



*Office of the Metropolitan*  
*312 Garfield Street*  
*Johnstown, PA 15906*

### **NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2020**

Protocol No. 41/2020

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Beloved Faithful Clergy and Laity of our God-Protected Diocese,

It is hard to believe that this month marks the eighth anniversary of my Consecration and Enthronement as your Hierarch. It has been a very strange year with the arrival of the Coronavirus early in 2020. The pandemic has turned our lives upside down. Several of our Clergy and many of our Laity have been exposed and sickened. Unfortunately we also lost many wonderful people of our Diocese and beyond. May their memories be eternal!

From the very beginning as God fearing people we have been praying for the Lord's help. In all of our Divine Liturgies additional petitions and prayers have been offered. And yet the struggle continues around the world. I believe we must intensify our prayers. If we are feeling like we are sinking because we are overwhelmed in our home life, work life, school life or even our social life (including social media and technology) we must be like Peter. He was walking on the water towards Jesus and when he became distracted by the winds and waves and today the virus, he began to sink. Peter cried out, "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30) and Jesus Christ reached down and pulled him out the stormy sea.

As we once again enter the Season of the Nativity Fast, I ask you, actually I plead with you, the good faithful people of our Diocese, to join me on a journey to meet the new born King. During these 40 days leading to the Nativity of our Lord let us increase our efforts in church attendance, in prayer, in fasting, in scriptural reading, in almsgiving, in repentance and confession, in receiving the Eucharist. This is who we are as active Orthodox Christians.

In the last five years, I have challenged everyone, Clergy and Laity, to offer a special prayer for peace and stillness during evening prayers. This year the prayer will be about the Coronavirus. The text of these prayers will be provided to the Clergy for distribution. Each household should have sufficient copies so that each young person that can read has one by their bed to use nightly and those who are too young to read may say the prayer with their parents before they go to bed. Of course, all the adults should also participate.

*The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America*  
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

To assist with this challenge, a special web page has been created on the Diocesan Website, Prayer Against the Coronavirus, which contains downloadable texts of the special prayer. Other postings will be made on various social media outlets to encourage maximum exposure and participation.

With all of us united in prayer and laboring for relief from this pestilence this Nativity Fasting Season, I am convinced that we will help to protect our lives and those of others throughout the world from the pandemic.

Working in His Vineyard with much love,

+ Metropolitan Gregory

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

**This Archpastoral Letter is to be read in all new calendar parishes of the Diocese on the Sunday at the beginning of the Nativity Fast (November 15) during the reading of the parish announcements and placed in your weekly bulletins. Old calendar parishes on the Sunday prior to November 27 (November 22).**

*The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A.*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE



*His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory's*  
**NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2020**

*To Be Prayed Every Evening of the Nativity Fast*

O Physician of Souls and Bodies: we pray that You continue to come to our aid now during the global spread of the Coronavirus.

May the sick regain their strength and health, and as they worry and grieve, defend them from further illness and despair. We offer thanks to You for those who have recovered. Grant rest to those who have reposed. Be with the families of those who are sick and those who have died.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another. Remove from us all pride, which can make us claim immunity to a disease that knows no borders.

Give wisdom and strength to our President, our federal government, our state governments, together with the leaders of all nations, and give them foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they serve.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, we pray that You stay by our side and grant us courage and peace. *AMEN.*