



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Wednesday, 1 October 2025
The Protection of Our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God
№. 130

ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF HIS EMINENCE
THE MOST REVEREND DANIEL
ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST

ON THE FEAST OF THE PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

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

I greet you all with joy as we celebrate the feast of the Protection of the Mother of God. Today we gather in prayer and worship, singing the praises of the Most Holy Theotokos, our Mother and Protectress. This feast commemorates a special vision experienced by Saint Andrew, Fool for Christ, during the tenth century. According to tradition, he and others, including his disciple Saint Epiphanius, were gathered in prayer in the Church of Saint Mary *Blachernae* in the city of Constantinople, on Sunday, October 1. While in prayer, Saint Andrew witnessed the roof of the church suddenly opening. The Mother of God descended into the church, moving in the air above him. She was surrounded by a bright light and accompanied by angels, holy martyrs, and other saints. Having descended into the church, she knelt and prayed with tears for all faithful Christians in the world. In her prayer, she asked her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to receive the pleas and prayers of all the people entreating Him for His mercy and asking for her protection. After she had finished praying, she spread her *omophorion* (veil) over all the people in the church as a sign of her extending protection over them. Saint Andrew turned to Saint Epiphanius, who was standing near him, and asked, "Do you see, my son, the Holy Theotokos, praying for all the world?" Epiphanius answered, "Yes, Holy Father, I do see it and am amazed!"

While the origins of today's feast are found in Saint Andrew's transcendent experience, its meaning for us today is to be found in our own experience as Orthodox Christians, as disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and as the children of the one Mother, whom Christ Himself gave to us as He hung upon the Cross.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:25-27)

From that moment, the special relationship between Mary and the Church came into existence. All faithful Christians, represented at the Holy Cross by Saint John, the faithful disciple, have been entrusted to Mary as her own children. She became, and remains, our mother given to us by the Lord Himself. And, like John, we receive her as our mother, *welcoming her into our homes, our lives, our hearts.*

As our loving Mother, the Mother of God intercedes for us before her Divine Son and, as she did in the vision of Saint Andrew, she extends her veil of love and concern over us all. On this festal day, we run to her, seeking her intercession for all her children throughout the world: Christians who are persecuted and suffering, the innocent victims of war and violence, the sick and those who suffer in loneliness, the poor and marginalized, and all her children who are searching for the fullness of the Truth that is Jesus Christ and those who, without knowing it, are looking for the salvation that comes from Him alone. We ask her to protect the Holy Church from division, strife, and confusion. And we entrust to her care our own selves and all our dear ones.

Recalling today the amazing vision of Saint Andrew, the Blessed Fool for Christ, we are presented with the opportunity to renew our relationship with Mary, the ever-virgin Mother of Christ our God. Let us draw near to Mary, as individuals and as families and communities. As we sing today:

Today the faithful celebrate the feast with joy, illumined by thy coming, O Mother of God. Beholding thy pure image, we fervently cry to thee: "Encompass us beneath the precious veil of thy protection; deliver us from every form of evil by entreating Christ, thy Son and our God, that He may save our souls."

May the Mother of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ receive all of us under her protecting veil. I entrust all our parish and mission communities, our clergy, monastics, and all the faithful, their friends and loved ones to her intercession and maternal protection. Having just concluded our annual Support our Seminarians (SOS) Appeal, I also entrust to her motherly guidance and care our diocesan seminarians, as well as all those throughout the Diocese of the Midwest who are discerning the call to ministry.

Wishing all of you a joyous and blessed feast, and assuring you of my continued prayer for each and every one, I remain

With love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'D' and a cursive 'aniel'.

DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest