

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

Sunday, March 24, 2024

5025 E. Mill Road – Broadview Heights, Ohio 44147
440.526.5192 - info@stmichaelscleveland.org

www.StMichaelsCleveland.org

V. REV. FR. JOHN MEMORICH
(C) 216.548.8757
frjohn@stmichaelscleveland.org

Our parish welcomes you and thanks you for joining us in worship this morning.
If you desire any information about our parish, our diocese, or the Orthodox Church and Faith, please contact Fr. John Memorich. Check us out online or visit our Facebook Page which is updated regularly!



CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

First Sunday of Great Lent - Tone 1.
Sunday of Orthodoxy

EPISTLE READING

Heb. 11:24-36; 32:12-2

GOSPEL LESSON

John 1:43-51

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Sunday, March 24

9:30 am Divine Liturgy – Live Stream
Procession with Icons – Church School
Sunday School
4:00 pm Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers @ St. Theodosius
6:30 pm Parastas – Walter Dimitrijevs @ Mallchok's

Monday, March 25 – Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos

9:30 am Vespers Liturgy
11:00 am Funeral – Walter Dimitrijevs

Tuesday, March 26

7:00 pm Adult Education – Topic: Prophet Jonah

Wednesday, March 27

6:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy
Lenten Meal – sponsored by Board of Trustees

Thursday, March 28

7:00 pm Board of Trustees Meeting

Friday, March 29

7:00 pm Presanctified Liturgy

Saturday, March 30

9:30 am Divine Liturgy
3:30 pm Baptisms – Speth / Schlekier
5:00 pm Great Vespers / Confession

Sunday, March 31 – St. Gregory Palamas

9:30 am Divine Liturgy – Live Stream
Sunday School

CHURCH SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sunday – March 24 –

- **PARENTS – PLEASE** be sure to have your children bring their Icons for the Sunday of Orthodoxy procession of Icons.

PRAYERS, CANDLES, 7-DAY VIGILS and FLOWERS

FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF:

Tommy Visocky (13th Birthday) by Ed & Karen Visocky
Holly Hayes (Birthday) by Dede and Baba
Joyce Tabeing (Birthday) by Pat Hanchuk, sister
Chris Arkutik (Health) by Carol Milla
John Mindala II (Birthday) by John & Kathy Mindala
Anthony Schultz (Health) by The Tesar Family
Judi Wienclaw (Health) by The Tesar Family
Judi Wienclaw (Health) by Dennis Lapso

FOR THE REPOSE AND BLESSED MEMORY OF:

Nicholas Sipko (Departed) by The Cook Family
Joan Benny (Newly Departed; 7-d) by Ed & Karen Visocky
Walter Dimitrijevs (Newly Departed; 7-d) by Pdn. Michael & Mat. Lu Timko
Walter Dimitrijevs (Newly Departed; 7-d) by Dennis Lapso
Walter Dimitrijevs (Newly Departed; 7-d) by Chris Arkutik & Carol Milla
Tom Herberth (Newly Departed; 7-d) by The Herberth Family
Tom Herberth (Newly Departed; 7-d) by Dennis Lapso
Tom Herberth (Newly Departed; 7-d) by Ed & Karen Visocky
Annette Lapso (Departed; 7-d) by Dennis Lapso & Family
Joseph Naymik (Newly Departed; 7-d) by Helen Gaborick
Nicholas Sipko (Departed/Birthday; 7-d) by Jacquelin Sipko

Sunday, March 24 - Altar Servers & Readers

Altar Servers: Joseph Deyling, John Kormos, Jacob Kormos, Silas Foster, Isaac Foster, Augustin Mindala, Andrew Kovalak, Danny Reilly

Reader: Kathy Kovalak

Sunday, March 31 - Altar Servers & Readers

Altar Servers: Michael Gaborick, Lance Louie, Sam Watts, Charlie Herzak, Augustin Mindala, Nicholas Watts, Danny Reilly, MJ Herzak

Reader: Nick Rolin

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Fri, April 5 – HALOS – Kids on Wheels
- Fri, May 24 - Book Club
- Mon, June 3 – IOCC Banquet

NEWLY DEPARTED

Please remember in your prayers the newly departed servant of God **Walter Dimitrijevs**, who reposed in the Lord on March 18th. Memory eternal!

NEWLY DEPARTED

Please remember in your prayers the newly departed servant of God **Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria**, who reposed in the Lord on March 13th. Memory eternal!

LENTEN CHURCH SERVICES

After this first week of Lent, we will have:

- Presanctified Liturgies EVERY Wednesday (starting March 27) at 6pm;
- Akathist Friday, April 5; April 12 and April 26 at 7pm;
- On Friday, April 19 we will serve Presanctified Liturgy at 7pm in lieu of an Akathist service.

Upcoming Presanctified Meal Sponsors

Thank you to those who have sponsored a meal following the Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings:

March 27	Board of Trustees
April 3	Junior 'R' Club
April 10	Book Club
April 17	Cleveland 'R' Club
April 24	Samaritans

The church will supply all paper products and plastic silverware for all the meals. If anyone has any questions regarding the meals, please contact Kathy Mindala - 440.263.7427.

'R' CLUB WINE FOR SALE

The 'R' Club has wine left from the very successful Wine Tasting event held a few weeks ago. It will be on sale during Coffee Hour, or you can reserve some by contacting Becky at 216-403-4070.

- Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc (Tasting #2) \$14
- Dona Paula Malbec (Tasting #3) \$13
- Blackbird Project Red Blend (Tasting #4) \$20
- Primo Amore Moscato (Tasting #5) \$12

St. Gregory Palamas Monastery Pilgrimage

Enjoy a Lenten meal and Divine Liturgy with Orthodox Christians from other parishes and jurisdictions.

When: 2nd Saturday of Lent – **March 30**
9:30 am entrance of the bishop
10:00 am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

Where: St. Gregory Palamas Monastery
934 Coe Rd, 2256, Perrysville, OH 44864

Followed by a Lenten meal in the large trapeza. If you plan to attend liturgy/meal, please call 419-368-5335 or monastery@palamasmonastery.org so the meal can be prepared accordingly.

St. James Prayer List – March

"The prayer of the righteous has great power in its affects"
(St. James 5:1)

For the complete St. James Prayer List,
please see the most recent issue of the Archangel.

Add to the Departed: Walter Dimitrijevs, Patriarch Neophyte(Nikolov)

Stewardship

Thank you for your Stewardship. May God bless you for your generosity.

		MARCH	
		3/17/24	Wk-T-D
Collection for Sunday			
GENERAL FUND			
Pledge **	\$	8,290.00	17,341.00
PayPal / Pledge	\$	96.62	215.55
PayPal/Other	\$	0	0
Candle Desk	\$	130.00	482.00
Flowers	\$	0	65.00
Candles/Vigils – Prayers	\$	183.00	423.00
Offering	\$	110.00	450.00
Children's Offering	\$	3.00	10.00
Loose Cash	\$	11.00	428.00
Special Occasion	\$	0	0
OTHER INCOME			
Hall Usage	\$	0	100.00
Bap. Certificate	\$	0	20.0
Livestream	\$	0	100.00
IMO	\$	0	50.00
Weekly INCOME	\$	8,823.62	19,684.55
Weekly EXPENSE *	\$	7,082.00	21,246.00
(UNDER) / OVER	\$	1,741.62	-1,561.45
SPECIAL FUNDS INCOME			
Charity	\$	25.00	370.00
Improvement	\$	25.00	45.00
Renovation	\$	25.00	25.00
Liturgical	\$	0	0
Endowment	\$	0	0
Memorials	\$	0	100.00
Weekly Total /	\$		
Deposit to Spec Fund	\$	75.00	540.00

*Weekly expenses are based on the current year's approved budget, divided by 52 weeks in the year. *

**Pledge total may include donations towards the 2024 Pledge Campaign

***Transfer from Special Funds (SF) covers expenses which have been earmarked for payment from the Spec Funds Acct.

Bulletin Information Deadline

Deadline – is Thursday – 10 AM

Please forward any information you would like to have added to the bulletin to the church email – info@stmichaelscleveland.org

OR call 440-526-5192, Mat. Lu Timko.

Thank you!

GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION AT PRESANCTIFIED LITURGIES

If the Presanctified liturgy is celebrated in the morning, the normal guidelines concerning the Eucharist are to be followed. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion should prepare themselves spiritually through prayer and fasting from 12:00 midnight, not eating or drinking anything prior to receiving the Eucharist.

For those who wish to receive the Sacrament at an evening Presanctified liturgy, there are three ways in which to prepare, depending upon your personal abilities.

- Ideally one is expected to keep a complete and total fast (no food or drink) for the entire day and then partake of a light Lenten meal following the service.
- If one is unable to keep such a rigorous fast, you may eat a small, fast-worthy breakfast (such as tea and toast) but have no further food or drink until after that evening's liturgy.
- If one is unable to keep either of the previous two formats, it is permissible to eat a very light Lenten meal at noon and then begin the fast (no food or drink) with rigor. This third option, however, should not be considered the norm, but rather the exception, and is generally practiced only by the weak, infirm, or very aged.

If you have further questions or concerns you may contact me personally for bring them up during Confession

Fr. John



– Friday, April 5th – Kids on Wheels

It's that time of year to dust off your scooters, big wheel trikes, tiny cars, and roller blades (no bikes this year please)! Meet in the gymnasium from 6:30-8 PM for an open gym on wheels! We will be serving cheese pizza as always for everyone—plus a chance to plant some seeds and test out our green thumbs! See you there!

'R' CLUB OUTING – Always.....Patsy Cline

Everyone is welcome to join the 'R' Club at the Hanna Theater on Friday, May 10 for the Great Lakes Theater's production of 'Always...Patsy Cline' A Musical Celebration of the Country Legend. Enjoy the touching true story of Patsy Cline's friendship with a fan, Louise Seger, which started in 1961 and continued until the premature death of the renowned country star. LIMITED TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE! The show starts at 7:30 pm and the cost is \$35. Please contact Melissa Tesar at 216-509-2573 or clevelandrclub46@gmail.com for tickets.

AMOC SUNDAY SCHOOL

SUNDAY SCHOOL CALENDAR

- March 31 – Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas
- April 7 – Sunday of the Holy Cross

Our **NEW Sunday School GroupME link:**

<https://bit.ly/AMOCSSGroupMe>

VIDEO STREAMING

The Video Streaming Team is looking to add a few more producers/operators to our regular rotation.

NO VIDEO EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY. Our entire team can train anyone who is interested - all ages are welcome! It would be great to have people who would be available to help with weekday funerals or weekday liturgies - as well as Vespers and Sunday Liturgies.

If interested, please contact Phil Tesar at 216.210.9825 or at philtesar@gmail.com. A monthly sign-up has been created, and you are free to sign up for what fits our schedule.

CANDLES & PRAYERS

Have your loved one(s) remembered or prayed for during the Liturgy by requesting Candles & Prayers. Each request includes a listing in the bulletin, the name read during the service and the specific candle you would like. A \$3 candle burns during the service; a \$15 Seven-Day candle burns all week. There are specialty candles as well (i.e., Tetrapod Candles, High Place, Altar Table, etc.). Prices for those range from \$20-\$30. Call or email the church office to submit your request – or leave your request in the collection basket or at the candle desk. Call the church office with any questions!

Health & Well-Being

Health * Birthdays * Anniversaries * Name Day * Traveling

Repose & Blessed Memory

Newly Departed * Death Anniversary * Birthday of the Departed

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS–2024– March thru August

Thank you to those who have sponsored a coffee hour!

March – Senior 'R' Club	June – HALOS
April – Junior 'R' Club	July – Senior 'R' Club
May - 55+ Club	August – Junior 'R' Club

CHURCH MOBILE DIRECTORY INSTRUCTIONS

Do not forget that you can access our Church Directory on your mobile device! The instructions are at the back of your directory OR:

- Schedule.mychurchdirectory.com/mobile
- Church Name: Archangel Michael Orthodox Church
- Username: 33579
- Password: 42854

There are instructions to add the directory to iBook, also.

OUTREACH – COOKING & SERVING MEALS

We will be cooking and serving dinner at St Herman's the 3rd Monday of every month. If you can donate a few hours each month to cook and/or serve dinner for the men at St Herman's, please contact Kathy Kovalak, 440-842-6639.

Also we will be starting a list of people willing to cook a meal or 2 for one of our parishioners who might be ill, in hospital, new baby, etc., as the need arises. We are a Church family and how wonderful it would be to help each other. Please contact **Kathy Kovalak** at 440-842-6639 if you are interested.

Happy Birthday to those celebrating this week in March

Ralph Robinson	24	Judi Wienclaw	29
John Mindala II	24	George Strongosky	29
Anne Kyer	25	Thomas Visocky	29
Joe Tonicic	25	Lisa Lyon	30
Peter Ubbelohde	27	Kristina Polcen	30
George Glosik	28	Mary Herzak	30
Luke Hanchuk	29	Holly Hayes	30
Jacqueline Sabo	29		

No Anniversaries in March

May God grant you many years!!

AFRICA & BYZANTIUM ART EXHIBIT

coming to the Cleveland Museum of Art, the curator is Fr. Porfirios of Mt. Sinai (St. Catherine's Monastery).

Sunday, April 15 – Sunday July 21, 2024

Web site:

<https://www.clevelandart.org/exhibitions/africa-byzantium>

Icon with the Virgin Hodegetria Dexiokratoussa, c. 1200-1225 (Byzantine)



GRANDFATHER CLOCK – Looking for a good home!

You may have noticed there is a grandfather clock in the basement of the church. This clock (with original paperwork) is available to a good home with a financial donation to the church. The lucky donor will be responsible for moving the clock to its new home. We have been working on a project to update the honorarium in the library and additional wall space is required. Please reach out to any Board member if you are interested in acquiring the clock.



The Tamburitians

are coming to Cleveland – Saturday, April 20th, 2024 - 3:00 pm at Willoughby North High School. It's a new venue, but the same amazing show. Group discounts and student rates are available. Get your tickets today and get ready for another amazing event with America's favorite Folk Ensemble! <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/reflections-by-the-tamburitians-tickets-854573290717>

LOCAL FISH FRIES:

St. Andrew Eastern Orthodox Church

16029 Maple Park Drive
Maple Heights, OH
March 1, 15 and 29, April 12th
Serving 5 pm to 7 pm
Dine-in / Take-Out

St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Church

5913 State Road
Parma, OH
Every Friday through March 29th
Serving 4:30 pm to 7 pm
Dine-In / Take-Out

Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Cathedral

3352 Mayfield Road
Cleveland Hts., OH
Every Friday through March 22nd
Serving 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm
Dine-In / Take-Out

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

2187 W. 14th Street
Cleveland, OH 44113
Every Friday through March 29th
Serving 5 pm to 8 pm
Dine-In / Take-Out

St. Mary's Romanian

3256 Warren Road
Cleveland, OH 44135
Every Friday through March 29th
Serving 5 pm to 8 pm
Dine-In / Take-Out

ARCHANGEL MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
		* 3/5 - Topic: Women and the Church: Is a woman's place really in the home?			FAST FREE 6pm – HALOS 7pm-R Club – Wine & Cheese Event	FAST FREE 3pm – Baptism – William Matyas 5pm-Vespers/Confession
Prodigal Son 3 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School	4 10am – Prosphora Baking	5 7pm – Adult Education *	6	7	8 St. Tikhon's Board Mtg	Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste 9 9:30am – Divine Liturgy 5pm- Hierarchical Vespers 6pm-St Tikhon's Banquet
Last Judgment Meatfare Sunday 10 9:30am- Hierarchical Divine Liturgy Church School	11 Meat Fast 12 noon/Pierogi Making / potato balls	12 Meat Fast 9am-Pierogi Making 6pm-Woodside Bd Mtg	13 Meat Fast 9:30am-Molieben / Samaritans	14 Meat Fast	15 Meat Fast 7pm – Book Club	16 Meat Fast 5pm-Vespers/Confession
Cheesefare Sunday Forgiveness Sunday 17 St. Patrick, Bp of Armagh 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School Parastas – Victor Hanchuk 7pm-Forgiveness Vespers	18 Great Fast Begins First Week 5pm-Dinner/Serve @ St. Herman's 7pm – Great Canon of St. Andrew	19 11am-55+ Parastas / Meeting 7pm—Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	20 7pm-Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	21 7pm-Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete	22 9:30am-Presanctified Liturgy 7pm-Akathist	23 9:30am – Divine Liturgy 5pm-Vespers/Confession
Sunday of Orthodoxy 24 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School LCBA Meeting 4pm-Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers @ St. Theodosius	Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos 25 Second Week 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	26 7pm-Adult Education – Topic: Prophet Jonah	27 6pm/Presanctified Liturgy / Meal (sponsored by BOT)	28 7pm-BOT Meeting	29 7pm-Presanctified Liturgy	Ven. John Climacus 30 9:30am – Divine Liturgy 3:30pm/Baptisms – Speth / Schlekier 5pm-Vespers/Confession
St Gregory Palamas 31 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Church School						

Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon

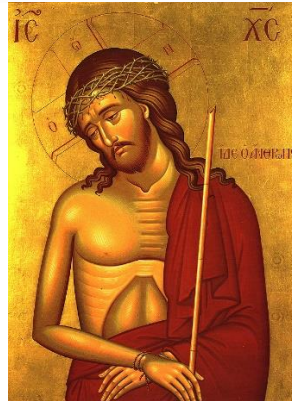
March 17, 2024

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, my beloved children in the Lord:

Christ is in our midst!

I greet you at the outset of the Lenten fast, and I assure you of my prayers for you during this sacred season. I pray that the coming Forty Days will be a time of soul-saving struggle for all of you.

When a traveler sets out on a long and difficult journey, he endures the road by keeping his destination in mind. Similarly, at the beginning of the Fast, it is helpful for us to look forward, toward its end, towards our final destination. We look towards that destination so that we might properly direct our Lenten efforts, our prayer and fasting and almsgiving.



And what is the destination toward which the Lenten efforts are directed? What is the end of our journey?

We are going to see a king enthroned, to witness a ruler coming into his kingdom.

When the Lord took his seat in the place of judgment and Pilate stood before him, the Roman governor addressed the King of Glory with inquiries concerning the nature of his kingdom.

“Are you the King of the Jews?” (Jn. 18:33)

“So you are a king?” (Jn. 18:37)

The kingship of Christ was a stumbling block for Pilate then, and today, twenty centuries later, that same kingship remains a stumbling block for many. The Lord had already stated the matter plainly to his would-be judge: “My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world” (Jn 18:36). But Pilate refused to understand. “Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?” he asked the Lord (Jn. 19:10).

In his willful ignorance, Pilate remained convinced that his earthly authority, delegated by the emperor, made him the judge over the Man who sat before him, when in fact, it was that Man who had taken his seat to pass judgment over the world. Pilate thought that he held the life of this Man in his hand, when in fact, it was that Man who held the life of the world in his palms, palms soon to be pierced by the nails of torment. Pilate believed himself to be an agent of the rule of law, when in fact, it was Christ the Law-giver who was making ready to “reign from the tree” (cf. Ps. 95:10).

In short, Pilate thought the earthly empire of Rome was the measure of all kingship, when in fact, the greatest kingship is the otherworldly reign of Jesus Christ.

Today, earthly states and the passing polities of this world continue to assert themselves through violence, warfare, the application of crude power. In this unsettled time, we are filled with sorrow and anxiety at the sharp increase in partisan political tensions, together with vitriol and factionalism, in the lands where the Orthodox Church in America sojourns. We are filled with sorrow and anxiety as we hear of wars and rumors of wars in Ukraine, the Holy Land, Armenia, Yemen, throughout the Middle East, in East Africa, in the Korean Peninsula. We are filled with sorrow and anxiety as we see our fellow Orthodox Christians persecuted, suffering, and endangered in Ukraine, in Russia, in Gaza. As our Lord tells us, these frightening circumstances are characteristic of the troubled age in which we live—“but the end is not yet” (Matt. 24:6).

“The end is not yet,” but, as Orthodox Christians, we should be living for the end. We are called by Christ to live for the last things, for the kingdom that does not belong to this world of time. Thus, it is with acute sorrow that we observe today many Orthodox Christians manipulated by the false powers of this passing age. Confusing the temporal for the eternal, many have chosen the Pilate-like paths of violent aggression, apology for violence, and religious imperialism and nationalism. As tragic as Pilate’s lack of vision was, it is all the more tragic when those who have been illumined by holy Baptism choose short-sighted ideologies that place their hope in a this-worldly future rather than in the eternity of Christ’s kingdom.

Witnessing this confusion, and this idolatrous embrace of ideology, I pray for those who have been deceived and led astray. Moreover, I see how, in certain places that present themselves as safe havens for the Faith, those who pray for peace are jailed and suffer as prisoners of conscience, and I pray for those who are persecuted. I see how, in other lands, the legitimate interests of the state, distorted by the passions of nationalism, have become a cause for the unjust treatment of Orthodox Christians who desire nothing other than fidelity to the holy Canons and Tradition of the Church, and I pray for those who are oppressed. I see how, in my own Church, political divisions have infiltrated many of our communities, and I pray that we all might resist the temptation of diabolical division along ideological lines, instead growing in unity of mind, striving together to put on the mind of Christ.

Even as we shun the temptation to place our hope in this fleeting world and its crumbling powers, we must be clear: Christ reigns even now, in the present. It is in the present that we encounter him who is named “I AM.” Although Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, nevertheless, Christians are called to become heirs of that kingdom even in this life. The kingdom is not found in a place or a time; it “is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, ‘Lo, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God,” says the Lord, is within us and in our midst, in the midst of his disciples, in the midst of the Church (Lk. 17:21).

Christ’s rule is not postponed to the future age, but neither is it merely another earthly reign; it is the eternal reign of God already manifest in time among the people of God. This rule is revealed and made real whenever men proclaim the Name of Jesus Christ, not merely in word, but in deeds. Christ’s kingdom is love, mercy, and forgiveness; it is repentance, self-sacrifice, and virtue.

The champions of Christ’s kingdom, then, are not those who rise up to defend it from earthly attack. The Lord once rebuked Saint Peter for his mistaken recourse to a crude, material sword (Mt. 26: 52–4), and Saint Paul reminds us that, in our struggle, “we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

The champions of Christ’s kingdom, rather, are those who bear witness to the Passion and Resurrection of the Savior by, in their flesh, completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions (Col. 1:24). These stalwart soldiers and knights of Christ are, in the first place, the holy martyrs—not those who kill in the Name of the Lord, but who die in the Name of the Lord. “Blessed are those who die in the Lord henceforth” (Rev. 14:13).

Many Christians today believe, and viscerally feel, that the kingdom of Christ is under attack. This is true. Satan is always going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. As Saint Paul indicates, there is a war underway. But that war is spiritual in nature; earthly swords will do no better than Saint Peter’s blade did when he turned it against Malchus. To seek to defend the kingdom of God with tanks and airplanes is to accept Pilate’s debased notion of kingship rather than embrace the exalted rule of Jesus Christ; using violence to establish a kingdom is the way of Herod, not of the tiny martyrs of Bethlehem. To believe that salvation depends on earthly rulers and regimes and favorable conditions for the faith is not the way of the martyrs, but the way of emperor-worship. In this regard, we must remember that many saints gave their lives rather than offer even a pinch of incense in worship of Caesar.

Of course, we desire that our earthly rulers provide us with a favorable situation for the propagation of the faith, for the peace and welfare of the churches of God, and we pray for this at the Divine Liturgy and the other holy services. Moreover, among the saints there is an entire rank of right-believing rulers. Indeed, from the time of Saints Boris and Gleb to the time of Saint Nicholas II and his royal family, there is sometimes significant overlap

between the ranks of the right-believing rulers and the ranks of the martyrs and passion-bearers. Some of those rulers were effective; some were less effective. What they had in common was a fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, beginning in their own personal lives. The holy rulers were not those who sought earthly power; they are those who, presented with power, remained faithful to the Lord and turned their earthly power back over to his service as best as they could.

Thus, our way forward consists neither in vainly grasping after earthly power nor in capitulation to the dark spirit of the age, but in fidelity to the Gospel according to our circumstances. We must reject sin—through repentance, confession, and preaching to those who have ears to hear. We must strive for the kingdom—through worship, charity, and virtue. We must fight for the faith—against the old Adam, against the devil, and against the passions. We do not reject the world’s dark ideologies by embracing the vanity of external violence and power. Instead, we reject the world’s dark ideologies by putting sin to death in our flesh through the violence of the ascetic life and the grace-filled power of God in whom is our hope and trust.

As we speak of the violence of the ascetic life, I point us back towards our Lenten efforts. In the face of tragedy and conflict, it is characteristic for all manner of organizations and companies and parties and public figures to offer up their “thoughts and prayers.” However, as Orthodox Christians, we are invited truly to pray, truly to fast, to bear some small martyrdom, some small witness, in our bodies. By the grace of God, this ascetic struggle, this little martyrdom, connects us to the Lord, his saints, and all those who suffer innocently. During these Forty Days that Save Our Souls, I exhort all of you to make a genuine effort to fast for peace and to pray for those who suffer. Platitudes are not enough: real ascetic effort is required. This ascetic effort makes concrete the hope and trust that we place in the kingdom to come.

It is this hope in the coming kingdom and this trust in the Savior that gave the martyrs the power to accomplish the greatest feat of arms—willingly to die, and thereby to join in Christ’s conquest of the world, death, and the devil. May God give us all the strength and the courage necessary to follow the way of the martyrs and to reject the false paths of human violence, power, and pride.

To our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, who suffers with all the innocent sufferers and lives in the deaths of all the martyrs, be unending glory and adoration, together with his Father and his Most Holy Spirit, now and unto everlasting ages. Amen.

Sincerely yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,
With all the blessings of the Holy Forty Days,

+TIKHON
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF
THE MOST REVEREND DANIEL
Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest
AT THE BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT 2024

Open to me the doors of repentance O Giver of Life; for my spirit rises early to pray towards Thy Holy Temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled. But in Thy Compassion purify me by the loving kindness of Thy Mercy.

Beloved Clergy, Monastics, Seminarians, and Faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest,

The “Doors of Repentance” are, indeed, opened for us so that we may pass through them and enter fully into the special season of grace, the 40-day period of the Church’s year, which we know as **Great Lent**. Indeed, it is repentance, fasting, and abstinence which are the chief hallmarks of our observance of this grace-filled season. While we strive to dedicate more time to prayer and study of the Holy Scriptures, participate more fully in Church’s services, and reach out in charity to those in need, it is fasting of which we are most conscious in our day-to-day of life. But fasting from various foods (limiting the amount we eat and drink) and abstinence from many types of food (not consuming any animal products and foregoing alcoholic beverages) is not an exercise we perform for its own sake. Rather, the fasting discipline to which the Church calls us is intended not only as a form of penance and self-denial, but to help us focus on our spiritual lives so that we might grow in holiness as we prepare to renew within us the Paschal Mystery of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the mystery in which we share by virtue of our baptism into Christ.

In one of his most memorable sermons, Saint John Chrysostom on the purpose and necessity of fasting. He emphasizes that fasting is not just about eating and drinking less or abstaining from certain foods. He states, “I have said these things, not that we may disparage fasting, but that we may honor fasting; for the honor of fasting consists not in abstinence from food, but in withdrawing from sinful practices; since he who limits his fasting only to an abstinence from meats, is one who especially disparages it. Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works! *Is it said by what kind of works? If you see a poor man, take pity on him! If you see an enemy, be reconciled to him! If you see a friend gaining honor, envy him not! If you see a handsome woman, pass her by! For let not the mouth alone fast, but also the eye, and the ear, and the feet, and the hands, and all the members of our bodies. Let the hands fast, by being pure from loose*

living and avarice. *Let the feet fast, by ceasing from running to the unlawful spectacles. Let the eyes fast, being taught never to fix themselves rudely upon handsome countenances, or to busy themselves with strange beauties.”* Saint John Chrysostom, the preacher with the “golden mouth,” counsels us to not only embrace fasting, but, as we embrace it, to look beyond the spiritual practice of fasting and realize that, if our fasting is to have any merit, if it is to make any difference in our lives, it must have an impact on all the areas of our life.

We are only at the beginning of the Fast and the weeks ahead can become more challenging and more tedious with each passing day. However, despite frustration or even boredom with the fast, we strive to remain faithful to it, nonetheless. So, as we struggle to be faithful to the Church’s discipline, let us also reflect upon the impact that our daily and Lenten fasting has in our daily lives. If we are more loving, if we are caring for those around us, if we reach out to those in need, if we are curbing our tongues, if we are less tempted by the world and its enticements, we will see the fast at work within us. To the contrary, if we see ourselves slipping in these areas of virtue, we must use that self-awareness to re-focus and step back onto the path of Lent.

The Lenten journey we are about to begin can be difficult. But we do not begin this journey alone or without support. Indeed, we are surrounded and supported by our fellow-strugglers, our brothers and sisters in Christ who walk the same Lenten path we are walking. Remember, we are not alone: our fellow Orthodox Christians, our families, and our faithful clergy join us in the struggle and share the same efforts. And, with us, they look to our common goal. May our mutual support encourage us in our common effort so that together we may reach that goal and arrive at the bright, joyous, and never-ending day of Pascha.

Be assured of my prayers for you and yours. May we journey together, supporting one another in our Lenten efforts. May the Mother of God, honored and venerated in her *Tikhvin* icon as the Mother and Protectress of our beloved Diocese, intercede for us all.

With love in our Merciful and Forgiving Lord,

DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest