

PATRIARCHAL MESSAGE

To the participants of the Sixth Annual Diocesan
Gathering of Popadias and Deaconissas

July 15-16, 2010
Des Plaines, IL

Dear Popadia Junia Tolbert,

Beloved popadias and deaconissas of our Diocese in the USA, Canada and Australia.

On behalf of the Holy Synod and ourselves we paternally greet you on the occasion of your sixth annual gathering as popadias and deaconissas of our Diocese in the USA, Canada and Australia. His Eminence, our beloved brother in Christ and your dear Vladika Metropolitan Joseph, informed us and asked our blessing and prayer for your successful meeting.

You know that in October last year we celebrated our 95th birthday. We would like to thank you all for your greetings, prayers and good wishes to us on the occasion of this event.

We know you and we praise you for your love of being together during your popadias and deaconissas annual gathering. Popadia Junia Tolbert has sent us wonderful reports and photos of your activities all these years. And we thank God that through you we walk into His blessings.

God has already released favor into your future. It's in front of you. He's already released promotion, increase, good breaks. So, you don't have to worry.

You don't have to try to force things to happen. All you have to do is stay faithful and you too will walk into God's blessings.

In the Holy Bible, Ruth suffered serious heartache and pain as a young woman. Her husband was killed in a battle. When her mother-in-law, Naomi, was moving to a different city, Ruth decided to go with her and help take care of her. There was a great famine in the land. Food was scarce. Ruth went out into the fields every morning to glean wheat left by the reapers. That is how she and Naomi survived.

One day, Boaz, the owner of the field came to visit. His workers told him about the young widow, Ruth, who picked up what the harvesters had missed.

“Here's what I want you to do: drop handfuls of wheat on purpose for Ruth,” Boaz told his workers (Ruth 2:16).

When you walk into one of your grace-filled moments, people will go out of their way to be good to you. Many times they don't realize why they are doing it. It is simply because you

have stepped into a time of favor that God released into your future.

God has dropped handfuls of purpose for you. Into the path of your future, God has already dropped favor. He has dropped promotion. He has dropped health. He has dropped wisdom. He has dropped good breaks. He has dropped divine connections. They are out in front of you, just waiting for you to come along. They are called “handfuls of purpose”.

Maybe you love the fact that Ruth was just minding her own business ... being her best, being faithful. All of a sudden she started seeing all this wheat being left in front of her. Think about it. She doesn't have to struggle anymore. She doesn't have to search the field trying to find a little here and a little over there. All she has to do is pick up the wheat piles left for her.

When Ruth goes home with four or five times more wheat than usual, Naomi says: “How in the world did you get all that wheat today?”

You can see Ruth scratching her head: “I don't know,” she replies. “I just walk into it. Normally, I get the leftovers. Normally, I get the scraps. But for some reason these workers starting leaving all this wheat right in my path.”

Extraordinary things began to happen to Ruth. She received blessings that she did not have to work for. That's the way our God is.

Ruth was content with what she had. But God had bigger plans. He didn't want her to spend her life working in the field. God wanted her to own the field. He wanted to do more than just meet her needs. The Holy Bible goes on to tell how she and Boaz fell in love and married. Boaz was one of the wealthiest men in the area. Ruth no longer worked in the field. She and her husband owned it. God brought Boaz across her path. She just walked into it.

So, this is our paternal advice to you as popadias and deaconissas of our fathers: Have a big vision for your life. Don't be complacent and don't be too easily satisfied. If you will seek God, if you will put Him first and honor Him with your life, the blessings will seek you.

When together with your husbands, who are our clergy, you live a life of integrity, when you have a spirit of excellence, giving, serving, and treating our people right, God's blessings will chase you down and overtake you. You cannot run out of the good things of God when you do your best to please Him. Or as the Holy Scriptures say in Psalm 37:4: “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

God bless you and your gathering!

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” (Revelations 22:21)

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Patriarch of Bulgaria