

His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

*“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” Is 40:8*

To the Beloved Clergy and Laity of our Archdiocese:

Greetings in the Name of our Great God and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I pray this letter finds you and your families in good health. For the past thirty-seven years, our teens have ministered to the athletes of Special Olympics. Through the power and joy of sports, Special Olympics transforms lives, both of the athletes and those who serve them. Once again this summer, our teens will have the blessing to host and serve at the 38<sup>th</sup> Special Olympics SOYO Sports Training Camp, providing – free of charge – a week of sports training for over 320 athletes and coaches.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide: “year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.” Our Lord taught: “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.” (Mathew 18:4-5). We can see that supporting our teens’ participation in this ministry is teaching them to do as Christ taught in a most profound and life-changing way. By our financial support, we also join our young people in this beautiful opportunity to show the love, service, and hospitality of our Antiochian Orthodox faithful.

As you leave Church this morning, the teens will offer you bookmark with an icon of the patron saint of SOYO, St. John Chrysostom, chosen to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of its North American Council. They offer this icon as an expression of their appreciation for your contribution and for you joining them in this sacred ministry. Your gift today will have a great impact on the lives of these athletes and the teens that minister to them.

Asking the Lord to bless this thirty-eighth year of our participation in Special Olympics as well as all of you and your loved ones, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

**+JOSEPH**  
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

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

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