



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

October 30, 2009

To the Most Reverend Father Vicars and Reverend Fathers of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta,

My Dear Con-Celebrants,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

As we look forward to the Advent Season, it gives me great spiritual joy to send you my love and prayers for a blessed and spiritually uplifting Nativity Fast, and to communicate with you regarding the glorious Feast Day of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in our Holy Orthodox Church.

In order to feel the joy of the celebrations, we have to prepare ourselves for it. As spiritual inheritors and protectors of the Orthodox Faith, I trust that you will offer your spiritual guidance and wisdom to prepare the faithful for the approaching commemoration of the Holy Nativity of our Lord. Please take time during the upcoming Advent Season to speak to your faithful and to remind them of the sacred obligations we hold as Orthodox Christians to prepare for the coming birth of our Lord and Savior. Indeed, we must help them to meet their spiritual responsibilities to love our neighbors and through fasting and prayer, enable ourselves to participate in the life of our Holy Church.

I would also like to address the need to assist the Choir Directors and Chanters during this special time in the Ecclesiastical year to present the Annual Christmas Candlelight Service you have done in the past. This beautiful Program should be presented for all of our Metropolis Faithful to enjoy the Sunday before Christmas either after church services or in the evening.

In recent years, communication has been sent regarding the consistency of schedules throughout our Holy Metropolis. I have concluded that we must abide by the “taxis” of our liturgical life to provide continuity. Therefore, I expect you to act accordingly. With this in mind, I am offering four options to the Nativity Schedule in keeping with the *Typikon*. The Nativity Divine Liturgy should take place close to midnight as we offer for our Pascha celebration.

I

- a. 8:30 AM December 24 – Great Hours, Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
- b. 8:30 AM December 25 – Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

II

- a. 8:30 AM December 24 – Great Hours
- b. Evening Hours December 24 – Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
- c. 8:30 AM December 25 – Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

III

- a. 8:30 AM December 24 – Great Hours and Vespers ONLY (no Divine Liturgy)
- b. 8:00 – 11:00 PM December 24 - Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

IV

(for communities with Second/Retired Priests)

Priest A: 8:00 AM Great Hours, Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

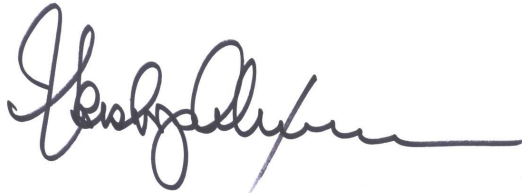
Priest B: Evening Hours December 24 – Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Priest C or A: 8:30 AM December 25 – Orthros and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

It is my fervent hope and prayer that you will take this period of sacred preparation as an opportunity to educate, to enrich, and to enlighten the lives of your faithful. This is a season of spiritual rejoicing and celebration of faith. I am confident that you will emphasize the true spirit of the season rather than the spirit of materialism that is promoted and accepted by our society.

In closing, my dear brothers and co-celebrants, I pray that the service schedule I have presented will offer your community the precious opportunity to pray together as a Parish Family in order to proclaim the miracle birth. At this time of enduring hope and thanksgiving, I wish you and your loved ones the abundant blessings of God's Grace and Love. God bless and be with you always! With faithful commitment to His service, I remain

Prayerfully yours with paternal love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexios', written in a cursive style.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta

Enclosure (Suggested Candlelight Service Program)