

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

Feast of Holy Pentecost - 2021

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

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter (that is, the Holy Spirit), will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. (Jn. 16:7, 13).

On this feast of Pentecost, I greet you in the name of the thrice-holy Trinity, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit! Our Creator and our Savior now also becomes our Comforter! The Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is also the Spirit of unity guiding and uniting Christ's flock into His holy Church—the ark of salvation.

The Holy Spirit has made an innumerable multitude of God-pleasing people holy, and glorified them with miracles and incorrupt relics, and works towards the salvation of us all, even until our day. Everything that we have now in the Holy Church—all of its spiritual riches, all the grace coming from its prayers and Sacraments—all of it originates from the holy day of Pentecost. That is why the present feast is so joyous and why we have a special feeling this day. The grace of the Holy Spirit especially and ineffably fills the very air and all of us today, allowing none to have just an everyday feeling.

That is why this feast is called the feast of the Holy Trinity, with the entire Holy Trinity participating perceptibly in our salvation from this day: the Father, Who begat the Son, the Son, Who came into the world and suffered and redeemed the whole of mankind, and the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father, who is our Comforter, and Who illuminated the holy apostles on the day of holy Pentecost.

Today, more than other days, we are able to understand and appreciate what a treasure we have, honoring God, precisely in worshiping the Trinity. The Christian faith differs from other faiths precisely in that we honor the One God in Three Persons.

The love of God for His creation is boundless and knows no measure. Our response to His munificence should echo the sentiments of the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all that He has rendered unto me?" (Ps. 115:4).

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

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The Comforter descends from on high to assist us in the spiritual struggle and remind us that we have been purchased at a great price. Saint Theodore reminds us, as a result of this,

“We shall not be afraid of the enemy and shall not be frightened by opposing powers but shall courageously and steadfastly hasten to the struggle and feat, experiencing them day after day, not being deluded by the deceptions of the snake, and not growing weary from his ceaseless attacks.”

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".

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

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