



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

September 16, 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,

As we continue through these most difficult times, our families, our communities, and the Church have been intensely affected both by the COVID-19 Pandemic and the restrictions in response to the Pandemic. The current levels of restrictions and regulations are indeed frustrating for myself and for our Ecclesiastical Communities as we are prevented from conducting the mission and ministries of the Church for the salvation and spiritual well-being of the devout faithful in the same manner as has been done in the past.

I share in your pain, your frustration, and your concern that our Communities are not able to return to gathering in worship all together without limitations and that the important ministries of the Church are not all able to function as they normally have. These unfortunate events have caused untold difficulties which have affected all the devout faithful of our Communities and the community at large. Our devoted Ecclesiastical Communities offer the Bread of Life to all devout faithful and they engage in numerous ministries which spiritually build the Body of Christ. Moreover, many of these ministries serve in reaching out to the less fortunate and marginalized members of society. Yet, in this COVID-19 era, these ministries have suffered from a lack of funding and the inability for the normal number of persons to gather so that these ministries may be as successful as possible. This reality is saddening and causes all of us pain since we are limited in the number of ministries that can function.

I fully and completely understand the challenges which our most devout Clergy and Parish Council members face in the light of these unprecedented times especially as our Communities face indescribable financial setbacks. It is with tremendous eagerness that I would like for our Communities to return to normal, just as all of our Clergy, Parish Council members, and devout faithful would like as well, however, currently this is not the case due to the continued effects of the Pandemic.

My beloved in the Lord, though our frustration is palpable and our desire for normality is abundant, we must have patience and, above all, faith in God. It is with God's intervention and His protection that we will be able to surpass these difficulties. Therefore, I encourage you to pray all the more fervently for the well-being, safety, and health of your family, friends, and members of your Community so that, when this Pandemic has come to an end, we can all gather and rejoice together in our Parishes, giving thanks to Almighty God for His love and mercy.

Praying that our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, together with His most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Mother, the Theotokos, guard and guide each of you and your families during these turbulent times, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The word "Metropolitan" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and "Evangelos" is written in a smaller, more delicate script to its right.

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