

PATRIARCHAL GREETING

To the delegates of the 35th Annual Convention
of the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia

July 16-18, 2010
Des Plaines, Illinois

Dearest Beloved Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is in our midst!

We are so pleased on behalf of the Holy Synod and ourselves paternally to greet you on the occasion of the 35th Annual Convention of the Bulgarian Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada and Australia.

Our brother in Christ and your Eparchial Vladika Metropolitan Joseph informed us about this, your annual event, and asked us to bless you and your work and to pray for successfulness of your endeavors.

As you remember in October last year we celebrated our 95th birthday. This is a good time to express our thankfulness to all of you for your greetings, prayers and best wishes to us on this occasion.

Also we would like to thank you for your good relationship in our faith, that you stayed with the Holy Orthodox Church for generations to honor our Holy Tradition. We are so pleased that your places of worship inspire you to rise higher and that you find this place where you are challenged to become all God created you to be: a Diocesan church where the leaders speak life and victory into the people.

In Psalm 133, we are told about the pouring of oil on Aaron's head. As you know he was the priest, the leader, and when he was anointed, the oil flowed from his head, down his beard, to the rest of his body. The flow of the oil symbolized how the anointing goes from the leader down to the people. Your own anointing will reflect that of your spiritual leader. If that leader is controlling, condemning and arrogant, that's what flows down to you.

We know about you and do need you to be good leaders in your life. Therefore, locate good relationship in your midst. Find and keep your home in your great Diocesan church with its great ministers, who have hearts of compassion and integrity.

In the Old Testament, God promised prophet Elisha that he would have a double portion of Elijah's anointing. But God said: "Elisha, it will happen under one condition, not how much you pray, not how many scriptures you can quote. You have to be in the right place. You have to stay close to Elijah."

For years Elisha was faithful. He followed Elijah everywhere he went. In fact, a couple of times Elijah tried to get rid of him, tried to lose him. But Elisha stayed right with him. He was determined.

Elisha's job was to help take care of Elijah, who was an older man. He would take him food and water, assist him in menial things. In the natural view of things, his work appeared to be unimportant. We are sure some of Elisha's friends said: "Elisha, what are you doing spending your time following this older man around? You've got dreams and desires. You need to go on with your life."

But Elisha knew something they didn't know. He knew how important it was to be in the right place. He knew that at the right time, God would release double the blessings into his life. He knew if he stayed close to Elijah, little by little, that same anointing would flow into him.

Sometimes it may be difficult for you, just as it was for Elisha. Maybe you think: "I'm serving, and nobody appreciates what I do. I work and get nothing in return."

Yet, whether you realize it or not God's anointing will glow upon you. Prophet Elisha was faithful. Because he recognized his destiny and connected to the right place, he received exactly what God promised: a double portion.

When you are in the right place, connected to the right person, that's when God will release great things into your life. Look for the signs in your own life. Be determined to reach the highest place of blessing. Search your heart. Make sure you are obeying. Stay faithful.

Remember, your blessing is connected to being in the right place physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. If you make staying in God's perfect will a priority, God will lead you and guide you. He will pour out His blessings and favor, and you will live that life of victory He has in store for you.

May God bless you and your 35th Annual Diocesan Convention!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

+ Patriarch Maxim of Bulgaria