

His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

December 8, 2019

**Choir and Chanter Appreciation Sunday**

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy and Christ-loving Faithful of our Archdiocese:

Greetings in the Name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray you and your families are well as we progress in the Nativity Fast with anticipation of the birth of our Savior in the flesh.

Just four days ago we celebrated the feast of St. John of Damascus, one of the great musical composers of our Orthodox faith. In his troparion, we refer to him as “the nightingale” because of his beautiful compositions. His hymns, along with countless others going back to the earliest days of the Church, continue to be sung in our churches. As such, the role of music and choirs in our divine services is of the utmost importance. With that in mind, it is with great joy that we honor today in our parishes throughout the archdiocese our choirs and chanters who sing praises to the Lord and beautify our divine services with their angelic voices.

While we set aside this day in December each year to give them special recognition, we strive throughout the year as an archdiocese to give them the resources and support they need by providing the proper liturgical texts with links to correct musical settings and sponsoring sacred music institutes at both the Antiochian Village in the summer and a location in another part of the archdiocese each February, and making available an ever growing library of sacred music in both four part and Byzantine settings on our archdiocese website. It is our prayer that our parishes will partner with us in giving the same encouragement to our choir directors and members by supporting them locally and helping them to gain new and young members to continue this important and sacred ministry of the Church.

Recently, we welcomed our new archdiocesan chair of the Department of Sacred Music, Ms. Mareena Boosamra-Ball, whom you will get to know more and more in the coming months. Like so many of our leaders in this archdiocese, she has dedicated over 40 years of her life to directing her local parish choir and over 30 years as the diocesan coordinator for the Diocese of the West. Now she will chair the Department of Sacred Music, bringing her talents and experience to a wider audience. We look forward to her leadership as she begins her work.

Finally, we thank all of our choir directors, chanters and choir members throughout our archdiocese for their dedication and ministry. Most of you serve on a volunteer basis or for very little compensation for your work and we are grateful for your time and talents you give each and every week. May God bless you all and grant you strength to continue giving praise to God.

Wishing you and your families a blessed remainder of the Nativity Fast and a joyous feast, I remain,

Yours in the service of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**+JOSEPH**

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

358 Mountain Road, P.O. Box 5238, Englewood, NJ 07631-5238  
(201) 871-1355 T Archdiocese@antiochian.org (201) 871-7954 F