



Епархія Чикагская и Средне-Американская
Русская Православная Церковь Заграницей

Diocese of Chicago & Mid-America
Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

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April 3/16, 2019
St. Nicetas of Medikion

Dear Father Rectors,

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Chicago & Mid-America:

On Monday, April 2/15, 2019, the Parish Cathedral of the Mother of God, “Notre Dame” (Our Lady of Paris), was gravely damaged by a catastrophic fire. Many of our parishioners have visited Paris, and even those who have not visited are well aware of the cathedral from western literature, film, and other cultural expressions. Likely by now all have witnessed the video of the destruction of the cathedral and have been effected in some way by it.

It is well known that France, along with much of the rest of Western Europe, has become more secular and less religious over the last decades. Nonetheless, it behooves us to recall that Notre Dame was a cathedral built in honor of the Mother of God, and although the cathedral was consecrated after the Great Schism, France was once a great Orthodox country, providing such universal saints to the Holy Church as St. Genevieve of Paris, St. Irenaeus of Lyon, and St. Vincent of Lerins. It is clear that this heritage has not been fully lost. Many risked their lives to rescue priceless relics of the Universal Church from the cathedral, include a portion of the crown of thorns placed on our Lord.

We would never wish such a tragedy on anyone, but this tragedy has taken place. It cannot be undone. May it be for the salvation of all the French people, that in their mourning of their loss the spark of faith may be rekindled in them, and that one day France will again be a shining light of Orthodoxy, providing new saints to the Holy Church on par with her great saints of the past.

My sincere condolences to all who are suffering at this great loss.

With Love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

+ *Andriy Pater*

Peter, Archbishop of Chicago & Mid-America

