



Archpastoral Letter for the Beginning of Great Lent 2026

February 23/10, 2026

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.

As we enter this holy season of Great Lent, the church, once again, invites us to walk a sacred path—a journey from darkness into light, from fragmentation into wholeness, from forgetfulness of God into the radiant remembrance of His love. This is not merely a change of liturgical season; it is a movement of the heart, a pilgrimage of the soul, a return to the Father who waits for us with open arms.

Great Lent is not a season of gloom, but of quiet joy. Every service, every hymn, every prostration, every act of mercy is a step toward the Radiant Light that shone on Mount Tabor and shines still in the hearts of the saints. The light of Christ is not distant. It is not reserved for the perfect. It is the light that softened the heart of the Publican, restored the dignity of the Prodigal, healed the blind man who could not even ask properly, and raised Lazarus from the tomb of hopelessness. This same light seeks us now. It is gentle, patient, and persistent. It doesn't expose us to condemn us, but to transform us.

The Church gives us three companions for this journey: **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving**. These are not burdens but gifts—ancient medicines for the healing of the soul.

Prayer draws us out of the noise of the world and into the stillness where God speaks. It is the lamp we carry into the dark corners of our hearts.

Fasting is not about deprivation but about freedom. It loosens the grip of our passions and teaches us to hunger for what truly satisfies.

Almsgiving opens our eyes to the image of Christ in every person. It breaks the chains of self-centeredness and allows the light of compassion to shine through us.

Together, these practices become a path—a way of walking toward Pascha with renewed clarity and joy.

Every step we take in Lent is enlightened by the destination: the radiant dawn of the Resurrection. We do not journey toward uncertainty; we journey toward the empty tomb, toward the triumph of life over death, toward the unquenchable light that no darkness can overcome. Our only way forward is to let it enter, to let it heal, to let it reshape us into the likeness of Christ.

May this holy season be for all of us a time of awakening, of renewal, of gentle repentance, and of deepening joy. May the light of Christ rise within us and scatter every shadow. And may we, as one community in His love, walk together toward the glorious day of Pascha, when the darkness is shattered and the world is made anew.

+ALEXY

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

+NICHOLAS

Archbishop of Edenborn
Vicar to the Metropolitan
Secretary of the Holy Synod

+HARALAMPOS

Archbishop of Dallas and Texas

+HERMOGEN

Archbishop of Odessa and Tavrychesk

+ALEXIOS

Archbishop of Hazleton and Weatherly

+BASILIOS

Archbishop of Santiago and Chile

+PHILIP

Retired Archbishop of Philadelphia