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His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey issues message of hope regarding the COVID-19 pandemic



His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey has issued his latest message regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

The message reads:

Archpastoral Message – May 4, 2020

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,

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

I pray this message finds you all well physically and spiritually experiencing the Heavenly Blessings of God as we continue to celebrate the glorious Resurrection of our Lord.

During the past several weeks, our communities, our country, and the world have contended with the devastating effects of the Coronavirus which has sickened millions, taken the lives of hundreds of thousands, and caused economic distress for countless persons throughout the world.

Yet, even in the midst of these troubling times, we should endeavor to have hope since we know that our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, is risen from the dead, granting us new life through Him. Let us, therefore, reflect on the words of the Prophet Jeremiah who tells us, “Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is” (Jer. 17:7). I implore you to keep hope and faith as your strengths for they will be your anchor against spiritual apathy and they will help to guide you spiritually and emotionally during these uncertain times. For without hope, we perpetually live on in desire without allowing our eyes to see that which God is preparing for us.

The fallout from this crisis has certainly been felt within our communities also as many individuals are physically battling this virus while others have sadly succumbed to its viciousness. In addition to this, many have lost their jobs or are experiencing financial hardships due to the severity of the economic consequences of the virus. Though we should always focus on our Lord, it is during these times that we must especially turn towards Him for help and comfort. We must keep the words of the Psalmist close to our hearts, “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven

and earth” (Ps. 121:1-2).

As we entreat God to deliver us from the devastation of the Coronavirus, let us also be Orthodox Christians of action and do whatever we can to help our neighbors who are struggling also. Let us be mindful of those who have been affected the most especially the elderly, the individuals who are less financially secure, and the vulnerable persons of our communities. I ask that you try to help your neighbors to the best of your ability so that you may put our Orthodox Christian faith into practice. Furthermore, I ask that you continue to pray fervently for everyone and particularly for those who or sick and for the medical professionals who risk their lives to help others recover from this virus. Finally, I ask that you keep the memory of those who have fallen asleep in your prayers, that God may grant them eternal rest.

My beloved in the Lord, the road ahead is still filled with intense struggles and difficult days, but let us always remember that God is with us and with His help, we will endure. Do not lose hope or faith since we hear Saint Paul state in his letter to the Hebrews, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). Stay strong in your Orthodox faith, remain fervent in your prayer, and be steadfast in your love and service to the Church. I look forward to the day soon when we will be once again gather in our Ecclesiastical Communities in person so that we may to glorify God together. Praying that our Lord continues to guard and protect each of you during these tumultuous times, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings in the Risen Lord,

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