



The Byzantine Catholic  
**Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh**

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***2018 - Warm Your Heart during the Season of the Great Lenten Fast***

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear faithful of Pittsburgh,

We begin our journey through the Great Fast during a very cold winter season. The below zero temperatures, bitter winds, and snow have extended all the way to Gulf Coast parishes of the Byzantine Church. The parishes on the shores of frozen Lake Erie were covered with over seven feet of snow. From this frigid time, we long for the return of warmth and sunshine to warm our houses. Also, during the time of the Fast, we pray to warm our hearts and prepare our minds and souls for the celebration of Easter.

The 2018 Lenten Message of Holy Father Francis from the Gospel of Saint Matthew focuses upon the chill of our hearts. "Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold." Matthew 24:12. The daily stream of bad news, the proclamation of false prophets, and global issues all weigh upon our desire and ability to hope.

For each of us, the same chill we feel outside may have crept into our spiritual lives. For some, our hearts have a dusting of frost and others are buried in a foot of snow and ice. Lent gives us a time to turn inward and to try to warm up hearts and share the love of God to everyone.

The way to warm our hearts is to attend the Lenten Services at our churches and to pray each day. We are called to donate our time, treasure, and talents to our churches, our charities, and to the needy people that we meet. They could be in our families. They could be strangers to us, or even our enemies. The love we show to them warms our hearts and leads us to God.

And finally, fasting is a way of getting our body, mind, and spirit to wake up a hunger for the Holy Spirit in our lives. Like the manna in the desert for the Israelites wandering in the desert, pirohy sustain us through our journey through the Great Fast.

This cold winter will end. With spring, the light of the Resurrection will help warm our hearts and lift us up into the presence of the Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ William C Skurka*

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D.D.  
Metropolitan Archbishop Pittsburgh

*Open to me the Doors of repentance, O Giver of life. As we worship in your temple this morning, teach us how to purify the temples of our bodies, and in your compassion, purify me by the goodness of your mercies. (Third Sunday of the Great Fast)*