

His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE**  
OF NORTH AMERICA

August 4, 2020

Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, Esteemed Members of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, Organizations and Department Heads, Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings to you and your families as we progress in this holy fast dedicated to the Mother of God, the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. I pray that you and your families are safe and well as we continue to deal with the pandemic that is plaguing our respective countries.

It is with a sense of shock and awe that I learned of the horrific explosion in Beirut. I immediately called the Archdiocese of Beirut to check on His Eminence Metropolitan Elias and the clergy and faithful of the archdiocese, as well as our churches in Beirut. Thanks be to God; His Eminence was not harmed, and the clergy are all safe. The same, however, cannot be said for the archdiocese headquarters, the churches and our St. George Hospital. Many of our churches and institutions in Beirut suffered devastating damage as well as the homes of many of the clergy and faithful.

Not only are these people our brothers and sisters in Christ, but for many of us they are family and friends of the faithful of our archdiocese. As such, we are making an immediate appeal to all of you to do whatever you are able during this economically difficult time and spare whatever penny you can, keeping in mind the parable of the widow in the Gospel, “And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.” (Luke 21: 1-4). Please give to your local parish and your parish will forward the money to the archdiocese in a timely manner. You may also give directly to the archdiocese and mark your check “Beirut” or give online using the following link:

<https://antiochian.networkforgood.com/projects/106179-financial-aid-following-beirut-explosion>

*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

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During this time of distress, we appeal to the Mother of God as we sing the Paraklesis service, crying out from the depths of our hearts and souls, “Preserve and save, O Theotokos, thy servants from every danger. After God, do all of us for refuge flee unto thee; a firm rampart art thou and our protection.” As we continue to pray for those suffering and those who have reposed from COVID-19 in our own archdiocese, please remember the victims of this tragic explosion in Lebanon and all those throughout the world who are suffering and in need of our prayers.

Wishing you all a blessed remainder of the Holy Dormition Fast, I remain,

Yours in the service of Christ,

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

**+JOSEPH**

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