



ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE  
METROPOLITAN TIKHON  
Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year &  
The Day of Prayer for the Creation

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

On September 1, 1989, the late Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios I issued the first message from the Ecumenical Throne on the environment. With his proclamation and the establishment of September 1, the first day of the Ecclesiastical New Year, as the Day of Prayer for the Creation, the Church again seeks to remind us, as Mary reminded Martha, of the one needful thing - life and unity with Our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. In that statement Patriarch Demetrios I reminds us that the holy fathers of the Church teach that, "Man is the prince of creation, endowed with the privilege of freedom. Being partaker simultaneously of the material and the spiritual world, he was created in order to refer creation back to the Creator in order that the world may be saved from decay and death."

In St. Ephrem the Syrian's work "Hymns on Paradise" we are given yet another guide to how we might come into that unity and life in Christ. St. Ephrem tells us that God's two witnesses, or pointers, are, "Nature, through man's use of it, [and] Scripture, through his reading it."

As the summer draws to a close and children go back to, or away to school for the first time, and begin again a new academic year ecclesiastical year, let us, being reminded by the pointers to Christ as mentioned by St. Ephrem, take a moment to turn to the one needful thing in praise, worship and thanksgiving for the creation and all the blessings bestowed upon us by our merciful Creator.

It is my prayer that the parishes, Sunday Schools, Youth Groups and other organizations of the Orthodox Church in America will take up this time around September 1 to celebrate the Day of Prayer for the Creation. Our Department of Christian Education has prepared an excellent Study and Activity Guide for young people titled, "The Earth is the Lord's", which can be found at <http://oca.org>.

With my archpastoral blessings and love,

†Tikhon  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada