



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

### Dormition of the Theotokos 2017

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 Sisterhood, Faculty and Students of the Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools, Directors and Participants of all of the Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Greek Orthodox Communities of our Holy Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved,

In the life of the Church we encounter several saints and holy people whose lives inspire us and whose deeds prove to be examples for our everyday lives. But there is no greater saint of the Church nor is there any saint who shares more in our struggles than that of the Theotokos—the Mother of God. Perhaps it is for this reason that she is “...*more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim.*” As we commemorate the Dormition of the Theotokos today, we are reminded of the various reasons we honor her and why she is so revered in the Orthodox Church.

There are various reasons for which we honor the Mother of God. One of these reasons is that she is the representative of humanity before her Son and her God. God did not desire to intervene and to infringe upon humanity’s freedom, even when humanity had fallen. However, it was the pureness of the person of the Panagia and her freely saying “Yes” to God and “Yes” to bearing Christ in her womb that allowed the curse of the devil on humanity to be reversed. It was her free-willed decision that opened the door of salvation to humanity once more. Thus, as the one who gave her entire self freely, she has the special position of being the representative for all of humanity as she continually intercedes on our behalf.

Another reason she is so revered by the Orthodox everywhere is because she not only holds the title of the Mother of God, but she also holds the role of mother to all of us as well. One of the most comforting and tender words in all languages is that of “*mother*”. Whereas the role of a mother is usually limited to her own children, the Theotokos took on this role and included all of humanity as her children. It is her to whom we flee when we are afflicted, when we are in pain, and when we are in despair precisely because in her motherly love that nurtured God, she also guards, protects, and nurtures us.

Therefore, as we commemorate her Dormition today, we should not only remember her motherly attributes or the favor she has with her Son as she intercedes for all of humanity, but we should principally remember that her devotion to God opened the door to paradise for all of creation. It is to her example that we should strive every day of our lives as we seek to *“commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.”* Praying the Theotokos continues to guard, guide, and protect you all, 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