



**His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH's remarks to the  
St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary Graduates  
Saturday, May 15, 2021**

On behalf of our Antiochian Archdiocese, I congratulate all of you, as your years of study now come to a successful conclusion. And I thank Fr. Chad and all of your teachers for investing their time and knowledge in you, which is an investment in the future of our Orthodox Church.

As you leave this blessed place, your challenge will be to put your knowledge to work in service of the Church. You will have the opportunity to bring God's grace to souls that are hungry for salvation. But in order to do this, you will need to overcome many challenges along the way. In particular, you will need to work with a great variety of personalities, each with his own strengths and weaknesses, his own visions and dreams. The Church is a body of many parts, and the interplay between these parts is both full of blessings and fraught with challenges. Our own weaknesses, sins, and pride provide ample room for the devil's attacks.

When Saint Anthony saw all the snares of the devil laid bare, he cried out, "How can anyone get through such snares?" And a voice from heaven said one word: "Humility." This is our greatest need in ministry. Just as pride can rob our good deeds of any benefit, so humility has the power to make our weakest efforts bear much fruit. It attracts God's grace; it unites us to the humble Lord who called us into His service.

So I leave you with this advice from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (4:1-3): "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Congratulations and many blessings to all of you.

**+ Metropolitan JOSEPH**