



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

New Ecclesiastical Year Message

August 19, 2009

My beloved ones,

As we prepare for the beginning of the New Ecclesiastical Year, it seems scarcely possible to me that summer is already approaching its end. This is indeed an exciting time, as we return from our vacations and travels with a renewed spirit and strength to face all the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Of course, in the eyes of God, today is the same as yesterday or tomorrow, for He is the Creator of time, but chronological time is still necessary for us, His creatures, so we have adapted our lives according to the seasons and cycle of His Creation. Even in our modern life, I think we are aware of the sequence of life with its beginning and end, though perhaps we are not as keenly aware of this ancient cycle, as our ancestors were.

The beginning of the new ecclesiastical year and the life of our Holy Orthodox Church is a living theology that communicates the reality that Christ is truly in our midst here and now. The cycle of feasts and fasts, worship, readings from the Holy Scripture, the commemoration of saints and martyrs, are a vital part of our spiritual journey. Thus our commemoration of the beginning of the ecclesiastical year must be more than a formality or a ceremony. It is equally important to reflect on how we choose to live our lives as children of God, because in our daily life we meet make many decisions, both large and small, that will affect our futures. This is not something that we can put off for another day, or just hope will happen. Our relationship to God is of ultimate importance, and that relationship can be deepened and strengthened, if we are willing, with prayer, fasting, study of Scripture, attending services and availing ourselves of all the tools for our spiritual journey provided by our Holy Orthodox Church.

At this time of new beginnings, it also seems appropriate to mention that in many communities there has not yet been established a good relationship between the pastor and the parish council, especially using the guidelines for meetings that we have developed. I have seen that our recommendations to utilize the Education, Culture and Youth Diaconia Committees have also not been implemented. You will find this information attached, and if you have any questions, please contact the Chancellor, V. Rev. Fr. George Tsahakis for guidance. My beloved ones, this is something that should not be delayed in implementation, and I look forward to hearing that all our parish communities are using these tools that we have developed for the improved organization and functioning of parish life.