



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

The Nativity of our Lord 2015

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

My Beloved,

“Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.”

(Php 2:6-7)

God has entered time and history through the divine incarnation. Almighty God has invited Himself into our lives in a state of absolute weakness and vulnerability. The newborn lying in the manger holds in His hands the secrets of the universe, the secret of creation, the secret of absolute love. In the cold night of Bethlehem, the one who carries within her the treasure of the world, the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, travels across the city in search of a place to give birth to the One who will change the course of the history of mankind. Today, we still count the years from this glorious moment when time and space were sanctified, merging in a divine *kairos*, an instant of the Kingdom in which still echoes the alleluia of the angels. As we contemplate this glorious miracle, we experience a sense of mingled wonder and awe that our Church expresses in its hymns for the feast: *“Heaven called the Magi by a star, and thus it brought the first-fruits of the Gentiles to You, the infant lying in the manger. And they were amazed, not by scepters and thrones, but by utter poverty. For what is more shabby than a cave? And what is more humble than swaddling clothes? But it was through these that the riches of your divinity shone forth. Lord, glory to You!”* (*Hypakoe* of the Nativity)

Our joy today contrasts with the humility and simplicity of the event that the Church commemorates. By His Divine Nativity, Christ has made all of creation a sacrament. He has reestablished the image of God in mankind by restoring its original light. He has made tangible his Divine Energies in a creation that bears the mark of His presence through its harmony, its beauty, and its structure. He has transformed the course of the personal vocation

of humanity by bringing us into the gates of eternal life. St. Peter wrote: *“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power was given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature...”* (2 Pt 1:2-4)

In the midst of our busy and stressful lives, we are called to rediscover the spirit of wonder. We must be able to hear the cry of the newborn child, to listen to the teaching that comes from the humble cave of Bethlehem. Now God has a face, He has acquired a voice that all can hear, and His words of peace echo throughout the world. As Saint Gregory Palamas wrote: *“Brethren, let us preserve this peace in ourselves, as far as we can, for we have received it as an inheritance from our Savior who has now been born, who gives us the Spirit of adoption, through which we have become heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ”*. (Homily 58, on the Holy Nativity).

May the Joy of Christmas, the Hope of the New Year 2016 and the Grace and Blessings of our Incarnate Lord be with all of you and your beloved families.

With Paternal Love in the New-Born King and God,

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

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