



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

The Fires in Attica 2018

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 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,

As you may know, the past several days have seen devastating fires in the Attica area of Greece. There are scores dead, numerous missing, hundreds hospitalized, thousands displaced, and many people who have lost their house, their car, and all their possessions, escaping only with their lives. These tragic events are occurring to an already traumatized Greek nation which has been beleaguered by the economic crisis, unemployment, and international tensions over the past several years. I imagine the feeling of hopelessness is one that has often crossed the mind of many of our compatriots; and yet, it is a feeling which shall not prevail.

The Greek nation and the Greek people are resilient and irrepressible no matter the challenges that come our way. Whether these difficulties are natural or man-made, Greeks have always found the courage and the determination to confront these challenges head-on and to push forward. As we witness these tragedies unfold with families losing their loved ones, being separated, and being driven from their homes, we must not remain apathetic to their plight. As Orthodox Christians and Greek-Americans, we must stand committed to helping the victims, many of whom are family and friends, through this catastrophe.

It is for this reason that I ask each parish of our Holy Metropolis to pass a tray this Sunday, July 29th, for the "Orthodox Village" orphanage which was destroyed by the fires and for all the victims who are suffering from this tragedy. Furthermore, I ask for our parishes to hold a memorial service for the repose of the souls of those who have lost their lives.

It is my utmost prayer that you will give as generously as possible so that those who have been affected by these fires can soon recover as they strive to return to their normal lives. Furthermore, I pray unceasingly that God will shed His mercy and His grace upon the Greek people during these difficult times and I ask that you keep the victims of this tragedy in your prayers. Praying that God blesses the Greek people and the Greek nation during the most difficult times, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in black ink on a white background. The word "Metropolitan" is written in a smaller, more compact script, while "Evangelos" is written in a larger, more flowing script. The signature is centered horizontally and is the main focus of the image.

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

All money collected from the trays for the orphanage and Attica fire victims are to be forwarded to the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey. Please make checks payable to the "Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey" with the title in the memo line as "Orphanage and Victims".