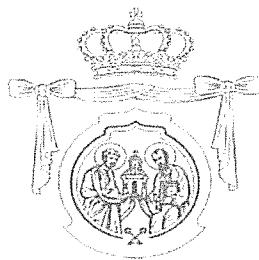


His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

March, 2017

Beloved Antiochian Women:

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as we begin our journey to Pascha. As Christians we are called to dedicate our entire lives to God, however, during this holy season we refocus and intensify our prayer and fasting in order to turn back to God and cleanse ourselves. I pray that every woman, man and child in this archdiocese will come closer to God through repentance and true *metonia* or change during this holy season.

The month of March throughout our archdiocese is known as “Woman’s Month.” Much like what I described above about our need to repent and turn to God throughout the year but have the Great Fast as a time of intensity of our efforts, we honor our Antiochian Women throughout the year, but give special attention to their role in the Church during the month of March. If we step back and think for a moment of the role women have played in the life of the Church from the time of Christ until now, we could write volumes. From the Myrrh-Bearing Women to St. Thekla, From the Great-Martyr Barbara to St. Mary of Egypt and from our own mothers and Godmothers, we see in them a purity of heart and love of Christ by which the faith is transmitted from generation to generation. Throughout the years of the persecution of the Church in the Soviet Union and other Eastern Block countries, it was some faithful clergy and the women by and large who held fast and kept the faith alive and there are so many other examples in history. I remind you of such things so you and all of us give thanks to God for both the women of the archdiocese and the great role they play today in the life of the archdiocese.

May God continue to give you strength and love not only in the month of March, but each and every day of the year.

Wishing you a fruitful Fast, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

+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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