



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Annunciation to the Theotokos, 2009

The Reverend Clergy

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

Greetings and peace be unto you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! *“This is the Lord’s doing: it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”* (Psalm 118: 23-24) How true these words of the Psalmist resound today as we gather together to celebrate the Annunciation to the Theotokos; the *Evangelismos* –*The Good News has come amongst, dwelling with us for our salvation, fully God and fully Man.* Today God sends His Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary the Theotokos with the salutation: *“Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you...Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there will be no end.”* (Luke 1: 28-33)

Today my beloved, our magnificent and Almighty God has announced to His creation our redemption, and has illuminated our pathway which will return us to Paradise –*The Garden of Eden*, from which our forbearers Adam and Eve were cast out. This wonderful message is received by a young virgin woman; pure in heart, mind, soul, and body. One who did not question the Lord’s actions, but rather accepted them wholly into her heart for all. Hearing the *Evangelismos*, she receives it on our behalf and illustrates to all of us the true virtue of obedience. By this act of obedience, *“And Mary said, Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word...”* (Luke 1: 38) she welcomes the Lord into the new Temple she had prepared through righteousness. She contains the uncontainable, she accomplishes that mystery which confounded Solomon, and always escaped his wisdom, at the building of the temple in Jerusalem, *“but who is able to build Him a house, since heaven, even the highest heaven, cannot contain Him?”* (2 Chronicles: 2:6)

What great wonders we celebrate today as the impossible is made possible! She is our Mother, the Mother of the Light of the world. She is always present for all of her

*children* hoping and praying that they might embrace her Son and our God. Panagia was there constantly interceding for the Greek people on this day 188 years ago, when the struggles for their independence against 400 years of Turkish domination began. In the radiant glow of this great feast, His Eminence, Metropolitan Germanos of Patras, blessed the new flag of the infant Greek Nation, prayers and supplications were offered to Christ our True God, and the protection of the Panagia was invoked. Our Blessed Mother implored her Son and our God on behalf of our beloved forefathers. On that day, when the dark shadow of such a long interminable tyranny and web of the enemy covered the lands of Greece, the spark and ember of a new light shone, a Divine Light, and its warmth filled the hearts of our ancestors with hope. We must always therefore keep in our heart, mind, and soul, their struggles; let us honor their sacrifices, let us offer heartfelt thanksgiving to our Gracious Lord for these acts of Divine Providence and Salvation; and let us also sing hymns of joy and thanksgiving to His Most Holy Mother, the ever-blessed Theotokos, the constant and fervent intercessor for all of Creation.

My beloved, may this jubilant celebration of the Annunciation this year, and always, be for each one of you a source of courage and joy; for we take courage in the example of our all-holy Lady’s life and the godly obedience which she embodies, and we sing out in joy, that our Lord has heard the *“groaning of those in fetters,”* and he has indeed freed us from our bondage. (Gal. 5:1) This celebration is not one of riotous noise and worldly banter. Rather it is one of solemn piety as the Virgin Theotokos illustrates for us, by bowing not only her head before the Lord, but her spirit as well, to the will of the Lord. This is the task which we must strive to accomplish ever invoking the intercession of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

Praying that the remainder of this Great and Holy Fast be filled with the Lord’s blessings for all of you and your families, and that the intercessions of the Theotokos will always be present in our lives and in this Holy Metropolis of New Jersey, I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

*Metropolitan Evangelos*

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

*To be read from the pulpit on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25<sup>th</sup> and on Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>.*