

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop THOMAS



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Oakland, Charleston,
and the Mid-Atlantic

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

September 14, 2018

Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Beloved brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, God-fearing Monastics,
and all my Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ our True God:

I greet each of you on this great feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross. On this day, we rejoice in the instrument of our salvation—a sign of contradiction and suffering to the world but to us a sign of reconciliation with God.

Saint John Chrysostom remarked:

For the Cross is the salvation of the Church; the Cross is the boast of those who hope in it; the Cross is reconciliation of enemies to God and conversion of sinners to Christ. For through the Cross we have been delivered from enmity, and through the Cross we have been joined in friendship to God. Through the Cross we have been freed from the tyranny of the devil, and through the Cross we have been delivered from death and destruction. When the Cross was not proclaimed, we were held fast by death; now the Cross is proclaimed, and we have come to despise death, as though it did not exist, while we have come to long for everlasting life. When the Cross was not proclaimed, we were strangers to paradise; but when the Cross appeared, at once a thief was found worthy of paradise. From such darkness the human race has crossed over to infinite light; from death it has been called to everlasting life, from corruption it has been renewed for incorruption. For the eyes of the heart are no longer covered by the darkness that comes through ignorance, but through the Cross they are flooded with the light of knowledge. The ears of the deaf are no longer shut by unbelief, for the deaf have heard the word of the Lord, and the blind have recovered their sight to see the glory of God. These are the gifts we are given through the Cross. What blessing has not been achieved for us through the Cross?

The pattern of our spiritual life is modeled on the holy cross. It is precisely by Christ's holy cross that our own crosses—the daily suffering that comes our way—is transformed into redemption. On this great feast day of the Church we rejoice in the Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the instrument of our triumph over suffering and death.

Glory to Thy holy cross, O Lord. Glory to Thee!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Thomas".

Rt. Rev. Bishop THOMAS (Joseph)
Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Oakland, Charleston, and the Mid-Atlantic

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

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