



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

November 19, 2008

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,

It is with great joy that I announce to all of you the genesis of a new ministry within the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey. On Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, 2008 the inaugural Challenge Liturgy was celebrated at Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church in Holmdel, New Jersey. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated for those with disabilities of all types, and for those who often times need special help or assistance during the liturgical services of our Holy Orthodox Church. This ministry was undertaken with my blessing, by Mr. and Mrs. Emanuel Katsoulis, assisted by the spiritual direction of Father George Dounelis, Proistamenos of Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church, as well as others both clergy and laity. This *Challenge* Liturgy, as it has come to be lovingly called, was not instituted, to keep those with disabilities away from the regular services of the Church. Rather this opportunity is being offered, to allow those with a real need to celebrate the Divine Liturgy within a calmer environment, than is often times found on a Sunday morning within our communities. This ministry also allows us as clergy and laity, to minister to the individual physical needs of our brothers and sisters, whose needs are sadly often overlooked.

This is a truly blessed opportunity for all of us to join together in support of this most wonderful act of love –an act of love which allows the beautiful celebration of the Divine Liturgy to truly be experienced by all. I urge each and every one of you to realize, that in this fallen world, we are all suffering because of our sins and the curse of death. Each of us faces challenges in our lives, some are physical, some are mental or cognitive, some are emotional, and most tragically some of the challenges we face, often times go unacknowledged. Those who are attending these *Challenge* Liturgies are in many ways ahead of the majority because they are truly aware of their limitations, and they seek the help of Christ before seeking the help of others first.

Please search your hearts and support this most blessed of acts, an act of true love. Offer financial support, offer of your time and labor, offer your emotional and moral support, but I exhort you most of all to offer to this ministry from your hearts! If you as a faithful member of our Holy Metropolis feel that this ministry is something which your community might have a need for, then speak with your parish priest. If you wish to attend a *Challenge* Liturgy, please contact Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church in Holmdel, New Jersey. The need will certainly not be present in every parish (or even possible in every parish) of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey. **Yet we as faithful Greek Orthodox Christians must support the need where it is now and wherever our Lord might reveal it to be in the future.** May Christ our True God, help each and every one of us with all of our challenges in this life, granting us the forgiveness of our sins, and life-everlasting in His Heavenly Kingdom. I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

† EVANGELOS  
Metropolitan of New Jersey