



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Sunday, November 2, 2014

The Reverend Clergy

Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos Societies, Faculty and Students of the Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools, Directors and Participants of all Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

Every year on November 1st we celebrate the joyous Feastday of the Saints Anargyroi, Cosmas and Damian, the Holy Unmercenaries. These Saints from Asia Minor were doctors who offered medical care to all in need free of charge, thus earning them the title of "Unmercenaries." They lived by Christ's admonition to His Disciples, *"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give."* (Mt. 10:8)

The Holy Unmercenaries are also, on account of their demonstrated compassion toward the poor and downtrodden, the Patron Saints of our National Philoptochos Sisterhood, whose mission is to aid the least among us in every available manner. At the core of their mission and ministry is the fundamental human component of empathy and altruism, assisting those whom others may have forgotten. As Orthodox Faithful, we are obligated by our conscience to offer assistance to the local Philoptochos Chapter so that they in turn may convey our love and support to those who need it most.

Your local Philoptochos Chapter needs your help and active support and as such, it is my firm belief that every Orthodox female of age should be a vibrant member of Philoptochos, especially the younger women of our Communities, whose participation is vitally needed to infuse new ideas and energy in this most critical vessel of philanthropy. I strongly encourage all of you my beloved daughters, to join your local Philoptochos Chapter if you have not done so already, and to become an even greater force of positive influence and activity if you are already a proud member.

As we approach the end of 2014, our Philoptochos Chapters across the country will be seeking our partnership in assisting those who need an extra something during the forthcoming Holiday Season. Indeed, the admonition of St. Paul, that *"we should remember the poor,"* (Gal. 2:10) is even more apropos during this time of joy and fellowship. It is indeed most regrettable that many of our Christian brethren do not have the financial means to meet their daily needs, much less celebrate the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays as most Americans do.

However, it is not just here at home that people face challenges and despair. Even more dramatic, are the political and financial obstacles faced by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whose resources are very limited, as it strives to minister to the needy Orthodox of greater Constantinople. It

is at these moments of crisis that we must act decisively and emphatically as we offer our support to our Mother Church and to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ across the Atlantic.

To this end, and for the sole purpose of supporting the philanthropic ministries and outreach of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, a special tray will be passed today, **Sunday, November 2, 2014**, by the local chapter of the National Philoptochos Sisterhood. Your generous gifts of love and sincere concern will indeed offer solace and assistance to our brethren in Constantinople who await our compassionate love and help.

Thanking all of you for your most generous and caring gifts of love, and praying that your spiritual journey during the forthcoming Nativity Season will be blessed from above, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The word "Metropolitan" is written in a larger, more prominent script, and "Evangelos" is written below it in a similar but slightly smaller script. The signature is centered on the page.

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

To be read from the pulpit on Sunday, November 2, 2014