



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Monday, 1 September 2025

Indiction

№. III

**ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF
THE MOST REVEREND DANIEL
ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST**

ON THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH YEAR - THE INDICTION

**Beloved Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Faithful
of the God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest:**

I greet each one of you with joy as we enter a new liturgical year. For many, this day goes unnoticed or overlooked. For others, it provides the opportunity to turn the page of their church calendars and begin to focus, again, on the great mystery of our salvation—that mystery which was revealed in human history, in real life and real time—and continues to be revealed even in our own day. This great mystery is clearly expressed and celebrated in the ebb and flow and rhythm of the Orthodox Church's liturgical cycle, a cycle which begins anew today.

On this first day of the Church New Year, we hear from the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke. This Gospel passage recalls not the beginning of any particular year or cycle or sequence. However, it transports us to a specific moment in the very beginning of the Lord's public ministry.

In this Gospel passage, we are told that the Lord returns to His hometown, the small village of Nazareth, where he was known as the son of Mary and Joseph, the carpenter. He goes to the synagogue, as is the Jewish tradition, to be part of the minyan, the group of ten adult men required for prayer to take place. When it is time for the reading from the Scriptures, the Lord is given the scroll and begins to read from the Book of Isaiah:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Then He closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16-21).

Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing... These prophetic words from Isaiah were acknowledged as being fulfilled then and there in the person, words, and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth. But that fulfillment, or realization of Isaiah's prophecy was not to end or conclude in that tiny place of worship in that backwater town of Nazareth. Indeed, these prophetic words of

the Prophet Isaiah have achieved an even greater significance. That prophecy spoke then and speaks now of the ongoing work of salvation in Christ. The prophecy continues to be fulfilled—and will continue to be fulfilled—until the Lord returns at the end of time.

The good news and message of today's annual observance reminds us that our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ continues to heal, to proclaim liberty, to restore sight to the blind, to free those who are held captive, and to announce that this is the year of the Lord. And how does he do this? He accomplishes his ongoing salvific mission through His Church, through each one of us.

I ask each one of you to use this day as a day of prayerful reflection. I invite you, as individuals and as parish communities, to ponder and reflect upon your role in the ongoing work of Christ and of His Gospel. Take this grace-filled opportunity of the new liturgical year to renew your own commitment to preach the Gospel, to heal our world that is filled with the brokenhearted, to announce freedom to those who are bound by the illusions and delusion of the world and those who are seeking the freedom and peace that can only come from Christ. By your words and deeds, announce that now is the time, this is the acceptable year of the Lord. Let us go into the world, announcing that through Christ, *Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*

I ask the Lord to continue to bless and strengthen you. May His Most Pure Mother, our Sovereign Lady and Theotokos, honored in her *Tikhvin Icon*, continue to protect and guard you, your families, and all your loved ones.

With love in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and a cross-like mark at the beginning.

DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest