



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

New Ecclesiastical Year 2017

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,

Today in the life of the Church, we celebrate the beginning of the new ecclesiastical year. The beginning of a new ecclesiastical year provides us with the unique opportunity to strengthen our spiritual lives so that we may challenge ourselves in being more dedicated to Christ and His Church. Thus, I implore all faithful Orthodox Christians to seize this opportunity and to not squander the gift which God has given us; for He has given us life in the very fact that we are enabled to experience this new ecclesiastical year. Therefore, let us reciprocate with a gift of praise and renewed efforts to live according to His will.

As we celebrate this new year, we are afforded untold possibilities to improve our relationship with God. For those Orthodox Christians who find it difficult to pray each day, make an effort to set aside just a few minutes a day to grow in your relationship with God for as we see in Holy Scripture, *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (Rom. 8:26).

For those Orthodox Christians who pray, but find it difficult to come to Sunday or weekday liturgies, challenge yourselves and devote yourselves more to Him so that you may be able to faithfully say, *“One thing I have desired of the Lord that I will seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His Temple”* (Ps. 27:4).

For those Orthodox Christians who attend liturgy regularly, but find it difficult to offer any of their time, talent, and treasure, be encouraged by Christ’s parable of the master who gave his servants talents and multiply that which you have been given by God so that you may be counted to hear the words, *“Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few things, I will make you the ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord”* (Mt. 25:21).

For those Orthodox Christians who pray, attend liturgy, and give freely of their time, talent, and treasures, but who may be lacking in any other way, since no one is sinless except for Christ Himself, take heart in the Holy Scripture when it is said, *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various*

trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2-4).

My beloved in Christ, do not be slothful and waste this opportunity set before us by God, but rather, let us allow ourselves to be challenged so that we may mature spiritually and come closer to the ineffable glory of God. Praying that the new ecclesiastical year provides you with much health and spiritual edification, 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. The word "Metropolitan" is written in a larger, more prominent script than "Evangelos". The signature is centered horizontally on the page.

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