



HOLY METROPOLIS G.O.C. OF AMERICA ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ Γ.Ο.Χ. ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ

Mid-Lenten Encyclical,

2016 Protocol #: L_2016_03_19

Martyrs Chrysanthos & Darius, March 19/April 1, 2016

Dear beloved children in Christ,

As we enter the midpoint of Great Lent, we are reminded of the importance of *almsgiving* as being one of the most important ways we can make our fast a spiritual fast, and thus reap the most benefit from this holy time of year. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to present to you some of the needs of our Metropolis, and the ways in which you can help with your alms.

People sometimes fall into the temptation of thinking that the Church operates in an automatic way. But in fact, the Metropolis has a great many expenses on an ongoing basis. For example, traveling costs for clergy, printing costs, and so on, which can consume a great deal of money. Also, some of these expenses have been paid for by the monastery of my residence, but since we already have our own significant expenses, it is unfair to ask for additional contributions. That is why we have a Metropolis fund. The money from this fund is devoted to the diocese itself, making sure that the Church can function as a single unit, and not be a mere coalition of scattered parishes or monasteries. We hope to eventually setup offices of the Metropolis.

Most of our parishes are self-supporting: there is a base of members who possess enough economic resources to pay the bills and perhaps even pay the priest salary (and maybe more). But missions which are just being started, which have few people or which are in parts of the world where the standard of living is much lower than in North America, do not enjoy such a luxury. They are not able to exist without outside assistance from you. Our Church has a number of missions in Guatemala, Colombia, Uganda, and Cuba, where the people are desperately poor. These countries are under our sacred Metropolis. They need funds to construct or rent church buildings, to maintain them; and in some cases, the parishioners themselves need assistance simply to have enough to eat. In order to ensure the spread of Orthodoxy in the poorer sections of the Metropolis, we have established the Missionary fund. The money from this fund is used exclusively for the mission which you designate.

Finally, we must not forget our Church in Greece. Greece has recently been hard-hit by the most difficult economic depression in its history. Many people – including members of our Church – have been left not only without a job, but also without a house or even food. The churches and monasteries in Greece are already overwhelmed in trying to assist the impoverished Greek people. That is why many end up calling churches and monasteries in North America for aid. In response to this, we have established the Greek Assistance fund.

A couple of our monasteries (St. John of San Francisco Monastery, Cobleskill, NY and Holy Ascension Monastery, Bearsville, NY) run Food Pantries for the poor. If you are interested in helping the poor, contact us at the St. John of San Francisco Monastery.

I ask all of you to take advantage of this season of Great Lent to make a donation to one of our church's funds. You will help others both materially and spiritually, and yourselves receive the greatest spiritual profit.

When giving alms for the Missionary Fund, please make the checks out to "GOC Missions". When giving alms to the Metropolis Fund, please make the checks out to the "Metropolis of America". If anyone is interested in assisting the Metropolis by volunteer (office) work, please contact: gocofamerica@gmail.com. Thank you for your generous support.

Your fervent intercessor before Christ,

+ Demetrius of America