

Introducing “Joy Magazine” for Children

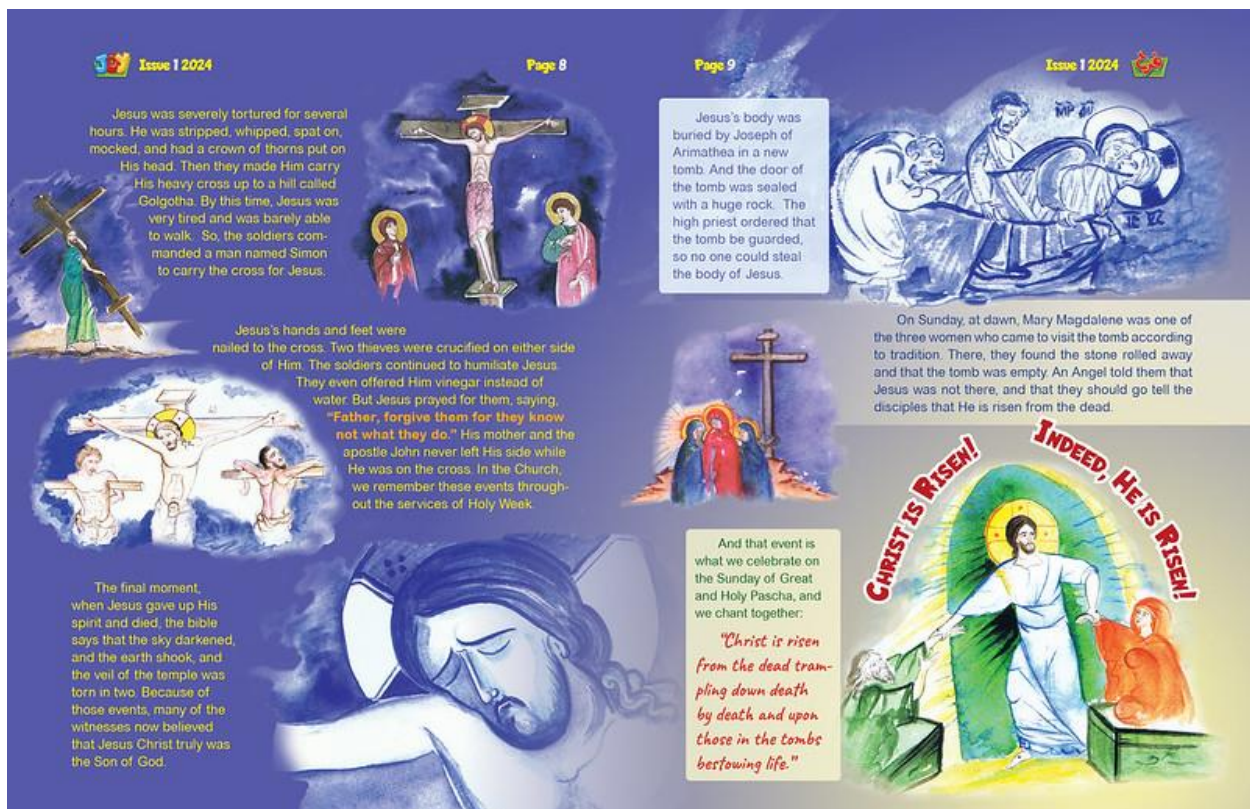
By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

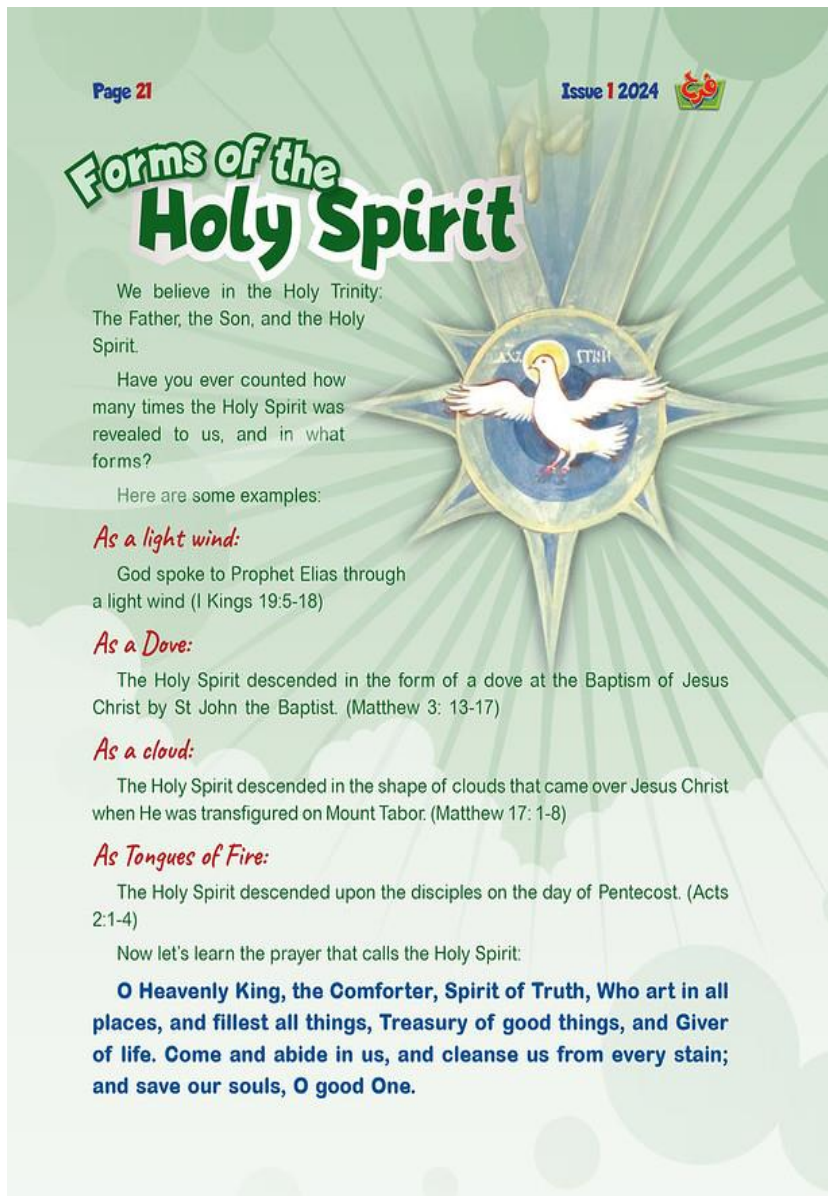
Sunday, June 9, 2024

My sons and daughters in this blessed Archdiocese,

I am delighted to inform you that the first issue of [Joy Magazine](#) for children has recently been released by our Archdiocese. The pages and sections of this Orthodox Christian magazine are designed to instill our faith in our children. As you read this letter, I hope copies have reached all of our churches. We have allocated a number of free copies for each church, so you have the opportunity to subscribe through your churches or by mail if you prefer.

We chose the name “Joy” (“Farah” in Arabic) because the proclamation of our faith begins with joy: “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11); and it ends with joy, “And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:52). We want joy for our children. After receiving the issue, some of you expressed great joy and what its pages brought to them.





This magazine has an old story that I would like to share with you. The idea first began on a spring day in 1992 when I was discussing with some university youth from the Orthodox Youth Movement the Sunday School ministry and how to provide children with a spiritual education that sticks with them at home. At that time, we agreed on the need for an Orthodox magazine tailored to them at their reading level.

And so we began, with humility and very simple means. The early issues were very basic in terms of production and

printing. They started in black and white, and soon the children eagerly embraced them in all the Antiochian archdioceses in the Middle East.

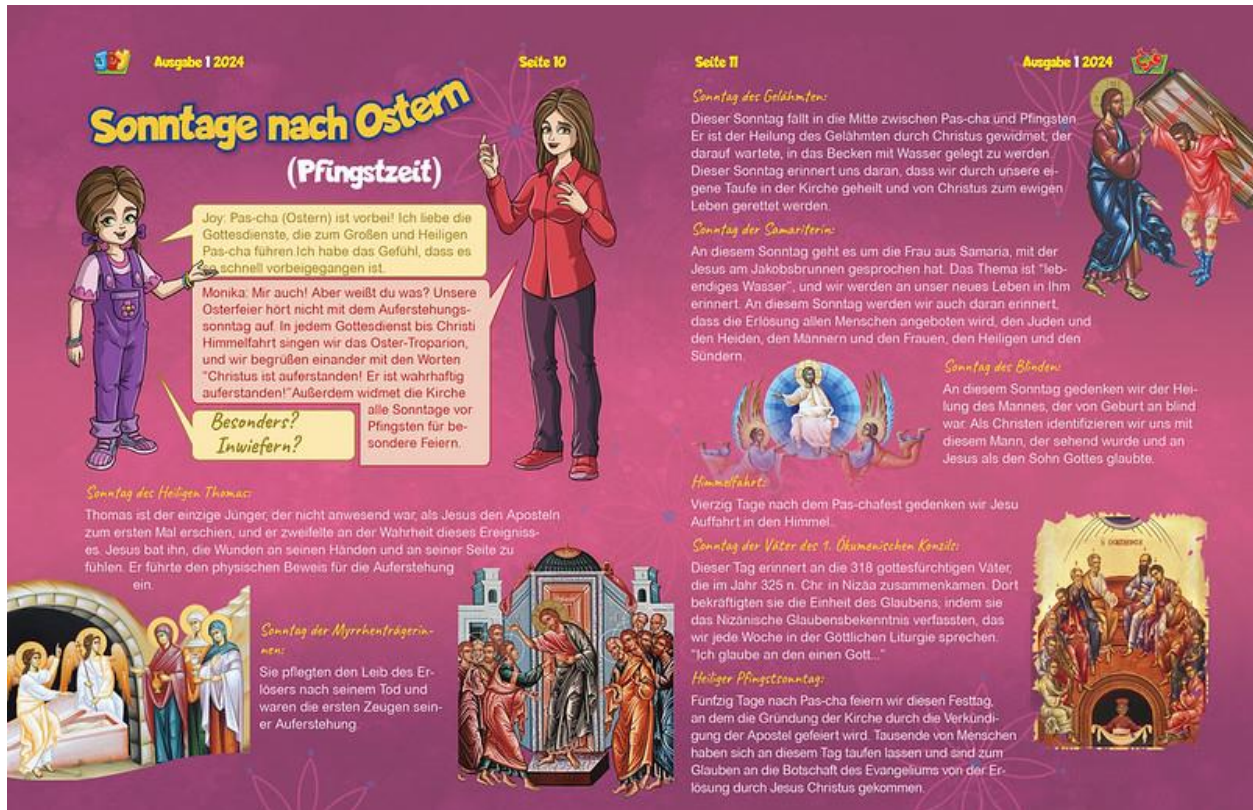
The increasing demand for them placed a greater responsibility on the editorial board than anticipated. But with the grace of God, we received support and the additional help that we needed.

During my visit to this God-protected Archdiocese between 1995-1996, I spent some time in Wichita as a guest of Bishop Basil Essey. There, Mr. Eric Namee became acquainted with the magazine after seeing some of its issues at the chancery. He provided us through the "Farah" Foundation with enough funds

to buy a photocopier, a computer, some design programs, and a camera. These devices helped us tremendously in developing the magazine.

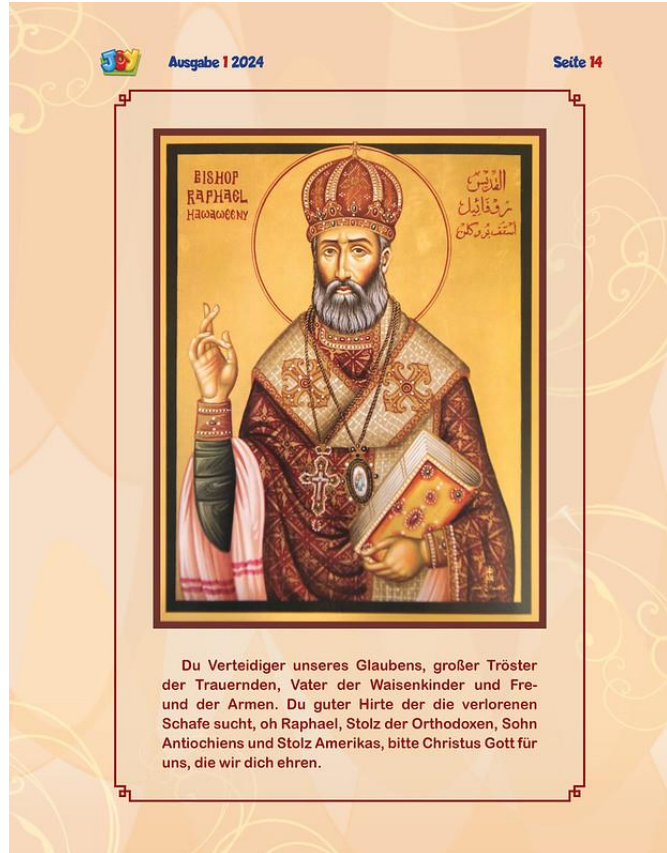
After my election as an auxiliary bishop for His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV of thrice-blessed memory, greater opportunities became available for the magazine's development and its pages increased. Issues came out in color and distribution expanded, until it exceeded eight thousand copies for each edition.

Eventually, the desire arose to issue Joy in English for the archdioceses of North America and Australia. We started with the grace of God, and three editions were published, but deteriorating security conditions and the cessation of mail forced us to stop issuing it. The Arabic version also stopped shortly thereafter.



After I arrived in this blessed Archdiocese and my acquaintance with the needs of its Department of Christian Education, I saw the necessity of issuing a magazine directed to our children and that they could read at home. I studied its revival, with many specialists in children's education and with some members of the old magazine team, who were forced to move and live in the

United States and Canada. Many responded positively to the idea, some volunteers from the Archdiocese began to offer their services, and thus the first issue was born with funding from the Archdiocese and a generous contribution from The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. The Antiochian Archdiocese of Germany requested permission to publish a German version, and the Antiochian Orthodox Media Center in Balamand, Lebanon requested permission to publish it in Arabic. Thus, the magazine became a means of communication between the archdioceses.



On behalf of our Archdiocese, I thank the magazine team who worked hard and cooperated with joy and apostolic zeal to print the first issue. The second issue will be released before Christmas, and the magazine will be issued quarterly in the coming year.

In its beginnings, the magazine will be somewhat modest, but I hope it will evolve and grow with your support and diverse contributions. The magazine welcomes every talented expert in writing, drawing, and design who wishes to volunteer their services for its publication. They can offer their services by contacting Fr. Peter Ackle at joy@antiochian.org.

I hope this magazine will be the beginning of launching many pastoral services that we will build together for a bright Christian future for you and the Archdiocese. Knowing your zeal, I do not feel the need to encourage you to subscribe and deliver the magazine to as many children as possible. May God bless you and protect our children with His abundant grace.

(For subscription information, contact joy@antiochian.org.)