



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

4 October 2023

Hieromartyr Hierotheus, Bishop of Athens

№. 120

**ARCHPASTORAL DECREE
PROCLAIMING THE MOTHER OF GOD OF TIKHVIN
AS SOVEREIGN LADY, QUEEN, AND PROTECTRESS
OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST**

*O people, let us hasten to the Virgin Theotokos and Queen,
giving thanks to Christ our God,*

*And looking upon her miraculous image with contrition,
let us fall down and cry out to her:*

*O Mary, our Sovereign Lady, who visit this land
in the miraculous appearance of thy precious image,
save all the Christians in peace and prosperity,
showing us as heirs of the heavenly life.*

For to thee do we cry out with faith:

Rejoice, O Virgin, the salvation of the world!

(Kontakion, Tone 8)

WHEREAS in the Gospel of Saint Luke, we read of the visitation of the Virgin Mary to her kinswoman Elizabeth immediately after the Annunciation, where Elizabeth greets her with the words: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:42-43); and

WHEREAS our Lord Jesus Christ entrusted His Church to the maternal care of His own Mother when, upon the Cross, He spoke to His Beloved Disciple and Apostle John, saying: “Behold your Mother” (John 19:27); and

WHEREAS the Holy Church has always sought the prayers and intercessions of the Mother of its Lord, honored Her as “Blessed Among Women” and venerated her in the Holy Icons; and

WHEREAS the Icon of the Mother of God, the One Who Shows the Way, of *Tikhvin* has been venerated by the faithful throughout the centuries of its recorded history, first in Jerusalem, then in Constantinople, Tikhvin, Riga, the war-torn countries of Europe, and Chicago and the Midwest; and

WHEREAS this venerable and wonderworking Icon was preserved and protected by the ever-memorable Archbishop John of Chicago and the Midwest, and then by his family, most notably the ever-memorable servants of God, Archpriest Sergei and Matushka Alexandra Garklavs, inviting special veneration at Saint Panteleimon Church in Summit Argo, Illinois, at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Chicago, Illinois, and throughout the Diocese of the Midwest; and

WHEREAS in July 2004, after almost five decades in America, the Icon was returned to its Shrine within the Monastery of the Holy Dormition in Tikhvin, Russia; and

WHEREAS an Icon of the Mother of God of *Tikhvin*, made as a true copy and then blessed upon the original in the Tikhvin Monastery Church, was presented to Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Diocese of the Midwest by His Grace Bishop Mstislav of Tikhvin in 2015, during the Archpastoral Ministry of the ever-memorable Archbishop Paul; and

WHEREAS this Icon has been enshrined within the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, the Mother Church and Diocesan Cathedral of the Diocese of the Midwest, resulting in an increasing knowledge and veneration to the Mother of God invoked in Her Tikhvin Icon; and

WHEREAS the God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest continues to be blessed through the presence of the Icon and invites the diocesan Clergy and Faithful and others to prayerfully turn to the Most Pure Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, seeking her prayers and protection, asking her help in times of need and glorifying the All-Holy Trinity and recalling Her own words “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47); and

WHEREAS the Holy Church continues to turn to the Mother of God invoked in Her wonderworking and miraculous Icon, a source of heavenly blessing and graces; and

WHEREAS this love and devotion to the Mother of God of *Tikhvin* is to be cultivated and promoted throughout the Diocese of the Midwest, in its parish and mission communities, and in the hearts of all the Faithful People of God:

I HEREBY PROCLAIM that the Mother of God of *Tikhvin* is to be honored and venerated as the Sovereign Lady, Queen, and Protectress of the Clergy and Faithful of this God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest.

Given on this fourth day of October in the Year of Our Lord 2023, in the presence of the Clergy and Faithful gathered in solemn assembly in the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Burr Ridge, Illinois.

May our Most Pure, Most Blessed, and Glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, our Mother and Queen, invoked in her Holy Icon of Tikhvin, ever intercede for us before the Throne of Her Son, our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory now and forever. Amen.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

+DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest