

His Grace Bishop Thomas, Diocese of Oakland, Charleston, and the Mid-Atlantic



His Grace the Right Reverend Thomas (Joseph), Ed.D., is an auxiliary bishop of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, serving in the Diocese of Oakland, Charleston and the Mid-Atlantic.

Of Arab-American heritage, Thomas Joseph was born in Paterson, New Jersey in 1953. He attended John F. Kennedy High School in Paterson, graduating in 1970. He went on to college at William Paterson College, graduating in 1974. After college, he worked in the Department of Community Improvements in Paterson, then served as a teacher for the Paterson Board of Education. When the Antiochian Village camp opened in the late 1970s, he was recruited by Fr. John Namie to serve as one of the original camp counselors from 1979 to 1982.

In the fall of 1979, Thomas began part-time study at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and was made a subdeacon by Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) of Blessed Memory in July of 1982. He continued his studies until the spring of 1983, when he was assigned to Virgin Mary Church in Yonkers, New York.

In 1984, Metropolitan Philip assigned him to St. George Church in Houston, Texas, where he served as Director of Christian Education and Youth Services. While in Texas, the Archdiocese also assigned him to oversee Christian Education and then later teen activities for the churches in the Southwest Region (now the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America). In July of 1988 Thomas was ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Michael (Shaheen) of Toledo.

On August 28, 1994, Bishop Antoun (Khoury) ordained Dcn. Thomas to the priesthood, and Fr. Thomas served as assistant pastor at his parish in Houston until August of 1996, when he was appointed pastor of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church in Pinellas Park, Florida, near St. Petersburg.

Between 1996 and his consecration to the episcopacy, Fr. Thomas served in multiple capacities aside from his work as a pastor. He was an appointed member of the Archdiocese Youth Department Board; Spiritual Advisor to the Teen SOYO (Society of Orthodox Youth Organization) Southeastern Region; Chairperson of the Tampa Bay Orthodox Clergy Association; former Director of Programs in Pastoral Bioethics for the International Academy of Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine in the United States; Speaker at Braunels, Germany, and at City University of Hong Kong on Bioethics; author of published articles on Christian Bioethics; Speaker at Antiochian Village and third session camp priest for many years; and past President and Vice President of the Tampa Bay Council of Orthodox Churches. In July 2002, Fr. Thomas was granted a Master of Arts degree in Applied Orthodox Theology jointly from the Antiochian House of Studies and the St. John of Damascus School of Theology of the University of Balamand in Lebanon.

On February 15, 2004, Fr. Thomas was elevated to the rank of archimandrite by Bp. Antoun, and on December 5, 2004, he was consecrated to the episcopacy by Patriarch Ignatius IV (Hazim) of Antioch in Damascus, Syria.

Bishop Thomas was enthroned as Bishop of Oakland and the East at St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh (Borough of Oakland), Pennsylvania, on May 6, 2005. In August of 2006, he graduated *summa cum laude* with a Doctorate in Education from California Coast University. His Grace also sits on the editorial board of the journal [*Christian Bioethics*](#), which is published by Oxford University Press. In 2005 and 2017, Bishop Thomas gave the commencement address at St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.

Throughout his ministry, His Grace has authored a number of published articles, including:

- [The Sanctification of Our Parish Life](#)
- [Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Its Importance in the Culture Wars](#)
- [Training Up a Child: Educational Options for Orthodox Christians](#)
- [An Orthodox University: Higher Education for Orthodox Christians](#)
- [Sanctified Schooling: Working out Salvation Within Education](#)
- [Instructing Your Spiritual Children for Salvation](#)
- [Orthodox Christian Witness](#) series
- [Care at the End of Life: What Orthodox Christianity Has to Teach](#)

He also co-authored the following articles:

- [The Emergence of Local Orthodox Christian Societies in America](#)
- [The Domestic Church as Foundation for Youth Formation in the Orthodox Faith](#)
- [Guiding the Ark of Salvation - The Theanthropic Role of the Bishop](#)
- [Orthodox Christian Witness Through a Vibrant Parish Spiritual Life](#)
- [Fidelity in the Life of Christ](#)

- [The Role of the Priest as Spiritual Father in the Orthodox Spiritual Life](#)
- [Care for the Elderly and Infirm in an Orthodox Setting](#)
- [Phronema, the Lifeblood of Orthodoxy](#)
- [Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World](#)
- [A Word on Forgiveness](#)
- [O Lord our God, Crown Them with Glory and Honor](#)
- [For the Healing of Soul and Body: Let Us Pray to the Lord](#)
- [Arise, Take Up Thy Bed and Walk: Pastoral Care for People with Special Needs](#)
- [The Two Shall Become One Flesh](#)
- [A Tranquil Heart amid Turbulent Seas](#)
- [With the Fear of God, and Faith and Love, Draw Near](#)
- [The Fast and Feast of Ss Peter & Paul](#)
- [Christian Marriage and the Role of Sexuality in the Life of the Orthodox Christian](#)
- [My Kingdom Is Not Of This World](#)
- [Who are the Right People, and Who are the Wrong People?](#)
- [Podcast: Expanding the Reach for Classical Education w/ Dr. John Mark Reynolds](#)
- [A Question for Orthodox Christians: What are we going to do to get them, and what are we going to do when they come?](#)
- [Again, We Pray for Our Father Whose Divine Liturgy We Now Celebrate](#)
- [Lust of Power, Anger Management, and Creating a Spiritually Fertile Environment for our Hierarchs, Priests, Deacons, and Faithful](#)
- [2022 St. Tikhon's Seminary Commencement Address](#)
- [The Holy Eucharist: Delighting in the Heavenly Food](#)
- [2022 Antiochian House of Studies Commencement Address](#)

He has also given presentations for the St. Tikhon's 2016 Continuing Education program including "Instructing your Spiritual Children for Salvation Through Faith in Christ Jesus: The Role of the Pastor in the Lives of Young People" and "Introduction to Orthodox Homeschooling."

Other articles include "Holy Hierarch Nicholas: Patron of Children and Model for Parents," "Sacred Music in the Holy Orthodox Tradition," "Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem: The Spiritual Benefit of Frequent Communion," and "Seeking First the Kingdom of God."

In 2006, the Church of St. George in Charleston, West Virginia purchased a chancery for the Diocese, and in October of that year St. George was elevated to a cathedral, thus adding another see to the Diocese. The Diocese is named the Diocese of Oakland, Charleston and the Mid-Atlantic. His Grace's residence is at the diocesan chancery in Charleston.

In addition to his duties in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, Bishop Thomas also served as the *locum tenens* of the Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest from December 2010 to December 2011. Within the Archdiocese, His Grace assists Metropolitan Joseph in overseeing the Antiochian Village, the Christian Education Department, the Youth Department, the Antiochian House of Studies, the Department of Prison Ministry, the Department of Homeschooling, and the military chaplains of the Archdiocese.

Since 2011, he has also chaired the [Committee for Youth](#) of the [Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America](#). He is also the episcopal liaison for the Assembly to the Orthodox Christian Education Commission (OCEC).

From May 2014 to 2018, His Grace served as Assistant to the President of the Balamand University in charge of Student Recruitment in North America. In May 2015, His Grace was elected to the

Board of Trustees of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. In 2017, St. Tikhon's awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Divinity.

In October 2021, the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America voted to create a new Youth and Young Adult Agency. At that time, His Grace Bp. Thomas was appointed as the Episcopal Liaison to the new agency.

His Grace was also appointed to The Saint Constantine School National Board on June 29, 2022 by His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH and by a unanimous vote of the board members.

Bishop Thomas's namesday is October 6 (Thomas the Apostle of the Twelve).