



**Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon
For the Beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year
September 1, 2021**

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

My beloved children in the Lord, and to all who read this encyclical at the beginning of the Ecclesiastical New Year, on the day when the Church also reflects on the created world: I greet you in the Name of the Lord, and pray that God bestows upon you “every good and perfect gift from above” (James 1:17). May the God who has revealed Himself to us as “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex 34:6) once again have mercy on us and upon His whole creation.

Just a few days ago, Hurricane Ida slammed into the Gulf Coast of the United States, and inflicted untold damage to property, and—to our great sadness—human life. This hurricane happened while at the same time unrelenting fires have likewise cut a swath of death and destruction throughout this same country, as well as in Canada, Europe, Russia, and Turkey. Even further, we hear that parts of our world have suffered from either extreme drought or unprecedented rainfall. We mourn those who have died in these tragedies, and ask that God keep them eternally in His memory. We grieve with their friends and families. We are also concerned for those who have been displaced, or lost property or homes; we have become saddened by what has befallen them. As always, as Christians, we should stand with them and seek ways to support any and all who have been afflicted by these natural disasters.

With these events that have taken place in just the past few days, we witness the awesome power of nature, and also the fragility and preciousness of human life. We should be reminded not only to fulfill our Christian vocation of love, of mourning, and of standing in solidarity with the weak and the vulnerable; but also that we should “number our days, so that we get a heart of wisdom” (Ps 90:12). When we learn the painful and heart-wrenching lessons that we are not invulnerable, we are not almighty, we are not immortal, we learn that we are men and women who are called to love one another as God has loved us, according to the teaching of the very Wisdom and Word of God, Jesus Christ (Jn 13:34; 15:12, 17).

At the beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year, on the day when we consider the created world, I call upon the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America to remember those who have

died, and those suffering from these recent natural disasters, and to seek ways to support them. May the God of every consolation and compassion be with you!

With my archpastoral blessings and love in the Lord,

+Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada