



*Office of the Bishop*

*312 Garfield Street*

*Johnstown, PA 15906*

## **NATIVITY FAST 2017**

Protocol No. 13/2017

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 fifth anniversary of my Consecration and Enthronement as your Bishop. During my visits to the parishes you have heard me preaching on the state of affairs, locally and globally. Conflicts, wars and senseless violence continue to inflict pain and suffering and spill blood everywhere. I am deeply saddened that peace continues to elude us. Recent events continue to reveal that demonic forces are fighting us, that evil continues to exist in the world. So many innocent people killed and wounded at a concert in Las Vegas. So many innocent killed and wounded in a small church in Texas. Everyday people are dying needlessly in our towns and cities. For what? Can someone please explain it to me? This lack of peace is the direct result of increased selfishness and hatred throughout the world. Whatever we as inhabitants of this planet are doing it is not working, somehow it is not enough. Obviously we as humans cannot achieve peace on our own. We need the help of someone and that someone is the Lord.

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 year, just like the last two years, I am challenging everyone, clergy and laity, to offer a special prayer for peace during evening prayers. During the Litany of Fervent Supplication at each Divine Liturgy a special petition is also to be included. 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 the U.S.A.*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

To assist with this challenge, a special web page has been created on the Diocesan Website, *Praying for Peace*, which contains downloadable texts of the special prayers. 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 peace this Nativity Fasting Season, I am convinced that we will help to make our lives and that of others throughout the world more peaceful, even if only in a small way.

Working in His Vineyard with much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Bishop Gregory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Bishop Gregory of Nyssa

*This Archpastoral Letter is to be read in all new calendar parishes of the Diocese from the pulpit on the Sunday prior to the beginning of the Nativity Fast (November 12), if not then definitely on the first Sunday of the Nativity Fast (November 19) during the reading of the parish announcements and placed in your weekly bulletins. Old calendar parishes on Sunday November 26 or Sunday December 3.*