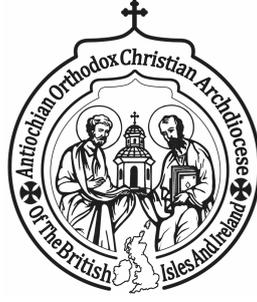


Antiochian Orthodox
Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and
Ireland



الأبرشية الإنطاكية
المسيحية الأرثوذكسية
للجزر البريطانية و إيرلندا

Registered Charity Number: 1175538

Archbishop: His Eminence, Metropolitan Silouan Oner

24th February 2023

Dear Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers and beloved faithful of our God-protected Archdiocese

Grace, peace and mercy from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be upon you all.

Thy grace hath risen, O Lord, the illumination of our souls hath shone forth. Lo, now is the acceptable time; the season of repentance hath come. Let us cast down the works of darkness, and put on the works of light, that we may pass the great tempest of fasting and reach the summit of the third-day Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls.

(Aposticha, Vespers for the first day of the Great Fast)

God has, once again, granted for our salvation that we embark on the Great Fast. We, each one of us, are invited to recognise that we have turned away from God and must reorientate ourselves towards him: in other words, we must repent.

But there is more. To restore our place with God we much restore our place with our neighbour. In the Lord's Prayer, which we pray so often, we hear the words, "*forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us*". We are called to forgive those who offend us, who wrong us, who have performed evil towards us.

And yet there is a deeper level, a more humble level: it is easy for forgiveness to become something which we condescend to do; in humility, though, we can ask each other for forgiveness. In our modern world we can easily see ourselves as disconnected from each other and we think each person's sins are a matter for him and for God alone: but this is a lie. Each of our sins affects every one of our community, and since "***all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,***" (***Romans 3:23***) the Church invites us to acknowledge this and make it our own, to humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness from each other and in this way set out on the season of repentance in a good way, a meek way, a way which is in the image of God.

For my sins, for my errors, for the ways in which I have offended you by my thoughts, by my words or by my deeds, by my actions or by my inactions, **please forgive me.**

I wish you all a joyful Lent and I beseech the Almighty God that he may bless you and grant that you may reach the blessed Pascha of our Lord in a spirit of humility and love.

Your prayers!

I remain your Father in Christ

+Silouan

Metropolitan of the British Isles and Ireland

**+ Silouan, Metropolitan of the British Isles and
Ireland**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Silouan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East