

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

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

November 1, 2024

*Holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damianos
and their mother Theodota*

Beloved in the Lord,

Glory to Jesus Christ!
Glory Forever!

Following up on my last letter on the difference between politics here, in the world, and citizenship in Paradise, there, in heaven. I would like to think about how we all have two needs, paths, or tracks to go down and travel through on our way to our true homeland, the Kingdom of God, *“for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come”* (St. Paul’s letter to the Hebrews chapter 13, verse 14)

The first path is historical, chronological, and worldly. We are born in a family and a social setting that has a history we learn about in school. We have our lives within this time and place where we make moral and professional choices and, if it is God’s will, marry and make a family ourselves and join the movement of the particular place and space we are in, another box car on the historical train rolling towards a destination, rocking on the metal rails that carried others before us.

This is the world where politics plays a primary role in organizing society and, hopefully, ensuring a partial, if not perfect, economic security where work, rest, and relaxation are balanced and available.

This is a visible and easily experienced road. Our sensory-self immediately has a familiarity with it and knowledge of it. If we are too casual and comfortable here, we may live as if and, more often than not, think this is all there is to life, that there are not two roads, but only one ~ whether we like it or not.

There is an invisible way too. Our faith calls it a mystical passage through earthly time that merges into eternity, because even there we draw ever closer to God. Mystical means, in this case, mysterious, fascinating, and personal, known in our hearts. Jesus said, to underline this kind of travel: *“the Kingdom of God is within you”* (Luke 17:21).

Think of it in this way. We travel on interstate highways with entrance and exit ramps and overpasses. This is the world where signs and signals keep us orderly on our way to where we want or need to go. They need our sensory organs to make sense! Then, there is the jet stream whose winds push airplanes forward or resist them depending on whether they have a tail wind or are dragged slowly by a head wind. You cannot see the jet stream.

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

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The invisible jet stream is our mystical journey carrying us toward the Kingdom of God. We strive to have a tail wind! We have to develop a spiritual organ an enlightened mind and heart to follow in the right direction. For this, we need a humble mind, a pure heart, and a bright soul.

A very good English writer, Malcolm Muggeridge once said, “*only those who know the other world will understand how to live in this world.*”

If we want to make the best and most godly choice about worldly things, we need to have sound spiritual vision.

My seminary professor and renowned Orthodox Theologian, Fr. John Meyendorff, in his book, Byzantine Theology, writes in his chapter “The Church in the World”; “*the dynamic "movement," which characterizes the "new humanity in Christ," and for which the Church is responsible, is not the movement of history but a mystical growth in God, known to the saints alone. The movement certainly occurs in the midst of history and may, to a degree, influence the historical process, but it does not belong to history essentially, because it anticipates the end of history. It is, indeed, the "movement" of nature, and of the natural man, but natural humanity: humanity as originally conceived and created by God presupposes communion with God, freedom from the world, lordship over creation and over history. It must, therefore, be independent from what the world understands as history.*”

May God bless and be with you always.

+ Bishop Anthony

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