



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

### Transfiguration 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,

Today we, much like the disciples Christ took with Him up to Mt. Tabor, follow our Lord and witness Him arrayed in light, transfigured before our eyes. This light shone so brightly the Apostles could not bear it as they beheld the revealed Christ before them, both God and man. The feast of the Transfiguration is a feast that bolsters our faith much as the disciples were fortified in theirs through the events that took place on Mt. Tabor. They were given added courage since Christ knew, as the vesperal hymns of the feast teach us, that His sufferings and crucifixion would test His disciples. We should also acknowledge, however, that the Transfiguration is an event that not only bolstered the faith of the disciples, but it aids in strengthening our faith as well.

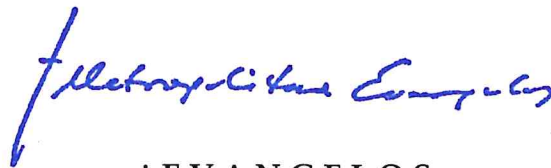
But the Gospel reading also points to another important element. When Christ was being transfigured, a voice from the cloud said, *"This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him"* (Matt. 17:5). The disciples were told to listen to Christ and though they were tested through the various events that would come to take place, all of them, except Judas, would come to listen to their Lord. The words of God the Father were not meant just for the disciples, but they hold true for us as well. We must listen to our Lord who constantly shows us the way of righteousness and truth.

We live in a world full of darkness and we must stay focused on our spiritual life even while society constantly bombards us with depraved thoughts and images. Nevertheless, we are given these words by God to remind us to stay focused on Christ despite all the distractions of the world, despite all the fears we may have, and despite the fact that the evil one is working to keep us away from our Lord. We must listen for our Lord's voice, He who guides us as the Good Shepherd, not just in one particular

moment, but every day and at every hour. The voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd, asks us to recognize His image in the face of our neighbors and, in doing so, feed the hungry, care for the sick, visit the marginalized, and protect the defenseless. In this way, we listen to our Lord and reinforce our faith while offering a witness of our faith to others.

My beloved in the Lord, the feast of the Transfiguration offers us an opportunity to renew our commitment to Christ by responding to the call of God who tells us to listen to His Son. It is my sincerest prayer that all of us heed this call so that we may live out our faith and offer a witness to a world in need of hope.

With Paternal Love and Blessings in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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