



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Feast of the Three Hierarchs 2020

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy

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 Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

The feast of the Three Hierarchs, Saints Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom, celebrates the memories of three great bishops whose theological, oratorical, hermeneutical, and social contributions represent some of the most significant advances in living and comprehending our Orthodox faith. Their writings, theological concepts, and personal sacrifices to the Church help to give us a glimpse into their unfettered faith, unparalleled intellect, and unmatched character. Were it not for these three great saints, the course of history and theology may not have been as luminous as they were able to explain what no one else could adequately put into words 1,600 years ago.

So fierce was the devotion to these three hierarchs that at the turn of the first millennium, the people of Constantinople found themselves divided into factions each claiming that their preferred hierarch was greater than the others. It was eventually revealed to the populace that none of the hierarchs was greater than the other, but that they were equally deemed great for each had offered to the Church their utmost love and sacrifice. Saint John Chrysostom, who was known for his brilliant oratory, had been exiled from Constantinople on multiple occasions and even died in exile. Saint Gregory the Theologian, whose theological eloquence was instrumental in declaring the divinity of the Holy Spirit, was expelled as Archbishop of Constantinople and President of the 2nd Ecumenical Council. Saint Basil, who is remembered for creating what many would consider the first hospital, was often attacked by his own provincial bishops who placed personal power over ministry.

Each of these hierarchs was willing to give every fiber of his being for the Church and for the people who constitute the Church. Thus, these hierarchs have become for us examples we should emulate. The example of Christian living demonstrated in the lives of the Three Hierarchs is indeed a difficult standard to live up to, but our Lord, knowing our frailty, only asks that we aspire to do more. Though the Lord does not demand that we should all become theologians like Saint Gregory, we should endeavor to learn more about the love and grace of

God through reading and studying. Though we may not have the practical means of creating marvelous social ministries like Saint Basil, we should strive to provide food and shelter for our fellow neighbors who find themselves in need. Though we may not have the ability to be grand orators like Saint John Chrysostom, we should seek to live our Orthodoxy so that our actions become an eloquent sermon unto themselves.

Very few of us are called to be theologians, or orators, or hierarchs, but we are all called to be faithful Orthodox Christians. A part of being an Orthodox Christian is understanding that each of us has a responsibility and a role which is integral to the functioning of the Body of Christ. Each of us has a purpose in life and this purpose is revealed by God through time. As we hear Saint Paul explain to the faithful at Corinth, *“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts”* (1 Cor. 12:29-31). Therefore, when we hear the call of the Lord asking us to live our faith, we should never be afraid of responding, *“Here am I. Send me!”* (Is. 6:8)

My beloved in the Lord, the blessedness of the Three Hierarchs did not make them immune to adversity, but neither did their adversity prevent them from *“fighting the good fight, running the race, and keeping the faith”*. Their example helps to show us that we must always remain focused on Christ because if we faithfully complete the race, He will raise us up in glory. Praying that the Three Hierarchs continue to guide, embolden, and enlighten each of us so that we may be led to the Everlasting Kingdom of God, 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 on the page.

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



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ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

ΠΟΙΜΑΝΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ ΕΟΡΤΗΣ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ 2020

Πρός τόν εὐλαβέστατον Ἱερόν Κλήρον,
Τούς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συμβουλίων,
Τάς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Φιλοπτώχων Ἀδελφοτήτων,
Τούς διδάσκοντας καί διδασκομένους τῶν Κατηχητικῶν καί Ἑλληνικῶν Σχολείων,
Τάς Ὄργανώσεις τῆς Νεολαίας καί ἅπαν τό Χριστεπώνυμον πλήρωμα τῶν εὐσεβῶν Ὁρθοδόξων
Χριστιανῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Νέας Ἱερσέης.

«Τούς τρεῖς μεγίστους φωστήρας τῆς Τρισηλίου θεότητος, [...] Βασίλειον τόν μέγαν, καί τόν Θεολόγον Γρηγόριον, σὺν τῷ κλεινῷ Ἰωάννῃ, τῷ τήν γλώτταν χρυσορρήμονι, συνελθόντες ὕμνοις τιμήσωμεν»

Ἀγαπητοί μου ἀδελφοί,

Ἐορτάζουμε καί πάλι τήν ἱερά μνήμη τῶν Ἁγίων Τριῶν Ἱεραρχῶν, τοῦ Μεγάλου Βασιλείου, τοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου, τοῦ προστάτου τῆς Ἱερᾶς μας Μητροπόλεως καί τοῦ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου. Ἀκόμη ἐορτάζουμε τήν πανήγυρη τῶν «Ἑλληνικῶν Γραμμάτων» ὅπως τά δίδαξαν οἱ Ἅγιοι Τρεῖς Ἱεράρχες καί ὅπως ἀγωνιζόμαστε νά τά διατηρήσουμε καί νά τά διαδόσουμε ὅλοι ἐμεῖς οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐδῶ στήν ὁμορφη καί εὐλογημένη Χώρα τῆς Ἀμερικῆς ἀλλά καί ὅπουδήποτε χτυπᾷ καρδιά ἑλληνική.

Ὁ Μέγας Βασίλειος, ὁ Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος καί ὁ Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος ἔζησαν πολλούς αἰῶνες πρὶν. Συγκεκριμένα τόν 4^ο αἰῶνα μετά Χριστόν. Ὅμως ἄφησαν πίσω τους ἕνα σπουδαῖο καί ὑπέρλαμπρο ἔργο, τό ὁποῖο ἔχει γίνει ἀντικείμενο καί ἀφορμή μελέτης καί ἐρεύνης γιά ἀναρίθμητους μελετητές, θεολόγους καί ἐπιστήμονες ἀνά τούς αἰῶνες.

Τιμοῦμε λοιπόν, ὡς Ἑλληνορθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία τῆς Διασπορᾶς καί τῆς Ὁμογένειας, τούς Οἰκουμενικούς αὐτούς φωστήρες, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἀπέδειξαν παντοῦ τήν ἀξία τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσας καί τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Σκέψης.

Ὡς Κοινότητα καί Κοινωνία Ἑλλήνων πού ζοῦμε στήν ὁμορφη αὐτή Χώρα, προσπαθοῦμε μέ κάθε τρόπο νά διατηρήσουμε τό μήνυμα αὐτό τῶν Τριῶν Ἱεραρχῶν. Ἄς μήν ξεχνοῦμε ὅμως ὅτι ἐδῶ στήν Διασπορά, οἱ Ἕλληνες μοιραζόμαστε ὄχι μόνο τήν κοινή μας καταγωγή, ἀλλά κυρίως τήν Ὁρθόδοξη μας πίστη, ἡ ὁποία εἶναι ἡ πραγματική καί ἀληθινή «ἐξ αἵματος Θεοῦ» συγγένειά μας.

Μέ κάθε εὐκαιρία, ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας μᾶς συγκεντρώνει ὅλους, μᾶς ἐνώνει, καί μᾶς κάνει νά νιώθουμε ἀδέλφια. Μέσα στήν Ἐκκλησία χαίρομαστε καί κλαῖμε, πονοῦμε καί προσευχομαστε, μοιραζόμαστε τούς πολλαπλούς σταυρούς πού ὁ καθένας σηκώνει στήν ζωή του. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας εἶναι ἡ «Μάνα» μας, πού μᾶς τυλίγει στήν ἀγκαλιά της καί μᾶς κάνει νά νιώθουμε ἀσφαλεῖς.

Μέσα στην Ἐκκλησία μιλοῦμε τὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Γλῶσσα. Ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὰ Ἱερά Μυστήρια, οἱ Ἱερές μας Ἀκολουθίες, ἡ ὑπέροχη Ὑμνογραφία μας καὶ Ὑμνολογία μας, εἶναι παραδεδομένα σέ μᾶς στὰ Ἑλληνικά. Καὶ τὰ νοήματα πού διέπουν ὅλα αὐτά εἶναι πολὺ δύσκολο, σχεδόν ἀδύνατο, νὰ περάσουν κατὰ τὴν μετάφραση. Γνωρίζουμε ὅτι κάποιες ἑλληνικὲς λέξεις ὅπως «φιλότιμο», «συγχώρηση», «ἄνθρωπος», «φιλοξενία» δέν μποροῦν νὰ ἀποδοθοῦν ἐπακριβῶς σέ καμία γλωσσικὴ μετάφραση. Καὶ αὐτὸ γιατί ἔχουν βαθειὰ ἐρμηνεῖα, μέ πολλαπλές ἔννοιες. Τό ἴδιο ὅμως συμβαίνει καὶ μέ τὴν Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Γλῶσσα. Γιά παράδειγμα, ὅταν λέμε «Θεῖα Λειτουργία», ἐννοοῦμε τό ἔργο τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τὴν προσφορὰ του στὸν Θεό. Αὐτὴ ἡ ἔννοια δέν κατανοεῖται στὴν ἀγγλικὴ λέξη «Liturgy». Ὁ ὅρος «Εὐχαριστία» σημαίνει πολλὰ περισσότερα ἀπὸ τό ἀπλό «Eucharist». Οἱ ὅροι «Ἐπίκλησις», «Ἀναφορὰ», «Δοξολογία», «Ἑσπερινός», «Ὁρθρος», «Σύναξις» δέν μποροῦν νὰ ἀποδοθοῦν νοηματικά μέ τίς λέξεις: «Epiclesis, Anaphora, Doxology, Vespers, Mattins, Synaxis, etc.».

Ὅλα αὐτά τὰ ἀναφέρω γιὰ νὰ κάνω σαφές καὶ φανερό τό μεγάλο δῶρο καὶ τὴν μεγάλη εὐλογία πού ἔχουμε ἀπὸ τὸν Θεό νὰ γνωρίζουμε Ἑλληνικά. Τὴν Γλῶσσα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου μας, τῶν Γραφῶν, τῶν Πατέρων μας. Καὶ αὐτὴ τὴν Γλῶσσα πρέπει νὰ τὴν κρατήσουμε μέ κάθε τρόπο. Νὰ τὴν διδάξουμε στὰ παιδιά μας. Νὰ τὰ κάνουμε ὄχι νὰ μάθουν τὰ Ἑλληνικά μέ τό ζόρι καὶ μέ πίεση, ἀλλὰ πρῶτα νὰ τὰ ἀγαπήσουν. Ἄν δέν ἀγαπήσουν τὴν Γλῶσσα μας, ἂν δέν καταλάβουν τὴν ἀξία της, ἂν δέ τοὺς ἐξηγήσουμε πόσο εὐλογημένα εἶναι πού ἔχουν αὐτὴν τὴν δυνατότητα νὰ μάθουν τὴν Γλῶσσα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου, τῆς Ἱατρικῆς ἀλλὰ καὶ κάθε Ἐπιστήμης, τότε τὰ παιδιά μας δέν πρόκειται νὰ συνεχίσουν αὐτὸ τό πανέμορφο ταξίδι τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Γνώσης, καὶ ἔτσι θὰ σπάσει αὐτὴ ἡ ἀλυσίδα πού κρατᾶει ζωντανό τό Ἑλληνικὸ πνεῦμα σέ ὅλα τὰ μήκη καὶ τὰ πλάτη τῆς Οἰκουμένης.

Ἀγαπητοὶ μου ἀδελφοί,

Ἄς εὐχηθοῦμε, οἱ Προστάτες τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν μας Γραμμάτων, οἱ Ἅγιοι Τρεῖς Ἱεράρχες νὰ φωτίζουν τὰ παιδιά μας, τοὺς γονεῖς καὶ τοὺς Διδασκάλους μας ὥστε ὅλοι μαζί ἐνωμένοι νὰ κρατήσουμε ζωντανὴ τὴν φλόγα τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Γνώσης καὶ Γλώσσης. Εὐχαριστῶ τοὺς Δασκάλους μας γιὰ ὅλα ὅσα προσφέρουν γιὰ τό καλὸ τῶν παιδιῶν μας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς γονεῖς, παππούδες καὶ γιαγιάδες γιὰ τό ἐνδιαφέρον τους, τίς θυσίες καὶ τοὺς κόπους πού ὑποβάλλονται ὥστε τὰ παιδιά μας νὰ μάθουν τὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Γλῶσσα. Εὐχομαί στὰ παιδιά μας πού σπουδάζουν στὰ Ἑλληνικά μας Σχολεῖα καλὴ ἐπιτυχία καὶ πρόοδο μέ τίς εὐχές καὶ πρεσβείες τῶν Ἁγίων Τριῶν Ἱεραρχῶν.

Χρόνια πολλά καὶ εὐλογημένα!
Μετά πατρικῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εὐχῶν,

Ο ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ



† Ὁ Νέας Ἱερσέης ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ