



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Thanksgiving 2015

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 Youth Organizations, and all devout
Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our
Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved,

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said ‘Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me’. In the same manner He also took the cup after supper saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’” (1 Co 11:23-25)

The Orthodox way of remembering an event is to give thanks to God for what He has done for us. There is no better way to do it than by celebrating the “Mystery of Mysteries”, the Divine Liturgy. During the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, by the Grace of the Life-giving Spirit, we make present all the different stages of the Divine Economy, the salvation history from the Old Testament all the way through the New Testament and to the Kingdom to come. The Divine Liturgy itself is a journey during which we are asked to “give thanks to the Lord” because it is, as we sing, “proper and right.”

Every year, Thanksgiving invites us to contemplate what God has freely given us in His love. His gifts take various forms: faith, family, friends, business, health, wealth, etc. All of these gifts bring us the strength to complete the pilgrimage of our lives. As Orthodox Christians, living in this wonderful country where freedom of religion is assured, we must give thanks to God for our freedom and pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who live under the oppression of restrictive policies and under the threat of religious persecution.

We should thank God through prayer, but we should also thank God through charity. By charity, I mean the encounter between love and action. We received freely, and so we

should give freely, without expecting anything in return. Otherwise, in the terms of spiritual literature, we are “mercenaries”. We are the servants of God and as such we should not expect any compensation when we do good. God sees it in the secret of our hearts, where He sends His Divine Grace as we “set aside all the cares of life, that we may receive the King of all...”

We are all pilgrims journeying towards the Kingdom. On this joyful day, I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving. I pray that our Lord will continue to show all of you His great and rich mercy.

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

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

† EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey