

## Remarks of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon at the Conclusion of Liturgy for the Feast of Saint Catherine

Your Holiness,

It is a great joy to concelebrate with Your Holiness, and all of our brother bishops, on the Feast of the Greatmartyr Catherine, the patronal saint of this sacred temple. This year, we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Church of St Catherine-in-the-Fields as the Representation Church of the Orthodox Church in America to the venerable Russian Orthodox Church and we give thanks to God that he has allowed this concelebration to take place as a visible sign of the continuity and unity of our Churches,

The Great Martyr Catherine was from Alexandria, which at that time was the greatest center of learning and knowledge in the world. Men and women came to Alexandria to study mathematics, philosophy, science, and rhetoric from the great teachers of that city. Saint Catherine herself learned all these arts, but as a young child, she already yearned for the science of sciences, the true knowledge of God that leads to salvation.

Her martyrdom at the hands of those who rejected Christ had an incredible effect: The philosophers and teachers she disputed with turned to Christ, as did hundreds of other pagans, including the Empress Augusta and her loyal bodyguards. For in her death for the sake of the Truth, they realized the truth that Jesus Christ died for us, so that we might rise with Him.

Today, we remember that Jesus Christ has overcome the world, and that it is through our common witness, our witness as his followers, that the secular world continues to be overcome. In our days, scientific knowledge is increasing rapidly, and as our knowledge increases, both our abilities to do good and our abilities to do evil increase. Our Church, following the example of Saint Catherine, must find ways to convince the world to turn to Christ, through our words and deeds, so that the world might be united by His Grace, instead of being divided by the Evil One.

It is with this unity in Christ in mind that we are gathered here today, for this Church represents the unity of faith and communion that the Orthodox Church in America shares with our brothers and sisters of the Church of Russia.

Your Holiness, today we find the inspiration and the courage to continue our Apostolic work to fulfill the commandment to preach the Gospel of salvation to the world. I am grateful to Your Holiness for your friendship and for the bond of unity in Jesus Christ that exists between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church in America, a bond that has historically existed for many years and, we pray, will continue for many more.