

His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

September 8, 2017  
*Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos*

**TO BE READ FROM THE PULPIT AND PUBLISHED IN THE CHURCH BULLETIN**

Beloved in Christ:

Greetings to you and your families on this Feast Day.

We have all witnessed with a heavy heart the catastrophic destruction and massive flooding in Southeast Texas, Western Louisiana and now Florida as a result of hurricanes Harvey and Irma. I urge the entire Archdiocese to pray for the safety of the residents of Florida and all those in the wake of Hurricane Irma and direct our parishes to offer up special prayers at Sunday's Divine Liturgy for the safety and quick recovery of those affected. Some of the scenes of suffering have been beyond words. I have been in constant contact with our clergy and the parishes of the affected areas and am waiting for an assessment from them in order to help in any way we can. Although things are still unfolding, we want to be proactive in our appeal to all of you so we can respond as quickly as possible.

As people of God and the Church of Christ, we feel compelled to help our brothers and sisters in need. Therefore, I am asking every parish and mission of the Archdiocese to appeal to their faithful and hold special collections throughout the month of September so that we can alleviate a little of the pain and suffering the good people of that area are enduring. Immediately after the last Sunday of September, please send your offerings to the archdiocese and put in the memo of the check "Hurricane Appeal". Once we have assessed the needs of our parishes and their faithful who have suffered losses, we will distribute your offerings to them on your behalf.

If there are funds remaining after our distributions to our parishes in need, we will forward them to IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) to help with their work in that area as they are already on the ground helping all Texans on behalf of the Orthodox Church. Please be as generous as possible so that we are able to help those in need as much as we can.

Wishing you all a blessed beginning of the new ecclesiastical year and praying that God's healing hand will touch the people who have suffered as a result of this destructive hurricane, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

**+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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