

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

September 21, 2017

Leave-taking of the Elevation of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross

Beloved in Christ,

With Archpastoral love, I embrace all of you – my brother hierarchs, reverend clergy, and Christ-loving faithful. Once again, I write to you in the midst of tragedy, witnessing the results of the devastating earthquake that struck our brothers and sisters in Mexico. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, when “one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.”

When I reflect on the heartrending disasters of the last several weeks, I take heart that we have been commemorating the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross. As we raise on high the Cross, we remember the sacrificial love of our Lord Jesus Christ. We remember how He transfigured that instrument of cruel torture and death into a “weapon of peace and trophy invincible.” We remember that the tears of mourning shed by the Ointment Bearing Women were transformed into inexpressible joy on the morning of Pascha.

As the Body of Christ, we do not lose hope in the face of suffering. Armed with the power of the Life-giving Cross, we follow the example of our Lord in our offering of sacrificial love to those in need, and in our co-working with Him, transfiguring life’s crosses into moments of grace-filled reconciliation between God and humanity, humanity and creation.

With all of the images of human suffering we have seen, let us not become desensitized to yet one more tragedy. Let us, taking our strength from this feast, renew our commitment to sacrificial and co-suffering love. Once again, I ask for your generosity towards our suffering brothers and sisters in Mexico. Once again, I ask you to offer fervent prayers on behalf of the suffering. We will have a special collection this Sunday – please mark the memo of your check with “Earthquake Appeal.”

As your Father in Christ, I have every confidence we will share the love and peace, hope and joy of our Savior during these trying times. Please assured of my own fervent, heartfelt prayers on behalf of all of you.

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

+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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