



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

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,

Terror has struck this nation with yet another senseless act of violence, this time very close to home, as it took place within the territory of our own beloved Metropolis of New Jersey. The shooting that was perpetrated at the offices of the Capital Gazette newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland, and took the lives of five precious souls and wounded many others this past Thursday, is an act of the utmost cowardice and the lowest disregard for one's fellow man. Although details about the incident are still forthcoming at the moment, we can say with certainty that these types of incidents, which have become so common as to numb our senses to their brutality, stem from a fundamentally spiritual error and weakness, from the refusal of one to see in his brother the image of God that is implanted in all humans. Only someone who does not recognize the image of God in his brother could so callously and cowardly kill his fellow human being. In our times, we are losing our ability to see that image in those who differ from us in race, religion, politics, or any other aspect. We as Orthodox Christians must insist that we treat all our fellow humans as "the brother for whom Christ died" (1 Cor. 8.11).

As your Spiritual Father, I ask all of you, the faithful of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey, to join me in praying for those that lost their lives in this tragedy, that our loving God would have mercy on their souls and grant them eternal rest. Let us further pray for the families and friends of the victims, that the Holy Spirit comfort them in these dark days of grieving. Furthermore, let us pray that the one who committed such a heinous crime would come to recognize the magnitude of his actions, beg God for mercy, and repent of his sins. Finally, let us not only pray, but let us redouble our efforts to teach all those around us the truth of the Gospel of Life, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave His life for all and thereby showed the infinite value of every human soul. We have seen recently that even one of our own children

from our Greek Orthodox community (Denver) can still fall prey to the world's insidious gospel of death. Therefore it is all the more important that we proclaim without ceasing the truth of Christ to those who are "sitting in darkness." He is the great "light that has dawned on those in the land of the shadow death" (Matt. 4.16).

Praying that our loving God guide and guard us 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 smaller, more compact script, while "Evangelos" is written in a larger, more decorative script. The signature is centered on the page.

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