



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS ^{OF} NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

July 11, 2020

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy and the
Esteemed Presidents of the Parish Councils of the
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

I pray this letter finds you well, both spiritually and physically, experiencing all of our Lord's bountiful blessings.

In recent weeks as the threat of the COVID-19 Pandemic has more harshly affected other areas of the United States such as in the southern and western states, an alarming trend has started to appear. There are reports that, in some cases, people who have been inflicted with the Coronavirus had contracted it through their attendance at their local churches and other houses of worship. This is most lamentable principally because people who had hoped to seek solace in their faith community were instead afflicted and also because churches have the potential to be unfairly categorized as high-risk areas for infection in the future.

By the grace of God, our communities have been kept safe from any similar type of large outbreak, but in light of these recent events in churches and houses of worship of other faith traditions, I exhort you to remain vigilant against the prevalent threat of the Coronavirus. Although some states, particularly in the mid-Atlantic, have largely relaxed some of the restrictions that had previously been in place, this does not mean that we should not exercise extreme caution. On the contrary, we must remain extremely careful and we must employ all of the precautions at our disposal to ensure that the devout faithful can participate in the Divine Services in a safe manner. We must continue to be stringent in following the local, state, and CDC guidelines since the preservation of the spiritual and physical health and well-being of the devout faithful is to preserve the Body of Christ itself.

As our nation continues to battle this vicious virus, I encourage you and your Parish Communities to remain cautious and vigilant, ensuring that all of the directives and guidelines which have been issued are thoroughly adhered to. In this way, we will protect the devout faithful of our Ecclesiastical Communities and assist in doing our part to flatten the curve of Coronavirus cases. It is my fervent prayer that you are all kept safe and in good health so that you may continue your most faithful service to Christ and to His Church.

Praying that our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the Physician of our bodies and souls, blesses you, your families, and your Parish Communities with every good and perfect gift from above, 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, sweeping initial 'M'.

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