



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

November 27, 2008
Thanksgiving Day Celebration

The Reverend Clergy

Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philotochos 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,

Today I greet you in Christ our God and I give thanks for all of you as well. Today we are fortunate to celebrate a holiday unique to our precious Country that is, Thanksgiving Day. Our forefathers celebrated this day to give thanks to Almighty God for preserving them through trying and the most difficult of times. They sought to give thanks to God for providing to them those things which they need to survive, and for sustaining them in spite of all adversity.

It is in this spirit of thanksgiving that **I have asked for the Divine Liturgy to be celebrated in all of the parishes of our Holy Metropolis, on this, and every Thanksgiving Day;** or as alternative to this, a Vespers Divine Liturgy may be celebrated on eve of Thanksgiving Day, as it is the perfect means of offering thanks and participating in the divine life to which we have been called. In the Greek Orthodox faith, this spirit of thanksgiving is something we embrace throughout the entire liturgical year. We as the Body of Christ, the Church, give thanksgiving to God by our participation in the Divine services/sacraments, especially in the Holy Eucharist. In the Divine Liturgy we are called to prayer, in recognition of God's providence; to repentance, in recognition of our sinfulness and unworthiness; for participation, in recognition of our need, for all of our needs are fulfilled in the faithful reception of the pure and precious Body and Blood of our Savior. In the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the entire economy of God's salvation is recalled, a salvation for which we must continually give thanks and praise, a salvation which has shattered the bonds of death and opened the gates of paradise through the selfless offering of our Lord upon the Cross for the sins of the world.

I exhort all of you today, to stop and give thanks to God; for all that He has done for you individually, and for us as a Greek Orthodox Family here in the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey, throughout this past year. Today is not a day to simply eat and be merry. Today is a very special day in our country, where we are offered the opportunity to give thanks to our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us not overlook the truly blessed nature of this day; let us not only offer thanks to our God in words, let us offer Him our souls and our hearts, and in return as our thanks to Him, let us make this offering not only on this day, but every day of our lives. I pray that our Lord would continue to show all of you His great and rich mercy. I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

Metropolitan Evangelos

† EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey

To be read from the pulpit on Sunday before Thanksgiving Day, and Thanksgiving Day.