



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

The Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos 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,

*“Neither the grave nor death could contain the Theotokos, the unshakable hope, ever vigilant in intercession and protection. As Mother of life, He who dwelt in the ever-virginal womb transposed her to life.” (Kontakion)*

Today the bells of the Church hearken to us, the angelic trumpets sound, let each of us come to offer honor to our Most Holy Lady as we celebrate her passing from life to Life, her blessed Kimisis. As we joyously celebrate this Pascha of the Summer, may our hymns be lifted up into the highest places, such that the entire earth is filled with the sound of our timeless Orthodox chanting, for today we honor one unlike any other born of men; today we honor the Theotokos, the God-bearer, our fervent intercessor before the Lord of Glory, His Holy Mother, our protectress, Champion and Fortress, the sweetness of Christians, safe harbor of our need, Guide and Model of Holiness.

Today is not a sad day or a day of mourning and weeping over the curse of death, *for when is there sadness after the fast?* For the bonds of death and the gates of Hades have been annihilated by our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. Today is a day of wonderment, a day of paradox, a day of astonishment! For the one who contained the uncontainable, and the one who allowed us, by her perfect obedience to Almighty God, to travel upon the road to redemption and salvation, has made the journey to the grave. In her own death, she not only prepared herself through prayer to her Lord (and Son), but consoled all of us, in a loving and comforting way, as only a Mother can, for her

departure and reunion with her Son and our God. The Mother of God was not spared the end of this *fallen life*; she was from her birth wholly human –with our faults and fallen nature. Yet, *she chose* the path of righteousness and salvation! Then without complaint or derision, over this fallen world and life, she accepted the same end, death, which all mankind must endure in this earthly life. Not a death into oblivion, not a death of condemnation, but a *Falling Asleep* in anticipation of the Resurrection and glorious second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Therefore we stand in wonder as we look upon the icon of our All Holy and Pure Mother of God, the Theotokos, for in her we see one who lived according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:1), a life of obedience to the will of God. In that obedience she found solace, in that obedience she found strength, and in that obedience she found Life. Indeed, by disobedience Eve brought sin, death and alienation into the world, this new Eve, this Mary, this Theotokos, brought forgiveness, resurrection and communion to all who would believe in His Name.

May He, whom she bore, also find that life in us, so that, in a like manner, we may serve our Gracious Lord, in every way, in obedience to His Will, growing ever stronger in the life which is in Christ Jesus, to whom we offer all glory, honor, and worship, always now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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, and "Evangelos" is written below it in a similar but slightly smaller script. The signature is centered on the page.

† EVANGELOS  
Metropolitan of New Jersey