

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, 2016

TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT AND PRINTED IN THE BULLETIN

Beloved in the Lord,

Greetings and blessings to you as we enter this most holy season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

It is with the greatest joy that I write to you today to inaugurate the 2016 Food for Hungry People campaign. This year marks the 42nd anniversary of this charitable drive. When reflecting on the past 42 years, I call to mind the countless charitable organizations and individuals that we have helped because of this fund. Through your generosity on the parish level, this drive has grown into a strong witness of our Holy Orthodox faith on this continent and throughout the world.

St. John Chrysostom, perhaps the greatest preacher in the history of the Church, once said: "Although fasting is more difficult than this, nothing is so strong and powerful to extinguish the fire of our sins as almsgiving. It is greater than all other virtues. It places its lovers by the side of the King Himself, and justly. For the effect of fasting is confined to those who fast, and no other is saved thereby. But almsgiving extends to all, embracing the members of Christ, and actions that extend their effects to many are far greater than those which are confined to one." Through your generosity to the Food for Hungry People campaign, you embrace the world with the love of Christ, saving yourself as you literally save others.

During the past few years, we continue to raise funds through various means to help those affected by the war in Syria. Through your contributions to FFHP over the years, we have helped many of the orphanages and other charitable organizations within Syria and throughout our Patriarchate and the entire Middle East, in addition to our domestic charitable contributions. As we continue to witness the horrors of the war in Syria, please make a special effort this year to use FFHP to raise funds and awareness to the tragedy there so we can help those in need even more.

We urge you, during this season of prayer, self-discipline, and fasting to be very generous in your contribution to this campaign. As we practice the virtues which cleanse our souls, let us not forget or refrain from what St. John Chrysostom calls the "greatest of the virtues," giving to the poor. As important as prayer and fasting are, they are of no avail to us if we fail to give to those in need.

Praying that the Holy Spirit will strengthen us as we embark on our journey to Pascha we remain,

Your Father in Christ,

+**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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