



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Dormition of the Theotokos 2019

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,

We approach the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God not in a spirit of lamentation, even though we lament her death, but rather in a spirit of joy as we have gained the most holy of all saints as an advocate for us before her Son and our God. Indeed, we lament her death because she is our common mother and she holds a particular place in our hearts and in the hearts of all Orthodox Christians. Both her life and her death are examples for us. In her life we are given her example which is the apex of saintliness and in her death we are shown that her love and dedication to God is rewarded with everlasting life.

The Panagia did not have a comfortable life and lived a life replete with trials and tribulations. At a young age she was told that she would bear a child even though she had never knew a man and she willingly told God, *“Let it be unto me according to Your Word”* (Luke 1:38). Along with Joseph, she had to make a long journey in order to be counted in the census while pregnant and having nowhere to bear her child. She, Joseph, and her newborn had to flee to Egypt in order to escape the wrath of Herod. Ultimately, she had to witness the death of her own Son by the excruciatingly violent method of crucifixion. Throughout all these difficulties, she continuously put her trust into God’s hands.

It is this trust and dedication to God expressed by the Theotokos to which we, as Orthodox Christians, must aim to emulate. Whereas the Theotokos was called to an immense responsibility, God knows our frailty and He asks less of us. Nevertheless, having the example of the Theotokos before us who endured her own difficulties in life, we should welcome the responsibilities to which God calls us. The spiritual responsibilities to which we are called are varied since we hear St. Paul say, *“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?”* (1 Cor. 12:29-30). No matter how great or how modest our calling may be and no matter what trials we may

encounter, we should always approach it with the same dedication and zeal that the Theotokos expressed for God.

As we commemorate the Dormition of the Theotokos, let us continuously remember her love and dedication which not only extends to her Son, Jesus Christ, but also to each one of us since she sees us as her children also. Let us always emulate this love so that we can reflect it upon each other and upon our neighbors as we endeavor to see Christ in everyone. Praying that the Panagia continues to guard and guide each of you and your families, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The word "Metropolitan" is written in a smaller, more compact script, while "Evangelos" is written in a larger, more prominent script. The signature is centered on the page.

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