



BULGARIAN DIOCESE — OF TOLEDO — Orthodox Church in America

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GREAT LENT 2023

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

As we enter the season of Great Lent, I encourage you to remember these words of St. Cyril of Alexandria: “Lent is a time to return to our first love, to rediscover the joy of our salvation, and to renew our commitment to Christ.”

At the threshold of this year’s Lenten journey, let us remember the words of St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:2, which say, “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Let us also be inspired by the examples of saints such as St. Mary of Egypt, who lived a life of great humility and repentance, and St. Basil the Great, who taught us to “fast not only with our mouth but with our eyes, our ears, our feet, our hands, and all our members.”

In short, our fasting must be understood as an opportunity, not a burden. We have before us a great gift, a time set aside for an intentional and intensified pursuit of spiritual healing and ascent. These are the “most-holy days for the cleansing of souls and bodies, for control of passions, and for hope in the resurrection.” (Divine Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts)

Let us, therefore, enter this Lenten season with humble and joyous hearts overflowing with anticipation for our Lord’s radiant resurrection. May we be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and may our Lenten journey lead us closer to the kingdom of God.

with love in Christ,

+ Alexander

Archbishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese