



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΗΣ

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent 2014

The Reverend Clergy and the  
Greek Orthodox Faithful of the  
Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

It is truly with increasing concern and sadness for the loss of lives and destruction of families that I communicate with you on this Second Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, which I hereby ask all Orthodox Faithful of our Holy Metropolis to pause as we bring awareness to **Gun Violence Prevention**, and thus stand in solidarity with other faith denominations in condemning gun violence in the United State and throughout the world.

Indeed, all of us as Orthodox Christians share in the unspeakable pain and grief of the families who have lost loved ones, especially children, to the senseless death as a result of a shooting. We thus *"weep with those who weep,"* (Romans 12:15) and pray that our lawmakers will enact tougher laws that require more stringent background checks on would-be gun owners, ban high-capacity assault weapons, and pursue gun traffickers to the fullest extent of the law. Now more than ever is the time to promote peaceful solutions to quarrels amongst brothers, neighbors, groups, and nations as we recall our Lord's words to Peter, *"put your sword in its place, for all who take up the sword will perish by the sword."* (Matthew 26:52)

It is even more painful to witness gun violence of children against children. Weeks do not go by until we are informed of yet another death due to gang violence, drug deals, psychopaths shooting in the local mall and domestic violence turned deadly because of the abundant availability of guns in the home. Let us make every collective effort to prevent gun violence at its earliest stage, by teaching our children, and for that matter our fellow adults, that instead of arming themselves with weapons of death and mass destruction, they should *"take up the whole armor of God...gird their waist with truth...put on the breastplate of righteousness...shod their feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace...take the shield of faith...take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* (Ephesians 6:13-17)

As your Metropolitan and spiritual leader, I exhort all of you to pray fervently for the repose of the many souls and for the health and well being of the survivors. May we also pray that those who would seek to take the life of another, especially through gun violence, be reminded that our Lord's Commandment of **"You shall not kill,"** (Exodus 20:13) was indeed a directive, not a mere suggestion.

Praying that our loving Lord will receive in the bosom of Abraham the countless victims of gun violence and will comfort their families with His abundant mercy and compassion, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

† EVANGELOS  
Metropolitan of New Jersey

To be read from the pulpit on Sunday, March 16, 2014