



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Sunday of Orthodoxy 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,

This past Monday, March 3rd, we entered another Ecclesiastical period known to each of us and all within our Holy Orthodox Church as the Holy and Great Lent, a sacred period of preparation for our Lord's Passion, Crucifixion upon the Cross, and His glorious Resurrection from death. Likewise, we embarked on a special spiritual journey which will be filled with contemplation and prayer and fasting which I pray will lead us to repentance and our reunification with Him. However, our noetic preparation to receive our crucified and resurrected Lord into our hearts and souls, into our very lives, must be accompanied by our physical actions and deeds such as almsgiving. In this manner, our journey to Golgotha and the empty Tomb becomes complete and most meaningful.

Indeed, we are challenged once again during this Lenten season and as part of our spiritual journey to recall the admonition of St. Paul, that "*we should remember the poor,*" (Gal. 2:10). It is indeed most regrettable that many of our Christian brethren in this day and age of plentiful and abundance, do not have the financial means to meet their daily needs. Our Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos stands ready once again, as always, to meet the needs of those who so desperately need financial assistance.

To this end, as an integral part of this spiritual journey and our physical and spiritual preparation, I paternally ask that we embrace one another in love, our families, our friends, our neighbors and especially, the known and unknown to us who lack all that we have. Please join the mission of the Church in her efforts to bring Christ and the joy of the Resurrection to all. Please help and put a smile on the face of the poor, the hungry, the widow, the orphan, the sick and all who live a life of distress. How? By offering your Christian Faith and beliefs in our Lord through philanthropy, we will be participating in His love for it is out of love for us that He came into the world.

In a few moments this opportunity will come before us as an offering tray will be passed in all Parishes of our Metropolis. Your contributions will benefit the philanthropic ministry of the Church through the Philoptochos of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey. On this sacred day, the first Sunday of Great Lent, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, let us also proclaim our victory over self-centeredness, egocentricity, pride and greed. May we my beloved also restore our self image in the eyes of God Who came into the world to abolish all that is NOT GOOD, injustice, prejudice, hatred, racism, physical and spiritual hunger and pain, etc.

Please give from your heart, not only now but always, and be assured that your reward will be multiplied with His blessings and love in heaven above and as St. John Chrysostom reminds us, *"God protects and loves the charitable and philanthropic person."* Furthermore, the Patron Saint of our Holy Metropolis also has this to say concerning our charitable acts, *"Almsgiving above all else requires money, but even this shines with a brighter luster when the alms are given from our poverty. The widow who paid in the two mites was poorer than any human, but she outdid them all."*

Thanking all of you for your most generous and caring gifts of love, and praying that your spiritual journey in celebration of His Resurrection will be blessed by our Father in Heaven, 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 than "Evangelos".

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

To be read from the pulpit on Sunday, March 9th, 2014

Checks should be made payable to the GOMNJ Philoptochos Society