



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

September 1, 2011

The Very Reverend and 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 our Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

I greet you in Christ the Lord and wish you all a Happy New Year! How strange those words sound in today's society, at this point in our calendar year. Yet today my beloved, we celebrate the beginning of the Church calendar, our Orthodox Christian Ecclesiastical New Year. The term Indiction comes from the days of the Roman Empire and from the Emperors themselves. Historically, the Indiction addresses were prepared at the end of the harvests and beginning of the new season, as the people were in preparation for beginning again, waiting to sow seeds and nurture another harvest and journey throughout another year. These messages from the Emperors were designed to provide direction for the remainder of the year. The message is a 'rudder' to steer the people, so that they would adhere to the will of the Emperor.

The Church uses this time as well to provide her direction to all peoples. This direction [the direction Christ our Lord gave to us] is given now so that at the beginning of the New Year we may 'chart the proper course', and so that we may 'stay the course' throughout the entire year. As the holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew tells us in his Gospel, in the beginning St. John the Baptist came first, preaching in the wilderness for the people to "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3: 2) So the Indiction [the direction] is put forth first in the new ecclesiastical year, that we may embark upon the right and proper path, the Orthodox path.

My beloved, that you may all know the wisdom and instructions Solomon speaks about, and which Christ Himself became incarnate to impart to us, I exhort you at the beginning of this New Year to not only *remember* the following, but to *participate* in the following: Pray before all actions, for in prayer we come into conversation with our Lord and the Saints receiving the grace of God Himself; be always repentant and recognize that we are fallen and sinful, for all sin and all fall short of the glory of God... "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone..." (John 8: 7) In spite of our fallen human nature, we can take strength in Him, in whose image and likeness, we have been created. Mankind is called to live a Holy life, one in which we strive for the ideal, a life in Christ; the true life which we as the Crown of God's Creation were meant to live. Be mindful and adhere to the fast seasons of the Church for these times provide for all of us, time to correct our course throughout the year. If we use these times for the correction, guidance, and direction they are intended to provide, then we will always return to the port of the Lord and be safe upon the seas of life.

I leave you with these final words from the Kontakion of the Feast of Indiction, "You who created all things in Your infinite wisdom, and set the times by Your own authority, grant Your Christian people victories. Blessing our comings and goings throughout the year, guide our works according to Your divine will." Praying that Christ our True God will illuminate your journey throughout this coming year, I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

† EVANGELOS
Metropolitan of New Jersey