



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

New Year 2020

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy

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 Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

The occasion of a new year provides for us ample opportunities. Principally, it allows us to reflect on the previous year and to thank God for all His blessings. For many, it also constitutes an ideal opportunity to set goals for the upcoming year, often called New Year resolutions. More often than not, these resolutions tend to address external matters, but we must be honest in asking ourselves, how often do we set spiritual resolutions for ourselves?

When we reflect on the past year can we truly say to ourselves that we prayed as much as we could or went to every Church service offered or never sinned? Certainly not! Therefore, we must be honest with ourselves in saying that there is always opportunity for spiritual growth. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as making goals to attend the Divine Liturgy more often, committing to increase one's personal prayer life, supporting the ministries of the Church more rigorously, or getting involved with organization and volunteer aspects of the Church. These actions help to set us on the correct path in building a strong spiritual life and if you do very few of these things, then set a reasonable goal for yourself to accomplish just a little bit more. If you already do many of these things, then find additional ways to increase your spiritual life. By setting spiritual resolutions for ourselves, we may prevent ourselves from being spiritually apathetic and offer to God more of ourselves since He has already blessed us with so much.

Additionally, the Church celebrates today the feast of St. Basil who, throughout his life, exemplified love for his neighbor. He typified this experience through his theological works and personal letters which often show that he was strict on himself and those close to him, but to those who were spiritually weak, he remained pastoral. He also showed love for his neighbor, particularly for the poor, by securing for them a return of their gold from the empire when they had been overburdened by tax assessments. When this money was returned to the people, he

devised a method by putting the gold coins in loaves of bread that were distributed to the populace and miraculously each family was given their just return. This is where we receive the tradition of the Vasilopita. St. Basil's ministry provides us with numerous examples of love for our neighbor and care for the poor which we should emulate in our own spiritual lives.

My beloved children in the Lord, I implore you to forever seek to do more in your spiritual lives. Start your day by making the sign of the cross. If you do not pray often, then try to pray at least once a day. Commit to attending the Divine services more often. Always seek to see the person of Christ in your neighbor and to help those in need. It is my sincerest prayer that each of you find the way to build up your spiritual lives in this New Year. Praying that you and your families have a happy, healthy, and blessed New Year filled with every good and perfect gift from our Lord, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

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