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STATEMENT OF METROPOLITAN BASIL  
ON THE LOSS OF THE COLUMBIA SPACE SHUTTLE CREW

“The tragic explosion of the space shuttle Columbia on Saturday touches all hearts with sadness as we remember the dedication of its crew, who willingly risked and sacrificed their lives to help advance all humankind.

“On behalf of the clergy, monastics and laity of the Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, I offer sincere condolences to the families of the Columbia crew.

“Likewise, we remember with compassion the entire NASA team as they struggle with the untimely loss of coworkers and friends under such difficult and painful circumstances.

“We join our prayers with those of the world community, asking God to give rest now to his servants in that place of Light, where there is no pain, sorrow, nor mourning, but life everlasting.

“We pray, too, that their families and friends find comfort in the blessed memories of their loved ones and the heartfelt sympathies of those who forever honor their devotion.”