



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Transfiguration of our Lord 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 today's feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Tabor, we are reminded of a light manifested in glory. It is a light that had a profound effect on all creation and it gives us a narrow glimpse into God's immeasurable greatness.

The light of the Transfiguration epitomizes the manifestation of Christ's glory on Mount Tabor. St. Matthew the Evangelist writes, *"And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light"* (Mt. 17:2). This uncreated light had shined brilliantly upon the apostles with Christ who Himself is the light of the world. Thus, Christ becomes the archetypal image of light. It is *"The light of Christ that illumines all"* as we say in the liturgy of the pre-sanctified gifts. It is the light of Christ that accompanies a newly baptized individual in the Church. It is the light of Christ that is held by married couples as they take their first steps as husband and wife. It is the light of Christ that we receive at Pascha, thus, reminding us of the promise of our own resurrection. Whereas these latter examples are not of the same nature as the uncreated light we see in today's feast, they nevertheless emphasize its importance.

The manifestation of the light of the Transfiguration is not just a historical event, but it reveals to us an image of the Kingdom. For St. Gregory of Nazianzus says, *"And on the mountain He was bright as the lightning, and became more luminous than the sun, initiating us into the mystery of the future"* (4th Theological Oration, XIX). This luminous uncreated light was the momentary foretaste of the Kingdom to come and it is this light that sustains our faith in the common resurrection of all.

Thus, with the feast of the Transfiguration, Christ's words at the Mount of Olives takes on even more significance, *"I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (Jn. 8:12). Praying that we are all guided to Christ as the true light of the world, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

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