

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 1, 2020
The Indiction – Liturgical New Year

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ!

*“You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip with abundance.”* Psalm 65:11

I greet each of you in the name of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ as we embark upon a new church year. The Lord grants us to see the dawn of another new year for our repentance, nothing else. It is not given carelessly or frivolously. Because it is God’s gift to us, we will have to give an account of how we spend the gift freely given to us.

The one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church is the ark of salvation as well as a hospital for our spiritual ills. Within the life and daily routine of the Church, a precise course of therapy is provided for those seeking spiritual restoration. This course of therapy is laid out for us in the calendar of the Church, since every event of the Church calendar has an application to the individual spiritual life—of the transformed state in which Christians shall appear at the end of the world, and in some measure even before then. We need only recall the recently celebrated Feast of the Holy Transfiguration, which reveals to us a foreshadowing of future glory which is celebrated in this Feast. The Holy Church comforts her children by showing them that after the temporary sorrows and deprivations with which this earthly life is filled, the glory of eternal blessedness will shine forth; and in it even the body of the righteous will participate.

This therapeutic course is particularly evident in the first two feasts of the new year - the Nativity of the most holy Theotokos and the Exaltation of the Precious Cross. These feasts are inextricably linked, for the agreement of the Theotokos necessarily means the cross and an acceptance of suffering as the path to purification, illumination, and theosis. As the new year dawns, the Church teaches us that obedience to God’s holy will - as we see so perfectly lived in the life of the Theotokos - is the path of the Cross which is our own exaltation and salvation.

This therapeutic economy is laid out for us in the Church calendar, exemplified in the life of the most holy Theotokos, and accomplished in the Lord Christ’s being lifted up on the Cross.

As the new year dawns, let us renew our efforts to work out our salvation through the tools the holy Orthodox Church provides us. May the most holy Theotokos protect you and may the thrice holy God bless you and give you strength.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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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