



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Veterans Day 2016

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

My Beloved,

In a time of global uncertainty, of great violence, and of deep crisis both inside and outside the borders of our country, it is vital to remember and acknowledge the men and women who have protected and who continue to protect our country and places beyond its borders, and who fight for freedom and human rights in the world. They are the heroes whose courage and faith shape the society we are blessed to live in. No society is perfect, but the peace we enjoy today in our country should be appreciated as a gift of the Holy Spirit, embodied by these virtuous men and women who should be recognized for their commitment, courage and sacrifice.

Earthly wars reflect the spiritual battle that mankind strives to win against the powers of evil, with the help of our good and loving God. Throughout its history, Orthodoxy has had profound respect for soldiers who give their own lives to protect the lives and safety of their neighbors. The Holy Church has canonized many soldiers, taking into account their Christian virtues and applying to them Christ's words: *"Greater love hath no man but this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13). In difficult situations where force must be used, the human heart should not be ensnared by passions and anger inspired by evil spirits. Only by conquering evil in our own hearts can we use force for the sake of justice. This is why the Orthodox Church takes special care of the armed forces, seeking to offer them the strength of the true faith and the resilience that comes from a genuine spiritual life. And this is why our Holy Metropolis has decided this year to honor all who have served in the US Armed Forces, alive or deceased, wholeheartedly expressing our sincere gratitude to them.

Through the prayers of the holy, glorious great Martyrs George the Victorious, Demetrios the Myrrh-Bearer, Theodore the Tyron, and Theodore the General, O God, save your people and bless your inheritance. Let us pray for our Veterans, wishing those who are living many years of health and spiritual prosperity, and those who have already reposed in the Lord, may our God of Mercy grant them peace in the bosom of Abraham, and comfort their grieving families.

Our Veterans, both living and deceased, must not only be never forgotten, but must be prayed for fervently by all Orthodox Christians and peace-loving people. To this end, I have directed that a yearly Memorial Service be conducted in all of the Parishes of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey on the nearest Sunday prior to or following Veterans Day.

Praying that Almighty God continues to protect all men and women who serve in our Armed Forces and praying that His peace and justice will be embraced by all peoples, 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 with a large initial 'M'.

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