



Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America EPISCOPAL COUNCIL

November 9/22, 2017
LIBERTYVILLE

Thanksgiving Day 2017

“Without thanksgiving to God there can be no progress in the spiritual life. Ceaseless thanksgiving to God is noble seed from which, if it is watered by the tears of unceasing repentance, a beautiful fruit grows— love for God.” - Saint Nicholai [Velimirovic], Prologue of Ohrid

To the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Executive Boards and Members of the Church-School Congregations of the Serbian Orthodox Communities in North and South America, the Circles of Serbian Sisters of our Parishes and Dioceses, the beloved Children and Youth and the entire Serbian Orthodox Family in North and South America: Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

The American feast of Thanksgiving is an opportunity which beautifully invites us to once more focus our attention on the many blessings God has given to us. As we celebrate this day, let us give thanks to God for his great love for us and for the joy of our salvation in Christ. Let us also give thanks for our families, friends and for our Church communities, which each enhance our experience of life, as together we journey to the great *Thanksgiving banquet* of His Kingdom. We as your Archpastors, are thankful for your commitment to Church, which includes your faithful presence, prayers and support.

Gratitude is foremost in our liturgical experience and faith which guide us to offer thanksgiving all the time, to live in thanksgiving in all of the circumstances and challenges of life. By singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving, we honor God who gives us *“every good and perfect gift.”* [James 1:17] When we celebrate and receive the *Sacrament of Thanksgiving*, the Holy Eucharist, we are united with Christ and one another, so that the *beautiful fruit of love for God* may grow in us and inspire us to extend His love to others. Therefore, let us this Thanksgiving also remember those who are in need, and extend to them the love of God.

As we will soon begin the Nativity Fast, We ask God to bless you abundantly, and pray that with thanksgiving, all of us may progress in the spiritual life during these coming days of preparation and expectation for the feast of Christmas.

With paternal love in Christ,

LONGIN

Bishop of New Gracanica-Midwestern America
PRESIDENT OF THE EPISCOPAL COUNCIL

SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

AMFILOHIJE, Archbishop of Centije, Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral,
Locum Tenens of South and Central America

MITROPHAN, Bishop of Canada

MAXIM, Bishop of Western America

IRINEJ, Bishop of Eastern America

KIRILO, Bishop of Dioclea, Vicar Bishop in South and Central America