



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Great and Holy Pascha 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,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

The Light of the world has been transmitted to our hearts and souls today and we have been promised new life in Christ through His Holy Resurrection. The ancient curse that had been placed over the human race was lifted as we received the opportunity to inherit eternal life. Although our Lord is all-powerful and the Light and Life of the world, He had to endure the Cross in order for us to experience His Resurrection as well. He had to withstand the mocking, the scourging, the suffering, the pain, the agony, the nails, the piercing, and the crown of thorns. Though our Lord endured this multitude of sufferings, we know that *“through the Cross, joy has come to the whole world”*. He endured the darkness of the tomb for three days before rising from the dead and granting us the hope and joy of His Resurrection. It is the Resurrection where we find our peace and hope. Our Lord’s triumph over death and His defeat of the power of Hades gives us hope not only in the common Resurrection of all humanity and in the Kingdom to come, but it gives us hope and encouragement as we endure our own difficulties in these present times.

Much like the darkness of Christ’s tomb prior to the Resurrection, we have experienced profound darkness these past several weeks as family, friends, kinsmen, and neighbors have become afflicted with the deadly Coronavirus. These events have brought many people to the brink of despair and they have tested the spiritual fortitude of countless persons. As we continue to endure the viciousness of this virus, we must remember that, though we may currently be in darkness, we also see before us the Light of the Resurrection.

The Psalmist tells us, *“Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning”* (Ps. 30:5). There is no doubt that our hearts and souls have been aching and weeping these past few weeks, but let us not forget that the morning is now coming with the unwaning Light of Christ. Therefore, let us be renewed in our faith and emboldened in our commitment because Christ, having risen from the dead, has offered us our own resurrection and new life. As Orthodox Christians who believe in the physical Resurrection of Christ, let us express this joy not only in words, but in actions. Let us express our hope so that we can inspire those who have lost hope. Let us express our faith to encourage those whose faith may have been shaken. Let us bolster our commitment to God and to the Church so that we may motivate others to develop a deeper relationship with Him.

My beloved in the Lord, as we celebrate Great and Holy Pascha, I implore you to gather with your families in prayer and to give thanks to God, celebrating the Resurrection of Christ with unfettered joy since it is through His Resurrection that we have the possibility to attain eternal life. Let the hope of the Resurrection be our rock and our strength each and every day of our lives as we exclaim and proclaim the Risen Christ and His Gospel. Praying that Christ, our King and God, blesses you and your families with good health and every good and perfect gift from above I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings in the Risen Lord,

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

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