

Ενθρονιστήριοις Λόγος Σεβασμιωτάτου
Μητροπολίτου Νέας Ιερσέης κ. Αποστόλου

Σεβασμιώτατε Μητροπολίτα Ρόδου, κ. Κύριλλε,
εκπρόσωπε της Α.Θ.Π. του Οικουμενικού ημών
Πατριάρχου κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίου

Σεβασμιώτατε Αρχιεπίσκοπε Αμερικής κ.

Ελπιδοφόρε

Σεβασμιώτατοι Άγιοι Αρχιερείς

Εντιμότητα Γενικέ Γραμματέα Αποδήμου

Ελληνισμού και δημοσίου διπλωματίας

κ. Ιωάννη Χρυσουλάκη, εκπρόσωπε της

Ελληνικής Κυβέρνησης

Τίμιον Πρεσβυτέριον

Ευλαβέστατοι Διάκονοι

Οσιώτατοι Μοναχοί και Μοναχές

Άρχοντες της Αγίας του Χριστού Μεγάλης

Εκκλησίας της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως

Λαέ του Θεού ηγαπημένε

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Kyrillos of Rhodes,
Representative of His All Holiness, our Ecumenical
Patriarch Bartholomew;

Your Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of
America;

Your Eminences and Your Graces;

Your Excellency Archbishop Gabriele Caccia,
Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the
United Nations

Beloved Clergy;

Esteemed members of the Monastic Communities,

His Excellency Ioannis Chrisoulakis,

Representative of the Government of the
Hellenic Republic;

Vice-President Peter Arbes and esteemed members
of the Metropolis Council;

Archon Megas Aktouarios Dr. Anthony Limberakis
and beloved Archons of the Order of St. Andrew of
the Ecumenical Patriarchate;

Beloved faithful people of God,

«Δόξα τῇ ἁγία, καὶ ὁμοουσίῳ, καὶ ζωοποιῶ, καὶ ἀδιαιρέτῳ Τριάδι πάντοτε, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν». Αἶνον καὶ δοξολογία καὶ ἐγκάρδιο εὐχαριστία ἀναπέμπω πρὸς τὸν ἐν Τριάδι προσκυνούμενο Θεό, τὸν Δοτήρα παντός ἀγαθοῦ, γιὰ ὅσα ἀγαθὰ, ὅσα εὐφῆμα, ὅσα ἅγια καὶ ὑψηλά ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλαχιστότητός μου ἐπιδαψίλευσε. «Εὐλογητὸς ὁ Θεὸς ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ» (Ἐφεσ. α', 3) Ἐν ὕμνοις εὐχαρίστοις δοξολογῶ καὶ γεραίρω τὴν Ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκο, τὴν Κυρία τὴν Παραμυθία, ἡ Ὁποία ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχὴ τῆς μοναχικῆς μου ἀφιερώσεως ἐκεῖ στο σμαραγδένιο νησί τῆς καταγωγῆς μου, τὴν Ρόδο, οὐδέποτε με ἐγκατέλειψε καὶ με τὴν ἄνωθεν παρηγορία πάντοτε παραμυθεῖ τὴν καρδιά μου, ἐξαιρέτως σε καιροὺς δοκιμασίας καὶ θλίψεως μεγάλης. Ἐν ὑπακοή, λοιπόν, στο θέλημα τοῦ Τριαδικοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅπως τούτο ἐξεφράσθη δια τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἐπαρχιακῆς Συνόδου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἀμερικής καὶ δια τῆς τιμίας ψήφου τῶν συνοδικῶν Ἀρχιερέων τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, εὐμενεῖ προτάσει καὶ

εισηγήσει του προσκυνητου μοι Αυθέντου και Δεσπότη, του Οικουμενικού ημών Πατριάρχου κυρίου μοι κυρίου Βαρθολομαίου, ιδού εγώ σήμερα ενώπιον κλήρου, αρχόντων και λαού μετα φόβου ανήλθα την κλίμακα και μετά δέους ενθρονίζομαι εις τον περίπυστον Μητροπολιτικόν θρόνον της Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Νέας Ιερσέης της Ιεράς Αρχιεπισκοπής Αμερικής, της μεγάλης και εξάκουστης αυτής επαρχίας του πανσέπτου Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου, του πρώτου της Ορθοδοξίας Θρόνου. Κατά την ηγεμονική αυτή ώρα αναφωνώ και λέγω εξ όλης της ισχύος μου « τι το περι εμέ τούτο γέγονε μυστήριο». Η ανύψωση εμέ του ελαχίστου εν τοις αδελφοίς μου εις τον περικαλλή αρχιερατικό θρόνο της Ιεράς αυτής Μητροπόλεως είναι έργο ο ειργάσατο η δεξιά του Υψίστου διά της Μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας και του Προκαθημένου Αυτής, Παναγιωτάτου Οικουμενικού Πατριάρχου κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίου. Δια τούτο ευγνώμονες ευχαριστίες και εγκάρδια αλλά και διηνεκή ευγνωμοσύνη καταθέτω προς τον Παναγιώτατο Οικουμενικόν μας Πατριάρχην κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίον, τον δεξιό οιακοστρόφο της

Πρωτοθρόνου και μαρτυρικής Μητέρας Εκκλησίας της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ο Οποίος, Χάριτι του Πανοικτίρμονος Θεού, υπερ τα τριάκοντα έτη αίρει μαρτυρικώς τον Σταυρόν του Κυρίου και εκ της αιωνοβίου Αυτού έδρας, εκεί εις την Πόλιν του Κωνσταντίνου, εξαγγέλει τοις εγγύς και τοις μακράν ότι «Ίησους Χριστός χθές και σήμεραν ό αυτός και εις τούς αιώνας» (Εβρ. 13, 8). Κύριος ο Θεός ο Παντοκράτωρ ας διαφυλάττει τον Οικουμενικός μας Πατριάρχην κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίον εν υγεία κατ άμφω, επι έτη πολλά, εις δόξαν Θεού και εύκλειαν της Μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Θερμές ευχαριστίες, επίσης, εκφράζω και προς τους Συνοδικούς Ιεράρχες της Αγίας και Ιεράς Συνόδου του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου οι οποίοι με ετίμησαν δια της τιμίας ψήφου αυτών. Είθε το Πανάγιο Πνεύμα να τους διαφυλάττει αδιαλώβητους από πάσης επιβουλής ορατού και αοράτου εχθρού και να κατευθύνει τις αποφάσεις τους σύμφωνα με το θέλημα του Θεού υπέρ της Εκκλησίας και του Γένους. Εξ όλης της καρδιάς μου ευχαριστίες θερμές και ειλικρινείς καταθέτω προς τον Σεβασμιώτατο Αρχιεπίσκοπο

Αμερικής κ. Ελπιδοφόρον και άπαντες τους Σεβασμιωτάτους Αγίους Αρχιερείς οι οποίοι συγκροτούν το ιερό σώμα της Ιεράς Επαρχιακής Συνόδου της Ι. Αρχιεπισκοπής Αμερικής δια την πρόταση πληρώσεως της Ιεράς Μητροπόλεως Νέας Ιερσέης και την θετική αυτών ψήφο υπέρ της ελαχιστότητός μου. Δέομαι, προσεύχομαι και από καρδίας εύχομαι το πολύτιμο αγαθό της ενότητος να χαρακτηρίζει κάθε πρωτοβουλία και απόφαση της Ιεράς Επαρχιακής Συνόδου της Εκκλησίας μας ώστε η μαρτυρία της Μίας, Αγίας, Καθολικής και Αποστολικής Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας εδώ στο νέο κόσμο να αναδεικνύεται πάντοτε δυνατή και πνευματικώς καρποφόρα ώστε να δοξάζεται το όνομα του Αγίου Θεού και οι πιστοί μας να οδηγούνται εις νομάς σωτηρίους. Η παρουσία των μελών της Ιεράς Επαρχιακής Συνόδου σήμερα εις την ενθρόνιση μου, προέξαρχοντος του Σεβασμιώτατου Αρχιεπισκόπου μας κ. Ελπιδοφόρου, εκτός τού γεγονότος ότι περιποιεί τιμή μεγίστη εις εμέ τον ελάχιστο, σκορπίζει χρηστές ελπίδες μα και χαρά μεγάλη στο πλήρωμα της Εκκλησίας μας πού επιθυμεί διακαώς την ακύμαντη,

ασφαλή και ειρηνική πορεία της Εκκλησίας μας, στους σκοτεινούς, μάλιστα, τούτους καιρούς που η μαρτυρία «περὶ τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐλπίδος» πρέπει να καταστεί ακόμη πιο ισχυρή και δυνατή.

And “behold, I am here among you.” “I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, Who has strengthened me, that He has deemed me faithful by appointing me to His service” (1 Tim. 1.12). Therefore, today I humbly accept the will of God and the decision of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Mother Church of Constantinople, and I take my throne as the new Metropolitan of the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey of our Sacred Archdiocese of America. From this day forth I begin my ecclesiastical, pastoral and administrative responsibilities as the First Servant of the Sacred Clergy and the Chief Shepherd of the faithful people of this Holy Metropolis with only one goal in my heart, our salvation in Christ. The Metropolitan’s mission and Hierarchal ministry is the sacrifice of the Cross, a selfless offering and service without any expectation of convenience or luxury. It is the hierarch who genuinely expresses Divine Revelation as it was lived and formulated by the Prophets, the Apostles,

and the Fathers of our Church. The Metropolitan's careful watch over the dogmatic truth of the Orthodox Church preserves the pure and unchanged, "the faith delivered once for all to the Saints" (Jud. 3). The Metropolitan in an ecclesiastical eparchy is, according to Orthodox teaching, the visible sign of unity in Christ. St. Ignatios the God-bearer says that 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." In order for the unity of the Church to be preserved according to the God-bearing Ignatios, the Bishop must be supported and must obtain respect from the faithful. It is in the person of the Bishop that God Himself expresses Himself, to such a degree and manner that if someone should act in hypocrisy towards the Bishop, ultimately "he does not act against the Bishop, but rather against God Himself. Therefore from this day I become your Father and Chief Shepherd, with paternal love, with affectionate care, as well as with great concern for your salvation, I repeat the words of the previously mentioned Holy Hierarch of our Church and say to you: "Embrace love and flee from division. Wherever there is division and strife, God does not dwell there... But I

encourage you to do nothing with prejudice, but rather to act in accordance with Christ's teaching.”

The Clergy are the Metropolitan's closest associates and collaborators in the service of God and mankind, and therefore, together with their families, they are a priority in my pastoral concern. I assure the Sacred Clergy of the Metropolis of New Jersey that they will have my paternal love and care. Indeed, both the Metropolitan and the Clergy, in order to offer spiritual benefit, must follow in the footsteps of Christ so as to form “living and silent exhortation” for the faithful people. First and foremost, the clergy's personal spiritual cultivation and their own rebirth in Christ is the promise that with the help of Almighty God their pastoral ministry will be most successful. Additionally, ecclesiastical formation, and continuing education are most important for the ministry of our Clergy.

Having a deep sense of my Hierarchical responsibility, I recognize that the celebration of the Holy Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist is the Bishop's first and foremost ministry. Divine Worship in our Orthodox Church is the heart of our spirituality. The life in Christ, the observance of the divine commandments, and the

purification of the inner self-being is the path to our salvation which our Church preserves unharmed and genuine. This is also the invaluable treasure of our Orthodox Faith, which we offer in love and in truth, as well as in pastoral discernment to every faithful person of good will. The celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the sacred services form the basis of our pastoral ministry in our Holy Metropolis. “For this is the will of God, our sanctification...” (1 Thes. 4.3).

I regard sowing the seed of the Word of God as equally important for the spiritual cultivation of our flock. Our preaching must follow the Orthodox tradition and the lives of our saints, both old and new, and must have its basis in the teachings of the Holy Fathers of our Church so as to give essential and spiritual answers to mankind’s existential questions, which are always specific to the time, and must speak to the modern problems that plague and afflict human life in our age, such as mental illnesses, stress, climate change, etc.

It is by God’s blessing that we, the Greek Orthodox Christians that dwell in this new homeland and exceptionally welcoming and great country, America, are the bearers of the unchanging spirit of *Romeosyne*, with

our Orthodox faith, Greek language, and dynamic culture, and that we have this sacred privilege and the great responsibility, not only to preserve, but also to spread our Faith and culture in the New World. As St. Matthew the Evangelist writes in his Gospel "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Math. 28:16-20). Indeed, the sacred unity of every ecclesiastical eparchy, of every Metropolis within the Archdiocese of America under our Mother Church of Constantinople, must be regarded as given, self-evident, essential, and unshakable. I hope and pray to God that the love of Christ, the virtue of harmony, and the grace of unity may characterize the relations of the Sacred Metropolises with the Sacred Archdiocese of America. We are very blessed in this wonderful country that the Mother Church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate under the wise leadership of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has established and blessed the unique structure of our Sacred Archdiocese with a Holy Eparchial Synod comprised of the Archbishop as the President and Exarch, together with the eight Metropolitans. With the

help of God and with principles and morals always purely of the Church, I will strive with all my spiritual and bodily strength to preserve this unity.

Θεωρώ μεγάλη ευθύνη και με την βοήθεια του Θεού θα αποτελέσει προτεραιότητα στην ποιμαντορία μου η στήριξη παντι τρόπω της ομογένειάς μας αλλά και της γλώσσας του ιερού Ευαγγελίου, δηλαδή της ελληνικής γλώσσας. Είναι η γλώσσα των προγόνων μας, των μεγάλων ελλήνων φιλοσόφων, των Πατέρων της Εκκλησίας μας, της ποίησης και της λογοτεχνίας, της επιστήμης, των γραμμάτων και των τεχνών. Η ελληνική γλώσσα, μας συνδέει με δεσμούς άρρηκτους και ακατάλυτους και με την Ορθόδοξη πίστη μας, το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο, αλλά και με την Μητέρα Πατρίδα μας, την Ελλάδα του φωτός. Μετά σπουδής πολύς θα στηρίξουμε την ελληνική παιδεία στα σχολεία μας και θα φανούμε αρωγοί σε κάθε θέμα που αφορά στην εκπαίδευση και την παιδεία των νέων μας. Ιδιαίτερη δε φροντίδα θα λάβουμε για την στήριξη, παντί τρόπω, της περιωνύμου Θεολογικής Σχολής του Τιμίου Σταυρού, του Ιερού τούτου σεμνώματος

της Ι. Αρχιεπισκοπής Αμερικής στην οποία και η ελαχιστότης μου, Χάριτι Θεού, εφοίτησε.

I consider it, a great responsibility, and with God's help, it will be a priority in my pastoral ministry to support in every way our *omogeneia*, as well as the language of the Holy Gospel, that is the Greek language. It is the language of our ancestors, of the great Greek philosophers, of the Fathers of our Church, of poetry and literature, of science, of letters and the arts. The Greek language binds us with unbreakable and enduring bonds with both our Orthodox faith, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and our Motherland, "Greece, the Country of Light." With great zeal I will support Greek education in our schools and I will offer my aid in every matter related to the education of our youth, which includes the use of the English language within our communications and within the Divine Services in order to better serve our young people. I will take especial care to support in every way our beloved Theological School of the Holy Cross, that Sacred jewel of our Archdiocese, where even my humble person, by God's grace, was blessed to study.

Among the priorities of my Hierarchical ministry is also the Christian formation of our youth. I will, therefore, take special concern for the suitable organization and well-ordered operation of the Religious Education Schools of our Sacred Metropolis. Through organized youth programs such as Camp Good Shepherd, the Hellenic Folk Dance Festival, the Oratorical Festival, the GOYA Olympics, Sights and Sounds, athletic leagues, retreats and other youth initiatives, I will pursue, by God's grace, the education of our young people in accordance with Orthodox tradition and life, so that our beloved youth may acquire an ecclesiastical ethos, allowing them to learn more of our faith and to grow closer to Christ and therefore be initiated into the spiritual life of our Orthodox Church. Indeed this important work on behalf of our youth cannot be realized by the Metropolitan alone, without the sacrificial cooperation and willing support of the parents, our clergy and our youth workers, so that our efforts may produce much good fruit. Especially important and essential is the wonderful cooperation of the Presidents and Members of the parish communities with the Metropolitan for the

promotion, development, and growth in the spiritual life, ministries and administration of our Parishes.

With first principles that are truly of the Church and purely spiritual, with solidarity and understanding, as well as a peaceful disposition, we must work together to overcome occasional difficulties and problems that arise, whether from human weakness or outside forces, in the implementation of our ministry. Let us not forget the unfailing words of our Lord, who said: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few” (Matt. 9.37).

I am especially concerned with the serious topic of marriages between an Orthodox spouse and a non-Orthodox spouse, as we must work harder to embrace these non-Orthodox spouses and to welcome them into our parishes, our communities and our Orthodox Faith. “This is a great mystery, but I speak referring to Christ and His Church” (Eph. 5.32), proclaims St. Paul, the Great Apostle to the Gentiles. Great is the Mystery of Marriage for us, the faithful people of the Orthodox Church. The sacramental blessing of marriage by our Orthodox Church, through which Divine Grace is bestowed upon a couple comprised of a man and a woman that desire to be joined together in the Lord, sanctifies

their union, with the essential goal of their perfection in Christ and their entrance into the Kingdom of God. We must convey the truth of our faith concerning the Sacrament of Marriage so that the understanding of Marriage in Christ may remain unchanged, and so that the faithful people of the Orthodox Church may not be influenced by newly introduced and spiritually harmful positions of the modern world.

The Lord said, my dear brothers and sisters: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me... As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” How, then, is it possible that we would forget this command of our Lord and be indifferent to our fellow men and women who are created in the image and likeness of our Lord? For us Orthodox, philanthropy cannot be simply a duty, or even just a virtue, but rather must be a way of life and a path to salvation. From this day I therefore sound a wake up call to the devoted members of the Philoptochos Sisterhood of our Sacred

Metropolis, as well as to all the faithful, so that with every means possible we may assist in this great and tremendous ministry of our Church. Let us heed the word of St. Basil the Great who says: For if we all took only what was necessary to satisfy our own need giving the rest to those who lack no one would be rich no one would be poor and no one would be in need. I offer my deepest gratitude to all of the most committed members of the National, Metropolis, and Parish Philoptochos societies for your most dedicated and distinguished service to our Church through your most important ministry to assist all those that are in need.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the President, Director and members of Leadership 100, the Great Commander and dedicated Archons of the order of St. Andrew of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, and the Supreme President and esteemed members of AHEPA for their vital and invaluable contributions to the philanthropic work of our Church. May the All-Merciful God repay a hundred times over their generosity to our fellow men and women, both now and in the age to come.

With great respect and deepest gratitude, I wish to honor my immediate predecessor, His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos, now Metropolitan of Sardes, the dignified Hierarch who toiled for many years in every aspect to distinguish and promote the Sacred Metropolis of New Jersey. I also thank him from my heart for his support for my candidacy and, in his capacity as a member of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, faithfully voted for my humble person to succeed him as the Metropolitan of New Jersey. May the Great High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant him health of soul and body, so that with the talents God has bestowed upon him, he may continue to serve the Church of Christ for many years.

With deep emotion at this sacred moment I invoke the prayers of my good-natured and kind-hearted Elder, Metropolitan Apostolos of Rhodes of blessed memory, who ordained me as a Deacon and as a Priest, as well as the prayers of my departed predecessors in this Sacred Metropolis, Metropolitan Silas and Bishop George. Likewise, I invoke the paternal prayers of my Spiritual Father and Elder, Archimandrite Serapheim Parcharidis, Founder and first Abbot of the Monastery of Paramithia in

Rhodes, the Monastery where I embarked upon my monastic life. Gratefully, I pray that the Risen Christ grant rest to their souls in the land of the Living and in the tents of the Saints.

Δοξάζω τον ελεήμονα Θεό διότι αξίωσε τους εκλεκτούς γονείς μου Ιωάννη και Στεργία, τα αγαπημένα μου αδέρφια Σταύρο, Δέσποινα, Σπυρίδων και Αικατερίνα να ιδούν την ημέρα αυτή. Είμαι ευγνώμων κατά πάντα και διά πάντα για όσα υπερ εμού εμόχθησαν και επρόσφεραν.

Ολοκληρώνοντας τον ενθρονιστήριό μου λόγο επιθυμώ να εκφράσω τις ολοκάρδιες ευχαριστίες μου και την βαθυτάτη ευγνωμοσύνη μου προς τον εκπρόσωπο της Α.Θ.Π. του Οικουμενικού ημών Πατριάρχου κ.κ. Βαρθολομαίου, Σεβασμιώτατον Μητροπολίτην Ρόδου κ. Κύριλλον, ο οποίος μετέφερε την Πατριαρχική ευλογία. Ο Άγιος Ρόδου είναι ο σεπτός Ποιμενάρχης της γενέτειράς μου και η παρουσία του σήμερα στην ενθρόνισή μου ως εκπροσώπου του Παναγιωτάτου Πατριάρχου μας περιποιεί ιδιαίτερα τιμή και ευλογία διά την

ελαχιστότητά μου. Πολλά, ευφρόσυνα και από Θεού ευλογημένα τα έτη Σας Σεβασμιώτατε.

With deepest respect and gratitude, I express my sincere thanks to the former Archbishop of America, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, who has always surrounded me with his paternal love. He granted me a tremendous honor when he appointed me as the Presiding Priest of the great and historic cathedral of St. Demetrios in Astoria. Later it was His Eminence who ordained me a bishop and appointed me Chief Secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod of our Sacred Archdiocese. I am grateful for his presence here today and I humbly request his continued prayers as I embark on this new chapter in my life.

With much joy I give thanks to God for the presence today of His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago. His Eminence and I have been good friends for many years, since our time together studying at Holy Cross and Boston University, and I have many fond memories of our times together in the wonderful city of Boston. May our Lord continue to bless him and his hierarchical ministry.

With much gratitude and heartfelt thanks I also wish to acknowledge His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston, who even though he did not know me at first, offered me his paternal support during my studies at Boston University and granted me the opportunity to serve in the communities of his Metropolis.

I offer my most heartfelt and deepest gratitude to His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco who appointed me as his Chancellor and two years later nominated me to serve as his assistant Bishop in the Metropolis of San Francisco. I must acknowledge that during my seven-year service at his side, I learned many things from his paternal love and his most dedicated service to our Church and his flock.

By God's grace I have served the Sacred Archdiocese of America for twenty-two continuous years in various capacities and I must confess that, on both the east and west coast, our Church has wonderful people who serve our communities with respect, dedication, and deep Orthodox faith. I have been blessed and fortunate to meet and work with distinguished people who show due respect to the sacred clergy and have true love for the Church and her ministry. Admittedly the many programs and

ministries of our Church cannot proceed without the support and synergy of all her members. With deep gratitude to our Holy God, I wish then to express my sincere appreciation to our faithful parishioners in the parishes that I have served, in Boston, in New York, in my beloved Astoria, as well as in San Francisco.

With deep gratitude I recognize my godparents in Astoria, California and in Greece, my teachers in Rhodes and Patmos and my professors in Thessaloniki and in Boston, and I wholeheartedly invoke the Grace of our Lord and God to continue to bless them, their families and all their works.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude and sincere thanks to His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, who so wisely appointed me almost 3 years ago to serve the Metropolis of New Jersey and granted me the wonderful opportunity to travel throughout this sacred Eparchy, so that today, I as am enthroned as your Metropolitan, I come not as a stranger, but as a known person whom the Orthodox Faithful of this Metropolis have already come to know and to embrace as a Spiritual leader.

I thank their Eminences the Metropolitans of the Holy Eparchial Synod of our Archdiocese, their Eminences Metropolitan Maximos of Ioannina and Metropolitan Iosif of Buenos Aires and His Grace Bishop Kyrillos of Olympos who traveled from afar to be present this day, the Auxiliary Bishops of our sacred Archdiocese of America, the Priests, Deacons and Monks, esteemed Members of the Metropolis Council, the Presidents and Members of our Philoptochos Societies and Parish Councils, the representatives of Leadership 100, of the Archons of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, the AHEPAns, the clergy and the laity from Greece, from throughout the world and from throughout this nation who traveled to be here for this most joyous and historic occasion in our Sacred Metropolis.

I especially thank the Abbot of the Monastery where I began my monastic life, my spiritual brother, Archimandrite Anthimos Palaioglou, who has come with his community to attend my enthronement. I give particular thanks and gratitude from the bottom of my heart to you the blessed people of God, who with much love and joy came today here to the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Metropolis of New Jersey to embrace me

as your new Metropolitan and Spiritual Father. I pray that our loving Lord remembers all of you in His Heavenly Kingdom, always, now and forever.

Lastly, allow me to make a personal confession. God granted me the blessing to attend the historic Ecclesiastical School of Patmos, the “Patmiada,” and for three years to attend the divine services and chant at the chanter’s stand of the Sacred Cave of the Apocalypse, where the Evangelist John the Theologian saw his vision and at the command of God composed the final book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelations. The fact that the Metropolitan Cathedral of this sacred Metropolis which has been entrusted to me, in which I am today enthroned, is dedicated to the Evangelist John constitutes for me in my humility a sign and blessing from above.

Know that from this bright and memorable day, on which by God’s Grace I am enthroned as the Metropolitan of the Sacred Metropolis of New Jersey, as I stand here in front of you with a contrite heart and with great awe, knowing and understanding the many responsibilities which have been entrusted to me, I call upon the Grace and Intercession of our Lady the Theotokos the Mother of God, the Holy, Glorious and All-Praiseworthy Apostles,

especially the Holy, Glorious Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, St. John Chrysostom the Patron Saint of this Metropolis, St. Anastasia the Pharmakolytria, and all the Saints. And so from the bottom of my heart I pray: “May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ grant peace and love with faith to all the brethren. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with undying devotion” (Eph. 6.23-24).