



November 20, 2022

Protocol 11/001

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

Today, we prepare to celebrate the great feast of the Entrance into the Temple, when, in the words of Basil the Monk, 'Anna led the undefiled Temple into the house of God' (2nd canon of the feast). According to the 2nd Book of Maccabees, the holy prophet Jeremiah hid the ancient treasures of the temple—the ark, the tent, and the altar of incense—in a cave until the latter days, when God shall gather together his people and reveal his mercy (2 Macc. 2:5). Thus, when the Virgin Mary was brought into the Holy of Holies, she found it empty.

But, as the hymns of the feast teach us, the Most Holy Theotokos is in fact the fulfillment of the shadowy ark and all that it contained. She is the true ark of God's Presence (1st canon, by St. George of Nicomedia). She is the true tabernacle, the true altar. She is the true Holy of Holies, the true treasure of the true Israel, which is the Church. And by entering into the temple, she fulfilled the shadows of the Old Covenant and proclaimed the New.

As Christians, we are heirs to all of these treasures of both Testaments: both those ancient objects hidden in a cavern by the prophet, and the Maiden who is lovelier than all other creation, whom the Lord has given to us as our loving and protective Mother (Jn. 19:27). But these divine treasures are given to us, not so that we can hoard them up and build bigger barns, but so that we can share these spiritual riches with the world (Lk. 12:18).

And if this is true of our spiritual treasures, what shall we say of material wealth? 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof' (Ps. 24:10), and it is only fitting that we contribute whatever we can out of our material resources so that the spiritual riches of the Law, the Prophets, the Gospel, and the Apostle can be shared with as many hungry souls as possible.

Therefore, I encourage all of our parishes and faithful, on this Sunday dedicated to the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America, to support with your treasure the work of the central administration of our Church. While our parishes are on the frontline of spreading the Gospel and sharing the Orthodox Christian faith with the world, the members of the central administration of the OCA labor tirelessly to support you on the frontline. Whether coordinating ordinations, working to ensure safe environments, maintaining good relations with other local Churches, or providing support for the work of the Primate, Holy Synod, the All-American Council, and the Metropolitan Council, my Chancery and our central administration carry out their work conscientiously and unflinchingly. And they do this so that we can all work together better to spread the Good News of our Savior.

So, once again, I offer my heartfelt appeal to all of parishes and faithful to support those who support you and to contribute to the work of the Orthodox Church of America by becoming Stewards of the OCA.

With the blessing of the coming feast, I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

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