



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Pentecost 2018

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

“When the Most High God came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations. When He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity. And with one voice we glorify the all-holy Spirit.”

My Beloved,

Having recently celebrated the conclusion of the Paschal season, we find ourselves at the feast of Pentecost in which God manifests His love for us and for all people by sending down upon us the Holy Spirit. Today, we bear witness to the revelation of the Church in history through the continuation of Christ’s ministry. We are thus given the commandment to “Go forth, therefore, and to make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19) as an indication that the gift of salvation which has been extended to us is to be shared with all people.

Though we have received the command to “Go forth”, our Lord does not intend for every person to literally leave their home in an effort to comply with this instruction, but it is clear that Christ has given each of us varying abilities so as to build up the Body of Christ for as we see in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way” (1 Cor. 12:29-31). Thus, we must discern in which way God wants us to serve His Church so that through our love and desire to serve Him we may, in turn, “Go forth” with our hearts and make disciples.

Though seemingly a daunting task, God enables us to fulfill this commandment even by living in a Christ-like manner so that, through our actions, we may serve as an example to others not for our own glory, but for the glory of God. The society and nature of the times in which we live, however, do not seem to permit us the convenience of living a Christ-like life,

thus, we must always be vigilant and strive towards this spiritual excellence by strengthening our prayer life and our sacramental life.

Above all, it is imperative to recognize the power of the Holy Spirit within our lives and within the life of the Church. It was the Holy Spirit that enabled the disciples to go forth and begin their apostolic mission. It is the Holy Spirit that has guided the Fathers of the Church in ensuring the orthodoxy of our doctrine. It is the Holy Spirit that has directed the saints over the centuries to pour down upon us their knowledge through their actions, their writings, and their lives so that we may partake of their wisdom. It is the Holy Spirit which accompanies each of us in our baptism as we shed the old self and we put on Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that at every liturgy consecrates our offering of bread and wine so that it may become the Body and Blood of Christ.

It is with these thoughts, my beloved in the Lord, that I implore you to hold fast to this commandment and fulfill it by living a Christ-like life. Thus, we will be able to make disciples of all nations and the Holy Spirit will allow us to transcend the bounds of divided nations and instead transform us into a united community of faithful in Christ. Praying that the Holy Spirit guides you to the ineffable glory of our Lord, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

Metropolitan Evangelos

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