



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Archpastoral Message

September 2, 2020

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy

Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos Sisterhood, Faculty and Students of the Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools, Directors and Participants of all Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

There is no doubt that over the past several months our Church, Parish Communities, devout faithful, Parish ministries, and nation have endured the serious consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic. In addition to over 180,000 people dying from this virus, millions have been infected which has often led to serious medical issues and perhaps medical consequences of which we know neither the duration nor the type. Beyond this, numerous families have endured economic hardships as many businesses were forced to close and millions of people lost work.

Our Parish Communities have also endured much during these trying months as the devout faithful were initially not permitted to attend the Divine Services and, even now, there are limitations to participation due to local, state, CDC, and Metropolis regulations. Nevertheless, as our nation and Communities endure, we thank God for having provided many of us with our health as well as the ability to continue contending with the harshness of this virus. Although the end of this pandemic is not imminent, we can still rejoice in the many blessings God has given us. Giving thanks to our Lord is of the utmost importance since He, as the Author of Life, gives us the strength and fortitude to withstand all things.

Therefore, I encourage each and every one of you to come to Church with your family so that you may give thanks to God. Give thanks to Him for having preserved us. Give thanks to Him for protecting us. Give thanks to Him for giving us strength when we were weak and for aiding us when we were in need. *“Give thanks to the Lord, for He*

is good, for His mercy endures forever” (Ps. 118:1). I implore you to go to Church so that, as a devout community of Orthodox Christians, we may give thanks to God together and partake of the most pure and precious Body and Blood of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and for eternal life. This is greatest way in which we can give thanks to God.

In addition to giving thanks to God through our participation in the Divine Services, let us redouble our efforts to support the ministries of the Church financially as the Church needs our support to continue its mission in spiritually nourishing the devout faithful and all people. During the course of this Pandemic, many Parish Communities have experienced serious financial setbacks which have affected ministries upon which countless people depend. Therefore, I implore you to give as generously as you can to your Parish Community so that our Parishes can continue their essential ministries which build up the Body of Christ, feed the hungry, shelter the destitute, aid the needy, and help the sick. With your love and dedication for Christ and His Church combined with your generosity, we may be able to continue these vital ministries for the glory of God.

My beloved in the Lord, we must help and assist one another as much as we can during these difficult times while remaining faithful that these trials and tribulations shall eventually pass. Let us always support and bolster one another so that, as a Community, we may confront the challenges that lay ahead. Moreover, let us always remember the words of St. James, the brother of our Lord, who says, *“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”* (James 1:2-4). Praying that our Lord continues to protect you and grant to you and your families His abundant blessings as we begin this New Ecclesiastical Year, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evagelos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'M'.

† E V A N G E L O S
Metropolitan of New Jersey