



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Transfiguration of Our Lord 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 Sisterhood, 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,

"...Light of Light, true God of true God" are the words the Fathers of the Church used to express how the Son of God is begotten of the Father in the Nicæan - Constantinopolitan profession of faith. The Light of Christ and its physical appearance in the event of the Transfiguration of our Lord is the uncreated Light of His divinity. It is this same light of which we speak every liturgy when we recite the profession of faith and it is this light that emanates from Christ on this feast day.

On this day, our Lord reveals Himself to the disciples on Mount Tabor in resplendent light, thus showing them His divinity as He stood among both Moses and Elijah, the former representing the Law and the latter representing the Prophets. Christ tells us, *"If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him"* (John 11:9-10). Thus, the light which perpetually shows us the path of Christ is the very light which emanates from Him since Christ Himself states, *"I am the Light of the world"* (John 8:12). It is here also that a voice from the Heavens declared, *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him"* (Matt. 17:5). These series of events in Christ's Transfiguration have their apex in the Father's words when He tells us specifically to listen to Christ so that we may be led to salvation.

Yet even with these unambiguous commands by God the Father and the salvific works of His Son throughout His entire earthly ministry, we, as humans, are still liable to sin and, thus, to fall into the dark abyss. Sin is not in the nature of humanity for our nature is precisely the image and likeness of God. This means that despite our shortcomings, we are nevertheless able to attain perfection if we listen to and obey the Father by orienting ourselves towards Christ. The darkness of sin in which we can sometimes find ourselves cannot overcome the

Light of Christ when we allow Christ into our lives, into our homes, and into our hearts. This is because, as St. Paul states, *“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness”* (1 Thess. 5:5).

Therefore, my beloved, I exhort each and every one of you to remain focused on the Light, that is, on Christ so that He may perpetually lead you to salvation in every day and hour of your lives. Let us not only marvel at the Transfiguration of Christ today, but let us also recognize that the Light which emanates forth from Him is also our destiny since we too are sons and daughters of the Light. Praying that we continually strive towards spiritual perfection in emulation of our Lord so that we too may walk with Him who is the Light and Life of the world, 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".

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