



**CHURCH of the LIFE-GIVING FOUNTAIN**  
“ZODOCHOS PEGHE”  
**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA**  
**ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ**  
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In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
My brothers and sisters in Christ,

September is the midst of the time of harvest. Our gardens have been productive, and the farmers' grain is ripening. September 1<sup>st</sup> was the start of the Byzantine tax year and is still the start of the Church cycle. As the Church has always blessed the harvest, the fruit of the year, at this time, so in recent decades the Ecumenical Patriarchate has asked for prayer and blessings for the whole environment, the created natural world. In the news this week as this comes to you we hear about the extreme weather that is impacting the people along the Gulf coast. Let us pray for the people and for the world. By the time this reaches you the remnants of that storm will be coming to our area.

On September 8<sup>th</sup> we remember the birth of Mary, the Mother of God. She was conceived and born, by God's blessing, just like you and I. Otherwise Christ could not have been born from her as truly human, united in nature to each of us. In middle of the month on the 14<sup>th</sup> the commemoration of the cross reminds us that there on the Cross heaven and earth meet, and open the door to the Resurrection. Let us take hold of God's blessing by day by day taking up our small crosses with the zeal of our baptism.

“Zeal also preserves us from sin. Many of the Fathers say that zeal is like a pot boiling on the stove: no fly or any domestic animal comes near to pollute the food that is meant for man only, because of the heat of the stove. But as soon as the fire goes out and the food cools down, the flies approach and leave their impurities in it.” Said St. Silouan the Athonite who is remembered on September 24<sup>th</sup>, the last Sunday of the month this year.

The compassionate love of St Silouan extends beyond animals to plants: ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees’ (Revelation 7:3).

That green leaf on the tree which you needlessly plucked – it was not wrong, only rather a pity for the little leaf. The heart that has learned to love feels sorry for every created thing.

This world is God's gift to us, and the means we have with which to give thanks and praise to Him. Let us each be alert to that gift every day of our lives.

Fr. Michael



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### **God is Glorious in His Saints**

**September 1<sup>st</sup>** is the ancient beginning of the church year. It dates back to the roman tax year and the season of harvest. It was established by the First Ecumenical Council in 325 when Christianity became legal in the empire. It was on this feast that the Lord Jesus entered the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21), opened the book of the Prophet Isaiah and read the words: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn (Isaiah 61:1-2).

On September 1<sup>st</sup> the Church remembers St. Symeon the Stylite. St. Symeon was the son of Syrian peasants. He undertook the most difficult ascetic practices, and sometimes undertook a strict fast for forty days. He eventually took upon himself a form of asceticism that was previously unknown. He stood day and night on a pillar, in unceasing prayer. Symeon helped everyone: healing some of infirmities, comforting those in need, instructing others, and reproaching some who held heretical beliefs. Thus, he turned Empress Eudocia from the Eutychian heresy and brought her back to Orthodoxy. He lived to the age of 103 and reposed in the Lord on September 1<sup>st</sup> 459.

In 1989 Patriarch Dimitrios, the predecessor of the current Patriarch Bartholomew already instituted September 1<sup>st</sup> as a special day to attend not only to the harvest, but to our whole relationship with God's world. Special liturgical services were written for this at the direction of the Patriarch.

On **September 6<sup>th</sup>** the Church commemorates the miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae in Asia Minor. A monk named Archippus settled there and lived a life of austerity, in fasting and prayer. The pagans did many malicious things to Archippus, for they did not like the fact that this Christian holy place emanated such spiritual power and attracted so many people to it. The pagans, in their wickedness, rerouted the nearest river in order to flood the church and the spring. By the prayers of Archippus, the holy Archangel Michael opened a fissure in the rock beside the church, and the river's water plunged into it. This is how that place was saved and why it was called Chonae, or "of the plunging," for the river's water that plunged into the open fissure. St. Archippus labored in asceticism there until the age of seventy, and peacefully reposed in the Lord. This is the event commemorated in the icon which is this month's cover.

On **September 8<sup>th</sup>** the Church remembers the **Nativity of the Theotokos**. This event is found in the Gospel of James, which is not part of the formal canon of the New Testament but has been read since earliest times. Certainly Mary was born, as we all are. Her parents were the righteous Joachim and Anna who had been without children to an advanced age. They prayed to God for a child, and were answered with a child who would bear a child like no other child.



## **The Earth is the Lord's Eighth Ode of Matins - Daniel 3:57 - 88**

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord Praise and exalt Him above all forever  
Angels of the Lord bless the Lord. You heavens, bless the Lord  
All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord  
All you hosts of the Lord, Bless the Lord Sun and Moon, Bless the Lord Stars of heaven, bless  
the Lord. Every shower and dew, bless the Lord. All you winds, bless the Lord Fire and Heat,  
bless the Lord  
Cold and chill, bless the Lord Dew and rain, bless the Lord Frost and chill, bless the Lord Ice and  
Snow, bless the Lord Nights and days, bless the Lord Light and darkness, bless the Lord  
Lightings and clouds, bless the Lord  
Let the earth bless the Lord Praise and exalt Him above all forever.  
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord You  
sprints, bless the Lord Seas and rivers, bless the Lord You dolphins and all water creatures, bless  
the Lord All you birds of the air, bless the Lord. All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord  
You sons of men, bless the Lord.  
O Israel, bless the Lord Praise and exalt Him above all forever.  
Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord Spirits and souls of the  
just, bless the Lord. Holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord. Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael,  
bless the Lord. Praise and exalt Him above all forever.  
Let us bless the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Let us praise and exalt Him above all  
forever Blessed are you Lord, in the firmament of heaven. Praiseworthy and glorious and exalted  
above all forever.

### **Metropolitan Savas regarding technology**

“For many people religion is at most a Sunday to Sunday experience. Why not be a day to day experience, maybe even an hour by hour experience, create that kind of connection with the Word. I see no down sides actually. Our physical presence here (in America) is a lot less pronounced than in a traditionally Orthodox country. If you're in Greece or in Serbia or in Russia you're going to pass by things in your daily travels. You do your cross as you go by a church; you'll see a roadside shrine; there'll be something that brings that to mind. We can be that on the internet.

“ So this is a new world. ... There is no down side to the Church being present, but the thing itself (the internet) is capable of introducing people to lots of danger. ... The alphabet is a technology. Writing is a technology, Roads are a technology. There was a downside to every one of those new developments. ... Mount Athos was one of the earliest Orthodox presences that I found on-line. ... I really don't make such a sharp line between the spiritual and the material or social. I don't think of the spiritual as the disembodied. I don't think of it as just the inner versus outer. The church is about everything, the whole of reality. Yeah, it's daunting, but so what?”

## **Patriarchal Message for the Feast of the Indiction and Day of Protection for the Environment**

**Prot. No. 702**

**+BARTHOLOMEW**

**By God's Mercy**

**Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch**

**To the Plentitude of the Church: Grace, peace and mercy**

**From the Creator of All, our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ**

**(September 1, 2017)**

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Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

With God's grace, today we enter the new ecclesiastical year, even as we continue to provide witness "through him who loved us" (Romans 8.38) and "give an account for the hope that lies in us" (1 Peter 3.15), living in the Church, in Christ and according to Christ, who promised to be with us "all the days of our life, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28.20)

Twenty-eight years have passed since the synodal decree of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to establish the Feast of the Indiction as the "Day of Protection for the Environment," when we offer prayers and supplications at the sacred Center of Orthodoxy "for all creation." The relevant patriarchal encyclical (September 1, 1989) invited all Orthodox and other Christian faithful on this day to lift up prayers of thanksgiving to the Creator of all for "the great gift of Creation" along with petitions for its preservation.

We express our joy and satisfaction for the broad reception and fruitful influence of this initiative by the Church of Constantinople. We demonstrated the spiritual roots of the ecological crisis as well as the need to repent and prioritize the values of contemporary humankind. We affirmed that the exploitation and destruction of creation constitute a perversion and distortion of the Christian ethos, rather than the inevitable consequence of the biblical command to "increase and multiply" (Genesis 1.22), but also that our anti-ecological conduct is an offense to the Creator and a transgression of his commandments, ultimately working against the authentic destiny of the human person. There cannot be any sustainable development at the expense of spiritual values and the natural environment.

The Holy and Great Church of Christ has championed and continues to champion the eco-friendly dynamic of our Orthodox faith, emphasizing the Eucharistic purpose of creation, the response of the faithful as “priest” of creation in an effort to offer it unceasingly to the Creator of all, as well as the principle of asceticism as the response to the modern sense of gratification. Indeed, respect for creation belongs to the very core of our orthodox tradition.

We are especially disturbed by the fact that, while it is clear that the ecological crisis is constantly escalating, in the name of financial growth and technological development, humanity has become oblivious to the global appeals for radical change in our attitude toward creation. It is obvious that the resulting deformation and devastation of the natural environment is a direct consequence of a specific model of economic progress, which is nevertheless indifferent to its ecological repercussions. The short-term benefits dictated by the rise of living standards in some parts of the world simply camouflage the irrationality of abuse and conquest of creation. Corporate business that does not respect the planet as our common home cannot be sanctioned as business at all. The contemporary unrestrained commerce of globalization goes hand-in-hand with the spectacular development of science and technology, which despite manifold advantages is also accompanied by an arrogance over and abuse of nature. Modern man knows this very well, but acts as if he is entirely unaware. We know that nature is not restored and renewed endlessly; yet we ignore the negative implications of “trading” in the environment. This explosive combination of unrestrained commerce and science – that is to say, the limitless confidence in the power of science and technology – merely increases the risks threatening the integrity of creation and humankind.

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church spelled out with wisdom and clarity the dangers of “autonomizing economy” or separating economy from the vital needs of humanity that are only served within a sustainable environment. Instead, it proposed an economy “founded on the principles of the Gospel” in order to address the modern ecological challenge “on the basis of the principles of the Christian tradition.” In response to the threats of our age, the tradition of the Church demands “a radical change of attitude and conduct”; in response to the ecological crisis, it proposes a spirit of asceticism, “frugality and abstinence”; in response to our “greed,” it calls for “the deification of our needs and attitude of acquisition.” The Holy and Great Council also emphatically referred to the “social dimensions and tragic consequences of destroying the natural environment.”

Therefore, echoing the decisions of this Council, we too underline through this encyclical the close connection between ecological and social issues, as well as their common roots that lie in the “imprudent heart” that is fallen and sinful as well as in the inappropriate use of our God-given values,” by spiritual and ethical damage. When material possessions dominate our heart and mind, then our attitude toward our fellow human beings and toward creation inevitably becomes possessive and abusive. In biblical terms, the “bad tree” always “produces evil fruit.” (Matthew 7.17) Furthermore, by extension, we would underline that respecting creation and other people share the same spiritual source and origin, namely our renewal in Christ and spiritual freedom. Just as environmental destruction is related to social injustice, so too an ecofriendly attitude is inseparable from social solidarity.

What also becomes apparent is that the solution to the multi-faceted contemporary human crisis – namely, the crisis facing human culture and the natural environment – demands a multi-dimensional mobilization and joint effort. Much as every other vital problem, the underlying and interconnected ecological and social crisis cannot possibly be addressed without inter-Christian and inter-religious collaboration. Therefore, dialogue becomes the fertile ground for promoting existing ecofriendly and social traditions in order to stimulate environmental and communal discussion, while at the same time initiating a constructive criticism of progress understood exclusively in technological and economic terms at the expense of creation and civilization.

In closing, we once again reiterate the inseparable nature of respecting creation and humanity, and we call upon all people of good will to undertake the good struggle for the protection of the natural environment and the establishment of solidarity. May the Lord and giver of all good things, through the intercessions of the all-blessed Mother of God, grant all of you “a burning within your hearts for all creation”<sup>7</sup> and “a stirring of love and good works.” (Hebrews 10.24)

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople  
Your fervent supplicant before God