

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

110 EAST MAIN STREET,
Marblehead, OH 43440

V. Rev. Archpriest Peter Tomas, Rector

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***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

NOVEMBER 17, 2024

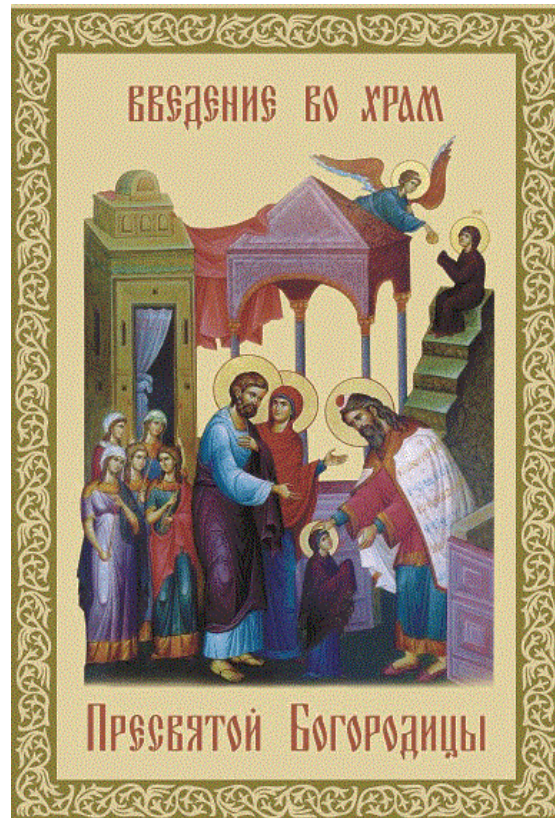
TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: Galatians 2:16-20

Brethren: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

GOSPEL: Lk 12:16-21

The Lord spoke this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So, he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 'And I will



**Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos
into the temple**

And I will

say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

MON. Nov 18	Martyr Platon of Ancyra; Col 2:13-20, Lk 17:20-25
TUE. Nov 19	Prophet Obadiah (Abdia); Col 2:20-3:3, Lk 17:26-37
WED. Nov 20	Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos, Venerable Gregory the Decapolite; Col 3:17-4:1, Lk 18:15-17, 26-30
6:00 PM	VESPERS
THU. Nov 21	THE ENTRY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE Heb 9:1-7, Lk 10:38-42, 11:27-28
FRI. Nov 22	Afterfeast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple, Apostles of the Seventy Philemon and Archippus, Martyr Apphia, wife of Philemon and Equal-to-the-Apostles, and Onesimus, disciple of Saint Paul; Col 4:10-18, Lk 19:12-28
6:00 PM	AKATHIST
SAT. Nov 23	Afterfeast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple, Saint Amphilokhios, Bishop of Iconium; 2 Cor 5: 1-10, Lk 10:19-21
4:00 PM	VESPERS
SUN. Nov 24	22nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, Afterfeast of the Entry, <i>Tone 5</i>
9:10 AM	HOURS
9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Social

FOR YOUR PRAYERS



Patti Owens, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; **Basil Glovinsky**, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; **Subdeacon Roger Pinta**, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; **Ed & Irene Vangeloff**, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870

NOVEMBER CANDLE SPONSORS



Altar Candles: Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle, For Health and God’s Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, and Michal & Helena Tomáš **(\$50)**; **Chandelier:** Available **(\$50)**; **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Available **(\$25)**; **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Madelyn, Amanda, Andrew, and Betty; and in memory of Uncle Alex **(\$20)**; **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, Sophie & Chloe **(\$20)**

NOVEMBER REPOSED

Mary Hritsko (1948) No date provided; Anna Holodnak (1951) No date provided; John Danchisen (1951) No date provided; Michael Guzy (1927) No date provided; Mary Lou Hobson (2015) No date provided; **1-**Peter Felenchak (1974); **2-** Donald Sennich (1994); **3-** Marian Glovinsky (2001); **5-** Margaret Pietropolo (2009); **5-** Dan Opritza (2021) **5-** Joseph Guzy (1974); **6-** William Rentz (2018);

6- Michael Chemorov (2019); **8-** Ann G Stretchberry (2003); **8-** Anne Catherine Glovinsky (2004); **9-** Ann Golob (No year recorded); **9-** Robley Blackford (2021); **18-** Archpriest George Timko (2000) Former Pastor; **19-** Evelyn Biecheler (2002); **19-** Frances (Nancy B. mom) (2019); **19-** Orestes Mihaly No year provided; **21-** Ann S. Ratica (1991); **22-** Joann Carender No year provided; **23-** George Michael Elchisco (2016); **23-** Violet Bargdill (1995); **26-** Janet Elchisko (2018); **28-** Anna Grabonsky (1972); **29-**Alexander Mazur (2003)



VIGILS FOR NOVEMBER 10

Angela Bricker 2 Family, Donna Bricker

Susan Guzy 2 In loving memory of grandfather Michael, Godfather Peter (Nov 1) Vichnaya Pamyat, In loving memory of Uncle Joe (Nov6) Vichnaya Pamyat

Laura Kovach 3 For health and/or healing of Jerry P., Matushka Melania, Ron R., Betty K., Margaret M., David M., Hannah S., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Kathie J., Ed V., Irene V.
Birthday blessings to Amanda, Madelyn, and Valerie
Safe travels for Tony and Tina

Sandy Martin 1 Special intentions

Natalie Twarek 8 Safe travel for Tina and Tony, For health and recovery of Mary, For the health Fr Peter & Matushka Michelle, For the health & recovery of Matushka Melania, For the health and recovery on Ron, Rodney, Betty, Carol, Kayla, Bill, Ruth, Pam, Jim, Terrie, Clayton, Heidi, Father Emilian, Barbara Heffernan, Health and healing for Father's parents Michal & Helena and Matushka's mom Barbara, For health Walter, For the health of Jen, Tony, Bev, Ed, Irene, Father David, Judy, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, special intentions

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Ron & Bobbie Royhab / Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Tom Hileman / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Helena Tomášova / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Clifford / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Nora.

Other Requests: Catechumen Blake Shoemaker / Catechumen Nickolas Dawenport / Matushka Melania / Mary Dziak / Sharyn Osborne / Christine Zahm / Amy / Bill Byrnes / Michael Heffernan / Susanne / Barbara Heffernan / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čizmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



ATTENDANCE

11/09 Vespers, **6** attending; **11/10** Divine Liturgy, **25** attending (7 guests)



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

17 – Cole Heffernan, **17** – Roddie Mazurik, **19** – Sophie Bricker *, **30** – Victoria Voloschuk



READERS LIST

Sunday Nov 17 – Jake
Sunday Nov 24 – Tim
Sunday Dec 1 – Jake

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS



- Nov 21st** Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple (*Thursday*)
- Nov 23rd** Holidays pre-orders pick up 9:00 – 10:30 am (*Saturday*)
- Dec 6th** St. Nicholas the Wonderworker (*Friday*)
- Dec. 9th** Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos (*Monday*)
- Dec. 21th** Holidays pre-orders pick up 9:00 – 10:30 am (*Saturday*)
- Dec. 24th** Christmas Eve - GREAT COMPLINE with Litya at 4:00 PM (*Tuesday*)
- Dec. 25th** NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (*Wednesday*)
- Dec. 31st** New Year’s Eve (*Tuesday*)



SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, November 10, 2024

Tithe	\$1,455.00
Donations	\$ 229.00
Candles	\$ 34.00
Vigils	\$ 115.00
Holy Day Donation	\$ 5.00
St. Herman’s House (Nov.)	\$ 245.00
Total:	\$2,083.00

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!



CLEANING SCHEDULE

Nov 18, Susan
Nov 25, Jean
Dec 2, Stephanie
Dec 9, Sandy



COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

Nov 17 – Laura
Nov 24 – Available
Dec 1 – Matushka Michelle
Dec 8 – Natalia, Ryan & Sebastian

Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“St. Herman House” is the charity we donate to for the month of November.



THANK YOU

We would like to express our sincere thanks to **Sue Guzy** for purchasing and donating a new floor mat for our kitchen. May Our Lord and God reward her abundantly for her kindness, and grant her Many Happy and Blessed Years!



MEMORIAL DONATION RECEIVED – THANK YOU!

We wish to express our sincere thanks to **Known to God** (Anonymous) donor for a very generous donation of **\$5,000.00** to our church in Memory of † **MARGUERITE BIRD**. *May Our Lord reward the generous donor for the care and love and grant to his departed servant † MARGUERITE Eternal Memory! Vichnaya Pamyat!*



THANK YOU, LETTER, RECEIVED

Our parish received a Thank you letter from St. Tikhon Seminary for our charitable donation of \$760.00. Please see the letter on our bulletin board and in this bulletin.



NEW “2025” LITURGICAL CALENDARS

We wish to express our sincere thanks to **Tom Priesman of Neidecker, Crosser & Priesman Funeral Home** for sponsoring our liturgical calendars. The new calendars are located in the vestibule of the church.



Saint Gregory, Wonderworker of Neocaesarea

Commemorated on November 17

Saint Gregory the Wonderworker, Bishop of Neocaesarea, was born in the city of Neocaesarea (northern Asia Minor) into a prominent pagan family (between 210 - 215), and his original name was Theodore.

After his elementary education, Saint Gregory and his brother Gregory, or Athenodoros (Athēnódoros)¹ (according to some hagiological sources) they went to Beirut to study law. The great thinkers of antiquity were not able to quench his thirst for knowledge, however. Truth was revealed to him only in the Holy Gospel, and the young man became a Christian.

In order to continue his studies, Saint Gregory went to Alexandria, known at that time as a center for pagan and Christian learning. Eager to acquire knowledge, Gregory went to the Alexandrian Catechetical School, where the presbyter Origen taught. Origen was a famous teacher, possessing a great strength of mind and profound knowledge. Saint Gregory became a pupil of Origen. Afterward, the Saint wrote of his mentor: “This man received from God a sublime gift, to be an interpreter of the Word of God for people, to apprehend the Word of God, as God Himself did use it, and to explain it to people, insofar as they could understand it.” Saint Gregory studied for eight years with Origen, who baptized him.

Saint Gregory's ascetical life, his continence, purity, and lack of covetousness aroused the envy of his conceited and sin-loving peers, pagans that they were, and they decided to slander Saint Gregory. Once, when he was conversing with philosophers and teachers in the city square, a notorious harlot came up to him and demanded payment for a sin he had supposedly committed with her. At first Saint Gregory gently remonstrated with her, saying that perhaps she had mistaken him for someone else. But the profligate woman would not be silenced. Then he asked a friend to give her the money. Just as the woman took the unjustified payment, she fell to the ground in a demonic fit, and the fraud was revealed. Saint Gregory prayed over her, and the demon was expelled. This was the first of his miracles.

After returning to Neocaesarea, the Saint fled from worldly affairs, into which influential townsmen persistently sought to push him. He went into the desert, where by fasting and prayer he attained great

spiritual heights, as well as the gifts of clairvoyance and prophecy. Saint Gregory loved his life in the wilderness and wanted to remain in solitude until the end of his days, but the Lord willed otherwise.

Learning of Saint Gregory's ascetical life, Bishop Phaidemos (Phaidēmos) of the Cappadocian city of Amaseia, decided to make him Bishop of Neocaesarea. But foreseeing in spirit the intention of Bishop Phaidēmos, the Saint hid himself from the hierarch's messengers who were sent to find him. Then Bishop Phaidemos consecrated Saint in absentia as Bishop of Neocaesarea, entreating the Lord to bless the unusual ordination. Saint Gregory regarded the extraordinary event as a manifestation of God's will, and he did not dare to protest. This episode in the life of Saint Gregory was recorded by Saint Gregory of Nyssa (January 10). He relates that Saint Gregory of Neocaesarea received the episcopal rank only after Bishop Phaidemos had ordained him to all the canonical ranks.

During this time, the heresy of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata began to spread. They taught falsely concerning the Holy Trinity. Saint Gregory prayed fervently and diligently imploring God and His most pure Mother to reveal the truth to him. The Most Holy Theotokos appeared to him, as radiant as the sun, and with her was the Apostle John the Theologian dressed in hierarchal vestments.

By the command of the Mother of God, the Apostle John taught the Saint the correct way to speak of the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Saint Gregory wrote down all that Saint John revealed to him. The Symbol of the Faith, as written down by Saint Gregory, is a great divine revelation in the history of the Church. The teaching concerning the Holy Trinity in Orthodox Theology is based on it. Subsequently, it was accepted by the Holy Fathers of the Church: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and Gregory of Nyssa. Saint Gregory's Symbol (Creed) was later examined and affirmed in the year 325 by the First Ecumenical Council, showing its enduring significance for Orthodoxy. Even those who disagreed with Saint Gregory regarded him as a second Moses.²

After becoming a hierarch, Saint Gregory journeyed to Neocaesarea. Along his way from Amaseia, he cast out the demons from a pagan temple, the priest of which he converted to Christ. That convert was a witness to yet another of the Saint's miracles: at his word a large stone moved from its place.

The Saint's sermons were direct, lively and fruitful. He taught and worked miracles in the name of Christ: he healed the sick, helped the needy, and settled disputes and complaints. Two brothers who shared an inheritance were unable to agree about their dead father's property. A large lake was the cause of their dispute, for each brother wanted the lake for himself. Both of them gathered their friends together, and were ready to come to blows. Saint Gregory persuaded them to delay their fight until the following day, while he prayed all night long on the shore of the lake which had sparked the quarrel. When dawn came, everyone saw that the lake had dried up or gone underground. Now, by the Saint's intense prayer, there was only a stream, and its course defined the boundary line. Another time, during the construction of a church, he commanded a hill to move and make room for the foundation to be dug.

When the persecution of Christians began under Emperor Decius (249-251), Saint Gregory led his flock to a faraway mountain. A certain pagan, who knew where the Christians were hiding, informed the persecutors, and soldiers surrounded the mountain. The Saint went out into an open place, raised his hands to heaven, and ordered his deacon to do the same. The soldiers searched the entire mountain, and several times they went right past those who were praying. Unable to see them, they gave up and went away. In the city they reported that there was nowhere to hide on the mountain. There were no people, just two trees standing next to each other. The informer was struck with amazement, he repented of his ways and became a devout Christian.

Saint Gregory returned to Neocaesarea after the end of the persecution. With his blessing, Church Feasts were established in honor of the martyrs who had suffered for Christ.

By the holiness of his life, his effective preaching, his miracles, and inspired guidance of his flock, the Saint increased the number of converts to Christ. When Saint Gregory first came to his See, there were

only seventeen Christians in Neocaesarea. At the time of his repose, only seventeen pagans were left in the city.

¹ According to Greek usage, both of them are commemorated on November 7.

² Saint Basil the Great, On the Holy Spirit, chapter 29.



The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple

Commemorated on November 21

According to Holy Tradition, the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple took place in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Saints Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached the age of three, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. They gathered together their relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the All-Pure Virgin in Her finest clothes. Singing sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15). There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. In the Temple, fifteen high steps led to the sanctuary, which only the priests and High Priest could enter. (Because they recited a Psalm on each step, Psalms 119/120-133/134 are called “Psalms of Ascent.”) The child Mary, so it seemed, could not make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly went up the remaining steps and ascended to the highest one. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year to offer a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore, all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

After entrusting their child to the Heavenly Father, Joachim and Anna returned home. The All-Holy Virgin remained in the quarters for virgins near the Temple. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Luke 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters around the Temple, in which those who were dedicated to the service of God dwelt. The earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos from Her infancy until She was taken up to Heaven is shrouded in deep mystery. Her life at the Jerusalem Temple was also a secret. “If anyone were to ask me,” said Saint Jerome, “how the Most Holy Virgin spent the time of Her youth, I would answer that that is known to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel, Her constant guardian.”

But there are accounts in Church Tradition, that during the All-Pure Virgin’s stay at the Temple, She grew up in a community of pious virgins, diligently read the Holy Scripture, occupied Herself with handicrafts, prayed constantly, and grew in love for God. From ancient times, the Church has celebrated the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Indications that the Feast was observed in the first centuries of Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, which say that the holy Empress Helen (May 21) built a church in honor of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century, also mentions this Feast. In the eighth century Saints Germanus and Tarasius, Patriarchs of Constantinople, delivered sermons on the Feast of the Entry. The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple foretells God’s blessing for the human race, the preaching of salvation, the promise of the coming of Christ.



Shifting Our Focus: The Reason We Should Fast before the Feast of the Nativity *by Fr. Andreas Blom*

On November 15th we entered the Nativity Fast.

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we “shift our focus” from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control us—and for many people, food is a controlling factor. We live in the only society in which an entire TV network is devoted to food! While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to abstain from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner—if we “ruin our appetite” we will enjoy the restaurant less—so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. However, there is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays.

At the same time, we are challenged, within the given framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently. If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not present fasting as an option, but as a “must.” In Matthew Christ says, “WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites,” not “IF you fast” or “IF YOU CHOOSE to fast.” It is simply part of the Orthodox Christian life!

Finally, however, it is important to remember that we do not fast in order to lose weight or to feel better physically (although these are very nice side-effects of our fasting). We fast for our own spiritual benefit, and for the sake of our inner life. If we decide not to participate in the fast, we are the ones that will miss out on the blessings that God has bestowed upon us. In the fast we empty ourselves, so that God's grace will have a space in our hearts to heal and form us. Let us not reject this great gift and opportunity!



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Friday, 15 September 2024
Martyrs Gurias, Samonas & Habib
№. 171

ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE
ON DIOCESAN DEPARTMENTS PLAN & GOALS

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest,

The Lord bless you!

After Our Lord's Resurrection, He commanded the Apostles to make disciples of all nations, promising to be with them until the end of the age (*St Matthew 28:18-20*). This Great Commission has been passed down through the ages as generations of Orthodox Christians bore witness to the Gospel message of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Today, it is our common responsibility within the territory of the Diocese of the Midwest to fulfill Our Lord's command. Since becoming your Archpastor, I have listened and observed during parish visits, taking account of what you need to be the Church and make disciples, while seeing many wonderful examples of how the Holy Spirit is at work in our parish communities.

I have met seniors, youth, families, and individuals in parishes small and large, all filled with the desire to grow closer to Our Lord. I have encountered both lifelong and newly-Chrismated Orthodox, all being cared for by our clergy. I am grateful that all of you daily accept the call to take up your Cross and follow Christ, and especially I give thanks to Almighty God for the desire of so many to be faithful Orthodox Christians in today's uncertain world.

For this reason, our Diocese has invested considerable time and resources over the past year to prepare the organizational plan which was adopted during the 63rd Annual Diocesan Assembly this past October. The vision and goal of this plan is to build upon the work of those who have gone before us, while leveraging the talents, skills, knowledge, and experiences of today's diocesan membership to grow the Faith in our vast diocesan territory. We can now leverage technology for new resources and to collaborate virtually, effectively reaching across the breadth of our Diocese to provide the spiritual resources and programs necessary to fulfill the Great Commission in every parish and monastic community.

Our organizational plan is grounded in Scripture and begins with our newly adopted diocesan mission statement:

Archpastoral Message on Departments Plan & Goals

Page 2

*Uniting the faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest to discover a Christ-centered life,
welcoming all to worship and live in the Orthodox Christian Faith.*

This mission statement defines the focus of our new diocesan organizational plan, including the establishment of new departments for Evangelization, Christian Education, Christian Service & Humanitarian Aid, Liturgical Practice, Communications, and Clergy & Clergy Family Life.

This mission statement is also a call for each of us to recommit to our role of being bearers of Christ in our daily lives. By living in this way, we all fulfill the Great Commission, showing those around us the joy and radiance of following Jesus Christ in the fullness of the Orthodox Faith.

As you prepare for the beginning of the Nativity Fast, I encourage you to find renewed focus in anticipation of the coming of Our Lord, and to gather in your parish communities for discussion and reflection that will identify:

- 1) how your parish is successful in living out the Great Commission; and
- 2) where there are opportunities to do more, or simply begin anew.

By organizing such informal gatherings during this season, we can turn from the hustle and bustle of our consumer-driven society and focus again on the majesty and innocence of the Incarnation of Our Savior. We can also give serious consideration to how our parishes can be places where members and seekers can encounter the divine.

When you gather to complete this [self-assessment for your parish](#), I encourage you to identify things that are working well, opportunities for improvement, and ideas for growing closer to Jesus Christ. Use the self-assessment to identify what your parish has set forth as goals, projects, activities, and service ministries. **Please complete this form by Monday, Dec. 16, and submit it online.**

Our Diocesan Chancellor, Archpriest Herman Kincaid, will gather your insights and ideas, sharing them with the directors of our new departments. Beginning in January 2025, these departmental directors will commence working with their teams to connect parishes with individuals who are able to develop the resources needed in our communities.

In the coming weeks, our diocesan website will be updated to feature information about each department, the newly appointed directors, and how to contact them. They will rely on the information you share—both the successes and the opportunities—to begin assembling teams drawn from parishes across the Diocese to work collaboratively and wisely to build up the Body of Christ together by the work of ministry (*Ephesians 4:12*).

The clergy in each parish should also ensure that the contact information for your ministry leaders is up to date and on file with the Diocese, so that our departments can effectively communicate with parish leaders responsible for music, church school, mission and outreach, and charitable programs in your parishes. Please update this information [through the reporting website](#), or [forward to the Diocesan Chancery](#).

Archpastoral Message on Departments Plan & Goals
Page 3

As Orthodox Christians of the Diocese of the Midwest, we are called to follow the example of the Apostles who gathered in council together (*Acts 15:28-29*), like them identifying the work set before us, and then putting our faith into action by being witnesses in our local communities (*Acts 14:21-22*).

The fields are white for harvest in the Diocese of the Midwest, and I firmly believe that Our Lord is inviting us to accept the call to be His witnesses—from the Dakotas to the Great Lakes, and from the Plains to the Ohio River Valley.

I pray that you will be inspired and motivated by what I have shared here, and that working together to enliven the Orthodox Faith in our parishes and in our local communities, one day we may hear Our Lord say: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (*St Matthew 25:21*).

Invoking God’s blessings upon our efforts, I remain,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DANIEL
Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest



SAINT TIKHON'S
SEMINARY

THANKS YOU

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
110 East Main Street
Marblehead, OH 43440

Dear Fr. Peter,

11/04/24

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Your generosity makes St. Tikhon's, St. Tikhon's, and ensures seminary is possible for our 40 Seminarians, each of whom is preparing for ordained service in the Church. Parishes, through their Bishops, are working on sending as many qualified candidates to us as possible. We, in turn, are laser-focusing to prepare them for love-of-God (our liturgical life) and for love-of-neighbor (evangelism and acts of mercy) ministries. **YOU, in turn, are ensuring the capacity for both the sending and the forming.** Did we say thank you? Thank you!

The faculty is meeting to make our recommendations for the next round of ordinations, which will likely begin in December and January. Our partnership with you puts priests and deacons in parishes...may the Lord bless you for it!

St. Tikhon's is, to borrow the title from the long-standing magazine of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania: *Alive in Christ!* Thank you again for co-laboring with us. Come and see *All the Good God is Doing* here in and through YOU!

Yours very gratefully in Christ,

Fr. John Parker

P.S. If you wish to learn more about our new giving tools, including how to leave a legacy gift to St. Tikhon's Seminary in your will, or how to make other non-cash gives (QCDS, stock, etc...), please visit www.stots.edu/waystogive or point your smartphone camera to the QR code and push the yellow link.

P.P.S. See reverse side to learn more about *All the Good God is Doing* at St. Tikhon's.

Donation: \$760.00

This document serves as an acknowledgement of the charitable contribution you made to St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary. No goods or services were provided by the seminary for this contribution. This acknowledgement must be retained and is required by the Internal Revenue Service in order to substantiate and verify this charitable deduction on your tax return.