

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Toledo and
The Midwest

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
December 25, 2021

To the beloved Clergy and faithful of our Diocese Family,

Christ is Born! *Glorify Him!*

المسيحُ وُلِد! فمجِدوه!

It is instructive that Jesus Christ was born in the wilderness and in a cave.

The wilderness wanderings of the freed slaves from Egyptian tyranny and bondage required the miracle of Manna ~ the honey-like bread that God gave to nourish and strengthen. The wilderness also had a cave and a rock that when struck poured out fresh water.

Jesus is both bread and water, the water pouring out eternal life (John 4:14). *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever”* (John 6:51)

Our Savior was born in Bethlehem, the house of bread (Micah 5:2).

When Christ was tempted by the Fallen Angel to turn stones into bread, He changed the conversation from bread which cannot satisfy our hunger for eternal life and talked about Himself as the True Bread; *“man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”* (Deuteronomy 8:3).

The Holy Gifts are prepared for the Divine Liturgy under the Nativity icon. Here the Bread of Life is brought forth as the Word by which we live.

May He who was born in a cave and lay in a manger for our salvation, Christ our true God, bless you and your families always.

+ Bishop Anthony

+Bishop ANTHONY
Bishop of Toledo
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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

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