



September 1, 2020  
Protocol 09/001

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

Grace, mercy, peace and love to my beloved children in the Lord, and to all who read this message. The feast of the Ecclesiastical New Year, September 1, in our contemporary Orthodox practice, has become an opportunity to consider and reflect on the natural world, those things that our great God, when He first created them and beheld all that He done, declared “*very good* (Genesis 1:31).” This day serves as an opportunity for us to further our knowledge and deepen our faith in God by contemplating the manifold blessings of creation.

These words, what God has created is “*very good*,” reveal to all people of faith a profound mystery, namely that our God is nothing other than the source of all good, because he is himself *very good*. He is not the source of wickedness, evil, decay, or sin, but of life, love, and goodness. Jesus Christ is for us the supreme testimony of this mystery. The One by whom all things were created, himself became truly a human, born in the fullness of time, while remaining true God. His death on the cross, resurrection from the dead, and his presenting himself, his resurrected body, “*living* after his passion (Acts 1:3)” to his apostles, points to the last days when creation will be restored, and will do nothing else than reveal the glory of God: the oaks will whirl (Psalm 29:9), the river of God will be full of water (Psalm 65:9), the threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil (Joel 2.24), both the sanctuary and the mighty firmament of the heavens will praise God (Psalm 150:1). In those days, what was spoken of in the holy scriptures will come to pass, “For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, ‘I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (II Corinthians 6:16; quoting Leviticus 26:12, Jeremiah 32:38, Ezekiel 37:27).’”

Creation reveals this mystery to us, the mystery of our salvation. From the first days to the last days, God beholds creation and it is *very good*, because the Creator, who is also our Redeemer, is *very good*. Amidst so much uncertainty, suffering, distress, and anxiety, which we are experiencing presently, the mystery revealed to us once again should give us comfort and consolation. The goodness and the love of God remain with us, no matter what else happens. The mystery given over to us in creation should also serve to challenge us to

**Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate**

have proper stewardship of it. God has given us the gift of creation ultimately for our life here and now, and to lead us to the life in the age to come. Having lordship over creation does not mean that we can destroy or do violence to the earth, but that we can live here and now, and that we can remain alive in Christ Jesus to the ages of ages.

I pray that all Orthodox Christians can each use this day as a day to come to a deeper and more profound faith in our Creator by reflecting on all that He has created.

With Archpastoral blessings for the Ecclesiastical New Year,

+ Tikhon  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada