



## ST. ATHANASIUS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America  
300 Sumida Gardens Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93111  
**Office hours:** Tues-Fri. 12:00—5:00 p.m.

His Beatitude, Patriarch John X

**Pastor:**

Fr. Symeon Halsell  
805-685-5495  
frsymeon@stathanasius.org

**Priests attached to the parish:**

Fr. Nicholas Speier (Pastor Emeritus)  
frnicholas@stathanasius.org, 805-685-5400

Fr. John Carrillo 805-770-3749 (retired)  
Fr. Jon Braun (retired)  
Fr. John Finley (Archdiocese Dept. of Missions)

**Deacons:**

Dn. Gary Braun  
Dn. Scott Jacobs  
Dn. John Young (retired)  
**Subdeacons:** Stephen Butler & Michael Easbey

**Parish Council 2022-2023:**

Lara Jacobs, President  
Glenn Hoppe, Vice President  
Dan Braun, Treasurer  
Dorothy Alexander, Secretary  
Dominic Dopico  
Lizabeth Hoppe  
Zak Landrum  
Michael Loulias

**Music Director/Administrator:**

Valerie Yova  
Office phone: 805-685-5400  
email: office@stathanasius.org

**Teen Program & College/Young Adult  
Activities Coordinator**

Subdn. Michael Easbey: measbey@gmail.com

## DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

February 19, 2023

Tone 3 / Eothinon 3

**Sunday of the Last Judgment (Meat Fare)**

Apostles Archippos, Philemon and Apphias  
of the Seventy



## WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS!

We are glad you are with us this morning.  
If you are not Orthodox, we invite you to partake of the  
blessed bread during communion.  
Please join us on the patio after the Liturgy for Coffee Hour.  
We'd love to meet you!

## We welcome children of all ages in our worship.

“Let the little children come unto Me for of such is  
the Kingdom of Heaven.” Luke 18:16

## ***CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK***

### **Sunday, February 19—MEATFARE SUNDAY**

9:00 a.m. Religious Ed. ages 3-12  
9:00 a.m. Matins  
10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy  
11:30 a.m. Teen Religious Education  
11:45 p.m. Meatfare BBQ  
12:45 p.m. Choir Rehearsal  
1:00 p.m. Adult Catechism

### **Monday, February 20**

NO MATINS

5:15 p.m. St. Xenia Prayer Ministry—Akathist  
by Zoom  
7:00 p.m. Men's Fireside

### **Tuesday, February 21**

5:30 p.m. Ninth Hour Prayers, Potluck and  
Book Study

### **Wednesday, February 22**

NO MATINS

12:00 p.m. St. Xenia Prayer Ministry  
6:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting

### **Thursday, February 23**

7:45 a.m. St. Xenia Prayer Ministry by Zoom  
8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy  
10:00 a.m. Showers of Blessing  
5:30 p.m. Daily Vespers  
6:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal  
6:00 p.m. Jr. High Youth Group  
6:45 p.m. High School Youth Group

### **Friday, February 24**

7:00 a.m. Daily Matins

### **Saturday, February 25**

5:30 p.m. Great Vespers/Confessions

### **Sunday, February 26—CHEESEFARE SUNDAY**

9:00 a.m. Religious Ed. ages 3-12  
9:00 a.m. Matins  
10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy  
11:30 a.m. Teen Religious Education  
11:45 p.m. Project Mexico Fundraiser Luncheon  
12:30 p.m. Adult Catechism  
5:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal  
6:00 p.m. Forgiveness Vespers

## **SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRIES SCHEDULE**

### **EUCHARIST BREAD**

February 19 Jacobs  
February 26 Meyer  
March 5 Fr. Nicholas  
March 12 D. Washburn

### **READERS**

February 18 Kern (Soul Liturgy)  
February 18 Kern (Great Vespers)  
February 19 Lange  
February 26 Gish  
February 26 Alexander (Forgiveness Vespers)  
March 1 Lange (Presanctified Liturgy)  
March 5 Butler  
March 8 Gish (Presanctified Liturgy)  
March 11 Kern (Soul Liturgy)  
March 12 Meyer

### **GREETERS**

February 19 K. Fox/D. Washburn  
February 26 L. Baker  
March 5 D. Lewis/H. Lange  
March 12 P. Cocores/M. Loulias

### **USHERS**

February 19 C. Speier/S. Speier  
February 26 K.L. King/D. Alexander  
March 5 P. King/J. King  
March 12 D. Washburn/C. Berari

### **AGAPE MEAL HOSTS**

February 19 Meatfare BBQ  
February 26 PROJECT MEXICO  
FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON  
March 5 TBA  
March 12 Team Palmer

### **THURSDAY SHOWERS OF BLESSING**

#### **HOSPITALITY TEAM**

Feb. 23 M. Loulias  
Mar. 2 D. Alexander/J. Jones  
Mar. 9 F. Young  
Mar. 16 L. Ballew

### HOLY COMMUNION

In the Orthodox Church, the sacrament of Communion is offered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive. Non-Orthodox believers and others **may approach the chalice for a blessing and the blessed bread instead of the Eucharist.** So that the priest is aware of this, please just say,  
*“Father, bless” when you get to the chalice.*

**At the conclusion of Matins, we sing the Great Doxology  
followed by the Matins Dismissal Troparion.**

### THE DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

#### THE GREAT LITANY

##### FIRST ANTIPHON—Psalm verses with refrain

Vs. It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy name, O Most High;  
To proclaim Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night. [Refrain]

**Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.**

Vs. Upright is the Lord our God, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. [Refrain]

Vs. Glory...now & ever...Amen. [Refrain]

##### SECOND ANTIPHON—Psalm verses with refrain

Vs. The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and  
hath girded Himself.

**Refrain: O Son Of God Who rose from the dead, save us who sing to Thee,  
Alleluia!**

Vs. For He hath established the world which shall not be shaken. [Refrain]

Vs. Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore. [Refrain]

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Only Begotten Son** and immortal Word of God who for our salvation didst will to be incarnate  
of the holy Theotokos and ever virgin Mary, who without change didst become man and wast  
crucified, O Christ our God, trampling down death by death, who art one of the Holy Trinity,  
glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit: save us!

**THIRD ANTIPHON—The Beatitudes or “Sermon on the Mount”**

In Thy kingdom remember us, O Lord,  
when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.  
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.  
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.  
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.  
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake,  
for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.  
Blessed are you when men shall revile you and shall persecute you, and shall say all manner of  
evil against you falsely for my sake.  
Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

**AS THE CLERGY ENTER THE ALTAR AT THE  
LITTLE ENTRANCE, WE SING THE FOLLOWING HYMNS FOR THE DAY:**

**Troparion of the Resurrection**

**Tone 3**

**(Music on p. 44 of Liturgy book)**

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad,  
for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm.  
He hath trampled down death by death  
and become the first born from the dead.  
He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades,  
granting the world the great mercy.

**Troparion to St. Athanasius**

**Tone 3**

Holy Bishop Athanasius,  
you became a stronghold of Orthodoxy,  
strengthening the Church through your divine teachings.  
Opposing the heretical opinion of Arius,  
you explained and taught that the Son is equal in nature with the Father.  
O holy Father, intercede with Christ God  
that He may grant us abundant mercy.

**Kontakion of Meatfare Sunday****Tone 1**

When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory,  
all things shall tremble,  
and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat;  
the books shall be opened, and the hidden things disclosed;  
then deliver me from the unquenchable fire, //  
and make me worthy to stand at Your right hand, O Righteous Judge!

**TRISAGION (THRICE-HOLY) HYMN**

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
+Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.  
Holy Immortal have mercy on us.

Deacon: With strength!

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

**Preparatory Psalm Verses before the Epistle (Prokeimenon)  
(Music on p. 57 of Liturgy book.)****Tone 2**

The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. *(Ps 117/118:4)*  
*v: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but He has not given me over to death.*  
*(Ps 117/118:18)*

**EPISTLE READING**

(For the Sunday of the Last Judgement)

**1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2**

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care, lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you—a man of knowledge—at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

**Alleluia Refrain and Psalm verses before the Gospel**  
**(Music on p. 65 of Liturgy Book)**

**Tone 8**

**Chanter:** Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!  
**People:** Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

- v: *Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (Ps 94/95:1)*  
v: *Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise! (Ps 94/95:2)*

**THE GOSPEL READING**

(For Sunday of the Last Judgment)

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (25:31-46)**

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He will place the sheep at His right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at His right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed Me, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and feed Thee, or thirsty and give Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and welcome Thee, or naked and clothe Thee? And when did we see Thee sick or in prison and visit Thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?' Then He will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

**HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS**

It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you.

**COMMUNION HYMN**

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest! (*Psalm 148:1*)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**By the Waters of Babylon (Psalm 137)**

By the Waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion.  
Alleluia.

1. On the willows there we hung up our lyres. Alleluia.
2. For there our captors required of us songs and our tormentors required mirth. Alleluia.
3. Sing us one of the songs of Zion. Alleluia.
4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? Alleluia.
5. Remember, O Lord, on the day of Jerusalem's fall. Alleluia.

## SCHEDULE FOR GREAT LENT

Sunday, February 19	Meatfare BBQ after Liturgy
Sunday, February 26	Project Mexico Fundraiser Luncheon after Liturgy Forgiveness Vespers at 6:00 p.m.
Monday, February 27	GREAT LENT BEGINS

### FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT

All services are at 6:00 p.m.

Monday, February 27	Great Compline with portion of Canon of St. Andrew
Tuesday, February 28	Little Compline with portion of Canon of St. Andrew
Wednesday, March 1	Presanctified Liturgy
Thursday, March 2	Little Compline with portion of Canon of St. Andrew
Friday, March 3	Little Compline with Akathist to the Mother of God

### Throughout most of Great Lent, we pray the following services at 6:00 p.m.:

Mondays	Great Compline
Wednesdays	Presanctified Liturgy
Fridays	Little Compline with a portion of Akathist to the Mother of God

### Exceptions:

Friday, March 24	Great Vespers for Feast of Annunciation
Thursday, March 30	Little Compline with full Canon of St. Andrew and reading of the Life of St. Mary of Egypt
Friday, April 7	Little Compline with the Canon of Lazarus

### Liturgies for the Departed will be celebrated on:

Saturday, Feb. 18, Saturday, March 11 and Saturday, March 18

## Thanksgiving Prayers after Communion

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, we offer the prayers of thanksgiving for having received the Body and Blood of Christ. These beautiful prayers help us to reflect on the mystery in which we have just partaken, and prepare us for our transition back into the "world." We invite you to listen to these beautiful prayers during and after the veneration of the cross at the end of the service, and **ask that you show courtesy to those who are remaining to hear the prayers in their entirety by waiting until the blessing of the food at Coffee Hour to eat and socialize.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**JOIN US TODAY ON THE PATIO FOR OUR ANNUAL MEATFARE BARBECUE.** The menu includes: tri-tip, bean, salad, French bread, dessert, and beverages. Suggested donation for adults is \$5.

**DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY WE WILL BE ACCEPTING DONATIONS FOR RELIEF OF THE VICTIMS OF THE EARTHQUAKE IN SYRIA & TURKEY.**

- Donations may be put in the tithe box from now through Sunday, February 26th.
- Please MAKE CHECKS OUT TO ST. ATHANASIUS and include "Earthquake Relief" in the memo line.
- Cash donations should be put in an envelope and clearly marked for "Earthquake Relief."
- We will send all funds collected to our Archdiocese, from which they will be distributed to relief efforts and organizations.
- You may also donate online directly at: <https://antiochian.org/>
- **PLEASE INQUIRE AS TO WHETHER YOUR EMPLOYER WILL MAKE A MATCHING GIFT CONTRIBUTION to this effort.** See bulletin insert for more information.

**ADULT CATECHISM THIS WINTER/SPRING will go from now through April 2nd and takes place after the Agape Meal.**

### UPCOMING CATECHISM SESSIONS:

February 19	The Passions, Dispassion, & Theosis
February 26	Faith, Hope & Love
March 5	NO CLASS
March 12	A Consecrated Life: The Role of Beauty in Worship And the Spiritual Life

### On Meatfare Sunday

from *Great Lent* by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

Christian love is the "possible impossibility" to see Christ in another man, whoever he is, and whom God, in His eternal and mysterious plan, has decided to introduce into my life, be it only for a few moments, not as an occasion for a "good deed" or an exercise in philanthropy, but as the beginning of an eternal companionship in God Himself. For, indeed, what is love if not that mysterious power which transcends the accidental and the external in the "other"-- his physical appearance, social rank, ethnic origin, intellectual capacity-- and reaches the *soul*, the unique and uniquely personal "root" of a human being, truly the part of God in him? If God loves every man it is because He alone knows the priceless and absolutely unique treasure, the "soul" or "person" He gave every man. Christian love then is the participation in that divine knowledge and the gift of that divine love. There is no "impersonal" love because love *is* the wonderful discovery of the "person" in "man," of the personal and unique in the common and general. It is the discovery in each man of that which is "lovable" in him, of that which is from God. [http://ww1.antiochian.org/great-lent-excerpts/last\\_judgement](http://ww1.antiochian.org/great-lent-excerpts/last_judgement)

*Fr. Thomas Hopko's reflections on the Sunday of the Last Judgment:*  
[https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/the\\_sunday\\_of\\_the\\_last\\_judgment](https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/the_sunday_of_the_last_judgment)



Join our parish in supporting the  
**FOOD FOR HUNGRY  
PEOPLE CAMPAIGN**

of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese  
during Great Lent 2023

to benefit the  
**Food Bank of Santa Barbara  
and Food for Hungry People**



**Ways to give:**

- Bring food items and deposit in collection boxes in the hallway
- Monetary donations are welcome. Please make checks payable to St. Athanasius, with a memo that says, "Food for Hungry."
- We will have coin boxes available for families to take home and use to collect alms (coins or bills) throughout Great Lent.

**MOST NEEDED  
FOOD ITEMS:**

- Canned Tuna or Chicken
- Nut Butters
- Pasta
- Canned or dried beans  
(black, kidney, garbanzo)
- Whole Grain Cereal (with  
less than 12g sugar/serving)

**Food items accepted Feb. 26-Apr. 2**

**Coin boxes due by Palm Sunday, Apr. 9**



[WWW.FOODBANKSBC.ORG](http://WWW.FOODBANKSBC.ORG)

*"Send your treasures to the heavenly storage room. Deposit your wealth in God's bank, distributing to the poor, the orphans and the widows so that you might receive a million times more in the Second Coming of Christ." - Elder Joseph the Hesychast*

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Sunday, March 5, 2023**

**Pan-Orthodox Vespers for the Triumph of Orthodoxy**

hosted by St. Timothy Antiochian Orthodox Church

403 N. J. Street in Lompoc

6:00 p.m. Vespers

7:00 p.m. Homily & Reflection followed by Agape Meal

(Please bring icons from home for the procession!)

***CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK***

**Wedding Anniversaries**

2/19 Ben & Viktoria Hedges, Adriana & Ron Malik

**Birthdays**

2/14 Fr. Nicholas Speier

2/15 Fr. Symeon Halsell

2/19 Jan Finley

2/20 Delaney Catherine Newhouse

2/21 Tyson Shackelford

2/25 Asia Ballew

**FINANCIAL UPDATE  
JANUARY 2023**

2023 Monthly tithe goal            \$57,461 (includes \$20,555 for mortgage)

**January tithes                        \$44,354**

January Temple donations        \$12,895

**Please pray for all of our catechumens, that their minds and hearts will be illumined as they continue their journey towards baptism and/or chrismation.**

Emma Bobro

Tatianna Calhoun

Kevin Duke

Kaleigh Flores

Anthony Salcedo, Ethan, Dominic and Jennifer

Gage Salinas

Naomi Siragusa

Mary Wolfington, Alicia & Gabriel

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

Prayer requests received through the parish office will be printed in the bulletin and will be prayed for during the litanies at the daily services. Prayer requests received in the box at the church will be prayed for quietly at the altar at all services. Prayer requests remain for 40 days unless requested otherwise.

**Send prayer requests for the bulletin to: office@stathanasius.org.  
Please pray for the health of:**

His Beatitude, Patriarch John X  
Mother Victoria  
Met. Paul & Abp. John  
Fr. Markos  
Fr. Jon B.  
Fr. John & Kh. Diane C.  
Audrey C.  
Greg & Margaret Y.  
Hoppe Family in Albania  
Joseph Wm. B. in Kenya  
Duane F.  
Richard and Susan B.  
Monsignor J. Yanek  
Bob N.  
Kh. Melissa H.  
Cole K. (military)  
Jeremiah H. (Airforce Academy)  
Lauren & Fernando J. (military)  
Chase K. (military)  
Nick & Kristine J. (military)  
Connor V. (military)  
Julianna B. (military)  
P. Speier (military)

Subdn. Matthew W. (seminary)  
Steve T.  
Abp. Benjamin  
Temmo K.  
Sarah B.  
Chuck S.  
Dn. John & Fay Y.  
Zachary B.  
Samantha & Chris N. & Family  
Lander and Washburn Families  
Kevin  
Stephan & Rosa K.  
David  
Evonne C.  
Phyllis M.  
Christina S.  
Judy A.  
Mark K.  
Todd C.  
Ethan K.  
Mari & the Fewell Family

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church  
The Church & people in Lebanon  
All those suffering and  
in danger in Ukraine,  
Africa, and the Middle East

Please pray for the raising up and support  
of long-term missionaries from our parish.

**For repose of the souls of:** Bishop Tikhon, Aiden B.

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**ST. ATHANASIUS CHURCH BOOKSTORE**

The church bookstore is located in the foyer of the fellowship hall - two enclosed cabinets containing items that are FOR SALE. One cabinet holds icons, crosses, incense, prayer ropes, etc. The bookshelf has books for sale, arranged alphabetically by book title. Children's books are on the bottom shelf. See Terri Speier if you are looking for jewelry such as a cross or chain. Payment should be made at time of purchase and placed in brown lockbox on wall next to Fr. Nicholas' office. Make checks payable to **S.A.O.C. Bookstore**. (The pamphlets in the rack are FREE, as are the 12-month liturgical calendars.)

**All proceeds go to the parish Temple Fund.**

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**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

**Great Lent 2023**

*“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give,  
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7)*

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, and Christ-Loving Faithful of this God-Protected Archdiocese,

Blessings to you and your families in the Name of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ!

Our Lord said, “Amen, I say to you: insofar as you did it for one of the least of these my brothers, you did it for me” (Matt. 25:40). Clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting those sick or in prison—all these acts of kindness toward others are received by Christ as an expression of love toward Him, when they are undertaken cheerfully. These words of the gospel are read in church on the Sunday of the Last Judgment in order to focus our attention on such acts of charity during this holy season. They call us to rededicate ourselves now to this Christian lifestyle of giving, which should characterize our lives throughout the year.

What a privilege it is to serve Christ Himself in the needy! In fact, every one of us is in need of the mercy of God. Christ identified Himself with the weak, the poor, and the miserable and with those who could not provide themselves with the necessities of life, so it is Him we serve in every human being, and it is Him who, in us, serves those who need to be served. This is how we live our “Royal Priesthood,” delivering our lives to Him so that we may experience the mystery of His sacrifice, for Christ Himself is “He that offereth and is offered, that accepteth and is distributed” (The Prayer of the Cherubic Hymn).

The mystery of giving and sacrifice lies in our acceptance to God’s Love, which we express by complying with the commandment, “My son, give me your heart” (Prov. 23:26). Giving God our hearts means giving Him everything—all our being. When we give Him our hearts, He gives us Himself through His Holy Spirit and dwells in our hearts with His unoriginated Father, “so that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). Then we will experience how “in everyone it is the same God at work” (1 Cor. 12:6) and will acknowledge that in Christ we become what we give; in other words, we should be the food given—in Christ, to and through Him—to console the hearts of those who seek it.

As we have throughout the past 49 years, we now encourage you to provide help for the needy through the Food for Hungry People program during Lent. We appeal to your generosity and your love of God, asking you to offer Christ this token of your gratitude for His kindness to us. We know that He will receive it as a precious gift and cherish it.

With prayers that God will strengthen us all in this holy struggle of Lent and that we will be found worthy to celebrate joyously the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, I remain,

Yours in Christ,  
Metropolitan ANTONIOS  
Metropolitan of Zahle, Baalbek, and Dependencies  
Patriarchal Vicar of New York and All North America