

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Great Lent 2020

TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT AND PRINTED IN THE BULLETIN

Beloved Faithful in Christ,

Greetings and blessings to you and your families in the Name of our Great God Savior, Jesus Christ!

Last week, the Church called upon us during the chanting of the Praises to enter the “arena of virtues” to struggle in the “noble contest of the Fast.” We were entreated to arm ourselves for the contest:

Let us have as our invincible rampart the Faith, prayer as our breastplate, and as our helmet almsgiving; and as our sword let us use fasting that cuts away all evil from our heart. If we do this, we shall receive the true crown from Christ the King of all at the Day of Judgment.

Too often, we remember during Great Lent to take some time to learn more about the Faith, keep the dietary rules of the fast, and make an effort to increase our prayer life but forget about the call to give alms. While being strong in the Faith is our rampart, prayer is our breastplate, and fasting is our sword, we should notice that without almsgiving our armor is lacking a helmet! No warrior enters an arena without a helmet, and we should not think that we can win in our Lenten struggle and attain a crown from Christ without generosity to the poor and needy.

With this in mind, our Archdiocese has offered the faithful an opportunity to generously give alms throughout the Lenten season for the past forty-six years – *Food for Hungry People*. Over the last several weeks, the Church has warned us that the mere observance of the rules of Faith condemned the Pharisee and the ignoring of the poor, naked, sick, imprisoned, hungry, and thirsty placed a multitude on the left hand of the Savior at the day of judgment. I ask not just for the parishes as institutions to give generously to *Food for Hungry People* but each and every family! Do not neglect the helmet of almsgiving as you continue in the noble contest of the Fast!

With prayers for all of us to be granted the strength to struggle courageously in the arena of virtues and be found worthy to celebrate joyously the victory of our Crucified and Risen Lord, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

+ 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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