

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan SABA

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Los Angeles
And the West

March 3, 2025
First Day of the Great Fast

BISHOP ANTHONY'S LENTEN MEDITATION FOR 2025
TO BE READ IN CHURCH AND DISTRIBUTED TO THE FAITHFUL

The Lenten season gives meaning to the seasons of our lives. The prayers and services that frame time bring out the picture of each one of us. If we are aware of ourselves, especially at this time, the Lord will show us that the past—so vivid in our memories—has brought us into our present with all its blessings and disappointments. They are all arranged in graceful order for our future.

We should not wish to forget the hurt and trauma of life, those moments of soul wounds. Nor should we shelter away in the comfortable rooms of present happiness. We must go on and encounter what seems uncertain and what we think will make us vulnerable. Let us have faith for tomorrow, not fear of the future.

Lent fortifies our faith.

Because God created us, and God is good, each of us wants to be and to do good. In this life-project, we want to give others our unique and distinctive gifts, in whatever form they come. We want our own goodness to contribute to the good creation and please our Lord.

We cannot do this alone, in isolation. We cannot do this as individuals, where we select who our friends are and who are not and how long we will befriend them. Self-centered lives get lost in temporary interludes of contentment.

The marvelous technology around us often seduces us into planning our own course in life. It results not in a give-and-take with others in community but a willful taking from others what they can give. We fall away from the God who loves us and from the people who love us, and we get into the trap of self-love. If no one is with us, what is the object of loving?

Who we are, our special self, the “I” of “me” whom people love, is expressed in unity with my neighbor—all of my neighbors.

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

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This life of mine, so often weighed down by living for myself and from myself and, so, by myself, has brought an epidemic of loneliness to the world.

The Lenten discipline gathers us to pray together, to receive holy Communion as the Body of Christ. *“So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind”* (St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians 2:1-2). *“There is one Body and one Spirit, just as you are called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all”* (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Bishop Anthony". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

+Bishop ANTHONY

Bishop of Los Angeles
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America