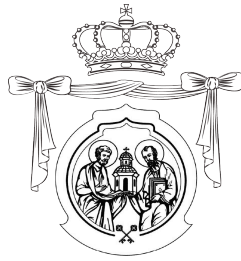


His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

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

Beloved in Christ,

The twin feasts of the Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost are truly a summation of the entire Christian life. In the Ascension, we are reminded that this life on earth is not our final destiny. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ascended 40 days after His resurrection to prepare a place for us with His Father. That is our ultimate destination and should be the object of our thoughts, words, and deeds on a daily basis.

Pentecost or Trinity Sunday reminds us of what our daily lives should be like. Holy Apostle Peter's words to the multitude on that first Pentecost provide us with the key to the Christian life. Peter boldly proclaims "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38-39)

Furthermore, on Pentecost, in the Vesper service following Divine Liturgy, Orthodox Christians kneel for the first time after Pascha. The kneeling prayers of Pentecost are a profound expression of repentance and provide us with the proper roadmap concerning how we are to live the rest of the year.

Our merciful and loving God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - has appointed to us repentance as the path to union with Him. Let us humbly beseech Him to grant us this great gift

So, on this feast of Pentecost we are emboldened to cry out, "O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present, and fillest all things, Treasury of good gifts, and giver of life, come and abide in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One." Amen.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bishop Thomas". The signature is written in black ink and is preceded by a small cross symbol.

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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