



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΙΑΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ Γ.Ο.Χ. ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
HELLENIC ORTHODOX TRADITIONALIST CHURCH OF AMERICA
HOLY METROPOLIS G.O.C. OF AMERICA

Nativity Encyclical 2014

Beloved children in the Lord,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

On this year's feast of our Lord's Nativity in the Flesh, I think it is appropriate for us to reflect upon the blessings God has granted us during the past year; and moreover, why He has granted such blessings. The Lord's Nativity brings us new life; it renews Christ's grace within us. In the exaposteilarion of the feast, we chant "the Lord hath visited His people from on High." This year, we are able to perceive the Lord's visitation very clearly in light of the blessed union of True Orthodox Christians which we all have so earnestly desired. We are now witnesses of the great mystery of unity. "Behold what is so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity!" After decades of separation, the Church has victoriously triumphed!

I believe that this miracle has taken place primarily through the intercessions of the saints of modern times. Here in America, three groups that were separated in the past - the GOC, the majority of HOCNA, and the Synod in Resistance - are now united under the protection of our Mother Church of Greece. Yet though we belong to the Greek Church, one of the things which makes our local church of America unique is the fact that all of us have roots in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. The Russian Church is important to us not only because it ordained bishops for our Church, such as my predecessor, Metropolitan Petros of blessed memory, but also because she produced many modern saints which illuminate the land of America. In New York State, where the Metropolis of America is centered, the precious remains of St Philaret of New York rest, together with many other righteous fathers. Other saints too have sanctified our land: St. Herman of Alaska, St. Juvenaly of Alaska, St. Peter the Aleut of San Francisco, and St. John Maximovitch of San Francisco are a few among the many whom we now invoke as heavenly patrons.

A few months ago I visited Romania for the feast of St Glykerie, the first Metropolitan of the Genuine Orthodox Church in that country, who died in 1986. I was amazed not only at the piety of the Christians there, but also at the special reverence which they have for St Glykerie. At every church I visited, there was a prominent place especially set apart to honour him. I attribute the vigorous life of our Sister Church in Romania in great part to the reverence she shows for her own local saints. I would like to see us do the same thing here in America.

We need to know who our local Saints are; we need to honour them, to place their icons in our churches and in our homes and to celebrate their feast days. In this way, blessings will come to our Church, to our families, and to our lives. Nor should we neglect the recently glorified saints of Greece, such as Saint Parthenios of Chios, Saint Catherine of Attica, Saint Pachomios of Chios, St Hieronymos of Aegina. Because they lived in our times and underwent struggles similar to ours, we share a kinship with them; and they intercede with special fervor for us.

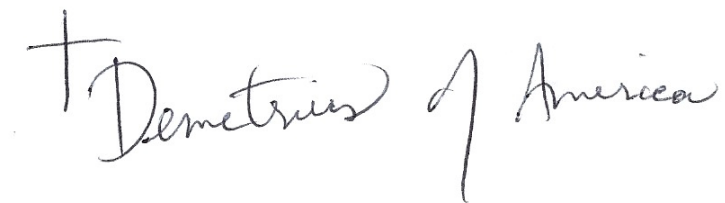
As we celebrate the festival of our Saviour's incarnation, let us understand that just as Christ was born for the salvation of the world, so He ever renews the faithful; and from time to time, He visits His Church with a special outpouring of grace, or as it were, a rebirth. This past year marked a new beginning for the Genuine Orthodox Christians throughout the world. Let us not permit the enemy to destroy what God has established. Let us ask the saints of modern times to protect our unity, and let us pray for the brethren who are still outside the boundaries of the Church to enter Her bosom.

Our Lord wishes that all men be saved. He opens to us the doors of the Heavenly Kingdom, and we have no right to close those doors on anyone who is seeking Him. There will always be people who will choose to shut the doors on Christ and remain far from Him, but let not such be our lot! Let the modern confessors of Orthodoxy preserve us from schism and heresy, for only in the Church are we renewed by the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, my beloved in the Lord, as we beg the intercessions of the recent saints, let us join chorus with them in crying out to our common God:

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

With fatherly blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Demetrius of America". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The plus sign is at the beginning, followed by the name "Demetrius" and "of America" written in a continuous script.

+Demetrius of America