



November 17, 2024

11/002

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

My Beloved Children in the Lord,

Today, we in the Orthodox Church in America mark our annual Stewardship Sunday. In thanksgiving for all the benefits that we receive from the work of the departments of the Orthodox Church in America and its central administration, and for the sake of the ongoing missionary, liturgical, and educational work of the holy Church, the Holy Synod has designated this day as a day of support for the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America, one of the primary sources of funding for our departments and their projects.

This designated day of stewardship very much fits the spirit of the present season. We are coming to the end of the harvest season in much of North America, and winter's cold will soon be upon us. At this culmination of the harvest, it has long been traditional to offer thanks for God's bounties with harvest fairs and festivals. Today, this custom continues: in Canada, the day of Thanksgiving is celebrated in October, and in the United States, we will celebrate Thanksgiving at the end of this month.

As we offer up thanks for material bounties during this autumn season, it is all the more appropriate that we also take time and thought to give thanks for God's many spiritual benefits, which we receive through his Church. After all, natural autumn is but a prefiguration of that great harvest at the end of the age, when the angels will thresh and winnow the inhabitants of the earth like wheat. The righteous will be stored up in the barns of God's eternal love, while the unrighteous, like harmful tares and worthless chaff, will be consigned to the everlasting flame of their own passionate desires and sinful inclinations (Mt. 3:12; Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43; Rev. 14:14-16).

Contemplating this great autumn of all mortal things, we recall the Lord's exhortation to store up our own treasures, not in earthly barns, but in heaven (Mt. 6:19-21). Therefore, it is most appropriate, on this Sunday in November, that we give generously to the Stewards of the OCA. Donations to the Stewards of the OCA go to support mission planting grants, youth and young adult ministry, the Department of Pastoral Life, the Department of Liturgical Music and Translation with its gamut of free resources for parish use, expanding educational and catechetical resources, and more.

P.O. Box 31409 Alexandria, Virginia, 22310
516-922-0550 - metropolitan@oca.org - www.oca.org