



Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

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13 April 2023

Dear Faithful of this Archdiocese,

As we approach the climax of all that defines us as Orthodox Christians, let us take time to consider what we are doing and why we are doing it. The Church tells us, in the second letter of the Holy Apostle Peter: “According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:4) In other words, God, in the person of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, has, by His human life, restored our humanity. As we read in the book of Genesis at the beginning of this Holy Season, when God created the human being, that human being was created in the image and likeness of its creator.

From the time that image was lost owing to the disobedience of our first parents, until the moment He took up His cross, God set in motion and carried out His plan to restore all of us to that image and likeness in and for which we were created, and make us altogether ready for His Kingdom in such a way that we, each of us, can say with St. Paul “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:38-39)

Therefore, in the joy and the victory of this restoration let us rigorously prepare ourselves so that on the feast we can truly proclaim His victory and rejoice in the reconciliation with our God which He has accomplished by coming down to us to lift us up to His Rejoicing in our Risen Lord

+Melchisedek

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Orthodox Church in America