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You do NOT need a Facebook account to access the online services.

www.facebook.com/saintsophiachurch

PLEASE keep in mind that our fixed costs are still ever present.

We hope you can help us with an online donation. You can give by going to our website,
www.saintsophiachurch.org and clicking on the "Donate" button.

Donate



You can also donate using Venmo! Just search in Venmo or click www.venmo.com/SaintSophiaChurch

We also accept Zelle as a form of payment! Through your bank's Zelle system, input
treasurer@saintsophiachurch.org as a recipient and you'll be ready to donate to St. Sophia Church.



**St. Sophia/Ss Faith, Hope & Agape
Greek Orthodox Church of Valley Forge**
900 South Trooper Rd., Jeffersonville, PA 19403

**Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Loukas
Proistamenos**

December 24, 2025

6:00 pm Orthros
7:00 Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
followed by the singing of the Kalanda (Carols)

**Christmas Eve
The Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord,
God and Saviour Jesus Christ**



**St. Sophia/SS. Faith, Hope & Agape
Greek Orthodox Church of Valley Forge**

900 South Trooper Road
Jeffersonville, PA, 19403

Tel.: (610) 650-8960 • Fax: (610) 650-8961

www.saintsophiachurch.org email: office@saintsophiachurch.org

Sunday Worship: 8:45 am - Orthros: 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Office Hours - 10 am to 4 pm

Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Loukas, Proistamenos

frkonstantinos@saintsophiachurch.org

Metropolis of New Jersey



December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve Vigil

The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ
The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Gaspar, & Balthasar
The Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were
watching their flocks and came to see the Lord



This evening's service consists of
Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

ENTRANCE HYMNS

Apolytikion for the Nativity – I Ghennisis sou, Christe (“Your Nativity, O Christ”)

Your nativity, O Christ our God, has caused the light of knowledge to rise upon the world. For therein the worshippers of the stars were by a star instructed to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You as Orient from on high. Glory to You, O Lord.

Apolytikion of St. Sophia/Ss. Faith, Hope & Agape

Greek

Ὁς ελαία κατά καρπος ανεβλάστησας, ἐν ταῖς ἀναλαῖς τοῦ Κυρίου, Σοφία μάρτυς σεμνή, καί προσήγαγες Χριστῷ καρπὸν ἠδύτατον, τοὺς τῆς νηδύος σου βλαστούς, δί' ἀγώνων εὐάγων, Ἀγάπην τε καὶ Ἐλπίδα σὺν τῇ θεόφρονι Πίστει, μεθ' ὧν δυσώπει ὑπὲρ πάντων ἡμῶν.

English Phonetics for Greek

Os elea kata karpos anevlastisas, en tes avles tu Kyriou Sofia martyrs semni, ke prosigages Christo karpon idytaton, tus tis nidyos su vlastus, di' agonon evagon, Agapin te ke Elpida, syn ti theofroni Pisti; meth' on dysopi yper pandon imon.

English

As an olive tree laden with fruit you sprouted forth, in the courtyards of the Lord, Sophia martyr dignified, and you brought to Christ a fruit most sweet, Namely your womb's own sprouts, brought up by instructive deeds: your daughters Love and Hope, along with God-minded Faith; together intercede with God for us all.

Kontakion for the Nativity – I Parthenos simeron ton iperousion tikti (“On this day the Virgin gives birth to the Super-essential.

*On this day the Virgin gives * birth to the Super-essential. * To the Unapproachable, * earth is providing the grotto. * Angels sing and with the shepherds offer up glory. * Following a star the Magi are still proceeding. * He was born for our salvation, a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God.*



Facing the needs of our neighbors, together.

FOCUS North America exists to serve the poor by bringing together Orthodox Christian churches and community partners to provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding, Shelter, and other assistance to address the needs of local communities.

FOCUS Philadelphia – based out of Saint Sophia and led by John Pogas as Center Director – is committed to understanding and addressing the needs of our neighbors. As Christ said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did for me” - Matthew 25:40

We serve hot meals in

- Norristown every Wednesday evening at 7:00 PM
- Philadelphia every Thursday evening at 8:00 PM

Discover how you can support this vital ministry either by volunteering, donating food, funding or simply spreading the word. Visit www.focusphiladelphia.org to learn more or use our SignUpGenius (link below).



Link to SignUpGenius

JOIN US!

Holy Theophany - Tuesday, January 6, 2026

9:00 am - Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Followed by Great Agiasmos & Blessing of the Schuylkill River
(at Betzwood Park), weather permitting.



Blessing of the Homes at Theophany: If you wish to have your homes and/or businesses blessed **after** the Feast of Theophany, please contact the Parish office **beginning January 8th** to schedule a visitation (office@saintsophiachurch.org or 610-650-8960.)

2026 Ecclesiastical Calendars: To save the Parish resources, 2026 Church calendars are available for pickup in the Narthex of the church and on the table outside of the Parish office. The calendars are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. We respectfully request that each stewarding family take only 1 calendar per household. Thank you!

EPISTLE READING

The Reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:4-7

Let all the earth worship you, and sing praises to you.

Verse: Shout with joy to God, all the earth.

BRETHREN, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir of God through Christ.

**Ἀνάγνωσις ἐπιστολῆς
Πρὸς Γαλάτας 4.4-7**

*Πᾶσα ἡ γῆ προσκυνησάτωσάν σοι καὶ ψαλάτωσάν σοι.
Στίχ. Ἀλαλάξατε τῷ Κυρίῳ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ.*

Ἀδελφοί, ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. Ὅτι δὲ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, κρᾶζον, Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ. Ὡστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

GOSPEL READING

The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

The Reading is from Matthew 2:1-12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

2025 Stewardship Program: Thank you to everyone who has supported our 2025 Stewardship Program. If you have not yet returned your 2025 Stewardship Commitment Form, please do so today! Forms are available at the Pangari.

If you have not yet finished paying your pledge, please do so before the end of the year so that your payment is posted in 2025. In addition, by whichever method you make your payment (cash, check, PayPal, Zelle, Venmo), it is imperative that you indicate "Stewardship 2025" with your name so that your account is properly credited.

Should you have any questions, please call the Parish office or see Tom Cox, our stewardship chairperson. The 2026 campaign will be starting shortly, so it is imperative that we finalize our stewardship rolls for this year. Thank you!



ΕΒΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ
Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 2.1-12

ST. SOPHIA PHILOPTOCHOS

VASILOPITA BREAKFAST

JANUARY 4, 2026



FRENCH TOAST CASSEROLE
SCRAMBLED EGGS
SAUSAGE LINKS
MUFFINS
FRESH FRUIT
GREEK YOGURT
COFFEE * JUICE

DONATION \$15

PROCEEDS BENEFIT SAINT BASIL ACADEMY IN GARRISON, NY

Τοῦ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλεὲμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἑρῳδοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως, ἰδοὺ μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμαλέγοντες, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἦλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἑρῳδῆς ἐταράχθη καὶ πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπυνθάνετο παρ' αὐτῶν ποῦ ὁ Χριστὸς γεννᾶται. Οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Ἐν Βηθλεὲμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας· οὕτως γὰρ γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου· Καὶ σύ, Βηθλεὲμ γῆ Ἰούδα, οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα· ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαὸν μου τὸν Ἰσραὴλ. Τότε Ἑρῳδῆς λάθρα καλέσας τοὺς μάγους ἠκρίβωσεν παρ' αὐτῶν τὸν χρόνον τοῦ φαινομένου ἀστέρος, καὶ πέμψας αὐτοὺς εἰς Βηθλεὲμ εἶπεν, Πορευθέντες ἐξετάσατε ἀκριβῶς περὶ τοῦ παιδίου· ἐπὶ δὲ εὗρητε ἀπαγγείλατέ μοι, ὅπως κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ. Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπορεύθησαν, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ἀστήρ ὄν εἶδον ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ προῆγεν αὐτοὺς ἕως ἐλθὼν ἐστάθη ἐπάνω οὗ ἦν τὸ παιδίον. Ἰδόντες δὲ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην σφόδρα. Καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν. Καὶ χρηματισθέντες κατ' ὄναρ μὴ ἀνακάμψαι πρὸς Ἑρῳδὴν, δι' ἄλλης ὁδοῦ ἀνεχώρησαν εἰς τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν.

St. Sophia Youth Ministries

NATIVITY FOOD DRIVE

THE GIFT OF FOOD TO THOSE LESS FORTUNATE

To benefit The Daily Bread Community Food Pantry in Collegeville

NOV 15, 2025 - JAN 6, 2026



ACCEPTING UNEXPIRED CANNED AND NON-PERISHABLE FOODS OR
DONATE USING VENMO (ENTER "YM NATIVITY FOOD DRIVE" IN MEMO)
DONATION DROP-OFF IN LOBBY OF FR. JOHN A. LIMBERAKIS CULTURAL CENTER

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Sun. Dec. 21, 2025 through
Sun. Jan. 4, 2026
No Greek School – Christmas/New Year's Recess

Christmas, New Year's and Theophany services are listed on the enclosed schedule

Sun. Dec. 28 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Sunday after Nativity No Sunday school
Thurs. Jan. 1 st	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great St. Basil the Great
Sun. Jan. 4 th	8:45 am	Sunday before Epiphany Sunday school resumes No Greek school

Theophany services are listed on the enclosed schedule

Mon, Jan. 5 th	4:45 pm	Little Angels
	6:00 pm	Greek School (Children)
Wed. Jan. 7 th	8:45 am	Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy Synaxis of St. John the Baptist
Thurs. Jan. 8 th	6:00 pm	Greek School (Adults)
Sat. Jan. 10 th	5:00 pm	Vespers

Mortgage Reduction Campaign: As of December 1, 2025, our mortgage balance is \$238,775.46. Thank you to our Stewards and friends who participated this month, and please help us continue to reduce the mortgage to \$0 in the near future.



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Services for Christmas

Christmas Eve Morning - Wednesday, 12/24/25
8:00 am Orthros; Great Hours
10:00 am Great Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Christmas Eve - Vigil for Christmas - Wednesday, 12/24/25
6:00 pm Orthros
7:00 pm Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
followed by the singing of Kalanda/Christmas Carols

Christmas Day, Thursday, 12/25/25
Merry Christmas! - **Καλά Χριστούγεννα!**
No Services Today

Sunday, 12/28/25
Sunday after Nativity
8:45 am Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
No Sunday school; No Greek school

Services for New Year's & Theophany

New Year's Day, Thursday, 1/1/26
Happy New Year! - **Καλή πρωτοχρονιά!**
Feast of St. Basil the Great
8:45 am Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

Sunday, 1/4/26
Sunday before Theophany
8:45 am Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Monday, 1/5/26 - Eve of Theophany
8:00 am Orthros; Great Hours
10:00 am Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
Great Agiasmos

Tuesday, 1/6/26 - Holy Theophany
8:45 am Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Great Agiasmos
Blessing of the Schuylkill River
(at Betzwood Park), weather permitting

Wednesday, 1/7/26
Synaxis of St. John the Baptist
8:45 am Orthros; 10:00 am Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Blessing of the Homes at Theophany

If you wish to have your homes and/or businesses blessed after the Feast of Theophany, please contact the Parish office **beginning January 8th** to schedule a visitation.



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 578/2025

Archebiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Christmas

December 25, 2025

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

*Today the Virgin gives Birth to Him Who is above all being
(Kontakion of Christmas)*

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

In the midst of all our Christmas celebrations, it is the hymnography of the Church that always calls us back to the essence of the Feast, so that, as we pause to consider the miracle of the Nativity of our Lord, the wonder of the Angels, Shepherds and Magi might come over us as well. The Birth of the Prince of Peace taking place in the humble cave of Bethlehem, which He shared with mute beasts of burden, is truly a marvel of marvels. For as the Kontakion of Saint Romanos the Melodist affirms, the God Who is beyond every possible conception and category of human comprehension, wills to be born a human being, from the womb of the Virgin Theotokos.

It is an act of God's supreme love for all creation. For as the Evangelist says, God, Who "so utterly loved the world, gave His Only-Begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish, but possess eternal life" (John 316). And it is also an act of the highest love of a human being for God. Because the Virgin was willing to become

the living Temple of God, offering her very body to provide the human nature that would become the Body of God. For nine months, she housed the Lord of the Universe in the Tabernacle of her womb, until the moment arrived for “Him Who is above all being” to come forth into the wounded and fragile world.

As a newborn and vulnerable Babe, dependent in every way upon His Mother and those around her for safety, nourishment and protection, our Lord and God entered into our experience as human beings, so that we might in turn enter into the Divine Life. For each and every one of us now has the potential to bring forth within our hearts, minds and souls the fullness of God, even unto grace upon grace (John 1:16). The fragility of our existence has become God’s own fragility, and His healing Spirit now infuses every aspect of creation.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, let us embrace the Child of Bethlehem Who is born within us, in the cave of our hearts. He is gentle and humble, and He understands how exposed and assailable our human condition can be — for He endured it with us and for us. Let us bring forth in our lives His many qualities: love, mercy, compassion, equanimity and forgiveness. And as the Virgin watched Him grow within her own womb and throughout her own life, let us also behold the miracle of His Presence within our lives and within our communities, to the honor and praise of His Holy Name.

Χριστὸς Γεννᾶται! Δοξάσατε! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



**ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ**

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 578/2025

**Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος
για την έορτή των Χριστουγέννων.**

25 Δεκεμβρίου 2025

Πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασμιωτάτους καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτους Ἀρχιερεῖς, τοὺς Εὐλαβεστάτους Ἱερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, τὶς Πρεσβυτέρες καὶ τὶς Διακόνισσες, τοὺς Μοναχοὺς καὶ τὶς Μοναχές, τοὺς Προέδρους καὶ τὰ Μέλη τῶν Κοινοτικῶν Συμβουλίων, τοὺς Ἐντιμολογιωτάτους Ἄρχοντες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἠγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Ἀπογευματινὰ Σχολεῖα, τὶς Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες Ὄργανώσεις καὶ ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

**«Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον τὸν ὑπερούσιον τίκτει»
(Κοντάκιον τῶν Χριστουγέννων)**

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Μέσα στὴν ἀτμόσφαιρα τῶν ἐορτῶν τῶν Χριστουγέννων, ἡ ὕμνογραφία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μᾶς ἐπαναφέρει στὸ βαθύτερο νόημα τῆς μεγάλης αὐτῆς ἐορτῆς, ὥστε νὰ ἀναλογιστοῦμε αὐτὸ τὸ μεγάλο θαῦμα τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ Κυρίου μας καὶ νὰ γεμίσουν οἱ καρδιές μας μὲ ὑπέρλαμπρη χαρά, ὅπως οἱ Ἄγγελοι, οἱ Ποιμένες καὶ οἱ Μάγοι. Ἡ γέννηση τοῦ ἄρχοντα τῆς εἰρήνης, ἡ ὁποία λαμβάνει χώρα σὲ μία ταπεινὴ σπηλιὰ στὴ Βηθλεέμ, παρουσία τῶν ἄλογων πλασμάτων, εἶναι τὸ θαῦμα τῶν θαυμάτων. Διότι, ὅπως μᾶς διαβεβαιώνει καὶ τὸ κοντάκιο τοῦ ἁγίου Ρωμανοῦ τοῦ

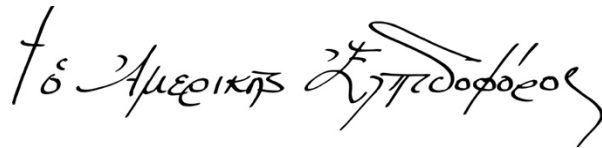
Μελωδοῦ, ὁ Θεός, ὁ ὁποῖος εἶναι ὑπεράνω κάθε δυνατῆς νοήσεως καὶ κάθε ἀνθρώπινης κατανοήσεως, «ὁ ὑπερούσιος», γίνεται ἄνθρωπος, ἀπὸ τῆ μητέρα τῆς Παρθένου.

Πρόκειται γιὰ ἔκφραση τῆς ὑπέροχης ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ πρὸς ὅλη τὴν κτίση. Διότι, ὅπως λέει ὁ εὐαγγελιστής, «Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον» (Ἰωάν. 3,16). Καὶ εἶναι ταυτόχρονα πράξη ὑψίστης ἀγάπης τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸ Θεό. Διότι ἡ Παρθένος δέχθηκε νὰ γίνει ὁ ζωντανὸς ναὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, προσφέροντας τὸ ἴδιο τῆς τὸ σῶμα, γιὰ νὰ δοθεῖ ἡ ἀνθρώπινη φύση κατὰ τὴν ἐνσάρκωση τοῦ Θεοῦ. Γιὰ ἑννέα μῆνες φιλοξένησε τὸν Κύριο τοῦ σύμπαντος στὴ μητέρα τῆς, ὥσπου ἔφθασε ἡ στιγμή «ὁ ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν ὄντων» νὰ ἐξέλθει στὸν εὐθραυστο καὶ δοκιμαζόμενο αὐτὸ κόσμο.

Ὡς νεογέννητο καὶ εὐάλωτο βρέφος, ἐξαρτώμενο κατὰ πάντα ἀπὸ τὴ μητέρα του καὶ ἀπὸ ὅσους τὴν περιέβαλλαν, βρίσκοντας ἀσφάλεια, τροφή καὶ προστασία, ὁ Κύριος καὶ Θεός μας εἰσέρχεται στὴν ἀνθρώπινη ἐμπειρία, ὥστε καὶ ἐμεῖς, μὲ τὴ σειρά μας, νὰ εἰσέλθουμε στὴ θεία ζωὴ. Διότι καθένας ἀπὸ ἐμᾶς ἔχει πλέον τὴ δυνατότητα νὰ ἐλκύσει μέσα στὴν καρδιά, τὸν νοῦ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴ του τὴν πληρότητα τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς «χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος» (Ἰωάν. 1,16). Τὸ εὐάλωτο τῆς ὑπάρξεώς μας γίνεται τὸ εὐάλωτο τοῦ ἐνσαρκωμένου Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐνῶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος διαποτίζει πλέον κάθε πτυχὴ τῆς κτίσεως.

Γι' αὐτὸ, ἀγαπητοί μου ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ, ἄς ἀγκαλιάσουμε τὸ νεογέννητο τῆς Βηθλεέμ, ποὺ γεννᾶται μέσα στὴ σπηλιὰ τῆς καρδιᾶς μας. Εἶναι πρᾶο καὶ ταπεινὸ καὶ γνωρίζει πόσο ἐκτεθειμένη καὶ εὐάλωτη εἶναι ἡ ἀνθρώπινη φύση μας, διότι τὴν ὑπέμεινε γιὰ χάρις μας. Ἄς γεμίσουμε, λοιπόν, τὴ ζωὴ μας μὲ τὰ χαρίσματα ποὺ μᾶς δίνει ἀπλόχερα, δηλαδὴ τὴν ἀγάπη, τὸ ἔλεος, τὴ συμπόνια, τὴν πραότητα καὶ τὴ συγχώρηση. Καὶ ὅπως ἡ Παρθένος τὸν ἔβλεπε νὰ αὐξάνει μέσα στὴ μητέρα τῆς, ἄς ἀτενίσουμε καὶ ἐμεῖς τὸ θαῦμα τῆς παρουσίας του μέσα στὴ ζωὴ μας, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέσα στὶς κοινότητές μας, δοξολογώντας τὸ ἅγιο ὄνομά του.

Χριστὸς γεννᾶται! Δοξάσατε!



† ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος



***Thank you to the following families who have donated poinsettia plants
in honor of or in memory of loved ones,
or just to beautify our church at Christmastime!***

Chris & Victoria Altum	In memory of Deacon Euripides and Mary Christulides
Angelo & Alexandra Ballas	In memory of Loula Giakoumatos
Matt, Joann, and Nick Bannon	In memory of Nick Moukoulis and Bill & Judi Bannon
Vinnie & Sophie Caliendo	
Jim & Mary Caravoulias	In memory of George & Minnie Alexiadis and Charlie & Connie Caravoulias
The Christou Family	
Marlena Crowley	In honor of my nouna, Linda Tripolitis
Vicki & Steve Dowzicky	In memory of Harry Papastrat & Dimos Miras
Eleni Evangelopoulos	In memory of Nicholas Papageorge
Art & Peggy Happas	In memory of Panagioti & Panagiota Kostomite
Vela Hatzipavlidis	In memory of Thomas & Maria Hatzipavlidis
Taylor & Carla Anastasia Johnson	In memory of Carl Augustine
Andrew & Georgiana Kane	In memory of our parents
Jeff & Lisa Kerns	In memory of Jesse & Lola Presutti
Evangelia A. Klapakis	In memory of our loved ones
The Klapakis Family	In memory of Michael, Eleni, and Chrysostomos
Lucy & Bart Kline	In memory of Solon Tsaoussis
Mr. & Mrs. Leonidas N. Koletas	In memory of Ernest, Nicholas, and Athanasia
Gilda Koutsouroumbas	
Dean Laskaris	In honor of Nina Laskaris
Effie R. Liacouras	In memory of George C. Liacouras
Alexis & Cary Limberakis	In memory of Fr. John & Presvytera Elizabeth Limberakis and Jack & Dolly Demetris
The Lowry Family	In memory of Mary & Thomas Stathopoulos
Ed & Mary McAdoo	In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Francis McAdoo, Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Nichols, and In memory of Mr. & Mrs. George Englesson and Mr. & Mrs. Emanuel Englesson
Irene Malagari	In memory of my parents, John & Helen Christopher
Steven & Rachel Malagari	In memory of 1st Sgt. Corey Nawrocki, USMC Retired
Angelo & Gloria Metropoulos	In memory of Thomas, Christine, and Michael Demetris
The Nazzaro Family	In memory of Spiro & Stella Vanezalos
The Neatherly Family	
Bessie Neofotistos	In memory of my husband George and my son Steven, and in honor of my daughter Elaine and family

Alexander & Marianne Nikas

The Notaras Family

Katherine & Anthony Pantazopoulos

The Papadakes Family

The Papadimitriou Family

Dr. Peter & Phyllis Patukas

Chris & Angelina Pavlou and Family

The Peoples Family

Aram & Elaine Piligian

The Pogas Family

David & Flora Poloway

Jim Reynolds

Rami & Maria (Fafalios) Richie

Anne & Matt Sabia

The Samios Family

The Sprayberry Family

Matthew & Melissa Stolarczyk

Maria & Keith Swope

Vasilios & Sofia Tatsis

Alexandra & Lazarus Tavlarides

Linda Tripolitis

Shirley Tripolitis

Katherine H. Tsipras

Seraphim & Patricia Tsipras

Irene Tsokas

The Tsouros Family

Alexis & Roger Witt

Ita Zaferes and Family

Charles & Catherine Zarcone

In memory of Ruth Andrews Nikas, Bill & Carolyn Ruhl, Despina & Alexandros Tsinikas, **and**

In memory of Ralph & Alberta Andrews, Demetrios & Anna Manolis, Bruce Andrews and Scott Meacham, **and**

In honor of Nicholas & Elizabeth Nikas

In memory of our loved ones

In memory of James Stamas **and** in honor of Stephen Stamas

In memory of Pauline Papadakes

In memory of Nicholas Papadimitriou

In memory of our brother Tom and sister Theodora

In memory of Demetrios & Kyriaki Pavlou

In memory of Susan M. Peoples, Michael Peoples, and Larry Kontos, **and** in honor of Jim Concannon

In memory of George and Steven Neofotistos **and** in honor of Bessie Neofotistos

In memory of Sarah Beckstrom

In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Aris Podotas and Mr. & Mrs. Michael Poloway

In memory of Gigi Reynolds and Nick & Tula Ganavazos

In memory of Anthony & Patricia Fafalios, Karissa Conner, and EJ Blaszcak **and**

In memory of Albert Richie, Hasna Saoud, and Sarah Assali **and**

In honor of Dr. Alexia Richie's 2025 Medical School Graduation and Neurology Residency

In memory of the Scandalios and Callipolites Families

In memory of our loved ones

In memory of James and Michael Farrell **and** in honor of Katina Athineos

In memory of Ernest & Marian Laskaris

In memory of Konstantinos, Eleni, and Dionysia Savas

In memory of our loved ones who we have lost

In memory of Smaragdi Carolas

In memory of George Tripolitis, beloved father **and**

In honor of Zoey Cosette Kreiser, beloved granddaughter **and**

in honor of the Tripolitis, Ruser, Kreiser, Crowley, and Klein Families

In memory of George Tripolitis

In memory of Speros & Olga Tsipras, Elias S. Tsipras I, and Maria Tsipras

In memory of Andreas, Ekaterini, and Demetrios A. Tsipras

In memory of my husband Chris and my sister Anthroniki

In memory of Isidoros N. & Markella C. Tsouros, Phokion C. Lacas, Father Stephen P. Theophilos **and**

In memory of Isidoros & Zoitsa Costalas, Michael C. Raptis and Constantinos I. Costalas

In memory of Alexander, Anna, John, and Peter Skylakon

In memory of James Zaferes

In memory of our parents



Prot. No. 977

Patriarchal Encyclical for Christmas

+ B A R T H O L O M E W

By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and

Ecumenical Patriarch to All the Plenitude of the Church

Grace, Mercy and Peace from the Savior Christ Born in Bethlehem

Most honorable Brother Hierarchs,

Beloved children in the Lord,

Having once again been found worthy of reaching the great feast of the Nativity in the flesh of the Son and Word of God, we glorify the "inexpressible and incomprehensible condescension" of the Savior of the human race and Redeemer of all creation from corruption, even as we proclaim with the angels "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to all people."¹

Christ was revealed as "Emmanuel,"² as "God with us" and "for us", as God beside each of us and "closer to us than ourselves."³ The pre-eternal Word of God, who is "consubstantial with the Father," as formulated in doctrine by the First Ecumenical Council, whose 1700th

¹ Lk 2.14.

² Mt. 1.23.

³ Nicholas Cabasilas, *On the Life in Christ*, VI, PG 150. 660.

anniversary was appropriately celebrated by the Christian world over this year, “becomes like His own creature,” being incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary “in order to render human beings into gods.”

The Apolytikion (Dismissal Hymn) for Christmas declares that the Nativity of Christ “has shone to the world the Light of knowledge” and revealed “the transcendent and universal meaning” of life and history, namely the truth that only the Christian faith can fully satisfy the deeper pursuit of the mind and thirst of the heart, that “salvation is found in no one else”⁴ but Christ. Thenceforth, the “knowledge” that “puffs up”⁵ is being judged by the words of the Lord, that “You will come to know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”⁶

The suprarational event of the Incarnation is experienced and repeated spiritually in the life of the faithful, who love the epiphany of the Savior Christ. As St. Maximus the Confessor writes: “The Word of God was once born in the flesh, but desires always to be born in the spirit out of love for those who desire it.”⁷ In this sense, the Feast of the Nativity, of the divine Incarnation and the deification of humankind by grace, does not direct us to an event of the past, but guides us to the

⁴ Acts 4.12.

⁵ Cf. 1 Cor. 8.1.

⁶ Jn 8.32.

⁷ *Various Texts on Theology and the Divine Economy* X, 8, PG 90.1181.

“future city,”⁸ to the heavenly kingdom of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In a world, where the echo of war and noise of weapons prevail, the angelic “peace in the world” is resounded and the Lord’s voice blesses “the peacemakers” while His Holy Church prays during the Divine Liturgy “for the peace from above” and “for the peace of the whole world.” Genuine faith in the living God strengthens our struggle for peace and righteousness, even when we are faced with humanly insurmountable impediments. As the Message of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church—whose tenth anniversary we shall celebrate next year—inspiringly states: “the oil of religious experience must be used to heal wounds and not to rekindle the fire of military conflicts.”⁹

The Gospel of peace especially concerns us Christians. We consider it impermissible to remain indifferent before the fragmentation of Christendom, particularly when this attitude is accompanied by fundamentalism and explicit rejection of inter-Christian dialogue that ultimately aims at transcending division and achieving unity. The obligation of striving for Christian unity is non-negotiable. The responsibility to continue the efforts of the pioneers of

⁸ Heb. 13.14.

⁹ Paragraph 4.

the Ecumenical Movement along with the justification of their vision and labor rest on the younger generation of Christians.

We belong to Christ, who is “our peace”¹⁰ and “the fulfilment of joy” in our life, the “goodwill” that springs from the conviction that “the truth has arrived” and “the shadow has passed,” that love is stronger than hatred and life stronger than death, that evil does not have the final word in the life of the world, which is directed by Christ, who is “the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.”¹¹ This faith must shine and be revealed in the way we honor Christmas and the other feasts of the Church. The joyous celebration of the faithful should bear witness to the transformative power of our faith in Christ. It should be a time of goodwill and spiritual delight, the experience of that ineffable “great joy”¹² that is “synonymous with the Gospel.”

Most honorable Brothers and beloved children,

In 2026, the Holy Great Church of Christ will honor the completion of 1400 years since August 7, 626, when the Akathist Hymn was chanted “upstanding” during the Sacred Vigil in the Church of Panagia Vlachernae, as an expression of gratitude to the All-Holy Mother of God, for the safeguarding of the City of Constantinople from

¹⁰ Eph. 2.14.

¹¹ Heb. 13.8.

¹² Cf. Lk 2.10.

the attack of hostile forces. On the occasion of this historic milestone, the 2026 Yearbook of the Ecumenical Patriarchate will be dedicated to the commemoration of this important event for our tradition and identity, which are inseparably and profoundly associated with the honor reserved for our ever-blessed and most pure Mother of God, the defender and protector of our people.

In this spirit, as we bow before Mary who holds the infant Jesus in her arms, and as we worship the Divine Word who assumed our form, we wish upon all of you a blessed Holy Twelvetide, and a fruitful in good deeds and filled with divine gifts new year of the Lord's favor, to Whom belong all glory, honor and worship, now and always, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Christmas 2025

+Bartholomew of Constantinople

Your fervent supplicant of all before God

To be read in churches after the Gospel Reading during the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Christmas

ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΙΚΗ ΑΠΟΔΕΙΞΗ
ΓΙΑ ΤΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ

+ Β Α Ρ Θ Ο Λ Ο Μ Α Ι Ο Σ
ΕΛΕΩι ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ – ΝΕΑΣ
ΡΩΜΗΣ
ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ
ΣΕ ΟΛΟ ΤΟ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ
ΧΑΡΗ, ΕΛΕΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ
ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΓΕΝΝΗΘΕΝΤΑ ΣΤΗ ΒΗΘΛΕΕΜ ΣΩΤΗΡΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟ

Τιμιώτατοι ἄδελφοὶ Ἱεράρχες καὶ τέκνα ἐν Κυρίῳ εὐλογημένα,

Ἀφοῦ ἀξιωθήκαμε καὶ πάλι νὰ φθάσουμε στὴ μεγάλη ἐορτὴ τῆς κατὰ σάρκα Γέννησης τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ, δοξολογοῦμε τὴν «ἄφραστη καὶ ἀκατάληπτη συγκατάβαση» τοῦ Σωτῆρος τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ Λυτρωτῆ ἀπάσης τῆς κτίσεως ἀπὸ τὴ φθορᾶ, ἀναβοῶντας μαζὶ μὲ τοὺς Ἀγγέλους «Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνῃ, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία»¹.

Ὁ Χριστὸς ἀποκαλύφθηκε ὡς «Ἐμμανουήλ»², ὡς «Θεὸς μεθ' ἡμῶν» καὶ «ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν», ὡς Θεὸς πλησίον ἑνὸς ἐκάστου ἀπὸ ἐμᾶς, ὡς «καὶ πιὸ κοντὰ μας ἀκόμα καὶ ἀπὸ ἐμᾶς τοὺς ἰδίους»³. Ὁ «ὁμοούσιος» τῷ Θεῷ Πατρὶ προαιώνιος Λόγος, καθὼς δογματίσει ἡ Πρώτη Οἰκουμενικὴ Σύνοδος στὴ Νίκαια, τῆς ὁποίας ἡ χιλιοστὴ ἐπτακοσιοστὴ ἐπέτειος ἀπὸ τῆς συγκλήσεως τιμήθηκε ὅπως ἔπρεπε ἀπὸ τὸν χριστιανικὸ κόσμον κατὰ τὸ παρελθὸν ἔτος, «ὁμοιώνεται μὲ τὸ ἴδιο τὸ δημιουργημά του», ἀφοῦ σαρκώθηκε ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου, «γιὰ νὰ κάνει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους θεούς».

Τὸ Ἀπολυτίκιον τῶν Χριστουγέννων διακηρῦσσει ὅτι ἡ Γέννησις τοῦ Χριστοῦ «ἀνέτειλε τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ φῶς τὸ τῆς γνώσεως», ἀποκάλυψε τὸ «ὑπερβατικὸ καὶ καθολικὸ νόημα» τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας, τὴν ἀλήθεια, ὅτι μόνον ἡ χριστιανικὴ πίστις μπορεῖ νὰ ἱκανοποιήσῃ πλήρως τὶς βαθύτερες ἀναζητήσεις τοῦ νοῦ καὶ τὴ δίψα τῆς καρδίας, ὅτι «ἡ σωτηρία δὲν ὑπάρχει σὲ κανένα ἄλλο»⁴ παρὰ μόνον στὸ

¹ Λουκ. β', 14.

² Ματθ. α', 23.

³ Νικολάου Καβάσιλα, *Περὶ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς*, ΣΤ', PG 150, 660.

⁴ Πράξ. δ', 12.

Χριστό. Ἐκτοτε, «ἡ γνῶση», ἡ ὁποία «φέρει ὑπερηφάνεια»⁵, κρίνεται μὲ βάση τὰ λόγια τοῦ Κυρίου «Γνωρίστε τὴν ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια θὰ σᾶς ἐλευθερώσει»⁶.

Τὸ ὑπέρολογο γεγονός τῆς Ἐνσαρκώσεως βιώνεται καὶ ἐπαναλαμβάνεται πνευματικὰ στὴ ζωὴ τῶν πιστῶν, ἐκείνων ποὺ ἀγαποῦν τὴν ἐμβάνιση τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ. Ὅπως γράφει ὁ Ἅγιος Μάξιμος ὁ Ὁμολογητῆς, «Ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ γεννήθηκε μία φορὰ κατὰ σάρκα, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ φιλανθρωπία γεννιέται πάντοτε κατὰ πνεῦμα μὲ τὴ θέλησή του γιὰ χάρι ὅσων τὸ ἐπιθυμοῦν»⁷. Μὲ τὴν ἔννοια αὐτή, ὁ ἑορτασμός τῶν Χριστουγέννων, τῆς Σαρκώσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς κατὰ χάρι θέωσης τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, δὲν μᾶς στρέφει πρὸς ἓνα γεγονός τοῦ παρελθόντος, ἀλλὰ μᾶς κατευθύνει πρὸς τὴν «μέλλουσα πόλη»⁸, πρὸς τὴν αἰώνια Βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος.

Σὲ ἓνα κόσμῳ, ὅπου ἠχοῦν οἱ πολεμικὲς ἰαχὲς καὶ ἡ κλαγγὴ τῶν ὅπλων, διασαλπίζεται τὸ ἀγγελικὸ μήνυμα «ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη», ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Κυρίου μακαρίζει τοὺς «εἰρηνοποιούς» καὶ ἡ Ἁγία Ἐκκλησία του δέεται στὴ Θεία Λειτουργία «ὑπὲρ τῆς ἄνωθεν εἰρήνης» καὶ «ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου». Ἡ γνήσια πίστις σὲ ζωντανὸ Θεὸ ἐνδυναμώνει τὸν ἀγῶνα γιὰ τὴν εἰρήνη καὶ τὴ δικαιοσύνη, ἀκόμη καὶ ὅταν αὐτὸς βρίσκεται ἐνώπιον ἀνυπέρβλητων, κατ' ἀνθρώπου, ἐμποδίων. Ὅπως μὲ θεία ἔμπνευση δηλώνεται στὸ Μήνυμα τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, τὴν πρώτη δεκαετηρίδα τῆς ὁποίας θὰ ἑορτάσουμε κατὰ τὸ ἐπερχόμενο ἔτος, «τὸ λάδι τοῦ θρησκευτικοῦ βιώματος πρέπει νὰ χρησιμοποιεῖται γιὰ νὰ ἐπουλῶνει πληγὲς καὶ ὄχι γιὰ νὰ ἀναζωπυρῶνει τὴ φωτιὰ τῶν πολεμικῶν συρράξεων»⁹.

Τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τῆς εἰρήνης ἀφορᾷ ἐξόχως ἐμᾶς τοὺς Χριστιανούς. Θεωροῦμε ἀνεπίτρεπτη τὴν ἀδιαφορία γιὰ τὴ διάσπαση τῆς Χριστιανοσύνης, ἰδίως ὅταν αὐτὴ συνοδεύεται ἀπὸ φονταμενταλισμὸ καὶ ρητὴ ἀπόρριψη τῶν διαχριστιανικῶν διαλόγων, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἔχουν τελικὸ σκοπὸ τὴν ὑπέρβαση τῆς διαίρεσεως καὶ τὴν ἐπίτευξη τῆς ἐνότητας. Τὸ χρέος τοῦ ἀγῶνα γιὰ τὴ χριστιανικὴ ἐνότητα εἶναι ἀδιαπραγμάτευτο. Στὴ νέα γενιὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀνήκει ἡ εὐθύνη τῆς συνεχίσεως τῶν προσπαθειῶν τῶν πρωτεργατῶν τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κινήσεως καὶ τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν ὁραμάτων καὶ τῶν μόχθων τους.

Ἀνῆκουμε στὸ Χριστό, ὁ ὁποῖος εἶναι «ἡ εἰρήνη μας»¹⁰ καὶ ἡ «ὀλοκληρωμένη χαρὰ» στὴ ζωὴ μας, ἡ «εὐδοκία» ποὺ πηγάζει ἀπὸ τὴ βεβαιότητα ὅτι «ἦρθε ἡ ἀλήθεια» καὶ «πέρασε ἡ σκιά», ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη εἶναι πιὸ ἰσχυρὴ ἀπὸ τὸ μῖσος καὶ ἡ ζωὴ πιὸ ἰσχυρὴ ἀπὸ τὸ θάνατο, ὅτι τὸ κακὸ δὲν ἔχει τὸν τελευταῖο λόγον στὴ ζωὴ τοῦ

⁵ Πρβλ. Α΄ Κορ. η΄, 1.

⁶ Ἰωάν, η΄, 32.

⁷ Μαξίμου τοῦ Ὁμολογητοῦ, *Κεφάλαια διάφορα θεολογικά τε καὶ οἰκονομικά*, I, η΄, PG 90, 1181.

⁸ Ἐβρ. ιγ΄, 14.

⁹ Μήνυμα τῆς Ἁγίας καὶ Μεγάλης Συνόδου τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας πρὸς τὸν Ὁρθόδοξο λαὸ καὶ κάθε ἀνθρώπο καλῆς θελήσεως, § 4.

¹⁰ Ἐφεσ. β΄, 14.

κόσμου, τὴ ὁποία κατευθύνει ὁ Χριστός, ὁ «χθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ ἴδιος καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνες»¹¹. Αὐτὴ ἡ πίστις πρέπει νὰ διαλάμπει καὶ νὰ ἀποκαλύπτεται στὸν τρόπο μὲ τὸν ὁποῖο τιμοῦμε τὰ Χριστούγεννα καὶ τὶς ἄλλες ἐκκλησιαστικὲς ἐορτές. Ὁ ἐορτασμός ἐκ μέρους τῶν πιστῶν ποὺ τέρπει τὸ Θεὸ ὀφείλει νὰ μαρτυρεῖ τὴ μεταμορφωτικὴ δύναμη τῆς πίστεως στὸ Χριστὸ γιὰ τὴ ζωὴ μας, νὰ εἶναι καιρὸς εὐδοκίας καὶ πνευματικῆς εὐφροσύνης, βιώσεως ἐκείνης τῆς ἀνεκκλήτητος «μεγάλης χαρᾶς»¹², ἡ ὁποία εἶναι «συνώνυμος τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου».

Ἰερώτατοι καὶ Θεοφιλέστατοι ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀγαπητὰ τέκνα,

Κατὰ τὸ ἔτος 2026, ἡ Ἁγία τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλῃ Ἐκκλησία τιμᾷ τὴ συμπλήρωση 1400 ἐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς 7^{ης} Αὐγούστου 626, ὅταν ἐψάλη «ὀρθοστάδην» ὁ Ἀκάθιστος Ὑμνος, κατὰ τὴν Ἱερὴ Ἀγρυπνία στὸν Ἱερὸ Ναὸ τῆς Παναγίας Βλαχερνῶν, σὲ ἔκφραση εὐγνωμοσύνης πρὸς τὴν Ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκο, γιὰ τὴ διάσωση τῆς Κωνσταντινούπολης ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιδρομὴ ἐχθρῶν δυσμενῶν. Μὲ τὴν ἱστορικὴ αὐτὴ ἐπέτειο, ἡ Ἐπετηρίδα τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου τοῦ ἔτους 2026 ἀφιερώνεται στὴν ἀνάμνηση τοῦ σημαντικοῦ αὐτοῦ γεγονότος γιὰ τὴν παράδοσιν καὶ τὴν ταυτότητά μας, οἱ ὁποῖες εἶναι ἀδιάσπαστα καὶ βαθεῖα συνυφασμένες μὲ τὴν τιμὴ πρὸς τὴν ἀειμακάριστη καὶ παναμώμητη Μητέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ μας καὶ Ὑπέρμαχο Στρατηγὸ τοῦ Γένους.

Στὸ πνεῦμα αὐτό, κλίνοντας τὸ γόνυ ἐνώπιον τῆς Βρεφοκρατούσας Μαριὰμ καὶ προσκυνώντας τὸν Θεὸ Λόγο ποὺ ἀνέλαβε τὴ δική μας μορφή, εὐχόμεστε σὲ ὅλους σας εὐλογημένο τὸ Ἅγιο Δωδεκαήμερο, καλλίκαρπο δὲ σὲ ἔργα ἀγαθὰ καὶ πλήρη θείων δωρημάτων τὸ νέο ἔτος τῆς χρηστότητας τοῦ Κυρίου, στὸν ὁποῖο πρέπει κάθε δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνηση, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ σὲ ὅλους τοὺς αἰῶνες. Ἀμήν!

Χριστούγεννα 2025

† ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως
διάπυρος πρὸς Θεὸ εὐχέτης ὄλων
σας.

¹¹ Ἐβρ. ιγ', 8.

¹² Πρβλ. Λουκ. β', 10.