

# +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

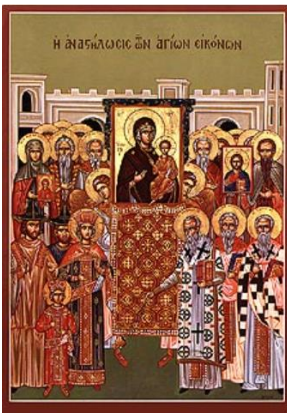
501 Moraga Way, Orinda, California 925-258-4255  
[www.stjohnorinda.org](http://www.stjohnorinda.org) email: [st.john.evangelist.orinda@gmail.com](mailto:st.john.evangelist.orinda@gmail.com)

**SUNDAY, MARCH 09, 2025**

**TONE 4 / EOTHINON 4**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT (SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY)  
& THE HOLY AND GREAT FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTIA**

## Sunday of Orthodoxy



On this day, the First Sunday of the Fast, we make remembrance of the restoration of the holy and venerable Icons, which took place through the ever-memorable Sovereigns of Constantinople, Michael and his mother, Theodora, during the patriarchate of Saint Methodios the Confessor.

This restoration was accomplished in the year 843. Theodora's husband was an iconoclast. After his death, Theodora venerated an icon of the Theotokos in front of Patriarch Methodios. The other faithful in the church did the same, venerating all the icons, considering them to be representations of their original elements, not idols. Theodora prayed to God to forgive her husband

during the first week of Great Lent; and on the First Sunday of the Fast, she led the way in hanging up the icons to adorn the churches.

## THE EPISTLE

*Thou, O Lord, will preserve us and keep us from this generation.*

*Save me, O Lord, for the godly man hath disappeared.*

### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (12:1-10)**

Brethren, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely; and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus: the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him Who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? "My son: do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by Him; for the Lord disciplines him whom He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father?

## الرسالة

أَنْتَ يَا رَبُّ تَحْفَظُنَا وَتَسْتُرُنَا مِنْ هَذَا الْجِيلِ

خَلِّصْنِي يَا رَبُّ، فَإِنَّ الْبَارَّ قَدْ فَنِيَ.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولَسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى الْعِبْرَانِيِّينَ. (10-1:12)

يا إخوة، لِدَلِكِ نَحْنُ أَيْضًا إِذْ لَنَا سَحَابَةٌ مِنَ الشُّهُودِ مِقْدَارُ هَذِهِ مُحِيطَةٌ بِنَا، لِنَطْرَحَ كُلَّ ثِقَلٍ، وَالْخَطِيئَةَ الْمُحِيطَةَ بِنَا بِسُهُولَةٍ، وَلِنُحَاضِرَ بِالصَّبْرِ فِي الْجِهَادِ الْمَوْضُوعِ أَمَامَنَا، نَاطِرِينَ إِلَى رَبِّيسِ الْإِيمَانِ وَمُكْمَلِهِ يَسُوعَ، الَّذِي مِنْ أَجْلِ السُّرُورِ الْمَوْضُوعِ أَمَامَهُ، اخْتَمَلَ الصَّلِيبَ مُسْتَهِينًا بِالْخِزْيِ، فَجَلَسَ فِي يَمِينِ عَرْشِ اللَّهِ. فَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي الَّذِي اخْتَمَلَ مِنَ الْخُطَاةِ مَقَاوِمَةً لِنَفْسِهِ مِثْلَ هَذِهِ لِيَلَّا تَكَلُّوا وَتَخُورُوا فِي نَفُوسِكُمْ. لَمْ تَقَاوِمُوا بَعْدَ حَتَّى الدَّمِ مُجَاهِدِينَ ضِدَّ الْخَطِيئَةِ، وَقَدْ نَسِينُمْ الْوَعْظَ الَّذِي يُخَاطِبُكُمْ كِتَابِينَ: «يَا ابْنِي لَا تَحْتَفِزْ تَأْدِيبَ الرَّبِّ، وَلَا تَحْزِنْ إِذَا وَبَّخَكَ. لِأَنَّ الَّذِي يُحِبُّهُ الرَّبُّ يُؤَدِّبُهُ، وَيَجْلِدُ كُلَّ ابْنٍ يَقْبَلُهُ». إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَحْتَمِلُونَ التَّأْدِيبَ يُعَامِلُكُمْ اللَّهُ كَالْبَنِينَ. فَأَيُّ ابْنٍ لَا يُؤَدِّبُهُ أَبُوهُ؟ وَلَكِنْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِلَا تَأْدِيبٍ قَدْ صَارَ الْجَمِيعُ شُرَكَاءَ فِيهِ، فَانْتُمْ نُغُولٌ لَا بَنُونَ. ثُمَّ قَدْ كَانَ لَنَا آبَاءٌ أَجْسَادِنَا مُؤَدِّبِينَ، وَكُنَّا نَهَابُهُمْ. أَفَلَا نَخْضَعُ بِالْأُولَى جِدًّا لِأَبِي الْأَرْوَاحِ، فَنَحْيَا؟ لِأَنَّ أَوْلَادَكَ أَتَدَبُّونَا أَيَّامًا قَلِيلَةً حَسَبَ اسْتِحْسَانِهِمْ، وَأَمَّا هَذَا فَلِأَجْلِ الْمَنْفَعَةِ، لِكَيْ نَشْتَرِكَ فِي قَدَاسَتِهِ. وَلَكِنْ كُلُّ تَأْدِيبٍ فِي الْحَاضِرِ لَا يُرَى أَنَّهُ لِلْفَرْحِ بَلْ لِلْحَزَنِ. وَأَمَّا أَخِيرًا فَيُعْطِي الَّذِينَ يَتَدَبَّبُونَ بِهِ ثَمَرَ بَرٍّ لِلسَّلَامِ. لِذَلِكَ قَوْمُوا الْأَيَادِي الْمُسْتَرْخِيَةَ وَالرُّكْبَ الْمُخَلَّعَةَ.

## THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (1:43-51)

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Jesus, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

## الإنجيل

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ يُوْحَنَّا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ، وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (51-43:1)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، أَرَادَ يَسُوعُ الْخُرُوجَ إِلَى الْجَلِيلِ فَوَجَدَ فِيلِبُّسَ فَقَالَ لَهُ: اتَّبَعْنِي. وَكَانَ فِيلِبُّسُ مِنْ بَيْتِ صَيْدَا مِنْ مَدِينَةِ أَنْدَرَاوسَ وَبِطْرُسَ. فَوَجَدَ فِيلِبُّسُ نَتْنَائِيلَ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: إِنَّ الَّذِي كَتَبَ عَنْهُ مُوسَى فِي النَّامُوسِ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ قَدْ وَجَدْنَاهُ، وَهُوَ يَسُوعُ بْنُ يَوْسُفَ الَّذِي مِنَ النَّاصِرَةِ. فَقَالَ لَهُ نَتْنَائِيلُ: أَمِنْ النَّاصِرَةِ يُمَكِّنُ أَنْ يَكُونَ شَيْءٌ صَالِحٌ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ فِيلِبُّسُ: تَعَالَ وَانظُرْ. فَرَأَى يَسُوعُ نَتْنَائِيلَ مُقْبِلًا إِلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ عَنْهُ: هُوَذَا إِسْرَائِيلِيُّ حَقًّا لَا غِشَّ فِيهِ. فَقَالَ لَهُ نَتْنَائِيلُ: مِنْ أَيْنَ تَعْرِفُنِي؟ أَجَابَ يَسُوعُ، وَقَالَ لَهُ: قَبْلَ أَنْ يَدْعُوكَ فِيلِبُّسُ وَأَنْتَ تَحْتَ التَّنِيَّةِ رَأَيْتُكَ. أَجَابَ نَتْنَائِيلُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا مُعَلِّمُ، أَنْتَ ابْنُ اللَّهِ، أَنْتَ مَلِكُ إِسْرَائِيلِ. أَجَابَ يَسُوعُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: لِأَنِّي قُلْتُ لَكَ إِنِّي رَأَيْتُكَ تَحْتَ التَّنِيَّةِ أَمَنْتَ؟ إِنَّكَ سَتَعَايُنُ أَعْظَمَ مِنْ هَذَا. وَقَالَ لَهُ: الْحَقُّ الْحَقُّ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ، إِنَّكُمْ مِنَ الْآنَ تَرَوْنَ السَّمَاءَ مَفْتُوحَةً، وَمَلَائِكَةَ اللَّهِ يَصْعَدُونَ وَيَنْزِلُونَ عَلَى ابْنِ الْبَشَرِ.

## Love Your Neighbor

### **March – Archdiocese Collection for Seminarian Fund on Sunday of Orthodoxy (March 9, 2025)**

Each year the Archdiocese asks all parishes to contribute to help the Antiochian students studying on the various seminaries of the United States. In March, these students will be our neighbors.



## Fellowship Hall Kitchen Hood

The kitchen hood has been installed in the hall!

## Upcoming Events

<b>Every Sunday at 7pm</b>	St. Anastasia Fellowship Meeting.
<b>Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup></b>	40 days memorial service for the servant of God George Wahbeh offered by Afaf Wahbeh and family. May his memory be eternal!
<b>Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Luncheon prepared by Mona Thayer, Siham Mitry and Fadwa Samara. Minimum donation \$20. Children under 6 years free.
<b>Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup></b>	Joseph Rodrigues will be speaking at Ascension Cathedral at a potluck sponsored by the Youth Council after their Presanctified Liturgy. He would love people from his parish to be there!

## Coffee Hours

<b>March 9<sup>th</sup></b>	In loving memory of Mariam Khalil Munayer (Al-Qalanza Al-Hijazeen) (2yr). Memory Eternal. Sponsored by Amal, Ibrahim, Joseph (Stephani) Munayer. Memory Eternal.
<b>March 16<sup>th</sup></b>	Afaf Wahbeh in memory of George Wahbeh. 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, 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 in memory of **George Wahbeh**. May his memory be eternal!
- † Siham Mitri and family in memory of **Michael Azoury**, her great nephew. May his memory be eternal!
- † Amal, Ibrahim and Joseph (Stephani) Munayer in memory of **Mariam Khalil Munayer** (Al-Qalanza Al-Hijazeen) (2yr). May her memory be eternal!
- † St. John Parish Family in memory of **Naim Nazzal**. 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 Kawar, Mason Kawar, Jonathan Juha, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola

- † Epistle Readers March 9<sup>th</sup>  
Arabic: Hala Yowakeem  
English: Rula Adranly

- † Flowers for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent offered by Nick Nicola for the good health of his wife Najat and his children Mark, Kristin, Kimberly and his grandchildren. Many years!

## IOCC Update: Gaza: Finding Relief and Community Amidst Crisis

Nora (not her real name) is a 14-year-old girl who has been displaced multiple times due to the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Her family originally lived in Gaza City but were forced to flee their home, finding refuge in a displacement camp. The upheaval caused Nora to lose her sense of safety, and she began to struggle with fear and anxiety.



While dealing with these problems, Nora and her family learned about a project implemented through IOCC, providing recreational activities for displaced children in Gaza. Nora decided to attend an event organized by IOCC, which gave her the opportunity to participate in fun and playful activities and to socialize in a lighthearted atmosphere.

Despite very difficult circumstances, Nora expressed how much happiness and relief she felt being able to play and experience a bit of joy again. She hopes to attend similar events in the future, and is grateful to IOCC for helping the youth in her community get together in a spirit of fun.

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

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**PASCHA**  
**EGG HUNT**

**APRIL 19TH, 2024 | AFTER MORNING LITURGY**

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

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**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER AND/OR DONATE  
PLEASE CONTACT RANIA KASHOU**

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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.

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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.



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.:** 071/2025

**The Sunday of Orthodoxy**  
March 9, 2025

Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils,  
and Beloved Faithful in Christ,

Greetings to you in the Name of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I pray that all of you have been granted a good start to the Lenten journey over the course of the past week. As you continue your journey to Pascha, please be reminded of the beautiful words of one of the new saints of our Church, St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia who said, “When people are empty of Christ, a thousand and one other things come and fill them up: jealousies, hatreds, boredom, melancholy, resentment, a worldly outlook, worldly pleasures. Try to fill your soul with Christ so that it’s not empty.” This holy season, more than any other, allows us to do just that if we immerse ourselves in prayer, fasting and almsgiving, maintaining the beautiful and time-proven traditions we have received over the centuries that edify our souls and bring us closer to God.

During our annual commemoration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we ask each parish to contribute towards the education and formation of our young men studying for the holy priesthood. As we celebrate today what is called the *Triumph of Orthodoxy*, we should be reminded that we have been given a precious inheritance – the “faith once and for all delivered to the saints” – through the struggles of our martyrs and ascetics, the devotion of our parents and grandparents, and the divinely enlightened writings of the Fathers. We, therefore, have a sacred responsibility to ensure the passing down of the “precious pearl” of Holy Orthodoxy to future generations as we have received it.

The young men who have answered the call to serve in the ranks of our clergy, as well as their wives and families, have sacrificially offered themselves to the Church to love and to serve Her people, and to work for the preservation of the very faith we celebrate today. I am blessed to meet and interact with them as often as my schedule allows. This is allowing me to come to know them intimately as a father knows his sons. As a result, this will help me to properly offer them to you when the time comes so that they might more fully offer themselves as shepherds of their future parishes.

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

358 Mountain Road, P.O. Box 5238, Englewood, NJ 07631-5238  
(201) 871-1355 T Archdiocese@antiochian.org (201) 871-7954 F

Also, I want to acknowledge the following parishes for their contribution toward the hand-on training and the financial support offered to our seminarians: St. Anthony, Bergenfield; St. George, Allentown; St. George, Little Falls; St. George, Worcester; St. Ignatius, Florida; St. Mary, Brooklyn; St. Mary, Wilkes-Barre; St. Mary, Yonkers; St. Nicholas, Bridgeport; St. Nicholas, Brooklyn; St. Paul, Emmaus; St. Philip, Souderton; and St. Stephen, South Plainfield.

With that in mind, I ask all our faithful to generously donate towards the support of the seminarians and their families. This is a sacred responsibility for all of us to share, as they and their families will be sharing their lives and their love with us.

Wishing all of you a grace-filled and salvific journey to the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord, I remain,

Yours in the Service of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T. Saba". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+**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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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 3, 2025  
First Day of the Great Fast

**BISHOP ANTHONY'S LENTEN MEDITATION FOR 2025**  
TO BE READ IN CHURCH AND DISTRIBUTED TO THE FAITHFUL

The Lenten season gives meaning to the seasons of our lives. The prayers and services that frame time bring out the picture of each one of us. If we are aware of ourselves, especially at this time, the Lord will show us that the past—so vivid in our memories—has brought us into our present with all its blessings and disappointments. They are all arranged in graceful order for our future.

We should not wish to forget the hurt and trauma of life, those moments of soul wounds. Nor should we shelter away in the comfortable rooms of present happiness. We must go on and encounter what seems uncertain and what we think will make us vulnerable. Let us have faith for tomorrow, not fear of the future.

Lent fortifies our faith.

Because God created us, and God is good, each of us wants to be and to do good. In this life-project, we want to give others our unique and distinctive gifts, in whatever form they come. We want our own goodness to contribute to the good creation and please our Lord.

We cannot do this alone, in isolation. We cannot do this as individuals, where we select who our friends are and who are not and how long we will befriend them. Self-centered lives get lost in temporary interludes of contentment.

The marvelous technology around us often seduces us into planning our own course in life. It results not in a give-and-take with others in community but a willful taking from others what they can give. We fall away from the God who loves us and from the people who love us, and we get into the trap of self-love. If no one is with us, what is the object of loving?

Who we are, our special self, the “I” of “me” whom people love, is expressed in unity with my neighbor—all of my neighbors.

*“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

This life of mine, so often weighed down by living for myself and from myself and, so, by myself, has brought an epidemic of loneliness to the world.

The Lenten discipline gathers us to pray together, to receive holy Communion as the Body of Christ. *“So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind”* (St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians 2:1-2). *“There is one Body and one Spirit, just as you are called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all”* (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Yours in Christ,

*+ Bishop Anthony*

+Bishop ANTHONY

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