

# The Nativity Epistle

of the Most Reverend Peter,  
Archbishop of Chicago and Mid-America

Beloved in Christ honorable fathers, dear brothers and sisters,

*...behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*

*When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. (Mt. 2:13-14)*

The above words of the Evangelist Matthew indicate that to leave evil is not reprehensible or a manifestation of fear, cowardice or weakness.

In the upcoming 2020th year of the Lord, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, God willing, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the great exodus from the homeland of hundreds of thousands of our fathers and grandfathers, and the founding of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

Some came abroad not of their own free will, and some left in order to remain faithful to historical Russia.

This exodus was not always religiously motivated. However, finding themselves abroad, many became more Church-oriented, and exemplary sons and daughters of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In many locations of the diaspora, our fathers and grandfathers would first build temples of God, and schools in order to preserve and transmit to us knowledge of the Russian language and her history.

We were cut off from Russia, but we were brought up to love her, yet at the same time reject the godless regime.

New waves of immigrants after the Second War joined our fathers and grandfathers, and continued the work begun by them.

Celebrating the centenary of the exodus, we simultaneously celebrate a joyful, long-awaited event - the reconciliation of both parts of the Russian Church, which occurred in 2007.

The Holy Church on the fifth day after the birth of Christ celebrates the memory of the 14,000 Innocents massacred in Bethlehem for Christ. Following this example, and paying tribute to our fathers and forefathers, we bow before the martyrdom of those who stayed in the homeland.

We have never forgotten the martyrs, we always testified to the free world about their feat, and the Church Abroad glorified them in 1981.

God willing, our celebration will have three main events: 1) in the fall of 2020, at Holy Trinity Monastery, where three of the five deceased First Hierarchs are buried, a memorial service will be held for them and all the bishops of the Church Abroad; 2) December 10, 2020, on the day of the of the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God, in the Synodal Cathedral solemn services will be celebrated, and a concert and a festive meal will be held; and 3) in May 2021, celebrations are planned in Belgrade and Sremsky-Karlovtsy.

In our Diocese, we intend to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Church Abroad on the feast day of our Cathedral: the Protection of the Mother of God.

I congratulate my clergy and my God-loving flock with the Nativity of Christ and wish everyone to greet this great day with spiritual joy.

Christ is born – glorify Him!

With love in the Lord,

+Archbishop Peter

Nativity of Christ, 2019 (2020)