

# GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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## *News Release*

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Holy and Great Lent

*But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.  
(John 4:14)*

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are truly blessed to enter once again this sacred and holy season of Great Lent, a time of prayer and reflection, a time of fasting and abstinence, a time of service, and a time of spiritual renewal. We have begun this transformative journey to the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord over the past few weeks from the beginning of the Triodion, starting with the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. We have been led through the services and observances of the Church to contemplate all that separates us from God, to affirm our need for His grace and love and forgiveness, and to find hope in Him.

The Holy Scriptures and the hymns of Great Lent exhort us to be sober, contrite and vigilant in the care of our hearts and minds and the spiritual needs of our souls. This is a time to be more mindful of the effects and deceptions of evil in our lives, the power of temptation, and the consequences of sin. It is a time to recognize the forces in our world that seek to separate us from God. We are called to guard ourselves against the snares of sin and to look more intensely to Christ, our fountain of life (cf. John 4:14).

In our vigilance we are also called to observe a time of contemplation, a time of stillness and quiet, filled with prayer, always keeping Christ as our focus and at the center of our lives. For Lent, we seek to abstain from the hectic pace of life and the demands of our contemporary world so that we can look inward and draw closer to God. We dedicate more time to be still, to pray, to pursue the peace of God through our focus on His presence and grace in our lives.

To know the presence of God and to experience the power of grace, we must watch and listen. His truth and wisdom come to us in the stillness and quiet. His will is revealed when our hearts and minds are open, receptive, waiting. We see and hear our Lord's guidance when we seek Him, even if it is not immediately apparent to us. Our strength and our hope are renewed, and our hearts are assured. Through our worship and prayer, our fasting and reflection, and through drawing near to God with contrite hearts, we are prepared to see His mighty works and hear His voice. We are ready for deeper communion with Him as He blesses us with forgiveness and grace.

The season of repentance is at hand. "O you faithful, with joy let us enter upon the beginning of the Fast. Let us not be of sad countenance, but let us wash our faces in the water of dispassion; and let us bless and exalt Christ above all for ever." (Hymn of Matins – First Monday of Lent)

**With paternal love in Him,**

**†DEMETRIOS  
Archbishop of America**