



SAINT NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Message from FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS, PROTOPRESBYTER

K O I N O N I A

Before I begin my article, I would like to wish everyone in the Community, A Happy New Year filled with joy, happiness and health.

Around this time of year, many people start thinking about ways they can change for the better. Each New Year brings with it hope of new beginnings. We leave the old, and look forward to the new. But the question here is? Yes, we leave the old and look forward to the new, but do we correct the faults and the mistakes of the past. We have all made mistakes in the past that has brought us to this point of questioning. But we have so many chances to correct our bad ways and change them for the good. Understanding what Repentance means is the key to our spiritual success and salvation. It is the key that opens the door to Heaven above for all Christians. Please, let us never forget what the thief on the Cross did to gain his passage to Paradise. He was so close to losing his soul, but with him asking Christ for forgiveness, he saved his soul.



We need to take his example, and use it in our lives. I would like to quote Ephesians 5: 15-17, which says, "Be very careful then, how you live not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's Will is."

Every year people talk about making new resolutions for the coming year. In the Orthodox Church, New Years resolutions are not particularly a feature of our faith, Change certainly is, and resolving to change based on times and seasons is a major part of our Liturgical tradition. So, if we could become a better Orthodox Christian through resolution then that seems perfectly reasonable to me.

In this paragraph, I'm going to give you some basic statistics about the attendance in Church. Did you know that only 26% of Orthodox Christians in America come to Church weekly? That to me is a horrible percentage. Did you know that hundreds and thousands of young married Orthodox couples with children, do not attend church even once a year? That

is very scary!! Just imagine out of 100%, 74% percent of our Orthodox Christians do not attend Church every week. There are probably some good reasons out there, but most of the 74% almost certainly do not have good reasons. If you are not serious about coming to Church, it's time to get serious. This is eternal life we're talking about not a religious club. We are slowly losing our children to the pleasures of this world. I would like to know "WHO DO WE BLAME?" As Parents we should put the blame on ourselves. We are not giving an opportunity for our children who are the next generation of Orthodox Christians a chance to have an essential relationship with Christ. That is also scary!!

Another resolution that we can make a change is coming to church on time. It's kind of an in-joke that Orthodox people are always late for Church. And why is that? We too often accept the excuse that we function on "Greek time". But Greeks seem to be able to show up to nearly everything else on time. Why is it, that we can show up for work on time, sporting events, movies, doctor's appointments, etc. but we are always late coming to Church.

I hope that this New Year 2019, we can bring a joyous and fresh attitude to our daily activities. Let's forget what happened in the past, the errors and mistakes, what we need to do is start anew. This is what is lacking in our lives, the opportunity to grow in Christ. We need to get back on track and set sail for a new destination, a destination that only God can provide for us. Do not set your future on the desires of this world, or should I say what Society has to offer us. The only thing that our Society has to offer us is fake and temporary existence. The question here is are we going backwards instead of going in a positive direction. The answer is "Yes" we are going backwards and not forward, because we have taken Christ out of our lives and have substituted Him with earthly desires and pleasures. We need to open up our eyes and face the reality of what is happening in this world that is affecting our relationship with our Lord. Look what is happening to our own families. We are giving up the fight, and allowing Satan to rule over us. God respects the person, who when he/she fails, gets back up and starts fresh. There is always room for evaluation and reassessment. We need to ask ourselves, "What do I want to do



Μήνυμα Από τον Πατέρα Μιχαήλ Α. Παστρικό

differently in this New Year 2019?” Look back at last year and see where you failed and where you succeeded. These are very serious questions, and they deserve our honest answer. We all need to find ways to better connect with Christ and the church in every aspect of our lives.

It's time to stop saying just with words that you have faith. We need to live our faith in Christ. Do not just express words, but put those words into action. If you are reading this article, thank God that you are alive and well to see the beginning of this New Year 2019. Let's begin to make certain changes that will conform our lives according to the Will of God, and put our spiritual household in order, not only on certain social events of the year, but to also fulfill our spiritual responsibilities to Christ.

Presvytera Toula and I, along with my children and grandchildren, would like to wish everyone in the Community, A Happy and Blessed New Year, and may our Incarnate Lord keep you and your family members healthy, safe and wise. Let's make this New year, the Year of Christ.

Πριν ξεκινήσω το άρθρο μου, θα ήθελα να ευχηθώ σε όλους στην Κοινότητα, Ευτυχισμένο το Νέο Έτος, γεμάτο χαρά, ευτυχία και υγεία. Κατ' αυτήν την περίοδο του χρόνου, πολλοί άνθρωποι αρχίζουν να σκέφτονται με ποιό τρόπο μπορούν να αλλάξουν προς το καλύτερο. Κάθε νέο έτος φέρνει μαζί του ελπίδες για νέα ξεκινήματα. Αφήνουμε το παλιό και προσβλέπουμε στο νέο. Αλλά η απορία εδώ είναι: Εν τάξει, αφήνουμε το παλιό και προσβλέπουμε στο νέο, αλλά διορθώνουμε τα λάθη και τα λάθη του παρελθόντος; Έχουμε όλοι κάνει λάθη στο παρελθόν που μας έφεραν σε αυτό το σημείο αμφισβήτησης. Έχουμε τόσες πολλές ευκαιρίες να διορθώσουμε τις κακές συνήθειές μας και να τις αλλάξουμε για το καλύτερο. Η κατανόηση του τι σημαίνει μετάνοια, είναι το κλειδί για την πνευματική επιτυχία και τη σωτηρία μας. Αυτό είναι το κλειδί που ανοίγει την πόρτα του Ουρανού για όλους τους Χριστιανούς. Παρακαλώ, ας μην ξεχνάμε τι έκανε ο κλέφτης στον Σταυρό για να κερδίσει το πέρασμά του στον Παράδεισο. Πρέπει να ακολουθήσουμε το παράδειμά του και να το χρησιμοποιήσουμε στη ζωή μας. Ήταν τόσο κοντά να χάσει τη ψυχή του, αλλά ζητώντας συγχώρηση από τον Χριστό, την έσωσε.

Θα ήθελα να παραθέσω την προς Εφεσίους επιστολή 5: 15-17, που αναφέρει, 'Βλέπετε οὖν πῶς ἀκριβῶς περιπατεῖτε, μὴ ὡς ἄσοφοι, ἀλλ' ὡς σοφοί, ἐξαγοραζόμενοι τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραὶ εἰσι. Διὰ τοῦτο μὴ γίνεσθε ἄφρονες, ἀλλὰ συνιέντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Κυρίου.

Προσέχετε, λοιπόν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἔχετε φωτισθῆ ἀπὸ τὸν Χριστόν, πῶς με κάθε ἀκρίβειαν να συμπεριφέρεσθε, ὅχι σαν μωροὶ καὶ ἀσύνετοι, ἀλλὰ σαν φρόνιμοι καὶ σύνετοί. Να κερδίζετε πάντοτε καὶ να εκμεταλλεύεσθε διὰ τὸ ἀγαθὸν τὸν χρόνον καὶ τὰς ευκαιρίας τῆς παρουσίας ζωῆς, διότι αἱ ἡμέραι, ἐξ αἰτίας τῆς αμαρτίας που επικρατεῖ, εἶναι γεμάτοι πειρασμούς καὶ πνευματικούς κινδύνους.

Δι' αὐτὸ προσέχετε να μὴ γίνεσθε καὶ φέρεσθε σαν ἀσύνετοι, ἀλλὰ να ερευνάτε καὶ να ενοήτε καλὰ ποῖον εἶναι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Κυρίου.

Κάθε χρόνο, οι άνθρωποι μιλούν για πραγματοποίηση νέων στόχων το επόμενο έτος. Στην Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία, οι υποσχέσεις για το Νέο Έτος, δεν είναι ιδιαίτερο χαρακτηριστικό της πίστης μας, όμως η αλλαγή σίγουρα είναι, και η επίλυση να αλλάξει με βάση το χρόνο και την εποχή είναι σίγουρα μέρος της λειτουργικής μας παράδοσης. Αν λοιπόν θα μπορούσαμε να γίνουμε καλύτεροι Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί με τις υποσχέσεις, τότε αυτό μου φαίνεται λογικό.

Σε αυτή την παράγραφο, θα σας δώσω μερικές βασικές στατιστικές σχετικά με τη συμμετοχή στην Εκκλησία. Γνωρίζετε ότι μόνο το 26% των Ορθόδοξων Χριστιανών στην Αμερική έρχονται στην εκκλησία κάθε εβδομάδα. Αυτό το ποσοστό για μένα είναι φρικτό. Γνωρίζετε ότι εκατοντάδες και χιλιάδες νεαρά παντρεμένα Ορθόδοξα ζευγάρια με παιδιά, δεν έρχονται στην εκκλησία ούτε μία φορά το χρόνο. Είναι πολύ τρομακτικό !! Απλά φανταστείτε από το 100%, το 74% τοις εκατό των Ορθόδοξων Χριστιανών μας δεν πηγαίνουν στην εκκλησία κάθε εβδομάδα. Μάλλον υπάρχουν κάποιες καλές δικαιολογίες, αλλά το μεγαλύτερο μέρος του 74% , είναι σχεδόν σίγουρο δεν έχει

βάσιμους λόγους. Εάν δεν παίρνετε στα σοβαρά τον εκκλησιασμό, ήρθε η ώρα να σοβαρευτείτε. Πρόκειται για την αιώνια ζωή, όχι για κάποια θρησκευτική λέσχη. Αργά αλλά σταθερά, χάνουμε τα παιδιά μας στις απολαύσεις αυτού του κόσμου. Θα ήθελα να μάθω «ΠΟΥ ΘΑ ΡΙΞΟΥΜΕ ΤΟ ΦΤΑΙΣΙΜΟ; Ως γονείς θα πρέπει να ρίξουμε το φταίξιμο στον εαυτό μας. Δεν δίνουμε την ευκαιρία στα παιδιά μας. Ήρθε η ώρα να σταματήσετε να λέτε μόνο με λόγια ότι (Έχετε πίστη), πρέπει να ζήσετε την πίστη μας με το Χριστό. Μην λέτε μόνο λόγια, κάντε αυτές τις λέξεις έργα. Αν διαβάσετε αυτό το άρθρο, ευχαριστώ το Θεό που είστε ζωντανοί και καλά, για να δείτε το ξεκίνημα του νέου έτους 2019. Ας αρχίσουμε να κάνουμε κάποιες αλλαγές που θα ακολουθήσουμε στη ζωή μας, σύμφωνα με το θέλημα του Θεού, και να βάλουμε το πνευματικό νοικοκυριό μας σε τάξη, όχι μόνο σε ορισμένα κοινωνικά γεγονότα του έτους, αλλά και να εκπληρώσουμε τις πνευματικές μας ευθύνες προς τον Χριστό, που είναι η επόμενη γενιά των Ορθόδοξων Χριστιανών, την ευκαιρία να έχουν μια απλή σχέση με το Χριστό. Και αυτό είναι επίσης τρομακτικό !!

Άλλη μια απόφαση που μπορούμε να πάρουμε και να κάνουμε αλλαγή, είναι ένα είδος αστείου ότι οι Ορθόδοξοι καθυστερούν σχεδόν πάντα για την Εκκλησία. Γιατί συμβαίνει αυτό; Πολύ συχνά αποδεχόμαστε τη δικαιολογία με την οποία λειτουργούμε (ελληνική ώρα). Αλλά όταν οι Έλληνες πρέπει να προσαρμοστούν για να εμφανιστούν κάπου, σχεδόν πάντα είναι στην ώρα τους. Όπως είναι, ότι μπορούμε να είμαστε στην εργασία μας στην ώρα μας, στις αθλητικές εκδηλώσεις, στο Σινεμά, στα ιατρικά μας ραντεβού, κλπ, αλλά πάντα ερχόμαστε αργά στην Εκκλησία. Ελπίζω ότι αυτή η Πρωτοχρονιά, του 2019, θα φέρει μια χαρούμενη και ανανεωμένη διάθεση στις καθημερινές μας δραστηριότητες. Ας ξεχάσουμε τι έγινε στο παρελθόν, τις αμαρτίες και τα λάθη, αυτό που πρέπει να κάνουμε είναι μια νέα αρχή.

Αυτό είναι που λείπει από τη ζωή μας, η ευκαιρία να μεγαλώσουμε με το Χριστό. Πρέπει να μπούμε και πάλι στο προσκήνιο και να αποπλεύσουμε για ένα νέο προορισμό, έναν προορισμό που μόνο ο Θεός μπορεί να μας οδηγήσει. Μην τοποθετείτε το μέλλον σας στις επιθυμίες αυτού του κόσμου, ή θα έπρεπε μάλλον να πω, αυτό που η Κοινωνία έχει να μας προσφέρει. Το μόνο που έχει να μας προσφέρει η Κοινωνία μας είναι η ψεύτικη και προσωρινή ύπαρξη. Το ερώτημα εδώ είναι; πηγαίνουμε προς τα πίσω αντί να πάμε προς μια θετική κατεύθυνση. Η απάντηση είναι "Ναι" πηγαίνουμε προς τα πίσω και όχι προς τα εμπρός, γιατί έχουμε βγάλει τον Χριστό από τη ζωή μας και τον αντικαταστήσαμε με γήινες επιθυμίες και απολαύσεις. Πρέπει να ανοίξουμε τα μάτια μας και να αντιμετωπίσουμε την πραγματικότητα του τι συμβαίνει σε αυτόν τον κόσμο που επηρεάζει τη σχέση μας με τον Κύριό μας. Κοιτάζτε τι συμβαίνει στη δική μας οικογένεια. Εγκαταλείπουμε τον αγώνα και επιτρέπουμε στον Σατανά να μας κυβερνά. Ο Θεός σέβεται τον άνθρωπο, που όταν αποτύχει, σηκώνεται και ξαναρχίζει από την αρχή. Υπάρχει πάντοτε περιθώριο αξιολόγησης και επαναξιολόγησης. Πρέπει να αναρωτηθούμε: Τι διαφορετικό θέλω να κάνω το νέο έτος 2019; Κοιτάζτε πίσω, στο χρόνο που πέρασε, και δείτε πού αποτύχατε και πού επιτύχατε.

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Please email your article(s) to: msalpeas@stnicholasmd.org

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All articles must be proofread and color corrected prior to submission.

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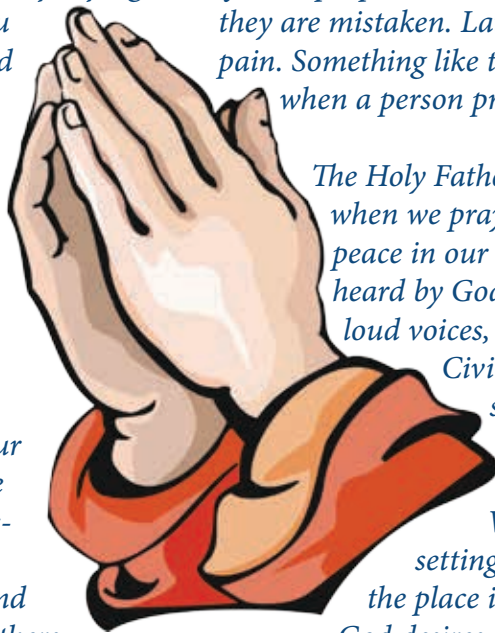
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HOW CAN I RECEIVE SPIRITUAL CONTRITION THROUGH PRAYER?

A monk once asked his Abbot who was filled with wisdom and was experienced in the fields of spirituality a question: "I love chanting the Byzantine Hymns, and I am very proud to say that I have a great voice." The Abbot said: "The Soul my son is not satisfied totally just by hearing the melody of the hymn. It is satisfied by the written word of the Hymn's Contents." The Abbot continued by saying that if you just sing for the melody, you are in danger of falling into vanity, and your heart will turn as hard as a rock. Whether you pray or chant, always be in the presence of God. Don't allow your thought to stray. It is through the process of humility that gives birth to contrition. Don't show off your wisdom or knowledge. It's better to choose to be taught than to teach.

Taking all this in mind, if God sees your love and humility, He will give you the talent of Contrition. In order for Christians to pray, the Abbot said that we must first have peaceful enthusiasm and silence. When we pray together with others in church, we must suspend ourselves from outside distractions and loud voices which bring turmoil to the hearts that are praying. In order to pray, we must reach deep down in our heart and bring out the inner pain with a peaceful mind dedicated to God.

There are people, who suffer from physical ailments. Even though they go under surgery or cauterization, they suffer the pain and stress without yelling or causing other problems. They go through the procedure with peace in their hearts. There are also people who are impatient that through their loud voices cause and create disruption or confusion for others. If these people think that they will avoid the pain, they are mistaken. Later on they will be in greater pain. Something like the examples above happen when a person prays.



The Holy Fathers of the Church say that when we pray in complete silence and peace in our heart, our prayer is always heard by God. Whenever we pray with loud voices, with demonstration whether Civil or Political, this can become scandalous. We as Christians should refrain from outside disturbances when we pray.

We need to choose a proper setting or place, and make sure that the place is very peaceful. This is what God desires according to the prophet who said; "When I see a person praying with in a peaceful and humble manner, the words which are heard, then they will be accepted by God. Any person who chooses to pray in this manner becomes the example of Light for others to follow.

Father Michael L. Pastrikos

Μήνυμα Από τον Πατέρα Μιχαήλ Λ. Παστρικό (continued from pg. 2)

Είναι πολύ σημαντικές ερωτήσεις και αξίζουν την ειλικρινή μας απάντηση. Όλοι πρέπει να βρούμε τρόπους για καλύτερη σύνδεση με τον Χριστό και την Εκκλησία σε κάθε στάδιο της ζωής μας.

Ήρθε η ώρα να σταματήσετε να λέτε μόνο με λόγια ότι (Έχετε πίστη), πρέπει να ζήσουμε την πίστη μας στον Χριστό. Μην εκφράζετε λόγια, κάντε τα λόγια πράξη. Αν διαβάζετε αυτό το άρθρο, ευχαριστώ το Θεό που είστε ζωντανοί και καλά, για να δείτε το ξεκίνημα του νέου έτους, 2019. Ας αρχίσουμε να κάνουμε κάποιες αλλαγές που θα ακολουθήσουμε στη ζωή μας, σύμφωνα

με το θέλημα του Θεού, που θα βάλουν το πνευματικό νοικοκυριό μας σε τάξη, όχι μόνο σε ορισμένα κοινωνικά γεγονότα του έτους, αλλά και στην εκπλήρωση των πνευματικών μας ευθυνών προς τον Χριστό.

Η Πρεσβυτέρα Τούλα και εγώ, μαζί με τα παιδιά μας και τα εγγόνια μας, θα θέλαμε να ευχηθούμε σε όλους τους ενορίτες, Ευτυχισμένο και ευλογημένο το Νέο Έτος, επίσης όπως ο Ενσαρκωθείς Κύριος χαρίσει σε εσάς και τα μέλη της οικογένειάς σας υγεία, ασφάλεια και σοφία, ας κάνουμε τούτο το Νέο Έτος, Έτος του Χριστού.

H O L Y L A N D P I L G R I M A G E

ATTENTION ALL PARISHIONERS: ALL ABOARD TO A TRIP OF A LIFETIME:

WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE, THAT THE ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, IS PLANNING A TRIP ONCE AGAIN TO THE HOLY LANDS, (JERUSALEM) SOMETIME IN SEPTEMBER OF 2019. FR. MICHAEL HAS RECEIVED MANY CALLS FROM PARISHIONERS ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE JERUSALEM TRIP. HE IS VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE EXPRESSED IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR LORD, AND TO VISIT THE LAND WHERE THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS AND SAINTS OF OUR FAITH LIVED. BUT IN ORDER FOR THIS EXCURSION TO BE SUCCESSFUL WE NEED TO DO OUR HOMEWORK. FR. MICHAEL HAS TAKEN MANY GROUPS TO THE HOLY LANDS THROUGHOUT HIS MINISTRY AND HE KNOWS THROUGH EXPERIENCE THAT THERE IS A LOT OF GROUNDWORK TO BE DONE TO PREPARE FOR THIS TRIP. THE FIRST STEP THAT WE TAKE, IS TO SCHEDULE A MEETING DATE FOR EVERYONE INTERESTED. SO THE FIRST SCHEDULED MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019 AT 7:00 PM. THIS WILL GIVE EVERYONE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS AND CHOOSE WHAT PLACES AND EVENTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO VISIT. THIS TRIP WILL ALSO HAVE AN OPTION TO VISIT OUR MOTHER LAND GREECE. ALL THE DETAILS OF THIS TRIP WILL BE DISCUSSED IN OUR FIRST MEETING.

I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US ON THIS EXCITING PILGRIMAGE. IF YOU HAVE ANY FRIENDS OR RELATIVES THAT YOU FEEL WOULD LIKE TO JOIN US ON THIS TRIP, PLEASE CONVEY THIS INFORMATION TO THEM. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED AND CANNOT MAKE THE FIRST MEETING, PLEASE CONTACT FR. MICHAEL AT 443-742-8314.

HOPING TO SEE EVERYONE THERE,

RESPECTFULLY,

FR. MICHAEL L. PASTRIKOS
PROTOPRESBYTER



Please fill out this form if you are interested in attending the first meeting.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____ CELL PHONE NO. _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____ FAX NO. _____

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

Prot. No. 1099

PATRIARCHAL PROCLAMATION
FOR CHRISTMAS

✠ B A R T H O L O M E W

By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and
Ecumenical Patriarch
To the Plenitude of the Church
Grace, Mercy and Peace from the Savior Christ Born in Bethlehem
* * *

Venerable brothers and beloved children in the Lord,

We glorify the Most-Holy and All-Merciful God, that we are again deemed worthy this year to reach the festive day of Christmas, the feast of the pre-eternal Son and Word of God's Incarnation "for us and for our salvation." Through the "eternal mystery" and "great miracle" of the divine Incarnation, the "great wound," namely humankind sitting in darkness and shadow, is rendered into "children of light and day,"¹ while the blessed road of deification by grace is opened for us. In the theandric mystery of the Church and through her holy sacraments, Christ is born and takes shape in our soul and existence. Maximus the Confessor theologizes that "the Word of God, though born once in the flesh, is ever willing to be born spiritually in those who desire Him. Thus, He becomes an infant and fashions Himself in us by means of the virtues; indeed, He reveals Himself to the extent that we are capable of receiving Him."² God is not an abstract "idea," like the god of the philosophers, or an unapproachable God enclosed in absolute transcendence. He is "Emmanuel," "God with us,"³ closer to us than we are to ourselves, "more akin to us than our very own selves."⁴

Faith in the inaccessible and fleshless Divinity does not transform our life; it does not remove the polarization between matter and spirit; nor does it bridge the gap between heaven and earth. The Incarnation of the Divine Word is the revelation of truth regarding God and humankind, which saves the human race from the dark labyrinths of materialism and anthropomorphism, as well as from idealism and dualism. The Church's condemnation of nestorianism and monophysitism signals the rejection of two broader tendencies of the human soul: on the one hand rendering anthropocentrism absolute, and on the other idolizing an idealistic understanding of life and truth, both of which are especially widespread deviations in our age.

¹ 1 Thess. 5:5.

² Maximus the Confessor, *Capita theologica et oeconomica*, PG 90, 1181.

³ See Matt. 1:23.

⁴ Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, VI, PG 150, 660.

Contemporary “nestorianism” is expressed as a spirit of secularization, as scientism and the absolute prioritization of utilitarian knowledge, as the absolute autonomy of economy, as self-saving arrogance and atheism, as the “non-civilization” of individualism and eudemonism, as legalism and moralism, as the “end of decency” and identification of sacrificial love and repentance with the so-called “morality of the weak.” By the same token, “monophysitism” is today represented by tendencies to demonize the body and natural man, by puritanism and the syndromes of “purity,” by fruitless introverted spirituality and various mysticisms, by disregarding the intellect, art and civilization, by denying dialogue and rejecting differences, with the dangerous expresser—supposedly in the name of the “one and only truth”—namely a religious fundamentalism nurtured by absolutism and rejections, while feeding violence and division. It is evident that both a nestorianizing deification of the world and a monophysitizing demonization of it leave the world and history, civilizations and cultures, exposed to the powers of the “present age,” cementing their autonomy and impasses.

Christian faith is the certainty of our salvation by the God of love, who graciously assumed our nature and once again granted us “the likeness” lost through the fall, making us worthy of true life in His Body, the Church. The theandric mystery is expressed throughout the entirety of life in the Church. The Incarnate Savior received “the flesh of the Church”⁵ and showed, “first and alone,” “the true man, who is perfect on account of both character and life as well as all other aspects.”⁶ The Church of Christ is the place of “common salvation,” “common freedom” and hope in the “common kingdom.” It is the way of living the liberating truth, the core of which is expressing the truth in love. This love transcends the boundaries of mere human action, because its source and prototype lie in divine philanthropy, which transcends human reason. “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us ... Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”⁷ God is present wherever love exists.

This saving truth must also be expressed in the way we celebrate the sacred Nativity of our Savior, who visited us from on high. A feast is always a “fullness of time,” a time of self-knowledge, of thanksgiving for the magnitude of divine philanthropic love, of witness to the truth of the theandric mystery and of freedom in Christ. The Christ-pleasing celebration of the Divine Word’s Incarnation is an act of resistance against secularization, against discoloration of the feast and its conversion into a “Christmas without Christ,” as well as against a celebration of Having, of consumerism and vanity—indeed, into a world filled with social tensions, reversal and confusion of values, of violence and injustice, where the “Jesus child” is once again faced with the inexorable interests of numerous, multifaceted powers.

⁵ John Chrysostom, *Homily on exile*, PG 52, 429.

⁶ Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, VI, PG 150, 680.

⁷ 1 John 4:9-11.

Honorable brothers and beloved children,

Generations come and pass, while forthcoming developments are difficult to foresee. Genuine faith, though, does not face dilemmas. The Word became flesh, the “truth has come” and “darkness has subsided.” We already participate in the Kingdom while still on our journey toward the completion of the incarnate Divine Economy. We possess the unshakeable certainty that the future belongs to Christ, Who is “the same yesterday and today and forever;”⁸ that the Church of Christ is and shall remain a place of holiness and godliness, a renewal of man and world, a foretaste of the glory of the Kingdom; that it will continue “to give the witness of the Gospel” “to distribute the gifts of God in the world: His love, peace, justice, and reconciliation, the power of resurrection and expectation of eternity.”⁹ The contemporary ideology of some “post-Christian” age is baseless. “After Christ,” everything is and remains “in Christ” to the ages.

We humbly kneel before the Divine Infant of Bethlehem and His All- Holy Mother, who holds Him in her arms, while venerating the Incarnate “most perfect God,” and bestow upon the children of the Holy and Great Church of Christ throughout the world—from the ever-vigilant Phanar—our Patriarchal blessing for the Holy Twelve Days of Christmas, wishing you a healthy, fruitful and joyous new year in the Lord’s favor.

Christmas 2018

✠ **Bartholomew of Constantinople**

Your fervent supplicant before God

To be read in church during the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Christmas, following the Holy Gospel.

⁸ Heb. 13:8.

⁹ Encyclical of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete 2016), Preamble.

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ

Αριθμ. Πρωτ. 1099

ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΙΚΗ ΑΠΟΔΕΙΞΙΣ ΕΠΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΟΙΣ

+ Β Α Ρ Θ Ο Λ Ο Μ Α Ι Ο Σ

**ΕΛΕΩι ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ,
ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ
ΠΑΝΤΙ ΤΩι ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ
ΧΑΡΙΝ, ΕΛΕΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ
ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΒΗΘΛΕΕΜ ΓΕΝΝΗΘΕΝΤΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ**

* * *

Τερώτατοι καί Θεοφιλέστατοι ἀδελφοί, προσφιλέστατα τέκνα ἐν Κυρίῳ,

Δοξάζομεν τόν Πανάγιον καί Πανοικτίρμονα Θεόν, διότι ἠξιώθημεν καί ἐφέτος νά φθάσωμεν εἰς τήν πανέορτον ἡμέραν τῶν Χριστουγέννων, τήν ἑορτήν τῆς σαρκώσεως τοῦ προαιωνίου Υἱοῦ καί Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ «δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καί διὰ τήν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν». Διά τοῦ «ἀεί μυστηρίου» καί «μεγάλου θαύματος» τῆς θείας Ἐνανθρωπήσεως, τό «μέγα τραῦμα», ὁ ἐν σκότει καί σκιᾷ καθήμενος ἄνθρωπος, καθίσταται «υἱός φωτός καί υἱός ἡμέρας»¹, ἀνοίγει δι' αὐτόν ἡ εὐλογημένη ὁδός τῆς κατὰ χάριν θεώσεως. Ἐν τῷ θεανδρικῷ μυστηρίῳ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καί διὰ τῶν ἱερῶν μυστηρίων τῆς, γεννᾶται καί μορφοῦται ὁ Χριστός εἰς τήν ψυχὴν καί τήν ὑπαρξίν μας. «Ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος», θεολογεῖ ὁ ἅγιος Μάξιμος ὁ Ὁμολογητής, «ἐφάπαξ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθεὶς, ἀεὶ γεννᾶται θέλων κατὰ πνεῦμα διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν τοῖς θέλουσι καί γίνεται βρέφος, ἑαυτόν ἐν ἐκείνοις διαπλάττων ταῖς ἀρεταῖς καί τοσοῦτον φαινόμενος, ὅσον χωρεῖν ἐπίσταται τόν δεχόμενον»². Δέν εἶναι «Θεός - Ἰδέα», ὡς ὁ θεός τῶν φιλοσόφων, οὔτε Θεός κεκλεισμένος εἰς τήν ἀπόλυτον ὑπερβατικότητα του καί ἀπροσπέλαστος, ἀλλά εἶναι ὁ «Ἐμμανουήλ», ὁ

¹ Α' Θεσσ. ε', 5.

² Μαξίμου Ὁμολογητοῦ Κεφάλαια διάφορα θεολογικά τε καί οἰκονομικά, PG 90, 1181.

«Θεός μεθ' ἡμῶν»³, εὐρίσκεται ἐγγύτερον εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἀπὸ ὅσον ἡμεῖς οἱ ἴδιοι εἰς τὸν ἑαυτὸν μας, εἶναι «καὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν συγγενέστερος»⁴.

Ἡ πίστις εἰς τὴν ἀπρόσιτον καὶ ἄσαρκον Θεότητα δέν μεταμορφώνει τὴν ζωὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, δέν αἶρει τὴν πόλωσιν μεταξὺ ὕλης καὶ πνεύματος, δέν γεφυρώνει τὸ χάσμα μεταξὺ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς. Ἡ Σάρκωσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου εἶναι ἡ φανέρωσις τῆς ἀληθείας περὶ Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου, ἡ ὁποία σώζει τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος ἀπὸ τοὺς σκοτεινοὺς λαβυρίνθους, τόσον τοῦ ὕλισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀνθρωπομονισμοῦ, ὅσον καὶ τοῦ ἰδεαλισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ δυϊσμοῦ. Ἡ καταδίκη τοῦ νεστοριανισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ μονοφυσιτισμοῦ ἐκ μέρους τῆς Ἐκκλησίας σηματοδοτεῖ τὴν ἀπόρριψιν δύο καθολικωτέρων τάσεων τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς, καὶ δὴ ἀφ' ἑνὸς τῆς ἀπολυτοποιήσεως τοῦ ἀνθρωποκεντρισμοῦ καὶ ἀφ' ἑτέρου τῆς ἐξιδανικεύσεως τῆς ἰδεαλιστικῆς ἐκδοχῆς τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, παρεκκλίσεων ἰδιαίτερος διαδεδομένων καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐποχὴν μας.

Ὁ σύγχρονος «νεστοριανισμός» ἐκφράζεται ὡς πνεῦμα ἐκκοσμικεύσεως, ὡς ἐπιστημονισμός καὶ ἀπόλυτος προτεραιότης τῆς χρηστικῆς γνώσεως, ὡς ἀπόλυτος ἰδιονομία τῆς οἰκονομίας, ὡς αὐτοσωτηρικὴ ἀλαζονεία καὶ ἀθεΐα, ὡς ὁ «μὴ πολιτισμός» τοῦ ἀτομοκεντρισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐδαιμονισμοῦ, ὡς νομικισμός καὶ ἠθικισμός, ὡς «τέλος τῆς αἰδοῦς» καὶ ταύτισις τῆς θυσιαστικῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς μετανοίας μέ τὴν λεγομένην «ἠθικὴν τῶν ἀδυνάτων», Ὁ «μονοφυσιτισμός» πάλιν ἐκπροσωπεῖται σήμερον ἀπὸ τὰς τάσεις δαιμονοποιήσεως τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ φυσικοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀπὸ τὸν πουριτανισμόν καὶ τὰ σύνδρομα «καθαρότητος», τὴν ἐσωστρεφῆ ἄκαρπον πνευματικότητα καὶ τοὺς ποικίλους μυστικισμούς, ἀπὸ τὴν περιφρόνησιν τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου, τῆς τέχνης καὶ τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ, ἀπὸ τὴν ἄρνησιν τοῦ διαλόγου καὶ τὴν ἀπόρριψιν τοῦ διαφοροτικοῦ, μέ ἐπικίνδυνον ἐκφραστὴν, ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς «μόνης καὶ ἀποκλειστικῆς ἀληθείας», τὸν θρησκευτικὸν φονταμενταλισμόν, ὁ ὁποῖος τρέφεται ἀπὸ ἀπολυτοποιήσεις καὶ ἀπορρίψεις καὶ τροφοδοτεῖ τὴν βίαν καὶ τὴν διάσπασιν. Εἶναι προφανές ὅτι, τόσον ἡ νεστοριανίζουσα ἀποθέωσις τοῦ κόσμου, ὅσον καὶ ἡ μονοφυσιτίζουσα δαιμονοποίησις του, ἀφήνουν τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὴν ἱστορίαν, τὸν πολιτισμόν καὶ τοὺς πολιτισμούς, ἐκτεθειμένους εἰς τὰς δυνάμεις τοῦ «νῦν αἰῶνος», καὶ παγιώνουν τοιουτοτρόπως τὴν αὐτονόμησιν καὶ τὰ ἀδιέξοδά των.

³ πρβλ. Ματθ. α', 23

⁴ Νικολάου Καβάσιλα, Περὶ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς, ΣΤ', PG 150, 660.

Ἡ χριστιανική πίστις εἶναι ἡ βεβαιότης τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης, ὁ ὁποῖος προσέλαβε φιλανθρώπως τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο ἡμῖν πάλιν τό διὰ τῆς πτώσεως ἀπολεσθέν «καθ' ὁμοίωσιν», ἱκανώσας ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν κατ' ἀλήθειαν ζωὴν ἐν τῷ Σώματι Αὐτοῦ, τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ. Σύνολος ἡ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκφράζει τό μυστήριον τῆς θεανθρωπότητος. Ὁ Θεάνθρωπος Σωτὴρ ἀνέλαβεν «ἐκκλησίας σάρκα»⁵ καὶ ἔδειξε, «πρῶτος καὶ μόνος», «τόν ἀληθινόν ἄνθρωπον καὶ τέλειον καὶ τρόπων καὶ ζωῆς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕνεκα πάντων»⁶. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι ὁ τόπος τῆς «κοινῆς σωτηρίας», τῆς «κοινῆς ἐλευθερίας» καὶ τῆς ἐλπίδος τῆς «κοινῆς βασιλείας», εἶναι ὁ τρόπος τῆς βίωσεως τῆς ἐλευθεροποιουῦ ἀληθείας, ὁ πυρὴν τῆς ὁποίας εἶναι τό ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ. Ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτὴ ὑπερβαίνει τὰ ὅρια τῆς ἀπλῆς ἀνθρωπιστικῆς δράσεως, καθ' ὅτι ἡ πηγὴ καὶ τό πρότυπον αὐτῆς εἶναι ἡ ὑπερβαίνουσα τόν ἀνθρώπινον λόγον θεία φιλανθρωπία. «Ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τόν υἱόν αὐτοῦ τόν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ Θεός εἰς τόν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ. Ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν τόν Θεόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτός ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς ... Ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ Θεός ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν»⁷. Ὅπου ὑπάρχει ἀγάπη, ἐκεῖ εἶναι παρὼν ὁ Θεός.

Αὐτὴ ἡ σωτηριώδης ἀλήθεια πρέπει νὰ ἐκφράζεται καὶ εἰς τόν τρόπον μέ τόν ὁποῖον ἐορτάζομεν τό σεπτόν Γενέθλιον τοῦ ἐπισκεψαμένου ἡμᾶς ἐξ ὕψους Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν. Ἡ ἐορτὴ εἶναι πάντοτε «πλήρωμα χρόνου», καιρός αὐτογνωσίας, εὐχαριστίας διὰ τό μέγεθος τῆς θείας φιλανθρώπου ἀγάπης, μαρτυρία τῆς ἀληθείας τῆς θεανθρωπότητος καὶ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐλευθερίας. Ὁ χριστοτερπῆς ἐορτασμός τῆς σαρκώσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου εἶναι μία πρᾶξις ἀντιστάσεως εἰς τὴν ἐκκοσμικέυσιν, εἰς τόν ἀποχρωματισμόν τῆς ἐορτῆς καὶ τὴν μετατροπὴν τῆς εἰς «Χριστοῦγεννα χωρίς Χριστόν» καὶ εἰς πανήγυριν τοῦ Ἐχειν, τοῦ καταναλωτισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ματαιοδοξίας, καὶ δὴ εἰς ἓνα κόσμον πλήρη κοινωνικῶν ἐντάσεων, ἀξιολογικῶν ἀνατροπῶν καὶ συγχύσεως, βίας καὶ ἀδικίας, ὅπου τό «παιδίον Ἰησοῦς» εὐρίσκεται καὶ πάλιν ἀντιμέτωπον μέ ἄτεγκτα συμφέροντα ποικιλωνύμων ἐξουσιῶν.

⁵ Ἰωάννου Χρυσοστόμου, Ὁμιλία πρὸς τὴν ἐξορίαν, PG 52, 429.

⁶ Νικολάου Καβάσιλα, Περί τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς, Στ', PG 150, 680.

⁷ Α' Ἰωάν. δ', 9-11.

Τιμιώτατοι ἀδελφοί καί πεφιλημένα τέκνα,

Γενεά παρέρχεται καί γενεά ἔρχεται, καί αἱ ἐπερχόμενοι ἐξελίξεις εἶναι κατ' ἄνθρωπον δυσκόλως προβλέψιμοι. Ἡ γνησία πίστις, ὅμως, δέν ἔχει διλήμματα. Ὁ Λόγος ἐγένετο σὰρξ, ἡ «ἀλήθεια ἦλθε» καί «παρέδραμεν ἡ σκιά», μετέχομεν ἤδη τῆς Βασιλείας ἐν τῇ πορείᾳ πρὸς τὴν τελείωσιν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς ἐνσάρκου Θείας Οἰκονομίας. Ἔχομεν ἀκλόνητον τὴν βεβαιότητα, ὅτι τό μέλλον ἀνήκει εἰς τόν Χριστόν, ὁ Ὅποιος εἶναι «χθές καί σήμερον ὁ αὐτός καί εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας»⁸, ὅτι ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι καί θά παραμένῃ τόπος ἀγιασμοῦ καί ἐνθέου βιοτῆς, ἀνακαινίσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καί τοῦ κόσμου, πρόγευσις τῆς δόξης τῆς Βασιλείας, ὅτι θά συνεχίσῃ «νά δίδῃ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν μαρτυρίαν» καί «νά διανέμῃ ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ τὰ δῶρα τοῦ Θεοῦ: τὴν ἀγάπην Του, τὴν εἰρήνην, τὴν δικαιοσύνην, τὴν καταλλαγὴν, τὴν δύναμιν τῆς Ἀναστάσεως καί τὴν προσδοκίαν τῆς αἰωνιότητος»⁹. Τό σύγχρονον ἰδεολόγημα περὶ «μεταχριστιανικῆς» ἐποχῆς εἶναι ἄτοπον. «Μετά Χριστόν», τὰ πάντα εἶναι, καί μένουσιν εἰς τόν αἰῶνα, «ἐν Χριστῷ».

Κλίνοντες εὐσεβοφρόνως τὰ γόνατα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ Βρέφους τῆς Βηθλεέμ καί τῆς βρεφοκρατοῦσης Παναγίας Μητρός Αὐτοῦ, καί προσκυνοῦντες τόν ἐνανθρωπήσαντα «παντέλειον Θεόν», ἀπονέμομεν, ἐκ τοῦ ἀκοιμήτου Φαναρίου, τοῖς ἀνά τὴν οἰκουμένην τέκνοις τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλῃς Ἐκκλησίᾳς τὴν Πατριαρχικὴν ἡμῶν εὐλογίαν ἐπὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Δωδεκαημέρῳ, εὐχόμενοι ὑγιεινόν, ἀγλαόκαρπον καί εὐφρόσυνον τόν νέον ἐνιαυτὸν τῆς χρηστότητος τοῦ Κυρίου.

Χριστούγεννα ,βιη΄
† Ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ΒΑΡΘΟΛΟΜΑΙΟΣ
διάπυρος πρὸς Θεόν εὐχέτης πάντων ὑμῶν

Ἀναγνωσθήτω ἐπ' ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τὴν Θεῖαν Λειτουργίαν τῆς ἑορτῆς τῶν Χριστου-γέννων, μετὰ τό Ἱερόν Εὐαγγέλιον.

⁸ Ἐβρ. ιγ', 8.

⁹ Εγκύκλιος τῆς Ἁγίας καί Μεγάλῃς Συνόδου τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας (Κρήτη 2016), Προοίμιον.



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Nativity of Our Lord 2018

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

Christ is Born, Glorify Him!

My Beloved in the Lord,

In celebrating the birth of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ we are given an incredible gift. It is a gift that cannot be purchased, it cannot be reciprocated, it cannot be rejected, it cannot be returned, and value of which cannot be quantified. The greatest gift of the Nativity of our Lord, of Christmas, if you will, is the gift of the Incarnation. The birth of Christ marks a historical event never seen before in the history of the world. *"God became man so that man might become God"* says St. Athanasios (PG 25, 192B). By this he means that the incarnation of Christ gave us the opportunity to join ourselves to Him in unity and live as a part of the Body of Christ.

What is significant and telling about the Incarnation is not just the fact that we can ascend in unity with Christ, but that as a prerequisite, He had to first condescend to our level as humans. Here we have the God of all Creation by his own will and volition becoming like you and me *in all ways except sin*. He willingly took on human flesh with all of its deficiencies such as the unavoidability of aging, the reality of feeling pain, the susceptibility of getting sick, the capacity to cry, and the inevitability of dying. We see from the Gospel readings of today and tomorrow that immediately after Christ was born He was hunted by King Herod who had ordered the slaughter of all male children two years old and under. Such was His love for humanity that He became human while not compromising His divinity and while remaining in personal communion with the Father and the Spirit.

His Incarnation and birth demonstrate for us His self-sacrificial love. It is a love that has no borders, no limitations, and no end. It is this same love He expressed for us with the Father and the Spirit in unison that we too must emulate. It is a love that calls for each and every one

of us to offer of ourselves in self-sacrifice for others regardless of whether we like them or not, regardless of their social status, their race, their gender, their age, their nationality, or their beliefs. We are called to express self-sacrificial love unconditionally because anything less than that is not love at all.

My beloved children in the Lord, let us behold the mystery of our Lord's Incarnation and enshrine His love and the meaning of His condescension in our hearts. Furthermore, let us all open our hearts wider to every person so that we may follow our Lord's example in expressing self-sacrificial love. Let us, as individuals and as communities, endeavor to use the freedom God has given us to labor not for ourselves, but for each other so that we may confront the pressing problems of our times caused by the abuse of this very freedom; problems such as violence, war, moral laxity, the violation of human rights, the deprivation of religious freedom, disinformation, the uneven distribution of goods necessary for existence, hunger, economic disparity, the displacement of populations, the ecological crisis, and the other problems plaguing our weary world.

It is my sincerest hope and prayer that through your actions and through your prayers we will endeavor to give glory to God by taking care of our neighbors and the Creation with which we were blessed. May Christ who said, *"I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life"* (Jn. 8:12) show each of you the path of salvation which began for us on this very day over two thousand years ago with our Lord's birth. Praying that you and your families are granted all of the Lord's Heavenly blessings as we celebrate this Christmas day, 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.

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



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΗΣ

Πρός τόν εὐλαβέστατον Ἱερόν Κληρὸν,
Τούς Ἐντιμωτάτους Ἀρχοντας τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ ἡμῶν Πατριαρχείου,
Τούς Προέδρους καί τὰ Μέλη τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συμβουλίων,
Τάς Προέδρους καί τὰ Μέλη τῶν Φιλοπτώχων Ἀδελφοτήτων,
Τούς διδάσκοντας καί διδασκομένους τῶν Κατηχητικῶν καί Ἑλληνικῶν Σχολείων,
Τάς Ὄργανώσεις τῆς Νεολαίας καί ἅπαν τό Χριστεπώνυμον πλήρωμα τῶν εὐσεβῶν Ὁρθοδόξων
Χριστιανῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Νέας Ἱερσῆς.

*«Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ καί ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία»
(Λουκά β', 14)*

Ἀγαπητοί ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφοί!

Στρατιᾶ οὐρανίων Ἀγγέλων ἐμήνυσε στὸν κόσμον τὴν Θεία Γέννησιν καὶ ἐξήγγειλε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο τῆς εἰρήνης. Πάνω ἀπὸ δύο χιλιετίες πέρασαν ἀπὸ τότε πού ἀκούσθηκε γιὰ πρώτη φορά ὁ ἀγγελικὸς αὐτὸς ὕμνος τῆς εἰρήνης. Στὸ διάβα αὐτῶν τῶν αἰῶνων πολλοὶ ταλαιπωρημένοι ἄνθρωποι ἐπιζήτησαν ἐναγωνίως τὴν εἰρήνην *«καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης οὐκ ἔγνωσαν»* κατὰ τὸν ψαλμωδὸ. Βρισκόμαστε αἰσίως στὴν ἀνατολή τοῦ εἰκοστοῦ πρώτου αἰῶνα καὶ παρὰ τίς προόδους τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ καὶ τὰ τεχνολογικὰ ἐπιτεύγματα, ὁ πόνος, ἡ ἀνησυχία καὶ ἡ ἀνασφάλεια κυριαρχοῦν. Ἡ ἀνθρωπότητα προσμένει ἐναγωνίως ἀπὸ τὸν νεογέννητο Ἰησοῦ νὰ φέρει τὴν πολυπόθητη *«ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη»*.

Σέ πολλά μέρη τῆς γῆς οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀρνήθηκαν τὴν εἰρήνην τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ συνεχίζουν νὰ ζοῦν μέσα στὸν φόβο καὶ τὴν ἀγωνία, γιατί δὲν ξέρουν τί ἀκριβῶς τοὺς περιμένει ὅταν ξημερώσει. Ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς στὸ εὐαγγέλιο μᾶς ὁμιλεῖ γιὰ μερικὲς τέτοιες στιγμές. Ὅταν θὰ βλέπουμε οἱ ἄνθρωποι νὰ ἔρχεται ἡ καταστροφή, πού μποροῦμε νὰ καταφύγουμε ὅταν γύρω μας τὰ πάντα γίνονται ἐρείπια; Ποιὸς μπορεῖ νὰ δώσει ἄσυλο καὶ προστασία; Μόνον ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ὁ οἶκος τοῦ ζῶντος Θεοῦ. Προσπαθοῦν νὰ βροῦν τὴν εἰρήνην μέ ὁμιλίες, μέ συνθήκες καὶ μέ συνεδριάσεις ἐθνῶν, ἀλλὰ ἡ εἰρήνη δὲν ἔρχεται διότι τὴν ἀναζητοῦν χωρὶς τὸν Ἰησοῦ Χριστό πού διακήρυξε ὅτι Αὐτὸς εἶναι ἡ ὄντως Εἰρήνη.

Ἡ εἰρήνη εἶναι προϊόν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Εἶναι δῶρο Θεοῦ. Εἶναι καρπὸς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Ἡ ἀληθινή καὶ μόνιμος εἰρήνη δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ πραγματοποιηθεῖ μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὸν Θεό. Ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ σημαίνει κοινωνία μέ τὸν ἴδιο τὸν Χριστό. Ὁ ἅγιος Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς μιλῶντας γιὰ τὸ κοσμοσωτήριο γεγονός τῆς θείας Ἐνανθρωπήσεως μᾶς προτρέπει *«Εἰρηνεύωμεν οὖν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν τὰ εὐάρεστα Αὐτῷ ποιοῦντες»*. Γιὰ νὰ ἔχουμε δηλαδή εἰρήνην, νὰ κάνουμε αὐτὰ πού εἶναι εὐάρεστα στό Θεό. Γι' αὐτὸ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου ἀρχίζει ἀπὸ τὴν εἰρήνην τῶν δικῶν μας ψυχῶν. Γιὰ νὰ εἰρηνεύσουμε

μεταξύ μας, πρέπει πρώτα να ειρηνεύσουμε μέσα μας, εισπνέοντας τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ «ὅς ἐστὶ ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν». Ὑπάρχει εἰρήνη μέσα στὴν ψυχὴ μας; Ὑπάρχει εἰρήνη μέσα στὴν οἰκογένεια; Ὑπάρχει εἰρήνη ἀνάμεσα στοὺς συγγενεῖς; Δυστυχῶς στὸν καθημερινὸ βίον μας γινόμαστε αὐτόπτες καὶ αὐτήκοοι μάρτυρες δυσάρεστων οἰκογενειακῶν καὶ κοινωνικῶν καταστάσεων, διότι λείπει ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Καὶ ὅταν λείπει «τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου» ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς, ὅλα σκοτιζοῦνται καὶ ἐπέρχεται μοιραία ἡ πνευματικὴ τύφλωση.

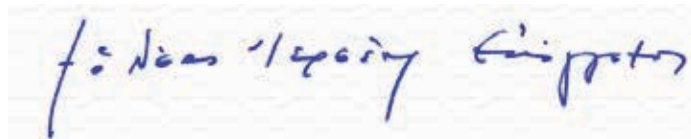
Ἀγαπητοὶ μου ἀδελφοί·

Τὸ ἀπ' αἰῶνος ἄρρητο μυστήριον τῆς θείας Οἰκονομίας ὁδήγησε στὴν Ἐνσάρκωση τοῦ Λυτρωτῆ καὶ Σωτῆρα τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Τὸ χαρμόσυνο μήνυμα πού ἀνατέλλει ἀπὸ τὸ Σπήλαιον τῆς Βηθλεέμ, καταυγάζει καὶ φωτίζει τὸν ἐσκοτισμένο κόσμον ὡς ἡ μόνη καὶ ἀδιάψευστη ἐλπίδα. Τὸ μήνυμα πού κομίζει ὁ ἑορτασμός τῆς θείας Γεννήσεως διατηρεῖ στό ἀκέραιον τὴν ἐπικαιρότητά του. Ἡ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη παραμένουν πάντοτε ἐπιθυμητὰ καὶ ζητούμενα μέσα στὸν κόσμον τῆς φθορᾶς καὶ τῆς πτώσεως.

Ὡς ποιμενάρχης καὶ πνευματικὸς σας πατέρας, σᾶς εὐχομαι ὀλόψυχα, ἡ «**πάντα νοῦν ὑπερέχουσα**» εἰρήνη τοῦ Θεοῦ νὰ ἔλθει στὴν καρδιά σας καὶ σὲ ὅλο τὸν Κόσμον. Ἄς πάρουμε τὴ μεγάλη ἀπόφαση τὰ φετινὰ Χριστούγεννα νὰ πλησιάσουμε τὸν Σωτῆρα Χριστὸ ὥστε νὰ βροῦμε τὴν πραγματικὴ εἰρήνη καὶ εὐτυχία πού τόσο ἀνάγκη ἔχει ὁ καθένας μας. Ἄς προστρέξουμε κι ἐμεῖς ὡς σύγχρονοι τῶν Ποιμένων καὶ τῶν Μάγων στὴ νοητὴ Βηθλεέμ, δηλαδή τὴν Ἐκκλησία, νὰ προσκυνήσουμε τὸν τεχθέντα Κύριον, ψάλλοντας μαζί μέ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τὸν χαρμόσυνο ὕμνον «**Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία**».

Καλὰ καὶ εὐλογημένα Χριστούγεννα!

Ο ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ



† Ὁ Νέας Ἱερσέης ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

SAINT NICHOLAS NAME DAY - December 6th



On Wednesday, December 5th, Saint Nicholas church celebrated its name day with a beautiful Great Vesper Service, followed by a reception kindly hosted by the Ladies Philoptochos society.

SUNDAY SCHOOL - Christmas Carols in the Church Atrium





GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

New Year 2019

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 in the Lord,

As we embark on a new year, we are given cause to reflect on the previous year and to celebrate the beginning of 2019. Every year millions of Americans and millions more throughout the world make an endeavor to make resolutions and personal goals for the upcoming year. Often times these resolutions are based on external factors such as reaching a certain weight goal or saving more money. Whereas resolutions for the New Year can often be admirable endeavors, we sometimes neglect to set spiritual resolutions for ourselves which are of greater value.

First and foremost, when reflecting on this past year and assessing the new one, we must always give thanks to God for all of His blessings. He blesses many of us with health and with plenty for which we should not only be thankful, but we should also seek to share these blessings with those who are less fortunate. Some may have endured hardships and trials for which we should remain faithful that our Lord never abandons us and He will give us the strength that we need to endure. In further reflecting on this past year, we must acknowledge that we can always improve our personal spiritual lives. This personal spiritual improvement includes increased prayer, increased participation in the divine services, and increased support for our parish communities and almsgiving to the poor. It must be stated, however, that any attempt to enrich our spiritual lives must also include a desire to build up the Body of Christ, that is, our parish communities. This is precisely because it is in the context of community where we find the Kingdom of God expressed as the Body of Christ.

On first day of this New Year, the Church commemorates the feast of St. Basil who, through his works, embodies this call to build up the Body of Christ. St. Basil does so through his sermons on social justice which show us that we have a Christian responsibility to care for our fellow human beings regardless of their gender, age, race, socio-economic status, or any of the other factors. Through his example, we learn to truly love our neighbor. Throughout his

ministry, he showed love for his neighbors and particularly for the poor by securing a return of funds for them from the empire when they had been overburdened by taxes. The miraculous return of this money according to what the people had given by putting the gold in loaves of bread distributed to the populace is where we get the tradition of the Vasilopita.

It is with these thoughts, my dearly beloved, that I urge each one of you to set spiritual resolutions for yourselves. Start off with small spiritual improvements such as increased prayer and participation in divine services before gradually increasing your spiritual commitments. Endeavor to emulate St. Basil who was a staunch advocate for the poor by increasing your almsgiving. Thus, by setting spiritual resolutions, we will give glory to God and give ourselves a greater spiritual disposition. Praying that God continues to bless each of you and your families as you journey through this new year, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

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

† EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey





GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Πρός τόν εὐλαβέστατον Ἱερόν Κλῆρον,
Τούς Ἐντιμωτάτους Ἀρχοντας τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ ἡμῶν Πατριαρχείου,
Τούς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συμβουλίων,
Τάς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Φιλοπτώχων Ἀδελφοτήτων,
Τούς διδάσκοντας καί διδασκομένους τῶν Κατηχητικῶν καί Ἑλληνικῶν Σχολείων,
Τάς Ὁργανώσεις τῆς Νεολαίας καί ἅπαν τό Χριστεπώνυμον πλήρωμα τῶν εὐσεβῶν Ὁρθοδόξων
Χριστιανῶν τῆς Ἱεράς Μητροπόλεως Νέας Ἱερσέης.

«Θελήματι Θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον»
(Α' Πέτρου 4,2)

Ἀγαπητοὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφοί!

Μέ τῆ χάρι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀξιωνόμαστε νά προσθέσουμε στό ἡμερολόγιο τῆς ἐπί γῆς παρουσίας μας ἕναν ἀκόμη χρόνο. Ἡ ἀπαρχὴ κάθε νέου πολιτικοῦ ἢ οἰκονομικοῦ, ὅπως συνηθίζεται νά λέγεται, ἔτους εἶναι ἕνας σταθμὸς στὴ ζωὴ κάθε ἀνθρώπου. Τὸ ἔτος ποὺ διανύσαμε, ἀφησε ἀνεξίτηλα χαραγμένα στὴ μνήμη μας σημάδια, ἀλλὰ εὐχάριστα καὶ ἀλλὰ δυσάρεστα. Ἀναμφισβήτητα, ἀποτελεῖ μέρος τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ μας εἴτε ὡς ἀνάμνηση, εἴτε ὡς καθορισμὸς τοῦ βίου μας. Τί ἀκριβῶς μᾶς ἐπιφυλάσσει τὸ ἀρχόμενο ἔτος, μᾶς εἶναι παντελῶς ἄγνωστο.

Ὡς **«τέκνα Θεοῦ»** καλούμαστε νά κάνουμε τὴν καλύτερη -κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν- χρῆση τοῦ χρόνου ποὺ ἔχουμε στὴ διάθεσή μας. Ὁ χρόνος ἐξάλλου τῆς ἐπίγειας ζωῆς μᾶς ὀδηγεῖ στὴν ἡμέρα, στὸ φῶς, στὴ χαρὰ καὶ στὴν εὐτυχία τῆς μελλούσης ζωῆς. Ἐκεῖ ὅπου **«νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι»**, σύμφωνα μέ τά προφητικά λόγια τῆς Ἀποκάλυψης, ἀλλὰ μιά συνεχῆς καὶ ἀδιάκοπη ἡμέρα, τὴν ὁποία θά φωτίζει τὸ φῶς τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ. Γιά τὸν λόγο αὐτόν, τὸν χρόνον τὸν ὁποῖο κάθε ἀνθρώπος ἔχει στὴ διάθεσή του, πρέπει νά τὸν ἀξιοποιήσει ὠφέλημα, ὅπως συνιστᾷ ὁ Ἀπόστολος Πέτρος **«θελήματι Θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον»**.

Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ χρόνου, ὅπως τὴ γνωρίζουμε καὶ τὴ βιώνουμε καθημερινά, ὑπάρχει γιὰ τὰ δημιουργηθέντα ἀπὸ τὸν Θεὸ λογικὰ πλάσματα, ἐνῶ γιὰ τὸν προαιώνιο δημιουργὸ δὲν ὑφίσταται χρόνος, χθές, σήμερα, αὔριο, παρελθόν ἢ μέλλον ἀλλὰ ἕνα αἰώνιο παρόν. Δέσμιος τοῦ χρόνου ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ἐπιθυμεῖ, εὐχεται καὶ ἀναζητεῖ ἐναγωνίως στόν ἐφήμερό του βίον τὴν εὐτυχία καὶ τὴ χαρὰ. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ὡς φιλόστοργη μητέρα, προσφέρει τὴ δικὴ τῆς παρήγορη ἐρμηνεία: **«ἰδοὺ νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας»**. Χωρὶς τὸ ἀσφαλὲς θεμέλιο τῆς πίστεως στόν Χριστὸ, οὔτε ἀνθρώπος εὐτυχῆς δύναται νά ὑπάρξει, οὔτε κοινωνία εὐημεροῦσα νά οἰκοδομηθεῖ. Μόνον ὁ Χριστὸς δωρίζει τὴν εὐτυχία καὶ τὴ

χαρά. Μόνο Αὐτός δύναται ν' ἀποσβέσει τὴ δίψα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου γιὰ τὴν ἀπόκτηση τῆς εὐτυχίας καὶ τῆς χαρᾶς. Ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ εὐτυχία καὶ χαρά εἶναι δῶρο Θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπο, καρπὸς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος καὶ κανεὶς δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ τὴν ἀφαιρέσει, ὅπως ὑπογραμμίζει ὁ Εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης «τὴν χαρὰν ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς αἶρει ἀφ' ὑμῶν».

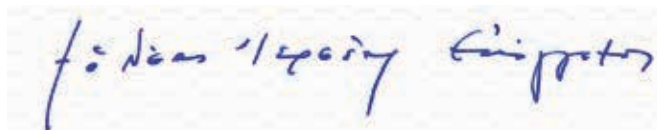
Ἀγαπητοὶ μου ἀδελφοὶ

Μόνο κοντὰ στὸν Σωτῆρα καὶ Λυτρωτὴ Χριστὸ ὁ ἄνθρωπος βρῖσκει ἀνάπαυση, ἀγαλλίαση, χαρά καὶ συναντᾷ τὴν γνήσια ἐλευθερία. Σὲ κάθε βῆμα τῆς ἐπιγείου πορείας μας μὲ τὸν Χριστὸ, μεταφέρουμε τὸν οὐρανὸ στὴ γῆ. Κάθε νέο ἔτος προστίθεται στὴ χοϊκὴ μας ὑπαρξὴ ὡς εὐλογία τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ μᾶς προσφέρει μίᾳ ἐπιπλέον εὐκαιρία ἀνυψώσεώς μας ἀπὸ τὰ γήινα πρὸς τὰ ἐπουράνια, ἀπὸ τὰ φθαρτὰ στὰ ἄφθαρτα, ἀπὸ τὰ πρόσκαιρα στὰ αἰώνια καὶ μοναδικά.

Εὐχομαι ἐγκαρδίως σέ ὅλους σας καὶ στίς εὐλογημένες οἰκογένειές σας, διὰ πρεσβειῶν τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βασιλείου τοῦ Μεγάλου, τοῦ ὁποίου τὴ μνήμη ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας τιμᾷ σήμερα, τὸ σωτήριο νέο ἔτος 2019, πού μόλις ἀνέτειλε, νά εἶναι εὐλογημένο, εἰρηνικό, πλήρες ἀγαθῶν, θεοσδότου χαρᾶς, πνευματικῆς προόδου καὶ εὐτυχίας.

Μετὰ πατρικῶν εὐχῶν καὶ τῆς ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγάπης

Ο ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ



† Ὁ Νέας Ἱερσέης ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ



Epiphany of our Lord

Courtesy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

www.goarch.org



The Scriptures tell us that Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. Initially, John would not do this, saying that Jesus should baptize him. Jesus said to John, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness (3:15). John consented and baptized Jesus.

When Jesus came up from the water, the heavens opened suddenly, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. The Bible records that the Spirit descended like a dove and alighted on him. When this happened, a voice came from heaven and said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." This was the voice of God the Father.

Christ's baptism in the Jordan was "theophany," a manifestation of God to the world, because it was the beginning of our Lord's public ministry. It was also a "theophany" in that the world

was granted a revelation of the Holy Trinity. All three Persons were made manifest together: the Father testified from on high to the divine Sonship of Jesus; the Son received His Father's testimony; and the Spirit was seen in the form of a dove, descending from the Father and resting upon the Son.

The theme of "manifestation" or "revelation" is also expressed in Scripture with the symbolism of light. In the hymn of the Feast we sing, "Christ has appeared and enlightened the world." Thus, January 6 is also known as the Feast of Lights. The Church celebrates on this day the illumination of the world by the light of Christ.

Icon of the Feast

The Icon of the Feast of Theophany tells the story from the Gospels in images and color. On the left side of the icon we see John the Baptist who is dressed in camel's hair and has the appearance of one who lives in the wilderness. His arms are outstretched, showing an attitude of prayer and reverence, but also directing others to Christ. With his right hand he is conducting the baptism.

In the center of the icon is Christ being baptized in the Jordan. He is standing in the water wearing a waistcloth, and with His right hand He is blessing the waters of the Jordan. Above His head is the Holy Spirit descending as a dove upon Him. At the top of the icon, a semicircle depicts the opening of the Heavens and the voice of the Father.

On the right side of the icon angels are shown with their heads bowed in reverence to Christ. They are prepared to receive Him as He comes out of the water.

The Orthodox Celebration of the Feast of Epiphany

The celebration of this Feast of our Lord begins on January 5, a day known as the Forefeast of Theophany. Depending on the day of the week, this could be an evening service with Vespers followed by the Liturgy of Saint Basil or a morning service with Matins and the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. Following the service on January 5, the service of the Blessing of the Waters is conducted. Prior to the evening or morning service the Royal Hours with the Typika are said.

On January 6, the day of the Feast, the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is conducted preceded by Matins and followed by the second Blessing of the Waters.

The Blessing of the Waters is conducted in the church; however in many places throughout the world services are conducted near open bodies of water. As a sign of blessing as Christ blessed the Jordan, holy water is poured into the body of water. An associated tradition has been the tossing of a cross into the water to be retrieved by divers.

The holy water from the church is given to the faithful to consume and to use in blessing their homes. In the weeks following the Feast, clergy visit the homes of parishioners and conduct a service of blessing using the holy water that was blessed on the Feast of Theophany.

Scripture readings for the Feast are the following: At the Vespers/Divine Liturgy on January 5: 1 Corinthians 9:19-27; Luke 3:1-18. At the Divine Liturgy on January 6: Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7; Matthew 3:13-17.

Introduction

The Feast of the Holy Theophany (Epiphany) of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is celebrated each year on January 6. The Feast commemorates the Baptism of Christ and the divine revelation of the Holy Trinity. At the Baptism of Christ, all three Persons of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—were made manifest. Thus, the name of the Feast is Epiphany, meaning manifestation, or Theophany, meaning manifestation of God.

Biblical Story

The story of the Nativity of Christ is The Biblical story of the Baptism of Christ is recorded in all four of the Gospels: Matthew 3, Mark 1:1-9, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:31-34.

John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus and the one chosen by God to proclaim His coming, was preaching in the wilderness and was baptizing all who would respond to his message calling for repentance. As he was doing this, John was directing the people toward the one who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11).



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

December 18, 2018

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy
Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos Sisterhood, and all devout
Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our Holy Metropolis of
New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

I take this opportunity to write to each of you as a parish community, as members of various parish ministries, and as individuals concerning a matter of tremendous significance. A little over 100 years ago in 1917, Bulgarian troops had invaded and pillaged the area of Drama, Greece, murdering many innocent people and illegally stealing priceless artifacts in their wake. Some of these stolen artifacts were 1,000 year-old Byzantine manuscripts of incalculable value taken from the Theotokos Eikosiphoinissa Monastery which falls under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. These manuscripts had been in use by the monks of this monastery until the very time that they were stolen by the Bulgarian troops who then dispersed them throughout Europe by selling them to various private collectors, auction houses, and schools of higher learning.

One of the schools of higher learning that acquired these stolen manuscripts is Princeton University which is in possession of four manuscripts. Though numerous requests in recovering these manuscripts have been attempted over the past three years, Princeton University has been reluctant to do that which is right and just. With no resolution to this issue in sight and with Princeton University reluctant to engage in any dialogue concerning this serious matter, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has filed suit against Princeton University for the return of these sacred texts.

These manuscripts are tangible elements of our Orthodox and cultural identity of which the monastery of Theotokos Eikosiphoinissa, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and worldwide Orthodoxy have been deprived. **Therefore, I would like each Parish Council, Philoptochos Sisterhood chapter, AHEPA chapter, and every individual of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey to sign a copy of the enclosed letter (one letter is formatted for organizations and the other for individuals) so that Princeton**

215 East Grove Street, Westfield, NJ 07090-1656 • Telephone: (908) 301-0500 • Fax: (908) 301-1397
web: www.nj.goarch.org • e-mail: metropolis@goarch.org

University may do what is right by returning these manuscripts to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and to correct a historical wrong.

Praying that each parish and person within the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey is moved to protect our Orthodox heritage by sending a copy of the enclosed letter to the President of Princeton University, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,



†EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey



December 18, 2018

Christopher L. Eisgruber, President
Princeton University
Office of the President
1 Nassau Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544

Dear Mr. Eisgruber,

As a member of a devout community of Greek Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey, which is comprised of parishes in New Jersey, the Greater Philadelphia area, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, I was greatly disheartened to hear of Princeton University's lack of an adequate response to the serious issue of their possession of stolen manuscripts from the Monastery of the Theotokos Eikosiphoinissa. These manuscripts are a part of our religious and cultural identity as Orthodox Christians which had been violently taken from us and of which we are now being deprived by Princeton University.

I strongly urge you to return these priceless manuscripts to their rightful owners and to right this wrong which has persisted for over 100 years. History will remember the decision of Princeton University and its leadership on this issue and it will be remembered if Princeton, like the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, rose to the occasion to correct an injustice or if they chose a different course of action which will tarnish the excellent name of one of the United States' most prestigious universities.

It is my hope that you will make the right choice and you will return these manuscripts to their rightful home.

Sincerely,

December 18, 2018

Christopher L. Eisgruber, President
Princeton University
Office of the President
1 Nassau Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544

Dear Mr. Eisgruber,

As members of a devout community and organization of Greek Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey, which is comprised of parishes in New Jersey, the Greater Philadelphia area, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, we were greatly disheartened and disappointed to hear of Princeton University's refusal to return manuscripts stolen from the Monastery of the Theotokos Eikosiphoinissa despite knowing that these manuscripts had been illegally taken from this monastery of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. These manuscripts are a part of our religious and cultural identity as Orthodox Christians which had been violently taken from us and of which we are now being deprived by Princeton University.

We strongly urge you to return these priceless manuscripts to their rightful owner and to right this wrong which has persisted for over 100 years. History will remember the decision of Princeton University and its leadership on this issue and it will be remembered if Princeton, like the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, rose to the occasion to correct an injustice or if they chose a different course of action which will tarnish the excellent name of one of the United States' most prestigious universities.

It is our sincere hope that you will make the right choice and you will return these manuscripts to their rightful home.

Sincerely,

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Title)

_____ (Parish/Organization)

PHILOTOCHOS NEWS / ΝΕΑ ΤΗΣ ΦΙΛΟΠΤΩΧΟΥ

Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New Year!

We would like to thank everyone for their support and donations in 2018 and look forward to another year of continuing the mission of Philoptochos with God's Blessings and your continued love and support!

Our Annual Christmas Lunch / Wine Tasting was enjoyed by all who came and shared an afternoon of fellowship and warmed the hearts of the children with the donations of toys and gift cards. Thank you to Maria Georgaki and Zoe Perdikakis for chairing the event!

Thank you to the Clergy from our sister parishes and everyone who attended the vespers and the service of December 6th, who brought in items or contributed towards the reception to celebrate our Patron Saint Nicholas.

The next general meeting will be on Monday, January 7th at 7:00! Please join us and bring a friend. Everyone is welcomed!

Tuesday, January 8th we will be cooking and serving dinner at the Ronald MCDonald House.

On Sunday, January 13th we will have our Annual Vasilopita cutting and Agape Luncheon.

You may purchase the meal to eat in church or carry out. This Luncheon has been established with The Diagoras Organization and all proceeds go towards the payment of medical bills for families when the need arises.

Please Join us on Monday, January 21st for a Winter Family Night Out at Costas Inn, 4100 North Point Blvd. Donation \$35.00 for information or tickets please contact Irene Vasiliou 410-687-3978 or Evagelia Saliaris 410-592-8345.

DONATIONS

Monetary donations towards vespers:

Mary Serafis
Popi Phillippou
Anonymous

Food Account:

Anonymous in memory of parents
Anonymous
Mrs. Mary Paros

General Account:

Irene Filippou
Maria Fillippou
Lilian Eliou in memory of her mother Antigoni Papathakis
Eleni Pikounis in memory of Emmanuel Pikounis
Mr and Mrs Peter Tassis in memory of Sophia Karamanlidis

We also would like to thank an anonymous family for their very generous donation in memory of their beloved parents which went to feed and cloth families during the holiday season.

May all who donated in memory of their loved ones feel the warmth and smiles of those that received their blessings and may their loved ones rest in peace in the warmth of our Lord's arms.

ΥΓΙΕΣ, ΕΥΤΥΧΙΣΜΕΝΟ ΚΑΙ ΜΕ ΕΥΗΜΕΡΙΑ ΤΟ ΝΕΟ ΕΤΟΣ!!

Θα θέλαμε να ευχαριστήσουμε όλους για την υποστήριξη τους και τις δωρεές τους το 2018 και προσβλέπουμε σε μια ακόμη χρονιά για να συνεχίσουμε την αποστολή της Φιλοπτώχου με τις Ευλογίες του Θεού και τη δική σας συνεχή αγάπη και υποστήριξη!

Το Εορταστικό Γεύμα μας / Οινογευσίγνωση όλοι όσοι ήρθαν το απόλαυσαν αφού πέρασαν ένα απόγευμα με συντροφικότητα και ζεστάναν τις καρδιές των παιδιών με τις δωρεές παιχνιδιών και δωροκαρτών. Ευχαριστούμε την Μαρία Γεωργάκη και Ζωή Περδικάκη για την διοργάνωση της εκδήλωσης!

Ευχαριστούμε τους Κληρικούς των αδελφών Ορθοδόξων Κοινοτήτων, όλους όσοι παρακολούθησαν τον Εσπερινό και την Ακολουθία της 6ης Δεκεμβρίου, και όσους έφεραν γλυκά και φαγητά ή συνέβαλαν στην δεξίωση που ακολούθησε για να γιορτάσουμε Προστάτη της Κοινοότητάς μας, Άγιο Νικόλαο.

Η επομένη μας τακτική συνεδρίαση θα είναι στις 7 Ιανουαρίου, στις 7:00 μ.μ. Παρακαλείστε να συμμετέχετε, φέρτε και κάποια φίλη σας. Όλοι είναι ευπρόσδεκτοι.

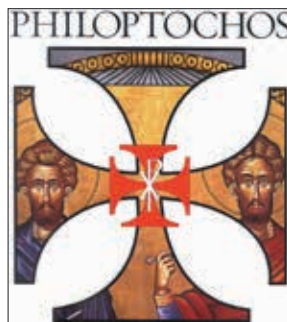
Τρίτη, 8 Ιανουαρίου θα προετοιμάσουμε φαγητά για το Οίκημα Ronald MCDonald House.

Την Κυριακή, 13 Ιανουαρίου, θα έχουμε το Γεύμα Αγάπης και θα κόψουμε την Βασιλόπιτα.

Μπορείτε να αγοράσετε το γεύμα και να γευματίσετε στην Εκκλησία ή να το πάρετε στο σπίτι.

Με τη συμμετοχή του Παν^ρΡοδιακού Συλλόγου ΔΙΑΓΟΡΑΣ, οργανώσαμε αυτήν την εκδήλωση και όλα τα κέρδη θα πάνε στον Ιατρικό-όλογοι οικόγενειών όταν υπάρξει ανάγκη.

Παρακαλείστε να συμμετέχετε στη Χειμερινή μας Οικογενειακή Έξοδο, την Δευτέρα, 21 Ιανουαρίου στο Εστιατόριο Costas Inn, 4100 North Point Blvd. Δωρεά \$ 35 το άτομο. Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες παρακαλείστε να επικοινωνήσετε με την Ειρήνη Βασιλείου 410-687-3978 ή την Ευαγγελία Σαλιάρη 410-592-8345



ΩΡΕΕΣ

ΧΡΗΜΑΤΙΚΕΣ ΔΩΡΕΕΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΕΣΠΕΡΙΝΟ

Μαίρη Σεραφή
Πόπη Φιλίππου
Ανώνυμος

Προς τον Λογαριασμό Γευμάτων
Ανώνυμος εις μνήμη των γονέων του
Ανώνυμος
Κα. Μαρία Παρού

Προς τον Γενικό Λογαριασμό

Ειρήνη Φιλίππου
Μαρία Φιλίππου
Λίλιαν Ηλίου – Εις μνήμη της μητέρας της Αντιγόνης Παπαδάκη
Ελήνη Πικούνη – Εις μνήμη του συζύγου της Εμμανουήλ Πικούνη
κος & κα Παναγιώτη Τάσση-Εις μνήμη της Σοφίας Καραμανλίδη

Θα θέλαμε ακόμη να ευχαριστήσουμε τα μέλη μιας ανώνυμης οικογένειας για την γενναιοδωρία τους εις μνήμη των αγαπημένων τους γονέων, οι οποίοι αυτή την εορταστική εποχή επισκέπτονταν άπορες οικογένειες και μοίραζαν φαγητό και ρουχισμό. Ευχόμεστε όλοι όσοι έκαναν δωρεές εις μνήμη αγαπημένων τους προσώπων να αισθανθούν την ζεστασιά και τα χαμόγελα εκείνων που έλαβαν τις ευλογίες τους, ευχόμεστε επίσης όπως τα αγαπημένα τους πρόσωπα αναπαύονται εν ειρήνη στη στοργική αγκαλιά του Κυρίου μας.

EARLY EDUCATION CENTER NEWS



ST. NICHOLAS BILINGUAL EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

The Saint Nicholas Bilingual Early Education Center provides a safe, nurturing, home away from home learning center. We accept children from 6 weeks till 5 years of age. **BEEC is hiring part-time and full-time aides to assist our teachers at the Center.** If you or anyone you know is interested, please call the Center at 410-633-5020 extension 4 or message us on Facebook.

The Center collected and donated new, unwrapped toys to Toys for Tots. We also had a Christmas Program where the children sang Christmas carols in both Greek and English. Our program was complete with a visit from Santa Claus.

Happy New Year! To welcome 2019, Father Michael will be blessing our school and we will cut the traditional Vasilopita. The children will be having a pajama party every Wednesday for the month of January. Mark your calendars - the BEEC will host "Godparents Sunday Luncheon" on February 17, 2019.



ΔΙΓΛΩΣΣΟ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΠΡΟΣΧΟΛΙΚΗΣ ΗΛΙΚΙΑΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ

Ο Δίγλωσσος Βρεφονηπιακός Σταθμός Αγίου Νικολάου παρέχει ένα ασφαλές περιβάλλον, ένα σπίτι μακριά από το σπίτι, ένα σπίτι μάθησης. Δεχόμαστε παιδιά ηλικίας 6 εβδομάδων έως 5 ετών. **Ο σταθμός μας ψάχνει να προσλάβει βοηθούς δασκάλων μερικής και πλήρους απασχόλησης.** Αν έχετε ερωτήσεις ή χρειάζοσαστε περισσότερες πληροφορίες, επικοινωνήστε με το σταθμό μας στο τηλέφωνο 410-633-5020, γραμμή 4 ή στείλτε μας μήνυμα στο Facebook.



ψάχνει να προσλάβει βοηθούς δασκάλων μερικής και πλήρους απασχόλησης. Αν έχετε ερωτήσεις ή χρειάζοσαστε περισσότερες πληροφορίες, επικοινωνήστε με το σταθμό μας στο τηλέφωνο 410-633-5020, γραμμή 4 ή στείλτε μας μήνυμα στο Facebook.

Διοργανώθηκε επίσης Χριστουγεννιάτικο Πρόγραμμα όπου τα παιδιά τραγούδησαν τα κάλαντα στα Ελληνικά και στα Αγγλικά. Το πρόγραμμα ολοκληρώθηκε με επίσκεψη από τον Άγιο Βασίλη.

Σας ευχόμαστε καλή χρονιά! Για να καλωσορίσουμε το 2019, ο πάτερ Μιχαήλ θα ευλογήσει το σχολείο και θα κόψει τη Βασιλόπιτα μας. Τον Ιανουάριο, οι μαθητές μας θα έχουν πάρτυ πυτζάμας κάθε Τετάρτη. Θέλουμε επίσης να σας ενημέρωσουμε πως ο σταθμός μας θα διοργανώσει το Godparents Luncheon την Κυριακή 17 Φεβρουαρίου.





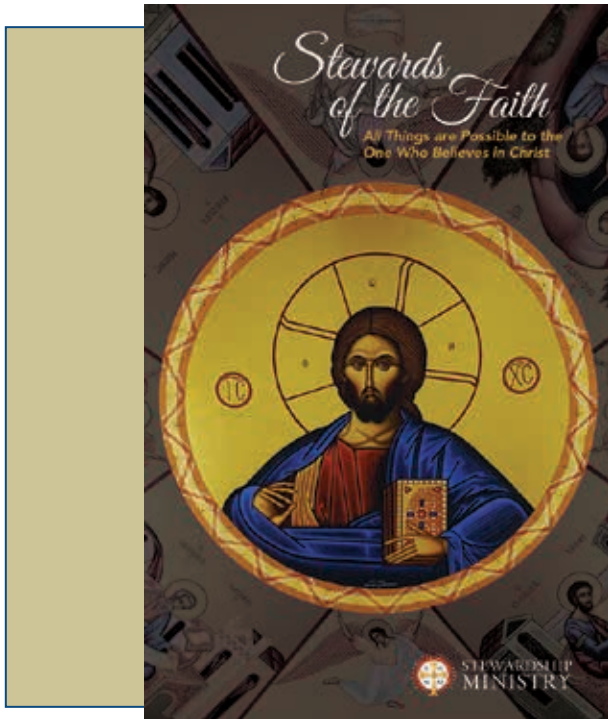
EARLY EDUCATION CENTER NEWS

BEEC PLAYGROUND ADDITION



Coming
Spring
2019!

IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH
Mr
landscape
structures
Sparks@Play



*Please remember to
turn in your
stewardship cards
for 2019.
Thank you!!*

PAN-HELLENIC NEWS/ ΠΑΝ-ΧΕΛΛΕΝΙΚ

Ο Χορευτικός Όμιλος ΠΑΝ-ΧΕΛΛΕΝΙΚ άρχισε τα μαθήματα χορού για τέταρτη (4η) συνεχή χρονιά. Τα μαθήματα θα γίνονται κάθε Πέμπτη στις 7:00 μ.μ. στη Κοινοτική Αίθουσα του Αγίου Νικολάου. Δεχόμαστε εγγραφές νέων μελών την ώρα των μαθημάτων ή μπορείτε να τηλεφωνήσετε στο 443-845-8903 και να μιλήσετε με την κ. Αναστασία (Στάσα) Χατζηευθυμίου Λουκάκη, μέχρι τον Δεκέμβριο. Δασκάλα του ΠΑΝ-ΧΕΛΛΕΝΙΚ είναι η κ. Έφη Καραμπέλα. Προτρέπουμε και ενθαρρύνουμε όσες και όσους αγαπούν το χορό να ενταχθούν στο γκρουπ του ΠΑΝ-ΧΕΛΛΕΝΙΚ. Όλα τα μέλη του θα χαρούμε να καλωσορίσουμε και να εντάξουμε στην παρέα μας νέα μέλη για τη χρονιά 2018-2019.

Με εκτίμηση

Από το Χορευτικό Όμιλο

Του Αγίου Νικολάου ΠΑΝ-ΧΕΛΛΕΝΙΚ



AMERICAN HELLENIC SOCIETY



THE AMERICAN HELLENIC SOCIETY
OF ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

The American Hellenic Society is now welcoming couples of mixed Greek and American backgrounds!



For information,
please email [info@
ahsofstnicholas.org](mailto:info@ahsofstnicholas.org)

2018 PLEDGES-\$226,716.00 / Payments-\$216,270.22 / Balance-\$10,445.78

MRS AGAPIOS MARIA
 MR/MRS ALAFASSOS SPYROS &
 MR/MRS ALMASON STEPHEN &
 MRS ANAN ELEZABETH A.
 MR ANGELOPOULOS CHRIST
 MR/MRS ANGELOU JOHN
 MR/MRS ARAVIKAKIS EKATERINI
 MR/MRS ARGIRAKIS PANTELIS &
 MR/MRS ASMAR - OLIVER - ANNA
 MR/MRS AVGERINOS GEORGE AND
 MS BALOMAS PATRICIA
 MR BARKAS SOYRIDON
 MR/MRS BISIOTIS DIMITRIOS -
 MRS BOURNIAS LAMBRINI
 MR/MRS CAUSEY WILLIAM &
 MR/MRS CHALKIAS IOANNIS &
 MRS CHRISOMALLIS SOPHIE
 MRS CHRIST STASA
 MR/MRS CHUVALAS DIMITRA
 MR/MRS CORNIAS MICHAEL C.
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 MR/MRS CORNIAS THEONI
 MRS DENDRINOS EVANGELIA
 MR/MRS DOUKELIS GEORGE
 MR DUCHESNE ROBERT
 MR/MRS ELIOU ERNEST
 MR/MRS FILIPIDIS NICHOLAS
 MR/MRS FILIPPOU JASON &
 MR/MRS FORAKIS MICHAEL
 MR/MRS FOTINOS GERASIMOS -
 MRS FRANGAKIS SOFOULA
 Col./Mrs. GAVRILIS JOHN &
 MR/MRS GEORGAS SAVAS & KYRA
 MR GEORGE ANTHONY M.
 MRS GERAPETRITE FOTINI
 MR/MRS GIAKOU MAKIS TSAMBIKOS -
 MR/MRS GIANNAKOULIAS GEORGE
 MR/MRS GIORGAKIS NICKOLAOS
 MR. GLYKIADIS KONSTANTINO
 HALKIAN "SAINT
 MR/MRS HARTOFILIS NICK & SYLVIA
 MR HATZIGEORGALI ANTONIOS
 MR HONDROULIS EMMANUEL D.
 MRS JOHNS ASPASIA
 MS KAITIS ANGELA MARY
 MRS KALIAKOUDAS SOFIA
 MR/MRS KAMMAS - GEORGIOS -
 MRS KAPETANAKOS SOULLA
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 MRS KARABELAS EFTHIMIA
 MR/MRS KARAGIANNPOU GUS & SUE
 MR KARAMIHALIS GEORGE
 MR/MRS KARLOS PETER -
 MR/MRS KASTANAKIS MILTIADIS &
 MR/MRS KATSAS STAVROS &
 MR/MRS KEPREOS GEORGIA
 MR/MRS KLOSTERIDES MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS KOLIADIS EMMANUEL &
 MR/MRS KONSTANTINOU JOHN
 MR/MRS KOROLOGOS JOHN &
 MR/MRS KOSTAKIS GEORGE
 MR KOTZIAS GEORGE A.
 MR/MRS KOUKOULAS EMMANUEL
 MR/MRS KOUROUBLAKIS VASILIS,
 MR/MRS KOURTESIS CONSTANTINE
 MR/MRS KOUTSOURIS STYLIANOS
 MR LALLAS JOHN
 MR/MRS LAZAROU TED & MARY
 MR/MRS LIKAKIS PERICLES
 MR/MRS LOUHIOTIS DIMITRIOS &
 MR/MRS MALTAS JOHN & ZOE
 MR/MRS MASTROMINAS MINAS
 MR/MRS MAVIAS - BASIL KOULA - RENEE
 MR/MRS MAVROMOUSTAK GEORGE
 MR MELISSARATOS ARIS
 MRS MILLER MARY
 MRS MIMAROS PARASKEVI
 MR/MRS MITSOS FRANK
 MR/MRS MONIODIS MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS MULLINS TROY &
 MR NICOLARAKIS GEORGE
 MR/MRS NISTAZOS GEORGE &
 MR/MRS O'DRUDY LEO K. III &

MR AGAPIOS DIAMANTIS
 MR/MRS ALEFRANKIS - ANGELIKI,
 MR/MRS AMARANTIDIS HARRY AND
 MR/MRS ANASTASIADES DEMOS &
 MR/MRS ANGELOS JOHN & IRENE
 MR/MRS ANTONAS NICK
 MR/MRS ARAVIDES NICHOLAS
 MISS ARGIROPOULOS ALIKI
 MS ATHANASIOU IOANNA
 MR/MRS AVGERINOS SOPHIA &
 MR/MRS BALOMAS BILL & KARI
 MR/MRS BENETOS JOHN &
 MR/MRS BITSANIS DIMITRIOS -
 MR/MRS BOUYOUKAS JOHN & FOTINI
 MR CAVOURAS STANLEY
 MISS CHRISOPOULOS VASILIA
 MR/MRS CHRISOMALLIS JOHN & TERI
 MR/MRS CHRIST PHILIP
 MRS CONWAY ROSE
 MRS CORNIAS ROZA
 MRS CORNIAS DESPINA
 MR/MRS COSSIS MILTON &
 MR/MRS DIAKANTONIS NICKOLAOS -
 MR/MRS DOUSKAS NIKOLAS
 MR/MRS EFTHIMIOU SPIROS &
 MR/MRS FAKAS JAMES
 MR. FILIPIDIS JAMES
 MR/MRS FINNEY THOMAS &
 MR/MRS FORAKIS STAMATI &
 MR/MRS FOTINOS JAMES
 MR/MRS FRANGOS JOHN
 MR/MRS GAZONAS-ZIKOU GEORGE
 MS GEORGAS ANTHE
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 MS GERAPETRITE PANAGIOTA
 MRS GIALAMAS JOANNA
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 MR/MRS GLAVA KIKI
 MR/MRS GLYTSIS - FILIPOS -
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 MRS HATZIDAKIS ANGELIKI
 MR/MRS HATZIGEORGALI NICHOLAS &
 MR/MRS HOUVARIDAS MINAS &
 MR/MRS JONES KENNY &
 MR/MRS KAKAROLIS NIKOLAOS
 MRS KALIS EUGENIA
 MS KAMOS MARY
 MR KAPETANAKOS FANOURIOS
 MR/MRS KAPUTSOS - SYLVIA -
 MR/MRS KARAGIANNIS DEMETRIOS &
 MR/MRS KARAMANLIDES KYRIAKOS -
 MR/MRS KARANIKOLIS NIKOLAOS -
 MR/MRS KAROUTSOS GEORGE &
 MR/MRS KASTELLORIZIOS KONSTANTINO
 MR/MRS KATTAVENOS MICHAEL &
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 MR/MRS KONSTANTOPOU ALEXANDER &
 MR/MRS KOSMAS DEMETRIOS
 MR/MRS KOSTALAS PANTELIS &
 MR/MRS KOUGIANOS DIONISIOS -
 MRS KOULATSOS ANASTASIA
 MR KOUROUPIS STEVE
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 MRS KOUVARIS PAULA
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 MR/MRS LENTIS - MINAS - ELENI
 MR/MRS LISOWSKY - ARTHUR -
 MR/MRS MACH LEON J. &
 MRS MANOLITSIS ISMINI
 MR/MRS MASTROVASILIS IOANNIS &
 MRS MAVRIKOS LAMBRINI
 MR MAVROMOUSTAK ELEFTHERIOS
 MS MICKLOS CHRISTINE
 MR/MRS MILLETT & ALEX EARL &
 MR MINAS IOANNIS
 MR/MRS MONIODIS MICHAEL
 MRS MOREKAS NITSA
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 MR/MRS NIKOLETOS FELICIA
 MR/MRS NISTAZOS NICKOLAS Z.
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 MR/MRS BARKAS HARALAMBOS
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 MRS BOULOUBASSIS KATHERINE
 MR/MRS BRITZOLAKIS GEORGIOS &
 MR/MRS CEJPEK PETER &
 MR/MRS CHRISOVERGIS NICHOLAS &
 MRS CHRISOMALLIS METAXIA
 MRS CHRISTAKOU STAVROULA
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 MS CORNIAS SEVASTI
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 MR/MRS FORAKIS MICHAEL
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 MR/MRS GALIATSATOS GERASIMOS &
 MR/MRS GEORGALAS MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS GEORGAS GEORGE
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 MR/MRS KAMOS EMMANUEL &
 MR/MRS KAPETANAKOS ELIAS & STE
 MS KARABELAS IOANNA
 MR/MRS KARAGIANNIS PAVLOS & JO
 MR KARAMANLIDES ANTONIOS
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 MR/MRS KAROUTSOS APOSTOLOS -
 MR/MRS KATSAROS MICHAEL
 MR/MRS KAZAMIAS GUS
 MR/MRS KILLIAS SAVAS &
 MR KLOSTERIDIS MICHAEL
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 MR/MRS KOULATSOS DIONISIOS
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 MR KOUTSANTONIS JOHN
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 MS LAMBROW STEPHANIE
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 MR/MRS LOGOTHETIS NIKOLAOS &
 MR/MRS MAHANI GEORGE &
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 MISS MAVROGIORGOS EVANGELIA
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 MR/MRS MILLON EDWARD &
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 MR/MRS ARGETAKIS GEORGE &
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 MR/MRS BAKALIS IOANNIS &
 MISS BARKAS LAMBRINI
 MR BISBIKIS PETE
 MR/MRS BOULOUBASSIS NICHOLAS
 MS BURRISS STEPHANIE
 MS CHAGETAS ANGELA
 MR/MRS CHRISOVERGIS GEORGE &
 MR/MRS CHRISOMALLIS JOHN & TERI
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 MRS CORNIAS CLARA
 MR CORNIAS NICHOLAS
 MRS CORNIAS CALLIOPI T.
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 MRS DINIOTIS ANASTASIA
 MR/MRS DOUSKAS NIKOLAS
 MRS ELIOPOULOS ANNA
 MRS FANTIS PENELOPE
 MS FILIPPOU IRENE
 MR/MRS FOOTLAND RAY - KAREN
 MR/MRS FORAKIS - GEORGE -
 MR/MRS FOUKAS PAVLOS &
 MR/MRS GAVRILIS VIRGINIA
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 MS GEORGAS HARRIET
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 MR/MRS KALFAS ELEFTHERIOS -
 MRS KAMINARIS BARBARA
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 MS KARAGIANNIS MARIA
 MRS KARAMIHALIS ELEFTHERIA
 MR/MRS KARDIASMENOS METAXIA
 MR/MRS KASTANAKIS MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS KATSAROS EMANUEL
 MR/MRS KEPALAS MIKE & NORA
 MR/MRS KIMOS JAMES
 MR/MRS KLOSTERIDIS SPIRO -
 MRS KONDYLAS DESPINA
 MR/MRS KORNIAIS GEORGE
 MR KOSMOS GEORGE
 DR/MRS KOTZIAS CHRIS
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 MR/MRS KOUMOUDIS SOTIRIS &
 MR/MRS KOURTESIS MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS KOUTSANTONIS DEMETRIOS
 MS LALLAS EVA
 MR/MRS LARENTZOS JAMES -
 MR/MRS LEWIS HOWARD E.
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 MR/MRS MASTROMANOLI MANUEL
 MRS MATTHEWS ANN
 MR/MRS MAVROGIORGOS OUANIA -
 MR MAVROULIS PHOTIS
 MR/MRS MIHAIL NIKOLAOS &
 MR/MRS MILONAS KIMON
 MRS MINAS ROSE
 MISS MONIODIS PANAGIOTA
 MR MOSKOS THOMAS
 MR/MRS NICOLAIDIS VASILIOS &
 MR/MRS NIOTIS NICHOLAS -
 MR/MRS NYCHIS GEORGE
 MR/MRS ORFANOS ANTONIOS

MR/MRS ORFANOS MICHAEL
 MR PANTELES KOSTAS
 MRS PAPADIMITRIOU ERMA
 MRS PAPAVALIIOU VIRGINIA
 MR/MRS PARAGIOS IOANNIS &
 FR./MRS PASTRIKOS MICHAEL &
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 MR/MRS POSLUSZNY JEFFREY &
 MR/MRS PROCOPOU ARISTOTELIS &
 MRS PSICHIS DULA
 MR/MRS REESE KALYOPI -
 MR RODITIS THEODOROS
 MR/MRS ROROS STAVROS &
 MS ROSSIS TSAMBIKA
 MR/MRS SAKELAKIS JOHN &
 MR/MRS SALIARIS PANAGIOTIS
 MRS SARIGIANIS CHRISTINE
 MR/MRS SAUNDERS JONATHAN -
 MR/MRS SFAKIANOUDIS VASILIS &
 MS SFIRIOU ANTONIA
 MR/MRS SISKOS STEFANOS
 MR SOLLON JAMES STEVE
 MRS SOURANIS MARITSA
 MR/MRS SPENCER ERIC AND
 MR/MRS STAKIAS JOHN &
 MR/MRS STAMIDIS ANASTASIOS
 MR/MRS STAVRAKIS DEMETRIOS &
 MRS STRAKES KATHERINE
 MRS SYROPOULOS AMALIA
 MRS TETTERIS STEVE
 MR/MRS THEOHARIS EMMANUEL
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 MR/MRS TRINTIS NICOLAOS &
 MS TSAKALOS JEANETTE
 MR/MRS TSAMPOS MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS TSERKIS GEORGE
 MR TZAVARIS DEMOSTHENIS
 MRS VASILAKOPOULO ANASTASIA
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 MS VENZKE KELLIE ANN
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MR/MRS OTTO TERRY
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 MR/MRS PASTRIKOS/HALK NOMIKI/JOHN
 MR PATRAS STEPHEN
 MR/MRS PEARCE ANTHONY &
 MR PHILIPPOU PHILIP
 MR/MRS PIKOUNIS JOHN & DEBBIE
 MR/MRS PITSOS PANAYOTA
 MS POULIMENAKOS ELENI
 MR/MRS PROTOPAPAS EMMANUEL &
 MRS PULIANAS DESPINA
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 MR/MRS ROLOGAS ANASTASIOS
 MR/MRS ROROS GEORGE L
 MR/MRS ROUFAS VASILIS
 MR SAKELLIS GEORGE
 MS SALPEAS MARIA
 MR/MRS SARIGIANIS- THOMAS &
 MR SAZAKLIS ANTONIOS
 MR/MRS SFAKIANOUDIS JOHN
 MR/MRS SFIRIOU ANTONIOS
 MR/ SKANDALIS GEORGE
 MR/MRS SOLLON NICK &
 MR/MRS SOURANIS MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS STAKIAS MICHAEL &
 MR/MRS STAKIAS GEORGE
 MRS STAMIDIS SOPHIA
 MR STAVROU STAMATIOS G.
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 MRS TARATSIDES ATHENA
 MR/MRS THEMELIS JOHN & RENEE
 MR THEOHARIS GEORGE
 MR/MRS TRIKOULIS DEMETRIOS
 MRS TRIPOLITIS EKATERINI
 MRS TSAKALOS ROSE
 MR/MRS TSAMPOS JOHN &
 MR/MRS TSERKIS PANTELIS -
 MR/MRS VALMAS GREGORY &
 MRS VASILAKOPOULO PARASKEVI
 MRS VAVAKAS KIRIAKI
 MR/MRS VERENAKIS MICHAEL &
 MR VOURGARAKIS HARRY
 MR/MRS VOXAKIS GEORGE
 MR/MRS YEAKIM DENNIS &

MR/MRS PALAS JOHN
 MR/MRS PANTOULIS NICK
 MR/MRS PAPAMINAS ANDREW
 MRS PAPPAS IRENE
 MRS PAROS MARY
 MR/MRS PATERAKIS CHARLES &
 MR/MRS PATRAS PETE
 MRS PELTSEMES IRENE
 MRS PHILIPPOU KALIOPI
 MR/MRS PIKOUNIS JAMES
 MISS POLIKANDRIOTIS MARIA
 MR/MRS PRASSINAS JAMES
 MR/MRS PROTOPAPAS NICHOLAS
 MR/MRS QUINTERO DENNIS & RITA
 MR/MRS REPPAS SOTERIOS
 MR ROLOGAS STAVROS
 MR/MRS ROROS JOHN P.
 MR/MRS ROUSSOS ANTHONY &
 MR/MRS SAKELLIS MICHAEL
 MR SAMARAS PETER GEORGE
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 DR/MRS SEAL CHARLES &
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 MR/MRS STAKIAS PETE &
 MS STAMIDIS - PEREZ CHRISOULA
 MR/MRS STEFANOI/STAK MICHAEL
 MR/MRS SVRJEK JAMES & ELENI
 MR TARATSIDES GEORGE
 MISS THEMELIS STELLA
 MR/MRS TOPOUZOGLOU ANASTASIOS &
 MR/MRS TRIKOULIS JOANNE
 MR/MRS TSAKALAS STEVEN
 MRS TSAMBIKOS IRENE
 MR TSAPAKIDIS THEOHARIS
 MR/MRS TSIRONIS NICK &
 MR/MRS VANTELAS STELIOS &
 MR/MRS VASILIOS FRANK
 MR/MRS VENETIS DIMITRIOS &
 MR/MRS VERGOS GEORGE &
 MRS VOIRVOULAS SOPHIA
 MR XIPOLITIDIS JOHN
 MR/MRS YIANAKIS STEVE &

MRS PANIAZONIS MARY
 MR/MRS PAPADIMITRIOU EMMANUEL &
 MR/MRS PAPATHAKIS MATTHEW
 MRS PARAGIOS FOULA
 MR/MRS PARTHEMOS KONSTANTINO
 MR/MRS PATERIS TELEMAHOS
 MR/MRS PATRIKIOS-JISSRI AIKATERINE &
 MR/MRS PERDIKAKIS GEORGE
 MR/MRS PHILLIPS DOUGLAS -
 MR/MRS PIKOUNIS GEORGE E.
 MR/MRS POLIKANDRIOTIS KONSTANTINO
 MRS PROAKIS KOULA
 MR/MRS PROTOPAPAS GEORGE &
 MR/MRS REDMILES SOPHIA
 MR/MRS ROBERTS BRIAN
 MRS ROROS NICKOLETTA
 MR/MRS ROROS DIMITRIOS &
 MR/MRS ROXANIS DEAN & SOULA
 MR/MRS SAKPAZIS IOANNIS
 MR/MRS SANDALIS JOHN
 MR/MRS SAKIOGLOU KERASSA
 MRS SERAFIS MARY
 MR SFIKAS PARASKEVAS
 MR/MRS SISAMIS IOANNIS &
 MR/MRS SMOUDIANIS JOHN & TINA
 MR/MRS SOULIKAS JAMES & JOAN
 MR SOURANIS STANLEY
 MR/MRS STAKIAS STELIOS &
 MR STAMATOPOULOU NICK
 MR/MRS STAVLAS JERRY
 MR/MRS STEWART JOHN
 MR/MRS SYROPOULOS NICHOLAS
 MR/MRS TASKER-GIOKA DAMIANOS
 MR THEMELIS JOHN
 MR/MRS TRIANTAFILOS COSTAS
 MRS TRINTIS THORINA
 MRS TSAKALAS JULIE
 MR/MRS TSAMPOS GEORGE
 MR/MRS TSERKIS VASILIOS &
 MR/MRS TZAVARIS STYLIANOS-
 MS VASILAKOPOULO IRENE
 MS VATAKIS TESSIE
 MR/MRS VENETIS APOSTOLOS
 MR/MRS VERGOS JOHN
 MR/MRS VOXAKIS JOHN & IRENE
 MRS XOURI SOFIA
 MR/MRS ZDZIERA STEVE

*2019 Parking Permits will be available soon for
 parishioners who have submitted their
 stewardship cards for new year.*



2019 PLEDGES-\$62,815.00 / Payments-\$36,227.71/ Balance-\$26,587.29

MR/MRS ALEFRANKIS - ANGELIKI,
MRS AMARANTIDIS PARTHENA
MR APOSTOLOU MICHAEL
MS ATHOS JANET
MR/MRS BOUYOUKAS JOHN & FOTINI
MRS CONWAY ROSE
MRS CORNIAS DESPINA
MRS FAKAS ZENOVIA
MR/MRS FILIPPOU JASON &
MR/MRS GAZONAS-ZIKOU GEORGE
MR/MRS GLAVA KIKI
MR/MRS GLYKIADIS KONSTANTINO
MRS HAZARIDES MELLI
MISS KAIKIS PENELOPE
MRS KAPETANAKOS SOULLA
MR/MRS KOSMOS GEORGE
MR/MRS KOULATSOS ANASTASIA
MS LAMBROW STEPHANIE
MR/MRS MARAGOS PETROS &
MR/MRS MILONAS KIMON
MR/MRS O'DRUDY LEO K. III &
MR/MRS PARAGIOS IOANNIS &
MR/MRS PASTRIKOS/HALK NOMIKI/JOHN
MR/MRS PRASSINAS JAMES
MR/MRS REDMILES SOPHIA
MS. SALPEAS MARIA
MR SAZAKLIS ANTONIOS
MR/MRS SOULIKAS JAMES & JOAN
MR/MRS STAMATOPOULO NICK
MRS TARATSIDES ATHENA
JUDGE THEMELIS JOHN & RENEE
MRS TRIPOLITIS EKATERINI
MRS VASILAKOPOULO ANASTASIA
MR VOUGARAKIS HARRY

MR/MRS ALMASON STEPHEN &
MR/MRS ANAN ELEZABETH A.
MR/MRS ARGYRAKIS DESPINA
MR/MRS ATSIDIS IOANNIS
MRS CHRISSOMALLIS SOPHIE
MRS CORNIAS CLARA
MR/MRS CORNIAS GEORGE A. &
MR/MRS FAKAS JAMES
MR/MRS FORAKIS MICHAEL
MR/MRS GEORGIU JOHN
MR GLAVAS SOCRATES
MS HATZIEFTHIMIO ANASTASIA
MR/MRS HONDROULIS EMMANUEL D.
MRS KAITIS ANGELA MARY
MR/MRS KATSAROS MICHAEL
MR KOSTOS JOHN
MR KOUROUPIS STEVE
MRS LERICOS IRENE
MRS MATTHEWS ANN
MR/MRS NISTAZOS GEORGE &
MS ORFANIDIS VASILIA
MISS PARAGIOS FOULA
MR/MRS PATRAS PETE
MR/MRS PROTOPAPAS EMMANUEL &
MR/MRS REESE KALYOPI -
MR SAMARAS PETER GEORGE
MRS SERAFIS MARY
MRS SOURANIS PARASKEVI
MR/MRS STEFANONISTAK MICHAEL
MR/MRS TASKER DALE &
MR/MRS THEOHARIS EMMANUEL
MS TSAKALOS JEANETTE
MS VASILAKOPOULO IRENE
MR/MRS YIANAKIS STEVE &

MR/MRS AMANN MARY & FRANZ
MR/MRS ANDERSON EMANUEL P. JR.
MR/MRS ATHANASIOU ANTONIOS
MR/MRS BAGIATI - AIKATERINI -
MRS CHRIST STASA
MRS CORNIAS ROZA
MR/MRS DIAKOKOMNINOS KOSMAS
MR/MRS FILIPIDIS NICHOLAS
MR/MRS FOTINOS GERASIMOS -
MR/MRS GIAKOU MAKIS TSAMBIKOS -
MR GLYKIADIS KONSTANTINO
MR HATZIGEORGALI ANTONIOS
MR/MRS IEROMONAHOS PANTELIS
MRS KALIAKOUDAS SOFIA
MR/MRS KATTAVENOS MICHAEL &
MR KOTZIAS GEORGE A.
MR/MRS KOURTESIS MICHAEL &
MR/MRS LEWIS HOWARD E.
MRS MAVIAS - BASIL KOULA - RENEE
MR/MRS NISTAZOS NICKOLAS Z.
MRS PAPADIMITRIOU ERMA
MRS PAROS MARY
MR/MRS PIKOUNIS ELENI
MR/MRS PROTOPAPAS NICHOLAS
MR/MRS RODITIS THEODOROS
MRS SARIOLGLOU CHRISTINE
MR/MRS SISAMIS IOANNIS &
MR/MRS SPANOS NICHOLAS &
MR/MRS STEWART JOHN
MR/MRS THEMELIS JOHN
MR/MRS THEOHARIS GEORGE
MR/MRS TSAMPOS GEORGE
MS VENZKE KELLIE ANN

MR/MRS AMARANTIDIS HARRY AND
MR/MRS APOSTOLOU DIMITRIOS &
MR/MRS ATHANASIOU IOANNA
MR BISBIKIS PETER
MR/MRS CHRIST PHILIP
MR/MRS CORNIAS MICHAEL C.
MR/MRS DOUSKAS NIKOLAS
MRS FILIPPOU IRENE
MR FOTIOU JOHN
MRS GIANNAKOULIAS DIONISIA
MRS GLYKIADIS DESPINA
MR/MRS HATZIGEORGALI NICHOLAS &
MR/MRS KAIKIS CLEMIS
MR/MRS KALPOURANIS - KONSTATNINO
MR/MRS KILLIAS SAVAS &
MR/MRS KOUKIDES HARRY
MRS KOUVARIS PAULA
MR/MRS LOUMIOTIS DIMITRIOS &
MR/MRS MILLETT & ALEX EARL &
MRS NISTAZOS SEVASTI
MR/MRS PAVAVASILIOU VIRGINIA
Rev./MRS PASTRIKOS MICHAEL &
MR/MRS PIKOUNIS JOHN & DEBBIE
Dr. PYRGOS GEORGIOS
MR/MRS SAKPAZIS IOANNIS
MRS SARIOGLOU ANASTASIA
MRS SOPHOCLEOUS HELEN
MR/MRS STAKIAS MICHAEL &
MR TARATSIDES GEORGE
MISS THEMELIS STELLA
MR/MRS TRIANTAFILOU COSTAS
MR/MRS TSAMPOS MICHAEL &
MRS VIZANIARIS EVANGELIA

JOY PROGRAM

~ The St. Nicholas JOY Program ~

The JOY Program is designed for ages 3-11. The program will prepare our children for GOYA and will emphasize the same goals of fellowship and understanding of our faith. Each meeting has a theme based on the Ecclesiastical Feast Days of the month. Activities include Crafts, Games, Basketball, and a lesson by Fr. Michael. Snacks will be provided by the parish.

We meet once a month every third Saturday from 12-2 pm.

Please feel free to contact me at 443-221-8024 or ckouroublakis@gmail.com for more information.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS - JANUARY

Wednesday, January 2nd: NO Greek School (Classes resume January 7th)

Monday, January 7th: Philoptochos Monthly Meeting at 7 p.m.

Monday, January 7th: GOYA Meeting at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, January 8th: Parish Council Meeting at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, January 8th: Choir Rehearsal at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, January 8th: NO Diamonds Meeting

Tuesday, January 8th: Philoptochos Ronald McDonald Dinner Visitation

Wednesday, January 9th: Bible Study at 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 12th: Diamonds Christmas/New Years Luncheon at the Plateia at 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 13th: Vasilopita cutting sponsored by the Philoptochos

Sunday, January 13th: Agape Luncheon sponsored by the Philoptochos and Diagoras Societies

Friday, January 18 - Monday, January 21: Hellenic Golden Coins Dance Festival - Atlanta, GA

Saturday, January 19th: Ladies Panchian Meeting at 1 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday, January 19 & 20: Metropolis Dance Festival - Annapolis, MD

Monday, January 21st: NO Greek School

Monday, January 21st: Philoptochos Night Out at Costa's Inn

Tuesday, January 29th: Choir Rehearsal at 7 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Monday, February 4th: Philoptochos Monthly Meeting at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 12th: Diamonds Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 13th: Holy Land Pilgrimage Meeting at 7 p.m.

Monday February 18th: NO Greek School

Tuesday, February 19th: Choir Rehearsal

Tuesday, February 19th: Philoptochos Night Out - TBD

Friday, February 22nd: Hellenic Golden Coins - Make a Cake Night



LITURGICAL PROGRAM - JANUARY

Happy New year to Everyone. May it be blessed with abundant health and prosperity.

Tuesday, January 1	New Years Day - The Circumcision of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m. Feast Day of St Basil the Great
Saturday, January 5	Eve of Epiphany Orthros: 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 (Strict Fast) Blessing of the Waters
Sunday, January 6	Holy Epiphany Day Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m. Blessing of the Great Waters
Monday, January 7	Synaxis of St. John the Baptist Orthros 8:45 am. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, January 13	Sunday after Epiphany Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Thursday, January 17	St. Anthony the Great Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, January 20	12th Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, January 27	15th Sunday of Luke Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, January 30	The Three Hierarchs: Orthros 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m.

We celebrate the Holy Baptism (Holy Epiphany) of our Lord. This is a Major Feast Day of the Church. We must make an effort to come to church on this day to worship and glorify our Lord. Blessing of the Great Waters will take place near the end of the Divine Liturgy.

