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Venerable Mary of Egypt

To the beloved Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of the Archdiocese of Canada.

I take this opportunity to greet all of you at this most holy time of prayer and fasting, as we begin this second half of Great Lent. May the experience of the life-giving Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen us all to complete this essential spiritual struggle.

As we all may know by now, His Eminence, Archbishop Seraphim was retired by the Holy Synod of Bishops of The Orthodox Church in America after much prayer and deliberation, and the Archdiocesan See of Ottawa and Canada was declared vacant.

This opens a new era in our Archdiocese. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada, has taken us under his Omophorion and will be the *Locum Tenens* of the Archdiocesan See of Ottawa and Canada until the canonical election of a suitable successor to His Eminence. Accordingly, His Beatitude is planning to participate in the Spring Archdiocesan Council in May and the Holy Synod is planning its Summer Session in June in Ottawa.

Until then, the Holy Synod has asked that I continue on as Administrator of the Archdiocese until the convening of an Extraordinary Assembly of the Archdiocese where we will have the task of choosing our candidate for this position. In light of this upcoming Assembly, the Clergy Synaxis that had been scheduled in Winnipeg in May is cancelled. Our parishes should thus plan their budgets accordingly.

For 25 years, the Archdiocese of Canada has been blessed with Archbishop Seraphim's leadership. Since 1987, by the Grace of God, His Eminence has led the



Archdiocese from difficult beginnings to growth and stability. In addition, the role played by all our self-denying clergy, and by the faithful with all their talents, devotion and generosity has made our Archdiocese a model for all. Through the last three and a half years of uncertainty, our Archdiocese has continued to grow through your continued faithfulness and generosity. Now, we must look ahead with hope that our Christian witness will continue to bring the truth of Christ's message to more and more of our fellow Canadians.

Our Archdiocese now must continue its path of evangelization. I take this opportunity to humbly ask your holy prayers and continued support for our Canadian Church. Now, more than ever, the Archdiocese of Canada looks towards its faithful people. Our parishes, monasteries and institutions continue to serve you and in return await your help: first of all through your prayers, and then through your continued financial support.

I ask your forgiveness at this time as we approach Holy Pascha, the Feast of Feasts. May we begin Holy Week with peace in our hearts and be open to the joy of the gift of new life through the glorious Resurrection of our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.



+ IRÉNÉE Évêque de Québec/Bishop of Québec
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