

+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

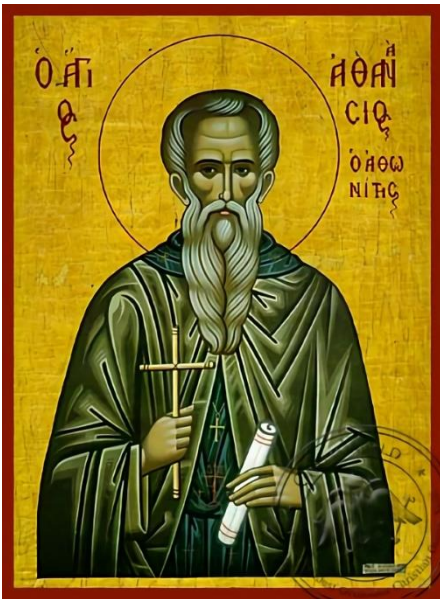
501 Moraga Way, Orinda, California 925-258-4255

www.stjohnorinda.org email: st.john.evangelist.orinda@gmail.com

SUNDAY, JULY 05, 2026; TONE 4 / EOTHINON 5

VENERABLE ATHANASIOS OF ATHOS

VENERABLE LAMPADOS OF IRENOUPOLIS; HIEROMARTYR CYPRIAN OF MOUNT ATHOS



On July 5 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our Venerable and God-bearing Father Athanasios of Athos, and his six disciples who died with him. Born in Trebizond of God-fearing parents, he was early left destitute, but, by the providence of God, a high-ranking army officer took him to Constantinople and educated him there. Finishing his schooling, Athanasios eventually moved to the Holy Mountain to live in silence and strict asceticism. Many, desirous of the ascetic life, began to gather round him and he was constrained to build the famous Lavra. The Byzantine Emperors gave him generous help in this. Manifold temptations came upon Athanasios, from demons and from men, but he, as a valiant soldier of Christ, resisted and overcame them all by his immense humility and unceasing prayer to the living God. Filled with the grace of God, he was found worthy to behold the most holy Mother of God, who

miraculously brought forth water from a rock. Death came to him suddenly in 1003. He, together with six of his monks, had climbed up onto a newly-constructed part of the church to inspect a wall that was in building when the wall fell in and buried them all. Athanasios appeared a number of times to his brethren after his death, to console or rebuke them.

THE EPISTLE

The saints shall boast in glory, and they shall rejoice upon their beds.

Sing unto the Lord a new song; His praise is in the church of the saints.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (5:22-6:2)

Brethren, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

لِيَبْتَهِجَ الْاَتْقِيَاءُ بِمَجْدٍ، لِيُرْتَمَوْا عَلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ.
غَنُوا لِلرَّبِّ تَرْنِيمَةً جَدِيدَةً، تَسْبِيحَتُهُ فِي جَمَاعَةِ الْاَتْقِيَاءِ .

فَصْلٌ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ غَلَاطِيَةِ. (2:6-22:5)

يَا إِخْوَةُ، أَمَّا ثَمَرُ الرُّوحِ فَهُوَ الْمَحَبَّةُ وَالْفَرَحُ وَالسَّلَامُ وَطَوْلُ الْأَنَاءِ وَاللُّطْفُ وَالصَّلَاحُ وَالْإِيمَانُ وَالْوَدَاعَةُ وَالْعَفَافُ، وَهَذِهِ لَيْسَ نَامُوسٌ ضِدَّهَا. وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلْمَسِيحِ، صَلَبُوا أَجْسَادَهُمْ بِكُلِّ مَا فِيهَا مِنْ أَهْوَاءٍ وَشَهَوَاتٍ. فَإِنْ كُنَّا نَعِيشُ بِالرُّوحِ، فَلْنَسْلُكْ بِالرُّوحِ أَيْضًا، وَلَا نَكُنْ دَوَى عُجْبٍ وَلَا نُغَاضِبْ، وَلَا نَحْسُدْ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا. أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَةُ، إِذَا أَخَذَ أَحَدٌ فِي زَلَّةٍ فَأَصْلِحُوهُ أَنْتُمْ الرُّوحِيِّينَ بِرُوحِ الْوَدَاعَةِ، وَتَبَصَّرْ أَنْتَ لِنَفْسِكَ لئَلَّا تُجَرَّبَ أَنْتَ أَيْضًا. إِحْمِلُوا بَعْضُكُمْ أَثْقَالَ بَعْضٍ وَهَكَذَا أَتَمُّوا نَامُوسَ الْمَسِيحِ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (8:28-9:1)

At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have we to do to Thee, O Son of God? Art Thou come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged Him, "If Thou castest us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to His own city.

فَصْلٌ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ مَتَّى الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (1:9-28:8)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، لَمَّا أَتَى يَسُوعُ إِلَى كُورَةِ الْجَرْجَسِيِّينَ اسْتَقْبَلَهُ مَجْنُونَانِ خَارِجَانِ مِنَ الْقُبُورِ، شَرِسَانِ جِدًّا، حَتَّى إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَحَدٌ يَقْدِرُ أَنْ يَجْتَازَ مِنْ تِلْكَ الطَّرِيقِ. فَصَاحَا قَائِلَيْنِ: "مَا لَنَا وَلَكَ يَا يَسُوعُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ؟ أَجِئْتَ إِلَى هَهُنَا قَبْلَ الزَّمَانِ لَتُعَذِّبَنَا؟" وَكَانَ بَعِيدًا مِنْهُمْ قَطِيعُ خَنَازِيرَ كَثِيرَةٍ تَرْعَى. فَأَخَذَ الشَّيَاطِينُ يَطْلُبُونَ إِلَيْهِ قَائِلِينَ: "إِنْ كُنْتَ تُخْرِجُنَا، فَأُذِّنْ لَنَا أَنْ نَذْهَبَ إِلَى قَطِيعِ الْخَنَازِيرِ." فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "اذهَبُوا." فَخَرَجُوا وَذَهَبُوا إِلَى قَطِيعِ الْخَنَازِيرِ. فَإِذَا بِالْقَطِيعِ كُلِّهِ قَدْ وَثَبَ عَنِ الْجُرْفِ إِلَى الْبَحْرِ وَمَاتَ فِي الْمِيَاهِ. أَمَّا الرُّعَاةُ فَهَرَبُوا وَمَضُوا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ، وَأَخْبَرُوا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَبِأَمْرِ الْمَجْنُونَيْنِ. فَخَرَجَتِ الْمَدِينَةُ كُلُّهَا لِلِقَاءِ يَسُوعَ. وَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ، طَلَبُوا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ يَتَحَوَّلَ عَنْ تَحْوِمِهِمْ. فَدَخَلَ السَّفِينَةَ وَاجْتَازَ وَأَتَى إِلَى مَدِينَتِهِ.

Coffee Hour

July 5 th	Saleem and Samya Abu Dahoud
July 12 th	Nelly and Maureen in memory of Paula and good health of the Nassif Family
July 19 th	Yowakeem Family for the one year memorial of Aida Yowakeem
July 26 th	Irene and Zzane Guajardo

Upcoming Events

July 12th	One year memorial service for the handmaid of God Najat Nicola
July 19th	One year memorial service for the handmaid of God Aida Yowakeem
July 19th	40-day memorial for David Romley.
Aug 9th	Grapes offered by the Nicola Family for the feast of the Transfiguration in memory of Metropolitan Phillip Saliba and Najat Nicola.
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

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 Addes, Henriette Hilal, Souhad Halaka, George Cawog, Rocky Dudum** and **Norma Khalil**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nader Hanna**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family in memory of **Laila Mashy**. May her memory be eternal!
- † St. John Parish Family in memory of **David Romley**. May his memory be eternal!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Jean Harb**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Fairouz Freij**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Violet Jaber**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Laila Adranly**. 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!
- † 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

=====

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

You could use this QR code for your donation



Announcements

Organizing Items in the Hall

We are beginning an important project to organize and improve the kitchen and storage areas in our hall. Our goal is to label all storage rooms, cabinets, shelves, and kitchen areas so that items can be easily returned to their proper place after use and the space can remain clean, organized, and well-maintained.

With the help of Joby, a professional organizer by trade, we will be starting this process on Sunday, July 19th at 1:00 PM, immediately following coffee hour. Please plan on dedicating at least 4+ hours. This project will take place in 2-3 phases, and we would greatly appreciate all volunteers who are willing to lend a hand. If you would like to help, please let Rania K know. Thank you in advance for your support as we work together to improve and maintain our shared space!

Fr. Morin State Substituting for Fr. Nicholas

Dear Parishioners,

Fr. Nicholas will be attending the annual parish life conference in San Diego, hosted by our sister church St. George church, this week. Fr. Morin State will celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Sunday July 5th at our church.

Welcome to St. John's, Fr. Morin State! Everyone have a Happy 4th of July.

Festival Children's Debka Group

As we gear up for our Festival in September, we'd love to get the kids involved in a Debka group! This was a huge hit last year, and we're excited to bring it back. If your child is 5 years old or older and would like to participate, please contact Rania K. at (415) 722-0774.

Since its a short timeframe, these are the requirements:

- Must attend practice every Sunday beginning August 2 through Festival week (some exceptions maybe accommodated).
- Practices will be approximately 30 minutes each Sunday after coffee hour.
- Must be available both days of the festival. We anticipate two performances per day (schedule TBD).
- A black t-shirt must be provided during the first week of practice.

Please note that Rania K. is not a professional Debka instructor. If you have experience with Debka and are interested in helping coordinate or lead the group, we would greatly appreciate your assistance. Please contact Rania K. if you'd like to help. Let's make this year's Festival another memorable one!

=====

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FESTIVAL PREP WORKSHOPS: Saturdays at 9:30 AM in our new kitchen!

June 27th	Grape leaves	July 11th	Spinach & Cheese Pies
August 1st	Sfeiha & Zatar Pies	September 12th	Knafeh & Date Mamoul



Please sign up for **any or all** workshops with Rula Adranly at rulaadranly@comcast.net or 510-508-0929

We're accepting pre-orders for grape leaves - will be available at the festival on September 25th & 26th or as early as June 27th. Delicious for your family to enjoy, for summer parties, graduations and more!!

- Large Tray - (approximately 180 leaves) \$200	- Small Tray - (approximately 90 leaves) \$100
---	--

Ecclesiastes 4:9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil

=====

ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH

MIDDLE EASTERN FOOD FESTIVAL



MUSIC



FOOD



CULTURE

CELEBRATING
32
YEARS

SEPTEMBER 26 - 27

501 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CA

SAT 11AM - 8PM | SUN NOON - 7PM

FREE ADMISSION

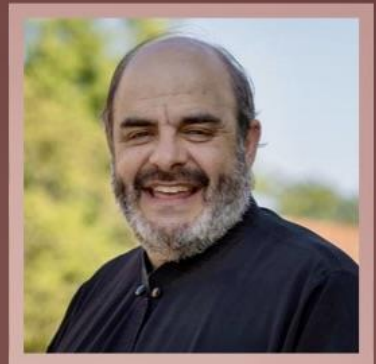
Youth and Young Adult Ministry Summit

Teen Directors & Advisors | Church School Directors & Teachers
Camp Directors & Staff | Young Adult Advisors & Leaders



*Registration
now open!*

Rev. Dr. George Parsenios
Keynote Speaker



<https://registration.antiochianvillage.org/Summit2026>



V. Rev. Fr.
Michael Nasser



Rev. Dr.
Greg Abdalah



Dr. Ann Bezzerides



Sh. Shell Keim

Save the date

★ AUGUST 15TH ★

St. John

DINNER DANCE

★ Under the stars ★



\$75.00
PER PERSON

Hope to
see you there!

★ KIDS 12 AND UNDER \$40.00 ★

★ 5:30 PM – Cocktails (No Host Bar) ★

RSVP by August 2nd to
Evleen Salem (925) 788-6775

What can we learn from America's first Orthodox bishop?

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

"I am an Arab by birth, Greek by primary education, American by residence, Russian at heart, and Slav in soul." — St. Raphael of Brooklyn

Many saintly, dedicated, and faithful servants helped plant the seeds of Orthodoxy in America, but few were as well-prepared for such labor as St. Raphael of Brooklyn. As the quotation above suggests, St. Raphael embodied the evangelical and missionary spirit needed in his own time which is all the more needed in ours as we mark the 250th anniversary of our nation.

Before reflecting further on St. Raphael and his example, I would like to mention a photograph that struck me in the hall of our St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y. Taken at the consecration of our current Cathedral on State Street in 1920, the photograph shows a massive crowd gathered outside. What covered the cathedral's façade was not, as one might expect today, a mix of American flags and those of the immigrants' countries of origin. Rather, the façade was completely draped in the flags of the United States of America alone. That image left a profound impression on me and speaks volumes to the mindset of those early immigrants. They loved the cities, villages, and families they had left behind, yet they knew they were here to stay in America. They desired to be full participants in their adopted land while preserving their ancient faith and traditions. It was into this context that St. Raphael, then Archimandrite Raphael Hawaweeny, arrived to New York in 1895.

Prior to arriving in the United States, St. Raphael lived in several centers of Orthodoxy, from his native Damascus, to Constantinople and the island of Halki where he studied, and to Kiev and Moscow. It is in this way that, through his extensive travels and his acquisition of multiple languages in both colloquial and liturgical contexts, St. Raphael, by God's providence, was well-prepared to undertake his mission in this new land: to help establish parishes for newly-arrived Orthodox immigrants of various ethnic backgrounds. Although his primary calling was to serve Arabic-speaking immigrants from Greater Syria—that is, modern-day Syria and Lebanon—through the newly-

formed Syro-Arab Mission of the Russian Orthodox Church, St. Raphael became a respected and beloved figure among Orthodox immigrants more broadly, especially in the New York area. His tireless missionary efforts took him across the United States, Canada, and even Mexico, where he baptized, married, and served memorials for faithful people living in remote areas. In each locale, he also encouraged the faithful to found parishes and promised them priests once they committed themselves to this holy task.

As the mission grew, the then-head of the Russian Orthodox diocese in North America, St. Tikhon of Moscow, recognized that St. Raphael should be made a bishop to oversee the young mission parishes throughout the United States expanding work, with the agreement of both the Patriarch of Moscow and the Patriarch of Antioch. On March 13, 1904, St. Raphael was elevated to the episcopacy at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York, becoming the first Orthodox bishop of any background to be consecrated on American soil. Without his missionary zeal and steadfast dedication to serving the faithful, many Orthodox immigrants might well have been religiously assimilated as they pursued the American dream in their new homeland.

St. Raphael's ability to move between cultures and to draw on the best of Orthodox customs makes him a model for our own time. He could speak to people in their own language and understood their traditions because of his life experiences, while also encouraging them to adapt to their new homeland. He upheld the teachings of the Church with vigor and protected his flock from ravenous wolves, while adapting to the realities and norms of the American experience without compromising the faith.

What, then, can we learn from St. Raphael's life as we celebrate 250 years of the American democratic experiment? We should be deeply grateful for figures like St. Raphael who cultivated the seeds of Orthodoxy in America. Just as American citizens look to the founding fathers of our nation and to the sacrifices they made to build a stronger and better country, so too should we should look to our own "founding fathers," of Orthodoxy in America, learn from their witness, and make it our own. We must continue to nurture what has

grown from their early labors, even as we welcome those who now embrace the Holy Orthodox Faith by choice.

Just as America has been called “the great melting pot,” so too does the Orthodox faith gather into one those who seek to embrace Jesus Christ within the ark of the Church, where “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). To Him be all glory and honor forever and ever.

This article is published as part of the America at 250: Orthodoxy in a New Homeland media initiative co-organized by the Orthodox Observer and the Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America to honor the contributions and experience of Orthodox Christianity in America and celebrate 250th anniversary of America’s founding.

ماذا يمكننا أن نتعلّم من أوّل أسقف أرثوذكسي في أميركا؟

المتروبوليت سابا

"أنا عربيّ بالولادة، يونانيّ بالدراسة، أميركيّ بالإقامة، روسيّ بالقلب، وسلافيّ بالنفس." (القديس روفائيل أسقف بروكلين)

لقد ساهم كثيرون من الخدام القديسين المخلصين والأمناء في زرع بذور الأرثوذكسية في أميركا، لكن قلة منهم كانوا مهّئين لهذه الخدمة، كما كان القديس روفائيل أسقف بروكلين. وكما توحى العبارة الواردة أعلاه، جسّد القديس روفائيل الروح الإنجيليّة والبشارية التي كانت مطلوبة في زمنه، والتي نحن بأمسّ الحاجة إليها اليوم فيما نحيي الذكرى المئتين والخمسين لتأسيس أمّتنا.

وقبل أن نغوص في تأمل شخص القديس روفائيل ومثاله، أودّ أن أشير إلى صورة فوتوغرافيّة لفتت انتباهي في قاعة كاتدرائيّة القديس نيقولاوس في بروكلين، نيويورك. التقطت هذه الصورة أثناء تكريس كاتدرائيّتنا الحاليّة، في شارع "ستيت" سنة ١٩٢٠، وتظهر فيها حشودٌ غفيرة مجتمعة خارج الكنيسة، فيما واجهة الكاتدرائيّة مغطاةً بكليتها بأعلام الولايات المتّحدة الأميركيّة فقط، لا بمزيج من الأعلام الأميركيّة وأعلام البلدان التي جاء منها المهاجرون آنذاك، كما قد يتوقّع المرء اليوم. لقد تركت هذه الصورة أثراً عميقاً في نفسي، لأنّها تعبّر بوضوح عن أمانة المهاجرين الأوائل للبلد الذي استضافهم (أميركا). لقد أحبّوا المدن والقرى والعائلات التي تركوها وراءهم مضطرين، لكنّهم أدركوا أنّهم جاؤوا ليستقروا في أميركا. وأرادوا أن يكونوا شركاء كاملين في الوطن الذي تبوّه، مع المحافظة في الوقت نفسه على إيمانهم الأصيل وتقاليدهم المقدّسة وبلدانهم الأصليّة.

هذا هو مناخ الأبرشية حين وصل القديس روفائيل، وكان يومئذٍ الأرشمندريت روفائيل هووايني، إلى نيويورك سنة ١٨٩٥.

قبل وصوله إلى الولايات المتّحدة، عاش القديس روفائيل في عدد من مراكز الأرثوذكسيّة المهمّة، من دمشق مسقط رأسه، إلى القسطنطينيّة وجزيرة خالكي حيث درس اللاهوت، إلى كييف وموسكو حيث تابع دراساته العليا. من خلال الأسفار الواسعة وإتقانه لغات عديدة، باستعمالاتها اليوميّة والليتورجيّة، أعدّه الله بعنايته الإلهيّة إعداداً

فريداً للرسالة التي كانت تنتظره في هذه الأرض الجديدة، من تأسيس رعايا للمهاجرين الأرثوذكس الوافدين حديثاً من خلفيات إثنية متنوعة.

ومع أنّ دعوته الأساسية كانت خدمة المهاجرين الناطقين بالعربية القادمين من سوريا الكبرى، (من سوريا ولبنان والأردن وفلسطين حالياً)، وذلك من خلال الإرسالية السورية العربية التي أنشأتها الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية الروسية، غير أنّ قديسنا روفائيل صار شخصية محترمة ومحبوبة بين المهاجرين الأرثوذكس عموماً، ولا سيما في منطقة نيويورك. وقد حملته جهوده البشارية الدؤوبة إلى مختلف أنحاء الولايات المتحدة وكندا والمكسيك. فكان يزور المؤمنين حيثما وجدوا، ولو في مناطق نائية، فيعمدهم ويبارك زيجاتهم ويقوم الجنائز للراقيدين منهم. كما كان يشجّع المؤمنين، في كل مكان يزوره، على تأسيس رعايا جديدة، ويعدّهم بإرسال كهنة إليهم متى التزموا بهذا العمل المقدّس.

ومع نموّ الإرسالية الأنطاكية، أدرك القديس تيخن، رأس الأبرشية الروسية في أميركا الشمالية آنذاك، [كان الحضور الأرثوذكسي الكنسي الوحيد آنذاك للميتروبوليا الروسية] ضرورة أنّ أن يرسم الأرشمندريت روفائيل أسقفًا، للإشراف على الرعايا العربية الفتية المنتشرة في أنحاء الولايات المتحدة، وذلك بموافقة كلّ من بطريرك موسكو وبطريرك أنطاكية. وهذا ما صار، إذ رُفّع القديس روفائيل إلى الدرجة الأسقفية في كاتدرائية القديس نيقولاوس في بروكلين، نيويورك، ليصبح أول أسقف أرثوذكسي، من أيّ خلفية كانت، يرسم على أرض الولايات المتحدة الأميركية. حدثت رسامته في الثالث عشر من آذار سنة ١٩٠٤. والحقيقة أنّه لولا غيرته الرسولية وتفانيه الثابت في خدمة المؤمنين، لكان كثير من المهاجرين الأرثوذكس قد ذابوا دينياً في محيطهم الجديد، وهم يسعون إلى تحقيق الحلم الأميركي في وطنهم الجديد.

إنّ قدرة القديس روفائيل على التنقّل بين الثقافات المختلفة والاستفادة من أفضل ما في التقاليد الأرثوذكسية تجعله نموذجاً صالحاً لعصرنا. فقد كان قادراً على مخاطبة الناس بلغتهم وفهم عاداتهم وتقاليدهم بفضل خبراته الحياتية المتنوعة، وفي الوقت نفسه كان يشجّعهم على التأقلم مع وطنهم الجديد. وقد تمسّك بتعليم الكنيسة وحما رعيته من الذئاب الخاطفة، وفي الوقت عينه تفاعل بحكمة مع واقع الحياة الأميركية ومتطلباتها من دون أيّ مساومة على الإيمان.

فماذا يمكننا أن نتعلّم من حياة القديس روفائيل ونحن نحتفل بمرور مئتين وخمسين عاماً على التجربة الديمقراطية الأميركية؟

علينا أن نكون ممتنين بعمق لشخصيات مثل القديس روفائيل الذين زرعوا بذور الأرثوذكسية في أميركا. وكما ينظر المواطنون الأميركيون إلى الآباء المؤسسين لأمتهم وإلى التضحيات التي قدّموها لبناء وطن أقوى وأفضل، كذلك ينبغي لنا أن ننظر إلى "آبائنا المؤسسين" للأرثوذكسية في أميركا، فنتعلّم من شهادتهم ونقتدي بمثالهم. كما ينبغي أن نواصل رعاية ما نرى من أعمالهم الأولى، فيما نرحب أيضاً بكلّ الذين يعتنقون اليوم الإيمان الأرثوذكسي المقدّس عن اقتناع واختيار.

وكما وُصفت أميركا بأنّها "بوتقة انصهار" للشعوب والثقافات، كذلك يجمع الإيمان الأرثوذكسي- في وحدة واحدة جميع الذين يسعون إلى اتّباع يسوع المسيح داخل فلك الكنيسة، حيث "لَيْسَ يَهُودِيٌّ وَلَا يُونَانِيٌّ، لَيْسَ عَبْدٌ وَلَا حُرٌّ، لَيْسَ ذَكَرٌ وَأُنْثَى، لَأَنْكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَاحِدٌ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ" (غلاطية ٣: ٢٨). له المجد والكرامة إلى أبد الأبد.

نُشر هذا المقال في إطار مبادرة "أميركا في عامها المئتين والخمسين: الأرثوذكسية في وطن جديد"، وهي مبادرة إعلامية مشتركة بين صحيفة "الأرثوذكس أوبزرفر" ودائرة العلاقات الأرثوذكسية والمسكونية والعلاقات الدينية التابعة لرئاسة أساقفة أميركا اليونانية الأرثوذكسية، تكريماً لإسهامات المسيحية الأرثوذكسية وخبرتها في أميركا، واحتفاءً بالذكرى المئتين والخمسين لتأسيس الولايات المتحدة الأميركية.

