



### ***MEDIA ADVISORY***

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## **HIS ALL HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I MAKES 2<sup>ND</sup> HISTORIC VISIT TO THE GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY**

Westfield, NJ–

His Eminence, Metropolitan EVANGELOS of New Jersey, officially welcomed His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW I, Spiritual Leader of the world's 300 million Orthodox Christians to the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey on Monday, November 2, 2009.

His Eminence, together with the Reverend Protopresbyter Kosmas Karavellas, Pastor, the Reverend Clergy and Lay Leaders of the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey welcomed His All Holiness to the SS. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Annapolis, MD, on the august occasion of the 18th anniversary of His All Holiness' Enthronement, which also coincided this year with the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SS. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church. This is the second Patriarchal visit to this God-saved Eparchy of the Ecumenical Throne by His All Holiness.

The Ecumenical Patriarch's 18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since his Enthronement as Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch was celebrated with a Patriarchal Chorostasia and Grand Doxology service followed by a magnificent Patriarchal Grand Banquet that was attended by over 500 guests. Upon his arrival, His All Holiness was greeted by several hundred Orthodox Faithful who came to receive the blessings of this Apostle of love and Peacemaker. His All Holiness was visibly moved to be received as well by over 200 children dressed in traditional Greek costumes who welcomed their Spiritual Father with special love and respect that permeated the atmosphere.

His All Holiness presided over the Patriarchal Grand Doxology service that was held in the capacity-only Church and which was attended by members of the Holy Eparchial Synod, Orthodox Hierarchs, Ecumenical Leaders, Diplomats from the United States, Greece and Cyprus as well as pious Orthodox Faithful from throughout the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of

New Jersey. Especially moving were the rich sounds of Byzantine chant and music of the Byzantine Choir combined with the historical Ecclesiastical liturgical tradition of the centuries-old Greek Orthodox Church.

In his address to the Ecumenical Patriarch, His Eminence, Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey remarked, *"We welcome Your All Holiness from the Apostolic and Martyric See of Constantinople, the Center of World Orthodoxy, for "As First Among Equals" in your person we see THE representative of Orthodox Christianity throughout the Oikoumene and as such are extremely blessed by your presence here in our midst. Your All Holiness, your tireless labors of love and profound desire to bring unity to all Christendom distinguishes you as a true believer and adherent to our Lord's exhortation in His Prayer to the Father, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." (John 17:20-21) As the Spiritual Leader of the world's more than 300 million Orthodox Christians, you have extended your hand in a symbolic gesture of cooperation and tolerance to all religious leaders, seeking to be a living catalyst through whom the Holy Spirit will allow our Lord's words to become a reality."*

His All Holiness addressed all present reassuring the faithful present that the Mother Church, the Great Church of Christ, continues to pray for all of God's creation, for peace and reconciliation in a world decimated by war, and for religious tolerance and justice by all Nations of the civilized world. His All Holiness also graciously thanked Metropolitan Evangelos and the Community of SS. Constantine and Helen for their warm reception and expression of respect and love toward his person and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Especially poignant and heartwarming was His All Holiness' account during the Banquet of his election to the Throne of Constantinople, in which his humanity and willingness to be a true servant of the Lord was most evident to all present.

Finally, His Eminence expressed once again his profound gratitude to His All Holiness for honoring the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey and its devoted Faithful for his second and historic Patriarchal visit, beseeching his paternal blessings on behalf of all present. Furthermore, His Eminence extended his gratitude to Fr. Kosmas Karavellas and the organizing committee for ensuring the great success of the Grand Banquet and the overall visit of His All Holiness to the celebrating Community. His Eminence prayed that this Community will continue to be a beacon of Orthodoxy in Annapolis and a jewel in the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey for the next 65 years, witnessing to the Gospel of Christ and His message of salvation.