



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Pentecost 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 Greek Orthodox Communities of our Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

Much like the Apostles two thousand years ago, we gather together in one place praying for and awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Paraklete who is also the One who distributes gifts to each person. The Apostles were promised by the Lord that He would send a Comforter, the ten days between His Ascension and the day the Holy Spirit descended, the Apostles must have felt somewhat bewildered as if something was lacking. When, however, the Holy Spirit came down upon them, *“They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”* (Acts 2:3-4).

This incredible event relayed to us through Holy Scripture may be difficult to image, but we seldom realize that we experience Pentecost at every Divine Liturgy. The Pentecost of the Apostles was an event that saw each of them, gathered in unity, being given gifts from the Spirit. Today we find ourselves, like the Apostles, *“together in one place”* (Acts 2:1). The place in which we gather is not just the church as a physical structure, but we gather together as a community offering bread and wine to be transformed by the Holy Spirit into the Body and Blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit descended today, just as it does at every Divine Liturgy, to accomplish this miracle so that, in partaking of the Body of Christ, we as a united community are transformed into the Body of Christ.

The reception of Holy Communion is not the end of our engagement as Orthodox Christians. In addition, we are graced certain gifts from the Holy Spirit just like the Apostles so that we may preach the Gospel of Christ. This does not necessarily mean that all of us are called to the same ministry as the Apostles were, for as we see St. Paul say, *“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts”* (1 Cor.

12:29-31). Nevertheless, we are all called to serve Christ and His Church. Therefore, our participation in the Eucharist is also our pledge to continue the earthly ministry of Christ with the gifts presented to us by the Holy Spirit. Thus, we become tools by which the Holy Spirit calls together the scattered nations so that we all may, in unity, partake of the same Body and Blood transformed by the Spirit.

My beloved children in the Lord, by exercising these gifts we are not just meant to bring in those who find themselves outside the fold of the Orthodox Church, but by using our gifts, we draw ourselves closer to Christ by bringing into action our Orthodox Christian faith. This must be combined with attending the divine services, developing a stronger prayer life, practicing almsgiving, expressing humility, showing forgiveness, and always conveying love for one's neighbor. Praying that we may fully utilize the gifts granted to us by the Holy Spirit and become an icon of the unity we see in the Holy Apostles, 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 larger, more prominent script than "Evangelos". The signature is centered on the page.

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