



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΑΣ ΙΕΡΣΕΗΣ

Statement of Support

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy

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 Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

My Beloved in the Lord,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

Recently there was a disturbing article in the Turkish press which libelously claimed that several high-profile religious figures including His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew were collaborators of the Fethullah Gülen movement. The article baselessly contends that the collaborators within this movement, a movement which is labeled as a terrorist organization in Turkey, were supporters of the attempted coup that took place in Turkey in 2016. These false and dangerous statements are simply unacceptable.

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey strongly and unequivocally condemns such accusatory language. Furthermore, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey fully supports our spiritual leader, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Center of Orthodoxy, in light of these false and baseless claims. The ministry of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has always been Christ-centered. His efforts to bring people of various backgrounds together in love has been a highlight of his lifelong ministry. Moreover, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has been and will always be the Church of peace, love, and faithful dedication to Christ's Gospel.

The truly alarming and troubling statements emanating from this biased press report are nothing short of irresponsible as they seek to stir resentment against

communities that have already suffered immensely during the last century. Furthermore, these statements hinder the positive cooperation that has been made between people of varying communities. It is my sincerest hope and prayer that the truth prevails and that the public is not led astray by this shameful display of prejudice and, instead, looks towards the lifelong and admirable words and actions of His All-Holiness who is an example to the entire world community of living Christ's Gospel.

Praying that our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, who is *"the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6) keeps guard over you, I remain,

With Paternal Love and Blessings in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Evangelos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'M'.

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