



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΣΚΟΥ

ENCYCLICAL FOR THE FEAST OF INDICTION 2015

*“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

Matthew 5:16

Beloved in the Lord,

The above verse is taken from our Lord’s *Sermon on the Mount*, and I hope it will inspire each of you and the ministries of our Metropolis in this new Ecclesiastical year. As the Lord teaches, this light, this brilliance, is not meant to be covered under a bushel, but placed high for all to see and to illumine a path for all to come to Him. Now that our parish programs and ministries resume their normal routines after the summer months, let the light of our faith and life as Orthodox Christians shine bright.

As you read this letter, I am enjoying the hospitality of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, at the Phanar, for the Synaxis of the Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne. The Phanar is so named because of the lighthouse that once sat in this area on the Golden Horn. Today the lighthouse is gone, but our Patriarchate serves as the lighthouse for our Orthodox faith, being a shining example of leadership and care for the Orthodox Church and the people of the world.

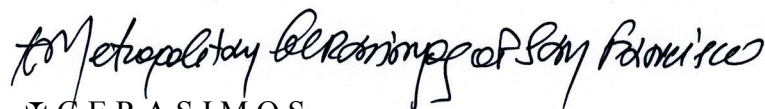
In the Synaxis, Archbishops, Metropolitans, and Bishops from the eparchies and dioceses of the Ecumenical Patriarchate around the globe are gathered in council under the leadership of our His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to discuss the issues facing our Church and the world today. Throughout the Synaxis our focus will be on finding new ways for our Faith and Church to shine the light of Christ with greater intensity. There are many issues to discuss from the forthcoming Great and Holy Council to be held in 2016, to the tragic situation of the Church under persecution in the Middle East. We must act as one Church to continually shine light on these issues.

Another area of common concern for the Church and the world is the environment. September 1 has been designated as the day of the Protection of the Environment. Our Ecumenical Patriarch began shining light on this issue long before other religious leaders. His All Holiness has called us to pray for the protection of the environment and to ask for forgiveness for our complicity in its destruction. With the raging forest fires, years of drought, and the recent toxic accident in a river, we can see why we must turn to God and ask Him to enlighten us with environmental wisdom, for we need His help and guidance more than ever.

Let me conclude by returning to our work as the Metropolis of San Francisco. Our task in this coming Ecclesiastical year is to magnify and radiate the light of Christ through the life of our parishes and people. We, the Body of Christ, are called to continue Christ's mission in the world, to see all people as Christ saw them: children of their loving God and Father. This coming year as we continue to implement our Strategic Plan, let us spread the light of the Good News of Jesus Christ and His Orthodox Church throughout our Metropolis. The programs and ministries we are building can shine the love and the light of Christ on all people. Some people today criticize Christianity because they believe it is not living up to the Gospel that it preaches. Let this not be so among our parishes and Metropolis. Let our love for our neighbor be as meaningful as the words we preach!

May the love of God the Father shine in your hearts and radiate among the lives of all you encounter in your parish, in your work, and in your family. Beseeking our God to bring this New Ecclesiastical Year all His blessings, I remain,

With Love in Christ,


✠ GERASIMOS
Metropolitan of San Francisco