



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

### Great and Holy Pascha 2014

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 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,

*Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is risen!*

Today we have been rescued from the ancient curse of death and new life has been granted to all of humanity. For our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ has risen from the dead, destroyed the gates of Hades, and has freed us from corruption. Hades was mortified when it saw Christ, the King of all, and he shuddered in His very presence.

Whereas before *“all of creation trembled when it saw you hanging on the tree”*, now all creation rejoices as it witnesses you ascending from Hades with those who had been dead. To those who were dead, they have been raised by Him who is the Source of Life. To those who were in darkness, they have been illumined with Christ’s divine Light. To those who were in anguish, they have been comforted with His sublime presence. To those who have been captives in Hades, they have been freed by Him who liberates all humanity. To those who were sinful, they have been redeemed by Him who suffered for our sake.

The resurrection of Christ does not simply have implications for those who lived in the past, but also for those of us who remain. Christ’s resurrection is a validation of the fact that we too are to rise with Him in the final days. We are offered this magnificent gift from Christ through His cross, but it necessitates that we too carry our cross for our Lord tells us, *“If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me”* (Matthew 16:24). Let us, therefore, run towards Him in our daily

lives and “...set aside all the cares of life” so that we may experience in ourselves the resurrection He experienced; for as St. Paul says, “For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall surely be united with Him in a resurrection like His” (Romans 6:5).

It is with these thoughts in mind, my dearly beloved in the Lord, that I implore you to take this opportunity to continuously strengthen your devotion to the Lord. The resurrection of Christ is by no means the end of our devotion and prayer life, rather it is the beginning of a new day in the Lord’s vineyard. This is the beginning because we have been given new strength in Christ’s resurrection. This is the beginning because we have been imbued with the Light of Christ so that we too may share it with the world. This is just the beginning for today we experience the good news and utter joy of the resurrection.

It is my sincerest hope and prayer that as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ that we also recognize our duty to spread the good news of His dominion over death. May Christ, our King and God, bless you all with good health and increased faith so that we may all exclaim together, “Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down death and to those in the tombs he has granted life.”

With Paternal Love and Blessings in the Risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". 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