

+St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

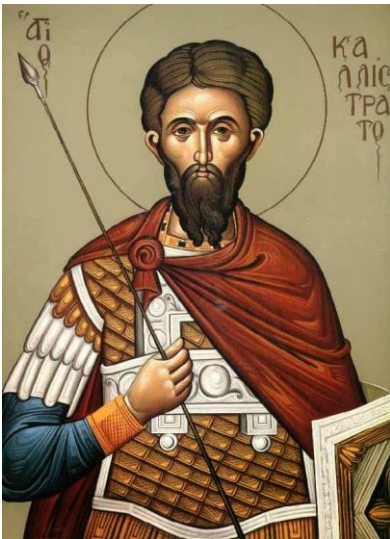
Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
Metropolitan Saba of New York and all North America
V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Pastor
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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026; TONE 8 / EOTHINON 6 **MARTYR KALLISTRATOS AND THE 49 MARTYRS WITH HIM**

THE APOSTLES ARISTARCHOS, ZENON AND MARK OF THE SEVENTY



On September 27 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate holy Martyr Kallistratos and the holy 49 martyrs with him. Kallistratos was a soldier. One night, one of his colleagues caught him praying and reported him to the harsh commander Persentinus. He ordered Kallistratos to offer sacrifice to idols, which Kallistratos immediately refused to do. Then Kallistratos was harshly beaten and thrown into the sea, but God's power preserved him, and he emerged from the sea unharmed. Seeing Kallistratos' endurance and his miracles, 49 soldiers came to believe in Christ the Lord, and they were beaten and thrown into prison along with him. In prison, Kallistratos instructed his companions in the Faith and encouraged them. They showed great courage in suffering, and the Lord showed great power through them. The wicked torturer sent soldiers to the prison at night, and they slew Kallistratos and the other 49. They suffered for the truth in 304.

THE EPISTLE

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.

God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel.

**The Reading from the Second Epistle of
St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:16-7:1)**

Brethren, we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from them, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

صَلُّوا وَأَوْفُوا الرَّبَّ إِلَهَنَا .

اللهُ معروفٌ في أرضِ يهوذا . إسمُهُ عَظِيمٌ في إِسْرَائِيلَ .

فَصْلٌ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرِّسُولِ الثَّانِيَةِ إِلَى أَهْلِ كُورِنْثُوسَ . (1:7-16:6)

يَا إِخْوَةُ، أَنْتُمْ هَيْكَلُ اللَّهِ الْحَيِّ، كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ، "إِنِّي سَأَسْكُنُ فِيهِمْ، وَأَسِيرُ فِيهِمْ بَيْنَهُمْ، وَأَكُونُ لَهُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُمْ يَكُونُونَ لِي شَعْبًا. فَلِذَلِكَ اخْرُجُوا مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ وَاعْتَزِلُوا"، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ "وَلَا تَمَسُّوا نَجِسًا. فَأَقْبَلَكُمْ وَأَكُونُ لَكُمْ أَبًا وَتَكُونُوا أَنْتُمْ لِي بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ الْقَدِيرُ. "وَإِذْ لَنَا هَذِهِ الْمَوَاعِدُ، أَيُّهَا الْأَحِبَّاءُ، فَلْنُظَهِّرْ أَنْفُسَنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أَدْنَسِ الْجَسَدِ وَالرُّوحِ، وَنُكَمِّلِ الْقَدَاسَةَ بِمَخَافَةِ اللَّهِ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (5:1-11)

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at Thy word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

فَصْلٌ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ . (11-1:5)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، فِيمَا يَسُوعُ وَاقِفٌ عِنْدَ بُحَيْرَةِ جَنَيْسَارَتَ، رَأَى سَفِينَتَيْنِ وَاقِفَتَيْنِ عِنْدَ شَاطِئِ الْبُحَيْرَةِ، وَقَدْ انْحَدَرَ مِنْهُمَا الصِّيَادُونَ يَغْسِلُونَ الشَّبَاكَ. فَدَخَلَ إِحْدَى السَّفِينَتَيْنِ، وَكَانَتْ لِسِمْعَانَ، وَسَأَلَهُ أَنْ يَتْبَاعِدَ قَلِيلًا عَنِ الْبَرِّ، وَجَلَسَ يُعَلِّمُ الْجُمُوعَ مِنَ السَّفِينَةِ. وَلَمَّا فَرَّغَ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ، قَالَ لِسِمْعَانَ: "تَقَدَّمْ إِلَى الْعُمَقِ وَأَلْقُوا شَبَاكَكُمْ لِلصَّيْدِ." فَأَجَابَ سِمْعَانُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: "يَا مُعَلِّمُ، إِنَّا قَدْ تَعَبْنَا اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ وَلَمْ نُصِبْ شَيْئًا، وَلَكِنْ بِكَلِمَتِكَ أُلْقِي الشَّبَكَةَ." فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ، اخْتَارُوا مِنَ السَّمَكِ شَيْئًا كَثِيرًا حَتَّى تَحَرَّقَتْ شَبَكَتُهُمْ. فَأَشَارُوا إِلَى شُرَكَائِهِمْ فِي السَّفِينَةِ الْأُخْرَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا وَيُعَاوَنُوهُمْ. فَأَتُوا وَمَلَأُوا السَّفِينَتَيْنِ حَتَّى كَادَتَا تَغْرَقَانِ. فَلَمَّا رَأَى ذَلِكَ سِمْعَانُ بُطْرُسَ، خَرَّ عِنْدَ رُكْبَتَيْ يَسُوعَ قَائِلًا: "أَخْرِجْ عَنِّي يَا رَبُّ، فَإِنِّي رَجُلٌ خَاطِئٌ." لِأَنَّ الْإِنْذِهَالَ اعْتَرَاهُ هُوَ وَكُلُّ مَنْ مَعَهُ لِصَيْدِ السَّمَكِ الَّذِي أَصَابُوهُ. وَكَذَلِكَ يَعْقُوبُ وَيُوحَنَّا ابْنَا زَبْدَى اللَّذَانِ كَانَا رَفِيقَيْنِ لِسِمْعَانَ. فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ لِسِمْعَانَ: "لَا تَخَفْ، فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْآنَ تَكُونُ صَيَّادًا لِلنَّاسِ." فَلَمَّا بَلَغُوا بِالسَّفِينَتَيْنِ إِلَى الْبَرِّ، تَرَكُوا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَتَبِعُوهُ.

Coffee Hour

Sept 27th	Festival!
Oct 4th	For the good health of the Dudum family and in memory of John, Misadeh, Audie, and Mary Dudum
Oct 11th	Samar Adranly for the good health of George Adranly
Oct 18th	Fady and Joumana Najjar in memory of Michel and Aida Najjar
Oct 25th	Charlene Nassoura
Nov 1st	Paula Kassouf in memory of Samir Kassouf (10-year memorial)

Upcoming Events

Oct 6th	Men's fellowship dinner meeting is scheduled for Tuesday October 6 @ 6:00 at our Church hall
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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 **Violet Jaber**. Many years!
- † Lisa Hanna for the good health of **David Hanna** following his knee surgery. Many years!
- † Charlene for the good health of **Ziad, Nicole, Charlene** and **Elaina** on the occasions of their birthdays, and the good health of **Clair Abdo**. Many years!
- † Cherlene in memory of **Blanche** and **Elias Nassoura, Robert Abdo** and **Alvera** and **Bill Hand**. May their memory be eternal!
- † The Dudum family in memory of **John, Misadeh, Audie, and Mary Dudum**. May their memory be eternal, and many years to the Dudums!
- † St. John parish family for the good health of **Fred Addas** on his 100th. birthday. Many years!
- † Fairouz Freij for the good health of **Osama and Wafa** as they travel to Spain to participate their daughter Angel 's wedding. Many years!
- † Fady and Joumana Najjar and family in 2-year memory of **Aida Najjar** Loving Mother & Grandmother for Fady, Joumana, Katie and Mychael. 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 Kawar, Mason Kawar, Jonathan Juha, Luke and Timothy Ernst, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola

† Elevation of the Cross:



Flowers donated in loving memory of Stephen and Pauline Belevich, by Nick Nicola Jr. and Family

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

You could use this QR code for your donation



Announcements

IOCC FOOD & WINE TOUR

Sunday November 1. This year, our parish is hosting the 34th annual IOCC Food & Wine Tour, one of IOCC's biggest fundraising events of the year. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Larissa Geleris by email lkgeleris@gmail.com or text 925-323-4924

Love your Neighbor: September – Archdiocese collection for Seminarian Fund

Each year in the Fall, the Archdiocese asks parishes to take a collection to help support the Antiochian Orthodox students studying at the seminaries in our country, including St Vladimir's, St Tikhon's and Holy Cross Seminary.

Donations for Heritage Booth at Festival

During the past few Festivals, there were multiple inquiries about purchasing used Middle Eastern items/ souvenirs at the Heritage Booth. We would like to gather unwanted items from our parish. If you have anything to donate, please contact Dn. Nicholas Adranly at 510-207-1796 for more information.

Ladies Health Class by Nicole Yowakim

Please join us for a practical class on October 18th by our Nicole Yowakeem, a registered Dietetic Technician, designed especially for the ladies of our church, we'll explore healthy eating habits, learn to read food labels and separate fiction concerning diet trends. Come and learn and ask questions.

Ladies Meeting Oct 18th

Please stay after Divine Liturgy for the Ladies meeting on Oct 18th!

Festival Volunteers Needed

Our Annual Food Festival is just around the corner on Saturday, September 26, and Sunday, September 27! Whether you can volunteer for a few hours or a full shift, every helping hand makes a difference. The more hands we have, the lighter the work—and the more enjoyable the weekend will be! There are **500+ volunteer slots** for the weekend. It's a wonderful opportunity to serve alongside one another, build friendships, and support our church community. Please consider signing up using the link:

<https://m.signupgenius.com/#/showSignUp/60B0C4FA8A729A0F94-64807921-copy?useFullSite=false>

Thank you in advance for your generosity and willingness to serve. We can't wait to see everyone there! God bless you all!

🎄 Save the Date! 🎄

Mark your calendars! Our Annual Christmas Party is scheduled for Saturday, December 12. More info to follow

We Love St John's Youth Group!



What a great gathering of our St. John's youth (pre-teens/ younger teens).

They prayed at vespers, learned our faith through bible study and discussion, broke bread together, played together in the spirit of fellowship.

What a fun night on Saturday, September 12th. Nineteen of them were there!

Big thanks to Kristen Kavar who spearheaded this event. Many thanks also to the parents who drove their children to our church. More to come soon...

The Cross in Our Life II

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

الصليب في حياتنا II

بقلم المتربوليت سابا (اسبر)

ЦРЬ СЛѢД

“You cannot simply turn your eyes away from someone you love. At times, you may try to put him out of your mind, but the moment you hear that something bad has happened to him, your suppressed love erupts in anguish.”

«لا يمكنك أن تغض الطرف عمن تحبه. قد تحاول أحياناً تغييبه، لكنك، ما إن تسمع سوءاً عنه، حتى تتفجر محبتك المكبوتة لوعةً عليه.»

AVAILABLE IN: EN AR FR ES

Atheistic existentialism says, “Hell is other people,” whereas Christian existentialism says, “Paradise is other people.” Saint Silouan the Athonite used to say, “Our brother is our life.” In Christ, the other — who,

according to the Gospel, is our “neighbor” — is no longer an outsider. Every stranger becomes your neighbor when you treat him as the Good Samaritan treated the wounded man (Luke 10). Thus, if you strive to approach every human being with love and compassion, you will see that all are your neighbors. Yet it is important to understand that whenever you feel responsible for others, whether individually or collectively, you continually bear the cross of that responsibility.

There is a heavy cross here, specifically in our relationships with others, beginning with the members of our own family and extending even to our enemies. This cross arises from our desire to protect those we love, to help them, and to stand beside them in their trials and distresses, even when they may not want our help, may be unwilling to follow our advice, or may misunderstand us. At times, they may even oppose us in proportion to our love for them, because they demand an expression of our love that differs from ours, and that may contradict our principles and morals.

In this world, we cannot but bear responsibility for whatever may threaten the lives of those entrusted to our care and love; first, those closest to us, and then everyone with whom we come into contact in one way or another.

In sharing their burden, our own cross grows heavier, just as theirs grows heavier. Sharing responsibility for their lives becomes a source of great anxiety and pressure. Can you simply cease caring about your children, your spouse, your parents, or your siblings? You may see them walking along a path that leads to destruction—materially or spiritually, emotionally or relationally—and your love instinctively compels you to stand beside them, strengthen and support them, and share in their pain and suffering.

Your sorrow may be magnified by being so close to them, especially since they might reject your offerings or misinterpret your actions for selfish reasons, although you had different intentions. You grieve for

them and bear their burdens to the extent that you know the terrible end they will reach.

It is in this sense that Saint Silouan the Athonite said, "The greater the love, the greater the suffering." You cannot simply turn your eyes away from someone you love. At times, you may try to put him out of your mind, but the moment you hear that something bad has happened to him, your suppressed love erupts in anguish. This is a cross that leads you toward openness and selflessness, raising you to become like your Lord in His tender compassion. As the sufferings of your love increase, your heart becomes more tender, more open, and more elevated.

There is a second meaning to the cross of relationships, which we encounter in the many people who behave with open hostility toward us, even when we have done them no wrong. This is a cross we may be required to carry until death. Why do some people feel hostility toward someone who has neither harmed nor offended them? In reality, human beings are pulled by many different impulses of which they are often unaware. They allow these impulses to drive them and consequently deal with others solely according to their feelings—yet feelings are deceptive and changeable. A person's psychological state often plays a decisive role in shaping his relationships with others.

Some people may oppose you because your uprightness exposes their crookedness, even if you have never behaved offensively toward them. Your very presence disturbs them and says to them, "You are wrong." They do not want to listen to their conscience, of which you remind them even when you remain silent and keep your distance. Your steadfastness in your convictions brings their evil schemes into the light and exposes their wrongful intentions.

How heavy, too, is the cross of those who do not understand you, who misunderstand you, or who judge you according to assumptions and interpretations that have never even crossed your mind. This cross becomes even heavier when your intentions are the exact opposite of

what they read into your conduct. Moreover, they refuse to accept any explanation or clarification from you. You seek their material and physical well-being and strive to help them grow spiritually and humanly, yet they perceive the very opposite.

In such a situation, bear their failure to understand your good intentions as a cross — one that urges you to examine yourself carefully, so that you may discover any weakness, error, or impropriety in your conduct. Leave room within yourself for the possibility that you bear some responsibility for their failure to understand you, even when you are certain that they have treated you unjustly. Your tone of voice, the look in your eyes, the movement of your hands — all or some of these may have provoked them in a way you neither intended nor desired. Once, during a conversation, an atheist struck Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk across the face. The saint bowed down before him and apologized for having provoked him!

In addition, always carry such people in your prayers. Do not allow your memory to dwell continually on the details of what happened, and do not speak about them excessively. Ask the Lord to have mercy on them. Remember them by name in your daily prayers. You will discover that, despite their hostility, they remain close to you and dwell within your heart — at least as far as you are concerned.

Every effort we make to spread goodness, uprightness, and a culture of love and forgiveness is accompanied by a cross that we must bear. If we avoid this cross, however, we are in fact renouncing the struggle and spiritual labor required to do what is good and to serve love. Consequently, we lose its blessing and the grace that God pours out upon us through it.

To avoid the cross is to refuse to carry it, thereby depriving yourself of the discovery of the depth and greatness of the powers and capacities hidden within you. You forget that you were created in the image of God, and that the traces of the divine image lie dormant within you,

awaiting your cooperation so that they may be brought forth. God allows the cross to become the instrument by which they are revealed.

Every transformation of the self entails a certain inner rupture, which we experience as a cross. Every advancement requires abandoning that to which we are accustomed or comfortable. The cross is necessary because it refines you, so that you may become a clear mirror reflecting your true, new humanity — the human person fashioned according to the likeness of his Creator.

Saint John Climacus says, in essence: Rejoice when there is among your brethren someone who is harsh and rough, for he brings forth the sleeping serpents hidden within you — anger, pride, vainglory, impatience, lack of endurance, weakness of love, and inability to forgive. Elsewhere, he says that the edges of stones are sharp and cutting at the river's source, but on their journey toward its mouth, they are gradually broken down as they strike one another under the force of the rushing water. With time, they are polished until, at the river's end, they become smooth and beautiful pebbles.

Rejoice in your cross, and carry it with courage and patience, that you may partake of beauties you never imagined.

Additional reading: [The Cross in Our Life, Part One](#)

This article is also available in [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#).

Pledge your support

Arabic Version:

https://antiochianprodsa.blob.core.windows.net/websiteattachments/The%20Cross%20in%20Our%20Life%20%20AR.pdf?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

All- Night Vigil For The Repose of St. John The Theologian



Great Vespers • Artoklasia • Orthros • Divine Liturgy

All faithful are welcome to join in prayer and worship

When

Friday, September 25, 2026
7:00PM-~1:00AM

Where

St. John the Evangelist
Orthodox Church
501 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA

*Apostle of Christ, John
the Evangelist and
Theologian, you
became a mystic of
secrets of God, and
thundered to us the
secret dogmas of
wisdom.*

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

IOCC FOOD & WINE TOUR

Hosted by St. John the Evangelist Antiochian Orthodox Church
& the IOCC Metropolitan Committee of Northern California

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2026

VESPERS: 4:00 P.M. • DINNER: 5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

**Come experience a tasting menu & wine pours from around
the world and learn about IOCC's latest humanitarian work**

ST. JOHN'S FELLOWSHIP HALL

501 Moraga Way | Orinda, CA 94563

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

Tickets and sponsorships at iocc.org/bayarea





HALLOWEEN

M O V I E N I G H T



SATURDAY OCTOBER 10TH

ALL AGES WELCOME



COME GET YOUR SPOOK ON, IF YOU DARE..
SNACKS AND DRINKS WILL BE PROVIDED



501 Moraga Way

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

ORTHODOX
Thanksgiving
KIDS AND TEENS RETREAT

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;
His mercy endures forever.

— Psalm 107:1



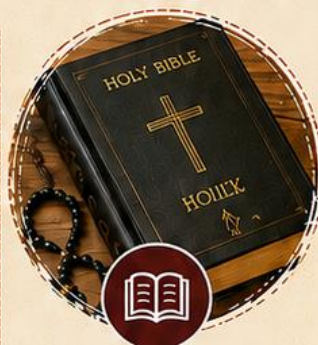
SUNDAY, NOV 15
1:30 PM – 5:00 PM



A fun and faith-filled afternoon for
kids and teens and their families to grow
closer to Christ and give thanks together!



WE WILL BE
MAKING
Holy Bread



BIBLE
STUDY



TEAM
BUILDING



DINNER
will be
PROVIDED

SUGGEST
\$40
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per family

RSVP BY NOV. 1
— TO —
Rania Kashou
or
Irene Guajardo 

DONATIONS AND
VOLUNTEERS
ARE WELCOMED!



FAITH. FELLOWSHIP. THANKSGIVING.
Come grow in Christ and gratitude together! 

