



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

March 17, 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 the Delaware Valley Region of the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in Christ,

I pray that my letter finds all of you spiritually sound having completed the first week of Great and Holy Lent.

In just a few weeks, Hellenes and Philhellenes the world over will be joyously celebrating the Holy Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos as well as Greek Independence Day. Indeed, the date of March 25th is both religiously and culturally significant as our Orthodox Faith and Greek Heritage are intermingled on this most historic day.

The Annunciation to the Theotokos is the defining event that heralded into history and mankind our very salvation, Christ our Lord. The Divine Conception of our Lord signaled the beginning of our release and freedom from the bonds of sin and death. Likewise, March 25th 1821, ushered in a new breath of hope for the Greek Nation as it announced that it would no longer tolerate oppression by the Ottoman Turks. Thus, the Greek Revolution was born with its sole goal of freedom from the bonds of tyranny and slavery.

It is right for us as faithful Orthodox Christians and proud Greek Americans to celebrate with enthusiasm and zeal the glorious events of March 25th. To this end, I exhort all of you to participate in and lead your beloved Communities in the Annual Greek Independence Day Parade which is to be held on March 29th, 2009 in Philadelphia, PA.

Together, we can demonstrate to all that freedom is a most cherished gift from above, and that as proud Greek Americans and Greek Orthodox Christians, freedom is at the essence of our lives.

Praying that you will be strengthened from above during this most holy time of the year, I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

† EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey