



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

The Nativity of our Lord, 2009

The 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 in the Lord,

“Christ is Born, Glorify Him!”

It is with inexpressible and boundless spiritual joy that every Christian heart rejoices today on this great and holy Feast of the Nativity according to the flesh of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Indeed, the festive and blissful nature of the Nativity Feast causes all of us the world over to leap with spiritual elation and peacefulness.

Today we celebrate the single most important cosmic event in the history of all creation, the Incarnation of the Son of God, by way of immaculate conception from a Virgin. The prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah is fulfilled, *“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel...God with us,”* (Matthew 1:23) thus heralding in a new beginning – a rebirth – of the relationship between the created and its Creator. We are reminded of St. Athanasios’ words, *“that God became man so that man might become God.”*

The Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness was received with inexpressible joy from all of creation that did everything in its power to participate in this most mystical phenomenon. The Earth offered a cave, the angels sang hymns, the heavens brought forth a great star, the wilderness created a manger, the shepherds stood in awe, the Magi presented Him gifts, and humanity offered a Virgin. All of nature, without

exception, reacted with profound respect when the angel exclaimed, *“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* (Luke 2:10-11)

Indeed, the joy of the Christmas season is universal, for Christ’s Nativity has saved the human race and the promise of our salvation has dawned upon the world. Christ was born so that man might redeem himself and his proper place in the world, He was born of a Virgin so that woman might be exalted, He was born as a babe so that He might bless the infants, He was born in all humility in a meager cave so that He might confirm that which He Himself would preach: *“he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* (Mt. 23:12) Our hope and anticipation has been fulfilled in the birth of the Christ-child, our God, who is the source of all good things, uniting us unto Himself and exalting humanity to the divine.

My beloved, each of us must prepare the manger of our soul and heart to welcome the Sun of Righteousness, the Son of God, as the Earth did, and to exalt and worship Him as the Angels and stars did. In so doing, our darkened and sinful life will be transfigured and transformed into a Christ-like life, illuminating light and reflecting the love, peace and joy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Let us gather together as one Metropolis family, joining in the angelic chorus, with the awe and wonder of the Shepherds and the reverence of the Magi, for today the world has received its Savior.

May the Joy of Christmas, the Hope of the New Year 2010 and the Grace and Blessings of our Incarnate Lord be with all of you and your beloved families.

With Paternal Love in the New-Born King and God,



† EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey