

Saint Raphael Hawaweeny

Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America

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3 the Halki Theological School, where he was ordained to the diaconate in 1885.

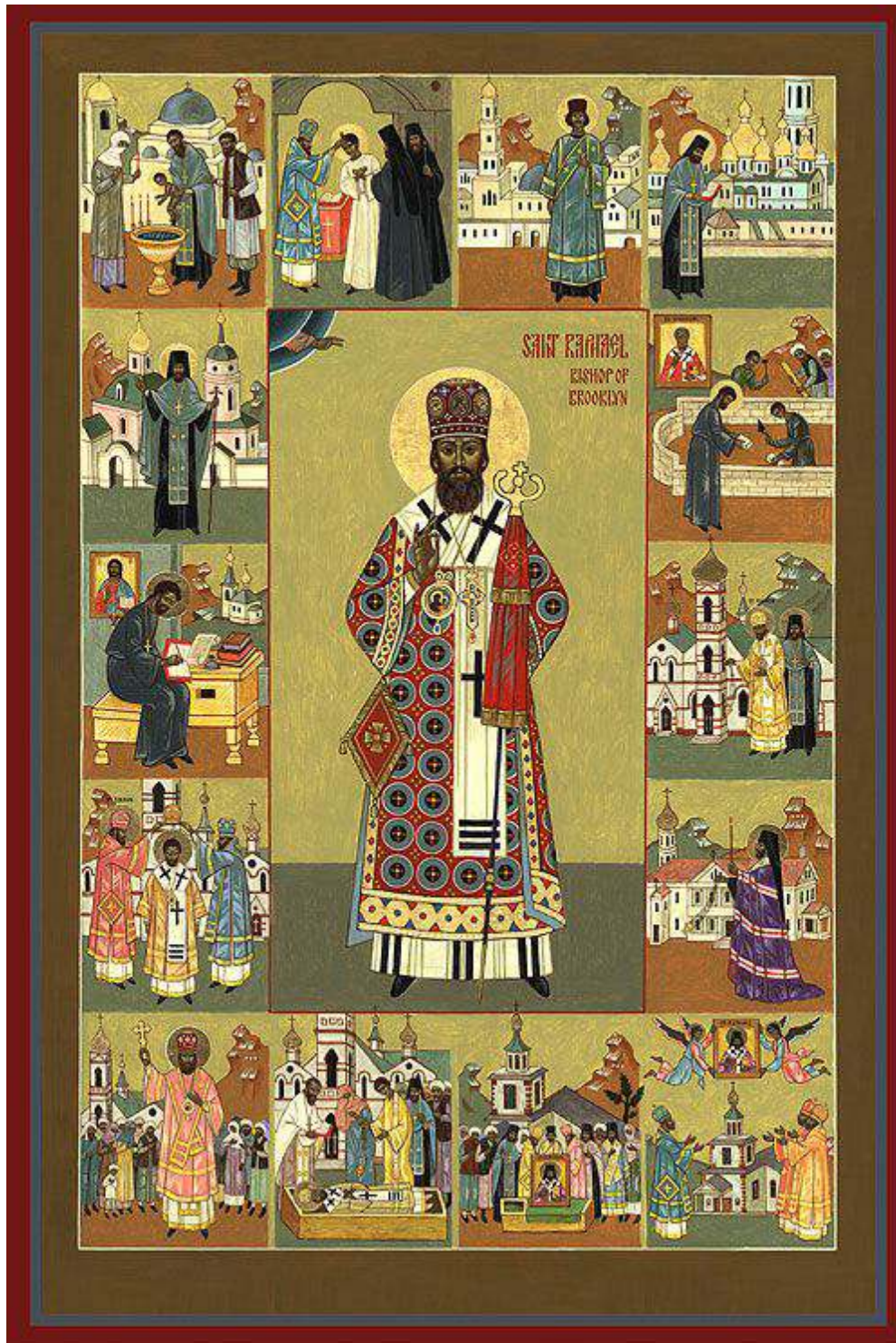
1 In 1860, St. Raphael was born and baptized in Beirut, to which his parents had fled after the outbreak of a persecution of Christians in Damascus.

5 St. Raphael served as the Representative of the Antiochian Patriarchate in Moscow.

7 St. Raphael established a publication for Orthodox Arabs and undertook other educational and literary ministries.

9 In 1904, St. Raphael was consecrated Bishop of Brooklyn by St. Tikhon and Bishop Innocent.

11 St. Raphael traveled tirelessly to minister to his flock across North America. Through his pastoral labors, many discords among the Orthodox Arabs were pacified.



4 He studied at the Kyiv Theological Academy and was ordained to the priesthood in 1889 at the request of Antiochian Patriarch Gerasimus.

6 St. Raphael arrived in America in November 1895. He established St. Nicholas Church, Brooklyn, NY, and founded many other parishes.

8 In October 1902, St. Tikhon consecrated St. Nicholas Church, Brooklyn, NY.

10 In July 1905, St. Raphael consecrated the grounds of St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA.

14 In March 2000, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America proclaimed St. Raphael a saint in services celebrated at St. Tikhon's Monastery.

12 On February 27, 1915, St. Raphael reposed in the Lord and after his funeral at St. Nicholas Church in Brooklyn, he was buried in New York.

13 In 1989, the incorrupt relics of St. Raphael were uncovered and transferred to Antiochian Village in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

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Our holy Father Raphael was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1860 to pious Orthodox parents [1]. His family had fled from Damascus because of a persecution that had been initiated against Christians. Among the martyrs was his family's parish priest.

After returning to Damascus the following year, the young Rafla – Saint Raphael's baptismal name – did very well in elementary school. Invited to become a student of the Patriarchate and to prepare for priestly ordination, he again excelled in his studies. In 1879, he was tonsured a monk by Patriarch Hierotheus of Antioch and was assigned to serve as his personal attendant [2]. Later he was sent to study at the renowned seminary at Halki, near Constantinople, and in 1885 he was ordained to the diaconate in the seminary chapel [3]. Returning to his homeland, he began accompanying Patriarch Gerasimus of Antioch on pastoral visits, occasionally preaching.

Eager to serve a wider range of people, Deacon Raphael obtained the Patriarch's permission to study at the Theological Academy of Kyiv. In 1889, at the Patriarch's request, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Sylvester, the Academy's Rector [4]. The Patriarch appointed him to serve as head of the Antiochian Patriarchate's Representation Church in Moscow, a position he held until 1895 [5].

Over the next years, Archimandrite Raphael campaigned to restore the administration of the Church of Antioch to its own clergy and people, but he still ministered to Russian and Greek Orthodox as well as Arabs. In 1895 he accepted an invitation to come to New York as Pastor of the Arab Orthodox community. Energetic as always, he established Saint Nicholas Church in Brooklyn, NY and supervised the building of churches in other places [6].

In 1896 he began the first of several continental journeys to find and minister to Arab Orthodox Christians scattered across the United States. He preached and taught, heard confessions, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and performed countless baptisms and marriages. His travels showed him the need for written materials to teach and sustain the people. He founded a periodical – still published as "The Word" magazine today – produced an Arabic service book, and remained involved in educational and literary activities for his whole life [7].

In 1902 Bishop Tikhon (later Saint Tikhon), as head of the North American Church, consecrated Saint Nicholas Church, Brooklyn, NY [8]. Two years later, in the same church, Father Raphael became the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated on American soil [9]. As a new bishop, he assisted in consecrating the grounds of Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania [10] and continued his missionary travels. His gentle, loving manner enabled him to settle serious disputes among his flock [11]. He continued his outreach to Greeks and Russians, encouraging all the Orthodox to use English in worship and education.

After years of declining health, Bishop Raphael reposed in February 1915 [12]. His funeral was held at Brooklyn's Saint Nicholas Church. In 1989 his incorrupt relics were transferred to Antiochian Village in Ligonier, Pennsylvania [13]. In March 2000, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America proclaimed him a saint. Glorification services took place that May at Saint Tikhon's Monastery [14].

O Holy Father Raphael, pray unto God for us! ■

