

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

March 30, 2020

Dear Fr. Luke, Reverend Clergy, Khouriyeh Dolly, Basil, Esteemed Members of the Parish Council, and Beloved Faithful in Christ,

Greetings and blessings to you in the Name of Our Victorious and Risen Lord, Jesus Christ!

Joined by my brother hierarchs, the reverend clergy, esteemed trustees, and Christ-loving faithful of our God-protected Archdiocese, I offer sincere condolences and heartfelt prayers for you at the passing into eternal life of Father Isaac. He served many of our parishes in his long and distinguished ministry as a priest of this Archdiocese. He built a sterling reputation as a man of fervent prayer and strong faith. His gentle demeanor and kind heart left an indelible mark on the hearts of his many, many spiritual children.

Fr. Isaac's passing into eternal life came during our commemoration of the Precious Cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ. For a considerable amount of time, Fr. Isaac bore the cross of his sickness with courage and strength, patience and forbearance. His earthly cross has now been taken away from him, and he is experiencing the fullness of the joy of Pascha in the heavenly kingdom.

During this time, we are all experiencing a new cross – the introduction of a virus that has caused a worldwide pandemic. We should take the example of Fr. Isaac and bear this new cross with his courage and strength, patience and forbearance. With faith and trust in our Lord and Savior, along with the prayers of Fr. Isaac, this cross will also be lifted from us. Let us fervently pray for the hastening of that time when we will once again be able to worship together in our holy churches.

Having said that, our physical distance does not imply a spiritual distance from one another. I am praying fervently with you for the repose of Fr. Isaac's soul today. And his passing from this life does not imply his spiritual distance from us. He will be with us and praying for us at the Throne of God until the culmination of that Eighth Day, when the sun will not set and our joy will be unending.

With paternal love and hope in the Resurrection, 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.

+JOSEPH

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"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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