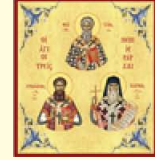




Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians
of Greece
Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle

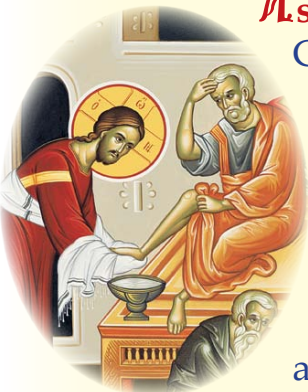


Message

At the Outset of the New Ecclesiastical Year

Self-Sacrificial Responsibility and Love Born of the Cross The Church as the Serving People of God

*Reverend Co-Presbyters and Co-Deacons;
Beloved and pious children of our Church:*



As you know from a previous message of ours, the Holy Church refrains from *conforming* to the spirit of *this age*. Striving for the unity and peace of the Holy Spirit, it rejects, with discretion and wisdom, such things as fluctuate and constantly change, that is, the *elements of this world*.

Precisely for this reason, the Orthodox Church has its own Calendar, which regulates the cycle of Feasts and which has entered into the life of the Church; it is now known as the "Church Calendar," in contradistinction to the civil calendar, which is used for our various secular social needs.

The Church Calendar is imprecisely, or in any event simply by habit, called the "Old Calendar." Yet, the Church Calendar, by virtue of its interconnection with the festal and liturgical life of the Church, is constantly *renewed*, is always *new*, and indeed is ever being enriched with new Saints.

It thus follows that the Orthodox Church has its own New Year, which falls on September 1. The Church Year, that is, its festal cycle, closes on August 31.

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Today, at the outset of the New Ecclesiastical Year, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy and the Small Blessing of the Waters in our Churches, chanting beautiful prayerful *Troparia* that the Holy Trinity might bless

the new period and reinvigorate our life in Christ, having in view the renewal and sanctification of creation through us Christians.

Not only Priests appointed by Ordination, but also those laypeople who have, through Holy Baptism and Chrismation, become a “Royal Priesthood,” “Kings and Priests” — all have received the charism to sanctify the world.



A person anointed by the Holy Spirit is marked by *doxology, thanksgiving, and prayer*. Our body becomes a temple of God, wherein the Liturgy is recapitulated in our being and our life becomes a Liturgy.

The purpose of the Church is the sanctification and renewal of the world; this means that, to the extent that the Liturgy continues beyond the walls of the Church and that we recapitulate and continue it in our daily lives, the demonic and profane elements of the world are banished.

Ultimately, the essence of Christian life is bound up with this perpetual “liturgy in the world,” which we celebrate all together — clergy and laypeople collectively — inside and outside the walls of the Church.

We all, as *liturgical beings*, a “holy nation” and “Royal Priesthood,” journey towards the Kingdom of Heaven, being sanctified and sanctifying, illumined and illuminating, saved and saving, deriving life and the abundance thereof from the Lamb in our midst, slain from the foundation of the world....

* * *

By this, our collective participation with compassionate love in the sanctification and salvation of the world, the nature of the Church is confirmed as that of a serving people. We all minister, having as our model Christ, the Unique Minister. We all participate in the Mystery of His Ministry.

This ministering people does not constitute an impersonal conglomeration. Each of the anointed has his or her own personal charism. Our Lord has entrusted to every minister of the “liturgy in the world” an appropriate *talent*, a small or large *stone*, few or many *rocks*, which will be used in building the Great Church of Sanctified Creation for the perpetual glorification of the Holy Trinity



Ministry, however, means responsibility. It means that the charism that our Lord calls “talents,” “pounds,” or “silver,” should not be neglected — not

hidden “in the earth” or set aside, “laid up in a napkin.”

Life in Christ possesses a Divine dynamism, in that we constantly cultivate the talent entrusted to us and increase it, in order to offer it with a sense of responsibility at the altar of the “liturgy in the world,” for the sanctification of the world.

Ministry and Duty, Sacrifice and the Cross... Christ our Eternal Minister, the inimitable Model of self-sacrificial responsibility and of love born of the Cross, today, at the outset of the New Ecclesiastical Year, addresses individually each of us who shares in His ministry and duty:

- **“I** created you with a seal of responsibility within you. I instilled in you a duty towards Me and others. From creation, I imprinted in you an innate inclination for duty, which I renewed by My Incarnation. Your neighbor appears before you with the same eternal value that he has before Me. Each and every person is in need of being served by you with a love without limits, with a love characterized by the Cross. Your neighbor is revealed to you as a locus and unerring sign of My Presence. Gird yourself, then, with a towel of service. Put into practice the Mystery of the Washing of your brother’s feet. I will be with you and will constantly increase a sense of duty within you—of responsibility towards Me and towards others.”

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May the Protection of the *Theotokos* and the Power of the Venerable Cross, through the prayers of our Elder and Father of eternal memory, Metropolitan Cyprian, safeguard and strengthen us in our journey of self-sacrificial duty and love born of the Cross.

The Least Server in the Lord,
†Metropolitan Cyprian
of Oropos and Phyle