



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΣΚΟΥ

ENCYCLICAL
Feast of Indiction 2010
Year of the Family

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

In the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, the celebrant boldly, yet with great humility, beseeches our Lord:

“Preserve marriages in peace and harmony; nurture the infants; instruct the youth; strengthen the elderly; give courage to the faint-hearted, reunite those separated; bring back those in error; defend the widows; protect the orphans...”

These words took on new meaning for me in 2005 when I was elected to serve as the Shepherd of our holy Metropolis. In addressing the clergy and laity gathered in the Ascension Cathedral, my words were by no means original or profound, but simple and heartfelt, as I prayed to God and asked each of you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, to preserve, nurture, instruct, strengthen, give courage to, reunite, bring back, defend, and protect the members of our Christian family. Reflecting upon some of our successes as well as upon those moments that have challenged us over the past several years, I can only thank God for His innumerable blessings and pray that He continues to inspire each of us in our respective stewardship.

After much thought and prayer, we have decided to declare the 2010 – 2011 Ecclesiastical Year the “*Year of the Family*” in the Metropolis. Through this declaration, I would like to ask each of you to commit yourselves more fully to our family, the Holy Orthodox Church. If we are emboldened to take this spiritual step, we will better understand the love of our Triune God for His Creation and also become better equipped to express this love to one another and to those far beyond the confines of our individual households and our parishes.

Although there are many factors that contribute to the health of our Orthodox family, many of which we will address through existing as well as new ministries in the new year, prayer is quintessential. Whether we live in the monastery or in the world, each of us must commit ourselves to a discipline of prayers throughout the day. It is then and only then that we can begin to pray without ceasing as commanded by the Holy Apostle Paul.

To assist our Orthodox family in this prayerful endeavor, I ask you to regularly and frequently incorporate the *Metropolis Family Prayers* into your personal disciplines. These prayers, which are now being disseminated by each of our parishes, are meant to be the foundational prayers of

our Metropolis households. For some of the members of our family, this will be a challenge; for others, these prayers are familiar and have advanced from the lips to the heart. In either instance, we will offer fitting praise and prayers to God *together!*

In closing, I offer a prayer near to my heart, a prayer that was first offered on the Feast of Ss. Joachim and Anna in 2007 at the parish of Saint Anna in Roseville, California. It was on this day that our Metropolis celebrated the formal reception of the Holy Relics of these Ancestors of Christ, a day on which we also distinguished this youthful parish a “Shrine” dedicated to the sanctity of marriage and family.

Most merciful Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, in the laver of Baptism we have been washed clean, redeemed, sanctified, forgiven of sins, illuminated, regenerated, renewed in spirit, and adopted as sons and daughters of the Most High. In Your infinite grace and great goodness, You also came to Cana-in-Galilee and blessed the marriage there, to show that lawful marriage and the bearing of children is Your will. Being mindful of the need to preserve the sanctity of the home, made firm through the prayers of grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, and kin, we beseech You to hear our prayer. Cast aside every trial, the temptation, and the tribulation that besets the members of our Christian family – young and old alike, those who persevere in virginity, those who are married, those who widowed, and those who are divorced. Strengthen, preserve and sanctify us in Your peace, the estate of marriage, and the nurturing of children

We offer this, our humble prayer, calling to mind the righteous Ancestors of Christ, Joachim and Anna, the most holy, pure blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, and all the Saints. For You bless and sanctify all things, Christ our God, and to You we offer up glory, as to Your Father who is from everlasting, and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

With Love in Christ,



✠ GERASIMOS
Metropolitan of San Francisco