

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 Fast, 2017**

**TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT AND PRINTED IN THE BULLETIN**

*Let those of us who have wisely finished the course of fasting and who celebrate with love the beginning of the suffering of the Passion of the Lord, let us all, my brothers, zealously imitate the purity of self-controlled Joseph; Let us fear the sterility of the fig tree; Let us dry up through almsgiving the sweetness of passion. In order that we may joyously anticipate the Resurrection, let us procure like myrrh pardon from on high because the eye that never sleeps observes all things.*

*---St Romanos the Melodist*

Beloved in the Lord:

Blessings and greetings in the name of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray that you and your families are enjoying good health as we prepare to begin another Lenten journey that culminates in the death and resurrection of our Lord.

As we begin our journey to Pascha, we enter into a time of increased prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. To that end, we write to you today to usher in a program that has become synonymous with this holy period, the *Food for Hungry Program*. This program, under the guidance of Miss Robin Nicholas, has helped countless numbers of people for decades. What I love about this program is that much of the money that is raised comes from the pennies, nickels, and dimes of the faithful adults and children of our parishes. It is amazing to think how our spare change can add up to so much!

As we begin a new fast, let us continue to strive to help those in need. As we abstain from foods and curtail our eating habits, let us set aside the extra money we would have spent on food and give it to the poor; this will make our fasting complete. As we increase our prayer, both private and in the Church, let us set aside those extra dollars we would have spent at the movies, going out with our friends, socializing, etc.; this will help put our prayer into action. As we strive to control our passions, let us help those whose only passion is to have a small meal to eat, a glass of clean water to drink, or a warm place to rest; this will enable us to see Christ in these, the least of our brethren.

Wishing you all a fruitful and spiritually rewarding fast, I remain,

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)*

358 Mountain Road, P.O. Box 5238, Englewood, NJ 07631-5238  
(201) 871-1355 T Archdiocese@antiochian.org (201) 871-7954 F