



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Thursday, 30 March 2024
Venerable Father Isaac of Dalmatia
№. 94

**Archpastoral Message of His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel,
to the Venerable Clergy, Monastics and Faithful
of the God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest**

Beloved Sons and Daughters,

✠ **CHRIST IS RISEN!** ✠

I have just returned to Chicago from my unexpected visit to Cleveland and to our beloved Saint Theodosius Cathedral. As you are already aware, this historic Cathedral recently suffered from an accidental fire sparked by restoration work on the roof. While not a complete loss, significant damages were incurred and substantial efforts will be necessary in order to return the Cathedral to its former glory.

For over a century, Saint Theodosius Cathedral has been a place of worship, spiritual comfort and consolation, Christian fellowship, ministry and service. Indeed, the Cathedral's history and its noteworthy architecture have made it not only one of the Orthodox Church in America's most beloved churches, but also a landmark on the Cleveland skyline. Those of you whose lives have been entwined with the life and history of Saint Theodosius know, better than anyone, what a great loss has been suffered because of the devastation caused by the fire on Tuesday afternoon.

It was emotionally moving and spiritually uplifting to gather in prayer with the local clergy and faithful on Wednesday morning, just hours after the fire. Standing before the open doors of the Cathedral, surrounded by fallen debris and with the smell of smoke still in the air, we sang the Paschal Canon. With these familiar melodies and comforting verses, we were reminded of what we continue to celebrate in these forty days of Pascha: Christ has conquered death and the powers of darkness and has given us the life and light that flow from His victorious Resurrection! Our coming together to proclaim Christ's Victory in word and song, especially in the midst of this painful loss, is a great testament of faith. It directs our hope to another victory, one that is yet to be shown, as the work of the restoration of the Cathedral begins.

At yesterday's service of prayer, I also had the blessing of witnessing the closeness of the Saint Theodosius parish community. Amidst the tears and sadness upon the faces of men and women, young adults and children, I saw the love and concern that the cathedral community have for one another. I am confident that these relationships will provide the strength and determination our brothers and sisters will need as we move forward. Your prayers and support will also play an

important role in the rebuilding of the Cathedral. As the newest chapter of the Cathedral's history begins to be written, I call upon you to pray for Father Ján Čižmár, Cathedral Dean, for the parish leadership, and for all the members of the Saint Theodosius Cathedral parish community. May we all, as Saint Paul exhorts us in his letter to the Galatians, "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.

DANIEL
Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest