



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

New Year 2019

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy

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

As we embark on a new year, we are given cause to reflect on the previous year and to celebrate the beginning of 2019. Every year millions of Americans and millions more throughout the world make an endeavor to make resolutions and personal goals for the upcoming year. Often times these resolutions are based on external factors such as reaching a certain weight goal or saving more money. Whereas resolutions for the New Year can often be admirable endeavors, we sometimes neglect to set spiritual resolutions for ourselves which are of greater value.

First and foremost, when reflecting on this past year and assessing the new one, we must always give thanks to God for all of His blessings. He blesses many of us with health and with plenty for which we should not only be thankful, but we should also seek to share these blessings with those who are less fortunate. Some may have endured hardships and trials for which we should remain faithful that our Lord never abandons us and He will give us the strength that we need to endure. In further reflecting on this past year, we must acknowledge that we can always improve our personal spiritual lives. This personal spiritual improvement includes increased prayer, increased participation in the divine services, and increased support for our parish communities and almsgiving to the poor. It must be stated, however, that any attempt to enrich our spiritual lives must also include a desire to build up the Body of Christ, that is, our parish communities. This is precisely because it is in the context of community where we find the Kingdom of God expressed as the Body of Christ.

On first day of this New Year, the Church commemorates the feast of St. Basil who, through his works, embodies this call to build up the Body of Christ. St. Basil does so through his sermons on social justice which show us that we have a Christian responsibility to care for our fellow human beings regardless of their gender, age, race, socio-economic status, or any of the other factors. Through his example, we learn to truly love our neighbor. Throughout his

ministry, he showed love for his neighbors and particularly for the poor by securing a return of funds for them from the empire when they had been overburdened by taxes. The miraculous return of this money according to what the people had given by putting the gold in loaves of bread distributed to the populace is where we get the tradition of the Vasilopita.

It is with these thoughts, my dearly beloved, that I urge each one of you to set spiritual resolutions for yourselves. Start off with small spiritual improvements such as increased prayer and participation in divine services before gradually increasing your spiritual commitments. Endeavor to emulate St. Basil who was a staunch advocate for the poor by increasing your almsgiving. Thus, by setting spiritual resolutions, we will give glory to God and give ourselves a greater spiritual disposition. Praying that God continues to bless each of you and your families as you journey through this new year, I remain

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 smaller, more compact script, while "Evangelos" is written in a larger, more prominent script. The signature is centered on the page.

† E V A N G E L O S
Metropolitan of New Jersey



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Πρός τόν εὐλαβέστατον Ἱερόν Κληρόν,
Τούς Ἐντιμοτάτους Ἀρχόντας τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ ἡμῶν Πατριαρχείου,
Τούς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν Συμβουλίων,
Τάς Προέδρους καί τά Μέλη τῶν Φιλοπτώχων Ἀδελφοτήτων,
Τούς διδάσκοντας καί διδασκομένους τῶν Κατηχητικῶν καί Ἑλληνικῶν Σχολείων,
Τάς Ὄργανώσεις τῆς Νεολαίας καί ἅπαν τό Χριστεπώνυμον πλήρωμα τῶν εὐσεβῶν Ὁρθοδόξων
Χριστιανῶν τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Νέας Ἱερσέης.

«Θελήματι Θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον»
(Α' Πέτρου 4,2)

Ἀγαπητοὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφοί!

Μέ τή χάρη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀξιωνόμαστε νά προσθέσουμε στό ἡμερολόγιο τῆς ἐπί γῆς παρουσίας μας ἕναν ἀκόμη χρόνο. Ἡ ἀπαρχὴ κάθε νέου πολιτικοῦ ἢ οικονομικοῦ, ὅπως συνηθίζεται νά λέγεται, ἔτους εἶναι ἕνας σταθμὸς στὴ ζωὴ κάθε ἀνθρώπου. Τὸ ἔτος ποὺ διανύσαμε, ἄφησε ἀνεξίτηλα χαραγμένα στὴ μνήμη μας σημάδια, ἄλλα εὐχάριστα καὶ ἄλλα δυσάρεστα. Ἀναμφισβήτητα, ἀποτελεῖ μέρος τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ μας εἴτε ὡς ἀνάμνηση, εἴτε ὡς καθορισμὸς τοῦ βίου μας. Τί ἀκριβῶς μᾶς ἐπιφυλάσσει τό ἀρχόμενο ἔτος, μᾶς εἶναι παντελῶς ἄγνωστο.

Ὡς «τέκνα Θεοῦ» καλούμαστε νά κάνουμε τὴν καλύτερη -κατὰ τό δυνατόν- χρῆση τοῦ χρόνου ποὺ ἔχουμε στὴ διάθεσή μας. Ὁ χρόνος ἐξάλλου τῆς ἐπίγειας ζωῆς μᾶς ὀδηγεῖ στὴν ἡμέρα, στὸ φῶς, στὴ χαρὰ καὶ στὴν εὐτυχία τῆς μελλούσης ζωῆς. Ἐκεῖ ὅπου «**νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι**», σύμφωνα μέ τὰ προφητικά λόγια τῆς Ἀποκάλυψης, ἄλλα μιά συνεχῆ καὶ ἀδιάκοπη ἡμέρα, τὴν ὁποία θά φωτίζει τὸ φῶς τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ. Γιά τὸν λόγο αὐτόν, τὸν χρόνο τὸν ὁποῖο κάθε ἀνθρώπος ἔχει στὴ διάθεσή του, πρέπει νά τὸν ἀξιοποιήσει ὠφέλημα, ὅπως συνιστᾷ ὁ Ἀπόστολος Πέτρος «**θελήματι Θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιώσαι χρόνον**».

Ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ χρόνου, ὅπως τὴ γνωρίζουμε καὶ τὴ βιώνουμε καθημερινά, ὑπάρχει γιὰ τὰ δημιουργηθέντα ἀπὸ τὸν Θεὸ λογικὰ πλάσματα, ἐνῶ γιὰ τὸν προαιώνιο δημιουργὸ δὲν ὑφίσταται χρόνος, χθές, σήμερα, αὔριο, παρελθόν ἢ μέλλον ἀλλὰ ἕνα αἰώνιο παρόν. Δέσμιος τοῦ χρόνου ὁ ἀνθρώπος, ἐπιθυμεῖ, εὐχεται καὶ ἀναζητεῖ ἐναγωνίως στὸν ἐφήμερό του βίον τὴν εὐτυχία καὶ τὴ χαρὰ. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ὡς φιλόστοργη μητέρα, προσφέρει τὴ δικὴ τῆς παρήγορη ἐρμηνεία: «**ἰδοὺ νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδοὺ νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας**». Χωρὶς τὸ ἀσφαλὲς θεμέλιο τῆς πίστεως στὸν Χριστὸ, οὔτε ἀνθρώπος εὐτυχῆς δύναται νά ὑπάρξει, οὔτε κοινωνία εὐημεροῦσα νά οἰκοδομηθεῖ. Μόνον ὁ Χριστὸς δωρίζει τὴν εὐτυχία καὶ τὴ

χαρά. Μόνο Αυτός δύναται ν' αποσβέσει τὴ δίψα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου γιὰ τὴν ἀπόκτηση τῆς εὐτυχίας καὶ τῆς χαρᾶς. Ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ εὐτυχία καὶ χαρά εἶναι δῶρο Θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπο, καρπὸς τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος καὶ κανεὶς δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ τὴν ἀφαιρέσει, ὅπως ὑπογραμμίζει ὁ Εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης «τὴν χαρὰν ὑμῶν οὐδεὶς αἶρει ἀφ' ὑμῶν».

Ἀγαπητοὶ μου ἀδελφοὶ

Μόνο κοντὰ στὸν Σωτῆρα καὶ Λυτρωτὴ Χριστὸ ὁ ἄνθρωπος βρίσκει ἀνάπαυση, ἀγαλλίαση, χαρά καὶ συναντᾷ τὴν γνήσια ἐλευθερία. Σέ κάθε βῆμα τῆς ἐπιγείου πορείας μας μὲ τὸν Χριστὸ, μεταφέρουμε τὸν οὐρανὸ στὴ γῆ. Κάθε νέο ἔτος προστίθεται στὴ χοϊκὴ μας ὑπαρξὴ ὡς εὐλογία τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ μᾶς προσφέρει μία ἐπιπλέον εὐκαιρία ἀνυψώσεώς μας ἀπὸ τὰ γήινα πρὸς τὰ ἐπουράνια, ἀπὸ τὰ φθαρτὰ στὰ ἄφθαρτα, ἀπὸ τὰ πρόσκαιρα στὰ αἰώνια καὶ μοναδικά.

Εὐχομαὶ ἐγκαρδίως σέ ὅλους σας καὶ στίς εὐλογημένες οἰκογένειές σας, διὰ πρεσβειῶν τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βασιλείου τοῦ Μεγάλου, τοῦ ὁποίου τὴ μνήμη ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας τιμᾷ σήμερα, τὸ σωτήριο νέο ἔτος 2019, πού μόλις ἀνέτειλε, νά εἶναι εὐλογημένο, εἰρηνικό, πλήρες ἀγαθῶν, θεοσδότου χαρᾶς, πνευματικῆς προόδου καὶ εὐτυχίας.

Μετά πατρικῶν εὐχῶν καὶ τῆς ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀγάπης

Ο ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ



† Ὁ Νέας Ἱερσέης ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ