



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

September 25, 2023

Metropolitan Apostolos of New Jersey's Pastoral Message to the Clergy

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy
of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My beloved con-celebrants in the Lord,

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom)

I hope and pray that my letter finds you all well both spiritually and physically. It is with great appreciation that I thank you, the beloved Clergy of the holy Metropolis of New Jersey, for your participation in the Clergy Family Dinner on September 15, 2023 at Sts. Nicholas, Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Roseland, New Jersey and at my Enthronement as the new Metropolitan of this sacred Eparchy on Saturday, September 16, 2023 at the Metropolitan Cathedral of St. John the Theologian in Tenafly, New Jersey. I offer my deepest gratitude for all of you that traveled from near and far to be in attendance and express your well wishes and receive the blessings of your new Chief Shepherd. This demonstrates to me your commitment to our Metropolis, our Archdiocese, and Mother Church of Constantinople, as well as reinforces your spiritual relationship with me, your new Metropolitan.

As I stated in my Enthronement address, the well-being of the clergy, together with your families, is a priority in my pastoral concern. Please know that all of you will have my paternal love, support and care. As St. Ignatios says in his writings the Bishop is "in the place of God," the Presbyters "in the place of the Council of the Apostles," and the Deacons "have been entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ." Therefore, just as I have my role and responsibilities as your spiritual father and Chief Shepherd, all of you, the sacred clergy, also have your roles and responsibilities in order to ensure the unity of this holy Metropolis and the continued spiritual growth and well-being of our parishes, communities and our dedicated faithful. As we begin our beautiful and sacred work together, I ask that you keep in mind the following pastoral concerns which I bring to your attention:

- Your families, your Presvyteres and your children, of course are of great importance in your lives. You must care for them, provide for them and protect them. However, your parish is an extension of your family and must be provided and offered the same love, commitment and nourishment that you show to your own family.
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- We must give attention to our faithful who are suffering and in need, whether it be physically in the hospitals or spiritually in the prisons. Please make your hospital ministry a priority in your service to the Church, so that our people who are plagued by disease and illnesses may receive a pastoral visit from their priest and receive the Holy Sacraments of the Church for their physical and spiritual healing. Additionally, unfortunately we have Orthodox Christians who are currently remanded to the prisons throughout our sacred Metropolis. I ask that you please work to identify these men and women in the prisons near your parishes and reach out to them so that you may offer to them spiritual nourishment, the opportunity to seek repentance through Holy Confession, and the light of Christ in their lives.
- More attention and more emphasis needs to be placed on the youth programs in our communities. I remind all of you of the importance for the parish priest to participate and attend all youth ministries including religious education schools, GOYA, HOPE/JOY, Young Adult ministry, Greek Dance, Athletic programs, camps retreats. Please remember that youth ministry also includes our Greek Schools which are important as they continue to teach future generations the language of the Holy Gospel.
- I ask that you give particular attention to the Acolyte/Altar Boy ministry within your parishes. Encourage these boys and young men in your parish to assist you in the Holy Altar. Please meet with them, train them to serve correctly, and teach them the meaning behind our beautiful and sacred Services. In addition, please speak to them regularly about our beloved *Scholi* and encourage them to consider the Holy Priesthood as their vocation in life, because with the right direction and guidance from their parish preists these boys and young men, God-willing, will become our future Clergy.
- In order for the spiritual well-being of our parishes and communities there must be harmony and a good working relationship between the Priest and the members of the Parish Council and the Philoptochos Society. A beautiful, healthy relationship is essential for the peace, concord and continued growth

of the parish. Please work to keep a warm, and loving environment in your parish so as to cultivate this spiritual growth and harmony.

Please also be reminded that you as clergy, through your ordination, have accepted a heavy burden and must always be good examples to our faithful. Therefore, heed the words of St. Paul as he states "*Be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry*" (2 Tim. 4:5). Remember that only with your own continued spiritual cultivation and your own dedication to our Lord and Savior, will your ministry to your parish reach its full potential and be most successful.

Truly grateful to His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for assigning me as a member of the Holy and Sacred Synod, and conveying to you His All Holiness' paternal and Patriarchal blessings as I begin my new Archpastoral ministry as your Metropolitan and Chief Shepherd, I remain

With much paternal love,

Met. Apostolos of New Jersey

† APOSTOLOS

Metropolitan of New Jersey