



+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 29, 2024

TONE 2 / EOTHINON 5

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



Joseph the Betrothed, David the Prophet and King, and James the brother of God

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.

الرسالة

عَجِيبٌ هُوَ اللهُ فِي قَدِّيسِيهِ. فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللهَ.

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

يا إِخْوَةُ، أُعَلِّمُكُمْ أَنَّ الْإِنْجِيلَ الَّذِي بَشَّرْتُ بِهِ، لَيْسَ بِحَسَبِ الْإِنْسَانِ. لَأْتِي لَمْ أَسَلَّمَهُ أَوْ أَتَعَلَّمَهُ مِنْ إِنْسَانٍ، بَلْ بِإِعْلَانِ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ. فَإِنَّكُمْ قَدْ سَمِعْتُمْ بِسِيرَتِي قَدِيمًا فِي مِلَّةِ الْيَهُودِ، أَنِّي كُنْتُ أَصْطَهْدُ كَنِيْسَةَ اللهِ بِإِفْرَاطٍ وَأَدْمَرُهَا. وَأَزِيدُ تَقَدُّمًا فِي مِلَّةِ الْيَهُودِ عَلَى كَثِيرِينَ مِنْ أَتْرَابِي فِي جِنْسِي، بِكَوْنِي أُوْفِرُ مِنْهُمْ غَيْرَةً عَلَى تَقْلِيدَاتِ آبَائِي. فَلَمَّا ارْتَضَى اللهُ، الَّذِي أَفْرَزَنِي مِنْ جَوْفِ أُمِّي وَدَعَانِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ، أَنْ يُعْلِنَ ابْنَهُ فِيَّ لِأُبَشِّرَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْأُمَمِ، لِسَاعَتِي، لَمْ أَصْنَعْ إِلَى لَحْمٍ وَدَمٍ. وَلَا صَعَدْتُ إِلَى أُورَشَلِيمَ إِلَى الرُّسُلِ الَّذِينَ قَبْلِي، بَلْ انْطَلَقْتُ إِلَى دِيَارِ الْعَرَبِ، وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ رَجَعْتُ إِلَى دِمَشْقَ. ثُمَّ إِنِّي بَعْدَ ثَلَاثِ سِنِينَ، صَعَدْتُ إِلَى أُورَشَلِيمَ لِأُزَوِّرَ بَطْرُسَ، فَأَقَمْتُ عِنْدَهُ خَمْسَةَ عَشَرَ يَوْمًا. وَلَمْ أَرَ غَيْرَهُ مِنْ 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."

الإنجيل

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ مَتَّى الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (23:13-2)

لَمَّا انْصَرَفَ الْمَجُوسُ، إِذَا بِمَلَاكِ الرَّبِّ ظَهَرَ لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْحُلْمِ، 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 صَبِيَّانِ بَيْتِ لَحْمٍ وَجَمِيعِ ثُخُومِهَا، مِنْ ابْنِ سَنَتَيْنِ فَمَا دُونَ، عَلَى حَسَبِ الزَّمَانِ الَّذِي تَحَقَّقَهُ مِنَ الْمَجُوسِ. حِينَئِذٍ، تَمَّ مَا قَالَهُ إِرْمِيَاءُ النَّبِيُّ الْقَائِلُ: صَوْتُ سَمِعَ فِي الرَّمَاةِ، نَوْحٌ وَبُكَاءٌ وَعَوِيلٌ كَثِيرٌ، رَاحِلُ تَبْكِي عَلَى أَوْلَادِهَا، وَقَدْ أَبَتْ أَنْ تَتَعَزَّى لِأَنَّهُمْ لَيْسُوا بِمَوْجُودِينَ. فَلَمَّا مَاتَ هِيرُودُسُ، إِذَا بِمَلَاكِ الرَّبِّ ظَهَرَ لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْحُلْمِ فِي مِصْرَ، قَائِلًا: قُمْ فَخُذِ الصَّبِيَّ وَأُمَّهُ وَاهْزُبْ إِلَى أَرْضِ إِسْرَائِيلَ، فَقَدْ مَاتَ طَالِبُو نَفْسِ الصَّبِيِّ. فَقَامَ وَأَخَذَ الصَّبِيَّ وَأُمَّهُ وَجَاءَ إِلَى أَرْضِ إِسْرَائِيلَ. وَلَمَّا سَمِعَ أَنَّ أَرْخِيْلَاوُسَ قَدْ مَلَكَ عَلَى الْيَهُودِيَّةِ مَكَانَ هِيرُودُسَ أَبِيهِ، خَافَ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ إِلَى هُنَاكَ، وَأَوْجِي إِلَيْهِ فِي الْحُلْمِ، فَانْصَرَفَ إِلَى نَوَاحِي الْجَلِيلِ. وَأَتَى وَسَكَنَ فِي مَدِينَةٍ تُدْعَى نَاصِرَةَ، لِيَتِمَّ الْمَقُولُ بِالْأَنْبِيَاءِ: إِنَّهُ يُدْعَى نَاصِرِيًّا.

Love Your Neighbor

December – Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

Leading the fight to end hunger, in partnership with our community and in service of our neighbors in need. We distribute food directly to low-income people at community sites and make food available for other nonprofit organizations serving the ill, needy and infants.

Poinsettia Flowers for Christmas



Poinsettia Plants to adorn the Royal Doors during this holy season in loving memory of Nick Sr. and Helen Nicola offered by Georgianna and Raymond Rishwan, Nick Jr. and Najat Nicola, Ronald and Nancy Nicola, and families. Never forgotten, you live in each of us.



Bake Sale Update

Thanks to a community effort from those who baked, contributed and purchased and especially Denise Dudum in helping make. Rose's Bake Sale a huge success. The sale generated \$7,290.00 for our Church.

St. Anastasia Fellowship Presentation

Thursday, January 16, 7:00 pm at Holy Trinity, Father Nikolas Delaveris will present his St. Anastasia model of Orthodox recovery. This uniquely Orthodox approach to addressing addiction has been successfully implemented on the East Coast. Anyone who struggles with addiction, supports persons with addiction, has been in a recovery program, or who simply wants to learn more about this subject is invited and encouraged to attend. The meeting will take place in the lower level of the church. Obviously, the hope is that this meeting might generate interest in establishing similar groups in the Bay Area.

Upcoming Events

Every Sunday at 7pm	St. Anastasia Fellowship Meeting.
February 9th	Memorial Service (10 year) by Leila Adranly and family in memory of Naim Adranly. May his memory be eternal!

Coffee Hours

December 29th	Nelly Nassif in memory of her mother Yvonne Siage
January 5th	Samia Shaheen in memory of her father Badi Ibrahim
January 12th	Sponsor Needed
January 19th	Sponsor Needed
January 26th	Sponsor Needed
February 2nd	Sponsor Needed
February 9th	By Leila Adranly and family in memory of Naim Adranly. May his memory be eternal!
March 2nd	In memory of Sal Freij (20 yr.) May his memory be eternal!

Holy Oblations

This week, Holy Oblations are offered by:

- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nick Nicola, George Messih, Henriette Hilal, George Wahbeh and Aida Youakeem**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Sam Nassab**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Fairouz Freij**. Many years!
- † Rocky and Nada Dudum for the good health of **Sandy Dudum Bennett**. Many years!

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!



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- † 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

St. Anastasia's Fellowship

A 12-Step Fellowship for Orthodox Christians seeking recovery from alcoholism and addiction in its many forms



Every Sunday @ 7pm

St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

**501 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563**

Contact Joseph: (310) 227-9848

Building Committee Update:

We are excited to announce that the parish has overwhelmingly (88 voted yes and 19 voted No) supported an additional \$1 million on our loan to support completing the church hall. We are submitting a letter to the archdiocese for the blessing of the Metropolitan to proceed. The Building Committee will be working closely with the contractor to ensure we can use these funds purposefully to bring us to our occupancy permit for the hall. While this will require some value engineering, and potentially deferrals of some items, we can assure you that the building will be built to design specs and a building of which we can all be proud.

As you can see from the photos, work has started on installing the hand rails on the steps, and we are working with several parishioners who have expertise in finalizing the equipment needs and procuring such equipment for the kitchen.

Things should start picking up the pace now and we will do our best to keep you all informed of our progress. But please join us for services and see me afterwards for a look into the building and with any questions or recommendations you may have.

Steve Kreta, Building Committee Chair

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

You could use this QR code for your donation





Join us to pray, march,
& fellowship together
at the Walk for Life!



MARCH WITH US

for the

**2025 Orthodox
Gathering**

of the

**WALK
for LIFE**

**Saturday, January 25
12:00 PM**

**Civic Center Plaza,
San Francisco, CA**

Corner of Polk Street &
Grove Street



for details go to oclife.org/walk

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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Nativity in the flesh of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
December 25, 2024

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
المسيح وُلِدَ! فمجدوه!

Love swings back and forth between hope and hurt. The Father in heaven had high hopes for His Son on earth to rescue His creation for Him, returning it to its original meaning and destiny. The Little One who lay in a manger outside the comfort and crowd of the Inn, as baby and from then on to the Cross, from cradle to Cross, would, in the deepest sense, always be alone, on His own, and never at home anywhere. This prophet was not welcome in the town He grew up in. Therefore, He wandered as a homeless person. The Father would feel the hurt of this homelessness and hear the Blessed One say He had nowhere to lay His head.

I had thought there were two dramatic moments in Christ's life when He truly could rest and lay His head down in peace; one is when He was born and His mother held Him, the other was in the quiet tomb while the crowds were gone and the noise of darkness stopped. He rose from the sleep of death, folded His cloth pillow neatly, and left resurrected and triumphant.

Christmas has me pray for and hurt for all of the little ones now, outside the comfort of warm homes, away in the wilderness of foreign places, traveling in the night to Egypt, far from the Bethlehem of their birth. The Father hurts for them who are made in the image of His son and so are made for Him.

Let us give them a home somewhere and show them there is love in every city, in the City of Peace.

Christ changed the hurt of the Cross into the help of the Father through His obedience, as a good Son always is, for the hope of us all. He saved us to become saviors, even when it hurts.

May He who was born in a cave and lay in a manger for our salvation bless you always.

+ Bishop Anthony

+Bishop ANTHONY

Bishop of Los Angeles
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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

Chancery of Los Angeles and the West
454 South Lorraine Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90020

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.: 625/2024

Nativity 2024

Beloved in Christ,

I extend my heartfelt greetings to each of you in these blessed days of the Nativity, holding you in my prayers and asking our loving and incarnate Lord to lift you to His glory and to pour upon you His abundant earthly and heavenly blessings.

On this sacred day, heaven bent down to embrace the earth, lifting it to itself. Before Christ, humanity knew God as a mighty, powerful, awe-inspiring, and distant figure, one whose wrath they sought to avoid. Yet, in Christ, we came to see a completely different face of God. Through His incarnation, we encountered a God who is loving, embracing, near, and fully present—one who shares in all things with us, except for sin.

God did not merely come to us; He became one of us, like us. He shared in our suffering, and through this, He raised us to Himself. The birth of Jesus Christ in the flesh forever transformed humanity's understanding of God. But have we, as individuals and as Christian communities throughout history, always lived according to what He has revealed and given to us? Often, we have failed to reflect His loving and participatory nature. Yet history is also rich with luminous examples—countless saints and faithful who have reflected the face of Christ in this suffering world.

In this joyous season, let us ask ourselves: How can we be born anew in Christ? How can we contribute to comforting this broken and weary world in which we live? This holy feast challenges us to follow the example of our Savior by embracing those in pain, those who are afraid, and those weighed down by the burdens of life. It calls us to offer them a spark of hope—a light to lift them beyond their worries, their pain, and their fears.

On this feast, let us remember our brothers and sisters throughout the world, especially those in the East, who endure hardships and long to experience the joy of our Lord. Let us prepare our hearts to receive Him within ourselves first so that we may see His presence in the faces of others.

I greet you with love and joy, saying: *Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.*

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "SABA". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

+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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