



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Feast of the Holy Cross 2017

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 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 of the Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved,

“Through the Cross joy has come to all the world.” It is truly paradoxical that something that was once looked upon as an instrument of torture, a symbol of shame, and an indication that someone was a criminal is now considered to be a universal sign of peace, a testament of unwavering love, and the ultimate symbol of life. Yet it is precisely the Cross through which humanity and, in reality, all of creation was saved.

It was through the free will of humanity that we disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Yet even in our disobedience, God respected our freedom so much that He did not seek to punish us, but to liberate us utilizing our own freedom. Thus, He sent His Son who would sacrifice Himself for us on the Cross thereby opening a door for us to Paradise. It was this self-sacrifice that annihilated death and granted life to all those who believe in Christ.

It was this call to faith in the years, decades, and centuries after the resurrection that led to the miracle which we celebrate today. It was on this day almost 1,700 years ago that, after having ventured to Jerusalem, St. Helen, the mother of St. Constantine, found the Holy Cross. Her faith led her to the discovery of the Most Precious Cross of Christ and also led to the bolstering of the faith of all Christians for centuries to come.

Though we celebrate this finding of the Cross, we should not just look at this as a one-time event. Rather, we are to continuously acknowledge and bear our individual crosses so that through our struggles we may grow closer to Christ in faith. Therefore, the finding of the Holy Cross today should bolster us in our faith in confronting the daily crosses that we bear.

As we celebrate this major feast of the Church, let us remember not only Christ's sacrifice as it relates to our freedom from death, but let us remember that His Cross grants us a freedom towards something—which is the opportunity to partake in the everlasting Kingdom of God.

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

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