



*Office of the Bishop*

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## **GREAT LENT 2015**

Protocol N. 5/2015

My beloved Faithful Clergy and Laity of our God-Protected Diocese:

As we begin Great Lent this year on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, I want to share with you a few thoughts so that we may journey through this reflective period and arrive at the Great Feast of Pascha spiritually uplifted to receive the Resurrected Christ.

This journey is a time for self-examination and self-denial. We must take control of our lives and bodies with fasting in order to gain a greater awareness of our dependence on and relationship with God. In addition, this journey gives greater time for doing those things that Christ mentioned in Matthew 25: 31-46. He instructed us to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to house the stranger, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick, and to go to the imprisoned. If we are indeed followers/disciples of Christ, we must attend to the needs of those less fortunate than us.

All journeys require an extra effort to be successful. Therefore increase your efforts in church attendance, in prayer, in fasting, in scriptural reading, in almsgiving, in repentance and confession, in receiving the Holy Eucharist. If you already do these things, do more. If you do not do these things, begin now.

Lent is time of great joy and a new beginning as we cleanse ourselves in body, mind, and soul. The physical and spiritual fast will give us a new Christian attitude to meet our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at the end of the journey, on that bright day of the Paschal destination.

I pray that this Great Lenten Season is a spiritually uplifting experience for all.

Working in His Vineyard with much love,

+ Bishop Gregory of Nyssa

*The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A.*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE