



Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America

*517 East Broadway
South Boston, MA 02127*

*Rt. Rev. Nikodhim
Bishop*

*Phone: 617-268-1275
albanianarchdiocese.org*

*V. Rev. Mark Doku
Chancellor*

27 February 2024
St. Raphael of Brooklyn

Reverend and Very Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

Christ is in our midst! Krishti midis nesh!

As we prepare to enter into the season of the Great Fast, attentive to the purifying struggle of Lent which has bright Pashka as its goal, I ask you to be attentive in this month of March to our archdiocese and to be generous and zealous in your prayers for it.

This year, we will inaugurate a new commemoration. United in prayer in these holy days, we will set apart a few minutes at the close of Liturgy on Sunday, March 24, to pray together, petitioning Almighty God to continue in His blessing, His providence, His grace and guidance for our spiritual home, this archdiocese.

Each March we mark two important occasions in the history of our diocese, days of note drawn from our spiritual ancestry: 13 March 1965 as the date of repose, the falling asleep in the Lord, of our first hierarch, the ever-memorable Theophan (Noli) and 22 March 1908 as the Sunday on which the first ever Divine Liturgy was offered in the Albanian tongue, intoned and prayed in Boston, Massachusetts by Noli and by the faithful founders of what would become this archdiocese.

I have instructed your fathers, the pastors of our parishes, to offer additional prayers at the close of Liturgy on the Sunday before the Feast of the Annunciation, hoping that this may become an annual tradition, a yearly opportunity for thanksgiving and earnest recommitment of ourselves and our communities to a shared purpose as one diocesan family. Additionally, I have asked that your pastors institute a practice on this same day of offering memorial prayers following the Liturgy for all of our departed diocesan hierarchs and for the priests and priftëresha who so faithfully served our local parishes.

I invite you and I adjure you now to be present on Sunday, March 24. With our prayers, we take up each this profound responsibility of bearing the history of our people, their struggles and sacrifices, our inheritance. With our prayers, we turn our faces now toward the future, bound together and purposed toward a common cause, which is that Christ's freedom and victory, His holiness mystically shared with us, be not ours alone but ours together, entrusted to us that we may bring this to others.

Offering you my every blessing and asking your forgiveness as we enter into the Great Fast together,