

# Archpastoral Letter for the Beginning of Great Lent 2025

March 3/February 18, 2025



To the beloved clergy, religious, and faithful of the True Orthodox Church of the Diaspora--mercy, peace, and love be yours in ever-greater measure.

*“Let us set out with joy upon the season of the Fast, and prepare ourselves for spiritual combat. Let us purify our soul and cleanse our flesh; and as we fast from food, let us abstain from every passion. Rejoicing in the virtues of the Spirit may we persevere with love, and so be counted worthy to see the solemn Passion of Christ our God, and with great spiritual gladness, to behold His holy Resurrection.”*

*-Forgiveness Vespers*

When we think of the season of Lent, we usually think of things that are somber, penitential, dark. We think of it as a time of abstinence, a time of denying ourselves, a time of darkness. But the hymns that accompany our Lenten services tend to paint a different picture of this season. It’s often described as a time of joy, a time to be glad, a time of love. The two images seem contradictory, but that is what is so magnificent about the church cycle. Things don’t have to be either/or for us. They can both one thing and the other.

As we enter these days given to us for spiritual correction, we’re aware that we have all fallen short of the person we were created to be. I doubt that any one of us can look at ourselves honestly today and say that we are exactly where we want to be regarding our relationship with the Lord. And if we look at ourselves and say that we are, perhaps we should clean the mirror a little to make sure that we have a clear picture in front of us. There is not one of us who can honestly say that we can’t do a little better, that we can’t be a little better than we are at present. There’s a tarnished image that obscures the radiance in each of us. But this is where the joyous part comes in, we rejoice in the fact that we don’t have to remain that way. Every day we’re given the opportunity to be better than the day before. As the sun rises and shines its light upon the new day, we can step out of our spiritual slumber and welcome the new chances we have to bring ourselves one step closer to the bright images we were created to be.

As we enter into the Fast today, let us greet each day with joy and gladness, knowing that we have been given another chance to put our old self behind and step out into the world a better and brighter version of ourselves. May the love of the Lord, and love for one another guide us in all that we do, and may we reach the end of these days filled with hope and joy for what lies ahead.

With the bestowal of our archpastoral blessings upon all of you, God’s people, we remain

Sincerely in Christ,

+ALEXY

Metropolitan and First Hierarch of the True Orthodox Church of the Diaspora  
Archbishop of Minneapolis

+HARALAMPOS

Archbishop of Dallas and Texas

+HERMOGEN

Archbishop of Odessa and Tavrychesk

+NICHOLAS

Archbishop of Edenborn  
Vicar for the Archdiocese of North America  
& the Diaspora

+ALEXIOS

Bishop of Hazleton and Weatherly

+PHILIP

Retired Archbishop of Philadelphia