



DIOCESE OF NEW ENGLAND
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
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*The Right Reverend BENEDICT
Bishop of Hartford*

22 February 2026
Forgiveness Sunday

Diocesan Officers

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To the Clergy and Faithful
of the Diocese of New England

Dearly beloved in Christ,

In one of the stichera in today's Vespers we hear

Let us humble the flesh by abstinence,
as we follow the divine path of pure fasting!
With prayers and tears let us seek the Lord who saves us!
Let us put an end to anger, and cry out:
"Save us, for we have sinned against Thee!
Save us, O Christ our King,
as Thou didst save the men of Nineveh,
and make us partakers of Thy heavenly Kingdom,
O compassionate One."

Similarly, our venerable Father Benedict urges us in these holy days, with prayers and tears, to keep our lives most pure and to wash away the negligences of other times, so that with the joy of the Holy Spirit we may look forward to holy Pascha.

In our parishes we begin the Lenten journey to Pascha by asking each other for forgiveness and by forgiving each other, thus taking heed of Christ's telling us in today's Gospel that if we fail to forgive each other, our heavenly Father will not forgive us.

Though I cannot be physically present with all of you, I ask you for forgiveness for anything I have done or failed to do in carrying out the holy office entrusted by God to my hands through you and the Holy Synod. Please be assured of my prayers as we set out on the path of repentance that leads to holy Pascha.

Good strength for the labors that lie ahead!

In Christ's service,

+ *Benedict*