

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

March 26, 2015

To our Beloved Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy and all of the Faithful of this God-Protected Archdiocese:

Blessings to you during this Holy Season of the Great Fast!

On January 16th of this year, the Supreme Court agreed to hear four new cases on same-sex “marriage,” and “rule on the power of the states to ban same-sex “marriages” and to refuse to recognize such “marriages” performed in another state.”¹ More details on the announcement can be found at the Supreme Court's website.²

We are writing to communicate the newly established date for the third annual March for Marriage in Washington D.C. on Saturday, April 25, 2015. The march is a peaceful rally and quite comparable to the March for Life. We ask that you would make every effort to attend the rally, and encourage others to do likewise. A strong, vibrant, and clear message is needed from our Church on the matter of the Mystery of Holy Matrimony, as well as an enumeration upon God blessed sexuality and gender roles, toward the strengthening of family life. This action is necessary in order to dispel confusion which has been stirred up by our secular culture. Such an effort would be blessed by God to the building up of our faith in the hearts of our Orthodox people. This is what our nation's people need to see.

Unfortunately, we are very short on time to get organized.

April 25th is an important date for the March for Marriage because it will fall within days of when the Supreme Court is expected to hear oral arguments on the cases before them that will decide the national legal status of civil same-sex "marriage."

1 SCOTUS blog, <http://www.scotusblog.com/2015/01/court-will-rule-on-same-sex-marriage/>, accessed Feb. 20th, 2015.

2 Ibid.

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

We are clearly on the cusp of a historic Supreme Court decision that could mark a powerful affirmation of marriage between one man and one woman, upon which all major civilizations have flourished – or, it can initiate a direction which the Holy Orthodox Church can never embrace.

Throughout the history of our faith our Holy Fathers have led the Orthodox laity to gather in unison to preserve the faith against heresy from within, and against major threats upon societies from without. We are in a unique position as Orthodox Christians in a nation governed as a democratic republic. We still benefit from religious freedoms that would allow us to voice with clarity the gospel message of Christ's love, and the path to salvation.

A growing group of Orthodox clergy and laity have begun to prepare for this event and to assemble resources, and they have established the website www.crownthem.org . We encourage you to visit this website for additional information.

If we have several thousand attendees from the ranks of clergy, monastics, and laity at this peaceful rally, it would immediately be clear that the Orthodox Church is a leading voice for marriage in this nation, sending a clear message to the Orthodox faithful, who being strengthened in the understanding of this mystery, can be prepared to more completely manifest the Gospel message to our nation.

We ask for your prayers and attentiveness to the progress of this effort. May we act now with great labor, asking that the Lord have mercy on us.

May the remainder of your Lenten journey be greatly blessed.

+Joseph

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Joseph', written in a cursive style.

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“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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