

+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, OCTOBER 13, 2024

TONE 7 / EOTHINON 5

**SUNDAY OF HOLY FATHERS OF SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL
& FOURTH SUNDAY OF LUKE**

HIEROMARTYR JACOB OF HAMATOURA

MARTYRS KARPOS, POPYLOS, AGATHODOROS & AGATHONIKA AT PERGAMOS



Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and Hieromartyr Jacob of Hamatoura

On this day, we commemorate the Venerable Hieromartyr Jacob of Hamatoura. This saint struggled in asceticism at the Monastery of the Dormition of the Most-holy Theotokos of Hamatoura in Lebanon's sacred Qadisha Valley at the time of the Mameluke occupation. His heroic spiritual labors and renown soon brought him to the attention of the Mameluke authorities who, being jealous of his fame, determined to convert him from his faith in Jesus Christ to Islam. St. Jacob adamantly refused. Eventually, they dragged him with a number of monks and laymen to Tripoli, Lebanon where St.

Jacob endured harsh tortures for a year, before he was beheaded and burned on October 13, 1450. This saint was almost forgotten in the course of history, due to the severe sufferings of the Church under various Moslem sultanates that both weakened Christian spiritual life and reduced Christian literacy. However, recorded encounters by the Hamatoura Monastery's pilgrims upon seeing visions of St. Jacob affirmed and authenticated his sainthood. In recent times, a forensic team determined one of the skeletal remains buried under the altar at Hamatoura Monastery to be that of St. Jacob.

On this day, we commemorate the holy and blessed Fathers who came together for the second time in Nicaea, during the reign of the pious and Christ-loving Sovereigns Constantine and Irene, against those who impiously, ignorantly and foolishly asserted that the Church of God worshippeth idols, and rejected the august and holy icons.



THE EPISTLE

Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers. For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done to us.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to St. Titus. (3:8-15)

Titus, my son, faithful is the saying, and concerning these things I desire you to affirm confidently, that those who have believed in God may be thoughtful of how to preside in honorable occupations. These things are good and profitable to men. But avoid foolish disputes, and genealogies, and contentions, and controversies about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man who is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that such a one is subverted, and sins, being self-condemned. When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicós, give diligence to come to me to Nicopolis; for I have determined to winter there. Set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that they may be lacking in nothing. And let our people also learn how to preside in honorable occupations, so as to help in cases of urgent need, that they should not be unfruitful. All who are with me salute you. Salute those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

الرسالة

*مُبَارَكٌ أَنْتَ يَا رَبُّ إِلَهَ آبَائِنَا.
لَأَنَّكَ عَدَلٌ فِي كُلِّ مَا صَنَعْتَ بِنَا.*

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى تَيْطُسَ.

يا ولدي تيطس، صادقة هي الكلمة وإياها أريد أن تُقرَّرَ حتَّى يَهْتَمَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ فِي الْقِيَامِ بِالْأَعْمَالِ الْحَسَنَةِ، فَهَذِهِ هِيَ الْأَعْمَالُ الْحَسَنَةُ وَالنَّافِعَةُ. أَمَّا الْمُبَاحَثَاتُ الْهَدْيَانِيَّةُ وَالْأَنْسَابُ وَالْخُصُومَاتُ وَالْمُمَاحَاكَاتُ النَّامُوسِيَّةُ فَاجْتَنِبْهَا، فَإِنَّهَا غَيْرُ نَافِعَةٍ وَبَاطِلَةٌ. وَرَجُلٌ الْبِدْعَةَ بَعْدَ الْإِنذَارِ مَرَّةً وَأُخْرَى أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ. عَالِمًا أَنَّ مَنْ هُوَ كَذَلِكَ قَدْ اعْتَسَفَ، وَهُوَ فِي الْخَطِيئَةِ يَقْضِي بِنَفْسِهِ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ. وَمَتَى أَرْسَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ أَرْتِيمَاسَ أَوْ تِيخِيكُسَ، فَبَادِرْ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنِي إِلَى نِيكُوبُولِسَ لِأَنِّي قَدْ عَزَمْتُ أَنْ أَشْتَبِي هُنَاكَ. أَمَّا زِينَا سَ مُعَلِّمُ النَّامُوسِ وَأَبْلُوسُ، فَاجْتَهِدْ أَنْ تُشَيِّعَهُمَا مُتَأَهِّبِينَ لِنَلَّا يُعَوِّزَهُمَا شَيْءٌ. وَلْيَتَعَلَّمْ دُونَا أَنْ يَقُومُوا بِالْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ لِلْحَاجَاتِ الصَّرُورِيَّةِ حَتَّى لَا يَكُونُوا غَيْرَ مُثْمَرِينَ. يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْكَ جَمِيعُ الَّذِينَ مَعِي، سَلِّمَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَنَا فِي الْإِيمَانِ، النِّعْمَةُ مَعَكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. آمِينَ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (8:5-15)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold." And when His Disciples asked Him what this parable meant, Jesus said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." As Jesus said this, He called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

الإنجيل

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا الإنجيلي البشير والتلميذ الطاهر.

قال الرب هذا المثل: خرج الزارع ليزرع زرعهُ. وفيما هو يزرع، سقط بعض على الطريق، فوطى وأكلته طيور السماء. والبعض سقط على الصخر، فلما نبت يبس لأنه لم تكن له رطوبة. وبعض سقط بين الشوك، فنبت الشوك معه فخنقه. والبعض سقط في الأرض الصالحة، فلما نبت أثمر مائة ضعف. فسأله تلاميذه ما عسى أن يكون هذا المثل. فقال: لكم قد أعطى أن تعرفوا أسرار ملكوت الله، وأما الباقون فبأمثال، لكي لا ينظروا وهم ناظرون، ولا يفهموا وهم سامعون. وهذا هو المثل: الزرع هو كلمة الله. والذين على الطريق هم الذين يسمعون، ثم يأتي إبليس وينزع الكلمة من قلوبهم لئلا يؤمنوا فيخلصوا. والذين على الصخر هم الذين يسمعون الكلمة ويقبلونها بفرح، ولكن ليس لهم أصل، وإنما يؤمنون إلى حين، وفي وقت التجربة يرتدون. والذين سقطوا في الشوك، هم الذين يسمعون ثم يذهبون فيخنتقون بهموم هذه الحياة وغناها وملذاتها، فلا يأتون بثمر. وأما الذي سقط في الأرض الجيدة، فهم الذين يسمعون الكلمة فيحفظونها في قلب جيد صالح، ويثمرون بالصبر. ولما قال هذا نادى: من له أذنان للسمع فليسمع.

Memory Eternal

Laila Qubain, Evleen's sister passed peacefully in Amman, Jordan. She is survived by 9 brothers and sisters, 3 wonderful children and 8 beautiful grandchildren. She was a wonderful mother and grandmother and a kind person who never complained. "Whatever God wants, I'm here to serve." May her memory be eternal! She will be missed with her sense of humor and love for all.

Palestine Day - Saturday, October 19th, 2024, Redwood City

Palestine American Coalition will be hosting Palestine Day on October 19th, 12-8pm at the Old Courthouse, Downtown Redwood City. Please attend or volunteer! The sign up link to volunteer is below:

[Palestine Day Volunteers October 19th 2024: Palestine Day Volunteers October 19th 2024 \(signupgenius.com\)](https://signupgenius.com/Palestine-Day-Volunteers-October-19th-2024)



Love Your Neighbor

October – (Youth Month) SOYO Special Olympics

This ministry is sponsored by the North American Council of Teen SOYO and is the second longest running program of Special Olympics Pennsylvania, serving over 340 Special Olympics athletes, coaches, and staff each season. It is the premier SOYO outreach program, now in its 38th year of service. Each year SOYO teens raise the funds on Special Olympics Awareness Day.

Sun. October 13th:

Epistle Reader: Tania Juha

Sermonette: Tania Juha

Sun. October 20th:

English Epistle reader: Yasmeen Rafidee

Arabic Epistle reader: Malak Khalileh

Sermonette: Malak Khalileh

Sun. October 27th:

Epistle Reader: Katie Najjar

Sermonette: Katie Najjar

Ushers/ Tray Passers: All the teens



Youth Month in our Archdiocese!!

October is here and we are about to start *Youth Month* across our Antiochian Archdiocese. During the month of October we give our teens more opportunities to serve in Church, including: Epistle reading, taking the collections, serving as ushers, and other additional activities in serving the parish community.

October is also a time for us, clergy and parishioners, to share our love and concern for the youth of our parish. Let us take a moment to thank a teenager for being present in Church. Thank them for their good works. Let them know that they are welcome and wanted in our parish!

A Big Thank You To All Who Made This Year's Festival A Success!

Our sincere thanks to all those who *labored, donated, and supported* the 30th annual Middle Eastern Festival. It was a real community in action under the Almighty God. May the Lord pour His blessing upon all of you.

Silent Auction for Gala

We just finished a very successful festival and we are hitting the ground running with our fundraising Gala in a few weeks. To have two big fundraisers back-to-back is a lot of work but very rewarding. We are collecting Silent auction items. We are confident with everyone's effort we are going to collect items for our silent auction. **NO ITEM IS TOO SMALL.**

Examples of items:

- Memorabilia
- Artwork
- Gift baskets (theme ones, arabic, kids, wine, beauty etc.)
- Spa
- Photography session
- Cooking classes
- Gift cards
- Museum tickets
- Golf lessons

Please text or call Rania Kashou as she is collecting items: 415-722-0774

General Parish Meeting

Dear parishioners,

We would like to call for a special general parish meeting on Sunday October 27th after the Divine liturgy. The purpose of the meeting is to entertain the idea of getting a second loan to finish our Fellowship Hall. In Christ,

Fr. Nicholas Borzghol

Upcoming Events

Every Sunday at 7pm	St. Anastasia Fellowship Meeting.
October 27th	General Parish Meeting

Coffee Hours

October 13th	Sponsor Needed
October 20th	Sponsor Needed
October 27th	Ron and Claude Issac and family
November 3rd	The Najjar Family in 40-day memory of Aida Najjar.

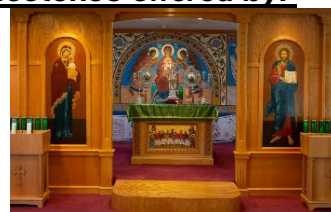
Holy Oblations

This week, Holy Oblations are offered by:

- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nick Nicola, George Messih, Henriette Hilal 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!
- † St. John Parish family in memory of **Karen Mash**. May her memory be eternal!
- † Siham Mityr in memory of her sisters **Elaine, Rita and Jeanete Samara**. May their 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 and Maron Juha



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

You could use this QR code for your donation



October is a HUGE month for St. John Orthodox Church

This month, October 2024, carries great hope and potential for our beloved parish of St. John. The generosity and commitment of St. John members and friends of St. John is appreciated, valued, and has gotten us to this point.

Our Fellowship Hall project is 85% complete. What happens this month can put us over the top, thus avoiding the need to stop construction before completion.

First, thank you to everyone who worked hard and who attended our just completed Festival. The preliminary financial report shows revenue after expenses of \$37,000. More details will be reported after all expense and revenue data is finalized.

The Gala and Dinner on Saturday, October 26 is a second critical moment that makes this month so pivotal. Funds raised from ticket sales and items auctioned will go to the Building Fund.

About 125 tickets have been sold so far to both members and friends of St. John. Each \$250 ticket includes drinks, appetizers, gourmet dinner, wine, and dessert, plus music and dancing. Amazingly, the evening will be highlighted by a live auction featuring autographed items from football great Tom Brady and Warriors star Stephen Curry. In addition, an array of silent auction items will be available throughout the evening. A brief update of the Fellowship Hall project will also be given. Tickets can be purchased until October 20, so please call David Hanna at (925) 323-1203, Rania Kashou at (415) 722-0774 or Fr. Nicholas at (415) 317-2072 to reserve your spot.

Third on the Big Three list for this month is the Parish Meeting after Liturgy on Sunday, October 27. Following an overview of the construction and the financial status of the project, plus time for questions and answers, a vote will be held to determine the best course of action going forward. With revenue from the Festival and the Gala taken into consideration, these three options will be reviewed and discussed.

- Continuing to solicit donations from parishioners, as well as from friends, of St. John.
- Contacting parishioners about making a personal loan to the parish.
- Feasibility of securing a second bank loan.

The parish roster is being reviewed to determine the quota for this Parish Meeting. This number will be made known in advance of the meeting on October 27.

We humbly ask all parishioners to appreciate how important this month is to the future of St. John. Our goal is to not only create a plan that will get us to the finish line for the Fellowship Hall Project, but to do so with everyone in the parish feeling they participated in creating that plan. Everyone's voice is valued, and everyone's prayers are needed.

Call

Steve Kreta at 707-334-1852,
David Kashou at 925-586-2931,
David Hanna at (925) 323-1203,
Raif Rihani at 925-212-9246, or
Fr. Nicholas at (415) 317-2072

with questions about any of this information.

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.: 512/2024

TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT

October, 2024

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38)

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of our Archdiocese:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The month of October in our God-protected Antiochian Archdiocese is designed as “Youth Month and Seminary Month.” This is intended to bring awareness to the importance of the pastoral and theological training initiative of our Archdiocese.

This year’s records of our Archdiocese show more than 25 students enrolled in three seminaries whose training supply our churches with priesthood candidates, choir directors, youth workers and Christian education leaders.

Your generous donations today in support of our seminarians and these institutions will ensure that our parishes will continue to be supplied with exemplary priests equipped to serve the needs of our parishioners, and competent staffing that will be able to perpetuate their vigorous programs. These men are preparing for the holy labors of baptizing our infants, marrying our young people, preaching the gospel, laying to eternal rest our loved ones, granting solace to those in distress, and offering guidance to those in need of direction. In other words, we are supporting them as they prepare to support all of us in our journey to the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are grateful for your invaluable and innumerable initiatives in providing financial and moral support over the many past decades toward this worthy cause, and for subsidizing the vital educational programs of these institutions, and the needs of our seminarians.

“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, we appreciate the hand-on training and the financial support offered to our students by the following parishes this year: St. Anthony, Bergenfield; St. George, Allentown; St. George, Little Falls; St. George, Boston; 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.

Recent studies have shown that we are facing a shortage of clergy in the coming years. We need your generous financial support to educate as many priestly candidates and their families as possible to work in the Vineyard of our Savior. May the Lord reward you accordingly for your emotional and financial support in his name and to his glory. Your thoughtfulness has made you worthy recipients of the spiritual dividends of the fruits produced through the labor of these schools and the priests they have trained.

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T. Saba". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "T" and a clear "Saba" following it.

+**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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**SAVE
THE DATE**

Ukrainian refugee Danilo (not his real name) and his family found support from an IOCC cash-assistance program when they arrived in Poland.

IOCC FOOD & WINE TOUR

Hosted by the IOCC Metropolitan Committee of Northern California and Ascension Cathedral

NOVEMBER 3, 2024

VESPERS: 4:00 PM • RECEPTION: 5:00 – 8:00 PM

Come experience a tasting menu & wine pours from around the world and learn about IOCC's latest emergency programs

ASCENSION GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

4700 Lincoln Avenue | Oakland, CA 94602

Tickets: \$60 through Oct. 15, includes food and unlimited wine pours
\$70 after Oct. 15, includes food and wine
\$50 includes food only
\$35 students
\$25 children 6–12 (free 5 and under)

Tickets and sponsorships at iocc.org/bayarea



شذرات مشرقية، الجزء الثاني

المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

تكمّن ميزة المسيحية الشرقية في أنّها، بقدر ما تتحسّس لاستقامة الإيمان، وتدقّق في صياغة قوانينه وحفظها، فإنّها لا تقونن الحياة المسيحية، بل تفتح، من أجل عيشها على الصعيد الشخصي، المدى واسعاً أمام التعليم العامّ المنبثق من العقيدة، والقائل بتطبيق الوصايا الإلهية، وفق ما يؤول إلى خلاص المؤمن، بإرشاد أبيه الروحي، وذلك، بحسب وضعه وقدرته وظرفه والمستوى الروحي الذي بلغه.

وعلى الصعيد السياسي، لا تحدّد الكنيسة الشرقية، والأرثوذكسية بخاصّة، التوجّه السياسيّ، بالمعنى الدقيق والمباشر، لأبنائها. فهي تكتفي فقط بتزويدهم بالتعليم المسيحي، وإغنائهم بالروحانية الأصيلة، التي تجد لها تجسيداً مسيحياً، بالشكل الذي يتناسب وكلّ مجتمع وشعب وظرف وحرب.

ماذا يعني هذا الكلام واقعياً؟ لنأخذ بعض الأمثلة. لا تحلّل المسيحية الشرقية العنف والقتل في أيّ ظرف كان. بمعنى أنّها لا تقول بتبرير القتل في حالات خاصّة وعدم اعتباره خطيئة، وهي، في الوقت ذاته، لا تمنع أبناءها من اتباع ضميرهم الروحي عندما يناديهم إلى مقاومة الشرّ بكلّ أشكاله. وإن اضطرّ المؤمن إلى القتل فيه، فعليه الاستشفاء من العنف الذي اضطرّ إليه. وذلك لكي لا يعتاده سبيلاً لحلّ أيّ مشكلة تصادفه. هذا ما يُعرف مسيحياً بالتوبة، وفي علم النفس المعاصر بالاستشفاء.

لا تشرّع، لك، المسيحية الأبواب لممارسة القوة، وأنت مرتاح الضمير، بل تعزوه إلى حالة السقوط التي تحيا فيها، والتي قد تضطرّك، في أوضاع معيّنة، إلى الاختيار بين أهون الشرّين.

تتوجّه المسيحية الشرقية، خاصّة، بالأحرى، إلى داخل الإنسان. تؤمن بأنّ المعركة العظمى روحية وساحتها الإنسان الداخليّ. متى عرف المؤمن الخير من الشرّ، على صعيده الذاتي الداخلي، استطاع اختيار كيفية التعبير عن محاربة الشرّ، على الصعيد الخارجي.

في حالة الإجهاض، مثلاً. لا تحلل الكنيسة الشرقية قتل الجنين، ولا تفتي به، مبررة إياه، بالاستناد إلى ذرائع طبية أو إلى المصلحة الفضلى. وهي لا تقول، بمبدأ أفضلية الأم على الطفل، بشكل مطلق، حتى عندما يقول الطب بحتمية موت أحد الطرفين: الأم أو الطفل. بل تترك الخيار للوالدين للتشاور مع أبيهم الروحي، ومن ثم اتخاذ القرار الذي يروونه مناسباً. ومن ثمّ الدخول في مرحلة الاستشفاء الروحي.

يهدف الاستشفاء أو التوبة، الذي يخضعان له، من ضمن ما يهدف إليه، إلى ألا يحلل الإنسان، لنفسه، القتل براحة ضمير تحت أيّ ظرف.

أعرف كاهناً شاباً، دمشقياً، أكدّ الطب بأنّ الجنين، الذي تحمله زوجته، سيكون مشوّهاً، ونصحهما الأطباء بإجهاضه، وكان طفلهما الأوّل. لكنّهما، بعد الصلاة والمشورة الروحية، رفضا الإجهاض، وقرّرا الاحتفاظ بالجنين، ورعايته، ولو كلفهما معاناة قاسية جداً، يوظفانها في تقديس حياتهما. فكان أن أتتهما طفلة جميلة سالمة النفس والعقل والجسد.

تعالج الكنيسة الشرقية مشاكل المؤمنين شخصياً، لا بتعميم ديني عامّ، مكتوب بروح قانونية شرائعية. وهي، على هدي روحانيّتها، المتفهمّة لمكانة الإنسان في المخطط الإلهي، والتي ترنو إلى خلاص الإنسان والعالم، تتحسّس، بالرحمة، الحكمة الإنجيليّة القائلة: "جعل السبت للإنسان وليس الإنسان للسبت."

إذا اضطررت إلى استخدام القوة في مواجهة الشرّ حتى توقفه، أو تمنعه، أو تحرّر الآخرين منه، فأنت، كمؤمن، تعي أنّك لجأت إليه، مضطراً، من أجل تخليص الآخرين منه. آنذاك، تُقبِل إليه تضحياً منك بنفسك، من أجل الآخرين، وأنت عازم، إن بقيت حياً بعد زواله، على الدخول في مرحلة الاستشفاء الروحي. آنذاك تكون شاهداً لإيمانك وشهيداً للمحبّة.

Eastern Remnants, Part Two

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The advantage of Eastern Christianity lies in the fact that -- as much as it is sensitive to the integrity of faith and meticulous in formulating and preserving its teachings -- it does not codify Christian life, but rather, for its implementation on a personal level, opens up a wide scope of general education emanating from the doctrine. It calls for the application of the divine commandments, in accordance with what leads to the salvation of the believer, under the guidance of his spiritual father, according to his situation, ability, circumstance, and the spiritual level he has reached.

On the political level, the Eastern Church, and the Orthodox Church in particular, does not determine the political orientation, in the precise and direct sense, for its children. It is satisfied only with providing them with Christian education, and enriching them with authentic spirituality, which finds a Christian embodiment in a manner that suits each society, people, and circumstance, even in the face of war.

What does this mean in practice? Let us take some examples. Eastern Christianity does not permit violence and killing under any circumstances. In other words, it does not justify killing in special cases and does not excuse the sin. At the same time, it does not prevent its children from following their spiritual conscience when it calls them to resist evil in all its forms. If a believer is forced to kill, he must seek healing from the violence to which he was forced to resort. This is so that he does not become accustomed to using violence to solve any problem he encounters. This is what is known in Christianity as repentance, and in contemporary psychology as healing.

Christianity does not open the doors for you to exercise power while you have a clear conscience, but rather attributes the exercise of power to the state of fallenness in which you live, which may force you, in certain situations, to choose between the lesser of two evils.

Eastern Christianity, in particular, rather addresses the interior of man. It believes that the great battle is spiritual and its arena is the inner man. When the believer

knows good from evil on his inner, subjective level, he can choose how to fight against evil on the external level.

In the case of abortion, for example, the Eastern Church does not permit the killing of the fetus, nor does it issue a ruling on it, justifying the act based on medical pretexts or the best interest. It does not say, in absolute principle, that the mother is better than the child, even when medical practice finds that the death of one of the parties, mother or child, could be inevitable. Rather, it leaves the determination to the parents to consult with their spiritual father, and then make the necessary decision. Then, they enter the stage of spiritual healing.

Their healing and repentance aim, among other things, to ensure that a person does not, under any circumstances, permit killing with a clear conscience.

I know a young priest from Damascus whose doctors confirmed that the fetus his wife was carrying would be deformed, and the doctors advised the pair to abort it. It was their first child. But after prayer and spiritual counsel, they refused to abort it and decided to keep the fetus and care for it, even if it led to very severe suffering which they would use to sanctify their lives. And so, they had a beautiful baby girl born to them, healthy in spirit, mind and body.

The Eastern Church deals with the problems of the faithful personally, not with a general religious generalization written in a legalistic and canonistic spirit. Guided by its spirituality, which understands the place of man in the divine plan, and which aspires to the salvation of man and the world, it feels, with mercy, the evangelical wisdom that says: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

If you must resort to the use of force to stop evil, or free others from it, then you, as a believer, realize that you have resorted to it under duress. Then, you accept it as a sacrifice of yourself for the sake of others, and you are compelled, if you live after the evil disappears, to enter the stage of spiritual healing. Then you will be a witness to your faith and a martyr to love.

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.: 523/2024

October 9, 2024

Dear Reverend Clergy and Esteemed Members of our Parish Councils,

Grace and peace to you in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Everyone across our nation has witnessed with sadness as Hurricane “Helene” cut a path of destruction across many states in our land from Florida to Tennessee and the Carolinas. Winds, rain, and flooding in many areas led to collapse of roads, destruction of properties, loss of businesses and livelihood, much suffering and loss of human lives.

As words have been received regarding the parishes that suffered damages asking for help through our hurricane funds, we continue to monitor until after the passing of the second Hurricane “Milton” to know the full damage that our parishes have sustained, their parishioners, and their surroundings.

In response to appeals from several of our clergy and their parishes that requested a directive from the Archdiocese as to where they may direct their help, I call upon all our parishes to take a special collection for those who have suffered losses from these two unprecedented storms.

Once you have had a chance to collect all donations, please forward one check from your parish to the Archdiocese (memo: “Hurricane Relief”)— no later than the end of this month. All donations will go directly to those in need.

Please demonstrate your love in a practical way by lifting prayers and supplications to our good and saving God on behalf of all that suffered distresses, pains, and losses because of the hurricanes, that they might “find hope under His wings” (Ps. 90:4).

Give any amount of love offering in the name of Jesus Christ for the sake of the victims of these two hurricanes. Offer whatever you are able. No amount is too small. May God’s blessings come upon you and reward your generosity preserving you and your families from all harms.

Your Father in 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)

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