

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 17, 2019

To Be Read from the Pulpit and Printed in the Bulletin

Reverend Fathers, Esteemed Members of the Parish Council, and Beloved Faithful:

Greetings and blessings to you in the Name of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I pray that all of you have begun the long journey to Pascha with a rigorous and spiritually fruitful first week of the fast.

Today is a day both to celebrate and reflect. We reflect on a time in our history when the holy icons were removed due to false teaching, and we celebrate their restoral through the triumph of true theology. This historical triumph reminds us that the education of our future clergy is of the utmost importance, for they will be tasked in the coming years with teaching true theology and rejecting false teachings. Therefore, each year on this day, it is meet and right that we ask the faithful to contribute towards the education and formation of our young men studying for the holy priesthood.

As these young men prepare for service in the Church, they leave family, friends, and careers behind for a life that will by no means make them materially wealthy. They come burdened with student debt due to the ever-increasing price of undergraduate degrees. They come with wives and children, with little ability to work to support them due to the rigors of seminary life. The long-standing tradition of our archdiocese is come together and share the burdens placed on our seminarians and their families by providing them with much-needed scholarships and housing aid.

Therefore, I ask all the Christ-loving faithful of our parishes to generously donate towards the support of the seminarians and their families. This is a sacred responsibility for all of us to share as they will be sharing themselves with each and every one of us – hearing our confessions, baptizing and marrying our children, burying our loved-ones, ministering to us in our times of sorrow, and leading us on the path to salvation.

Wishing you all a holy and spirit-building Fast, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

+JOSEPH

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

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