



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL  
ORTHODOX BISHOPS  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Office of the Chairman*

*Longsuffering Lord, how wonderful are your works! Who will number your love for humankind? Who, when they see your Priests and Ascetics slain for the sake of your Icon, would not reject deceivers? But you, when insulted, endured. (Synodikon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 9<sup>th</sup> Ode)*

Sunday of Orthodoxy 2015

To the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Members of Philanthropic Organizations, the Youth and Youth Workers, and the entire Orthodox Christian Family in the United States of America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At the onset of our journey to Holy Pascha, the Church designates the first Sunday of Holy and Great Lent as the Sunday of Orthodoxy. On this day we celebrate the splendor of the Orthodox Church and her salvific mission in the world, and we call to mind the holy men and women who made great sacrifices in defense of holy icons and the authentic worship of God; we venerate the great champions of Orthodoxy who kept the faith alive.

Their enduring love and commitment to Christ has made it possible for future generations to come to know God. And as we are embraced by Christ and become one with Him, our lives are transformed into living icons of our Lord and of His sacrificial love for the world. The dogmas, teachings and traditions that were defended, therefore, are not antiquated theories, philosophies, or broken rubrics. They are tangible guides and spiritual directives for how we ought to live our lives according to the Holy Gospel.

Beloved brothers and sisters, perhaps now more than ever before, it is important to declare our Orthodox Christian Faith, for the world is suffering and desperately searching for peace and reconciliation. As the world produces distorted images of the truth, we must share the beauty of the Gospel. As the world resorts to violence and hatred, we must respond with love and forgiveness. And as the world falls deeper into despair, let us ask God to grant us courage to endure and to allow us to serve as icons of hope for our neighbor.

Wishing all of you, on behalf of the Hierarchs of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, the abundant blessings of the Lord, I fervently pray that He grant to all of us the courage, the power and the wisdom to proclaim His eternal and saving Orthodox Faith to all people, both *those who are far off and those who are near* (Eph. 2:17).

*+Archbishop Demetrios of America*

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Chairman