gaze upon Your manifest poverty, so that we may cast off our deadly desires and taste the joy of liberation from enslavement to them.

Grant, O Lord, our hearts a tranquility that makes them independent of the allurements of this world, so that they may find true peace.

We yearn for peace on this feast day. O Lord, guide our steps to Your true path, so that when we experience Your peace, we may, by Your grace, share it in deed, not just in word.

The shepherds bowed down to You, possessing nothing but their need for You. O Lord, help us to cast aside to whatever we cling when we come to You.

Grant us the courage, O Jesus, to accept that we cannot truly open our hearts to You unless we come to You with empty hands.