



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

The Nativity of our Lord 2014

The Reverend Clergy
Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,
Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council,
Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos Societies,
Faculty and Students of the Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools,
Directors and Participants of all Youth Organizations, and all devout
Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our
Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My beloved in the Lord,

It is with particular joy and much enthusiasm that I greet all of you on this great Feast of the Nativity according to the flesh of our God and Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Indeed, the festive and blissful nature of the Nativity Feast causes all of us the world over to leap with spiritual elation and peacefulness.

The great herald and Prophet Isaiah had spoken about *“the child”* (Isaiah 9:6) centuries ago and behold, the Christ-Child was born, became incarnate, and dwelt among us, for *“when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son.”* (Gal. 4:4) Since sin had permeated and flooded the world and humankind was living in a state of wretchedness and rebellion, deeply immersed into the dark abyss of irreverence and tragedy, it was then that *“the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...full of grace and truth,”* (John 1:14). For sin was supplanted by the grace of God, darkness by divine light, falsehood by truth, injustice by divine justice and death by life. For now *God is with us, Emmanuel.*

The joy of the season is universal, for Christ’s Nativity has saved the human race and the Sun of Righteousness has dawned upon the world. *“Christ is on earth; arise to Him.”* Christ was born so that man might redeem himself and his proper place in the world, He was born of a Virgin so that woman might be exalted, He was born as a babe so that He might bless the infants, He was born in all humility in a meager cave so that He might confirm that which He Himself would preach: *“he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

The divine, human Birth of the Son of Man was received with inexpressible joy and profound wonder from all of creation, which did everything in its power to participate fully in this most mystical phenomenon. The Earth offered a cave, the angels sang hymns, the heavens brought forth a great star, the wilderness created a manger, the shepherds stood in awe, the Magi presented Him gifts, and humanity offered a Virgin. Indeed, a new dawn – a rebirth of

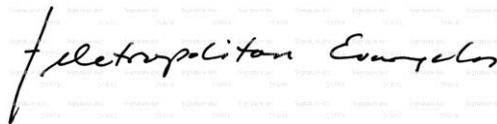
the cosmos and a renewed relationship between the created and its Creator is ushered into history as *“the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light.”* (Matthew 4:16)

As we celebrate Christmas with our loved ones, we are called upon to travel to Bethlehem and to hear the angel exclaim, *“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* (Luke 2:10-11) In order to delve deeper into the knowledge and understanding of the mystery of His Incarnation, and to accept more profoundly Christ as our Lord, God and Savior, the triumphant and melodious words of the angel must be shared with all.

Each of us must prepare the manger of our soul and heart to welcome the Sun of Righteousness, the Son of God, as the Earth did, and to exalt and worship Him as the Angels and stars did. In so doing, our darkened and sinful life will be transfigured and transformed into a Christ-like life, illuminating light and reflecting the love, peace and joy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

May the Joy of Christmas, the Hope of the New Year 2015 and the Grace and Blessings of our Incarnate Lord be with all of you and your beloved families.

With Paternal Love in the New-Born King and God,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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