



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΙΑΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ Γ.Ο.Χ. ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ
HELLENIC ORTHODOX TRADITIONALIST CHURCH OF AMERICA
HOLY METROPOLIS G.O.C. OF AMERICA

September 27/October 10, 2019

✠ Holy Martyr Callistratus of Carthage and the 49 martyrs with him

To the Clergy and Faithful of our Sacred Metropolis,

Beloved Children in the Lord,

As many of you know, this fall our Church in North America undertook the soul-saving labor of providing our families with online courses for their children of middle school and high school age, the St. John of Damascus Orthodox Educational Initiative. Initial reviews from involved parents have been glowing: the classes - in Orthodox apologetics, logic, classical languages, sciences, and mathematics - are well taught and well managed, and the students are both learning and being inspired to see their learning from an Orthodox perspective. The Initiative shows great promise to become what we intend it to be - a permanent and ever-expanding resource for Orthodox parents striving to provide a godly education for their children. Our goal must not fall short, ultimately, of providing a *complete* K-12 curriculum.

Current income from tuition can maintain the few classes that the Initiative now offers, but to make the program grow and to put it on a permanent footing, we must take first steps to create an endowment - which, as everyone knows, is absolutely necessary for any serious academic institution - to provide seed money for creating new classes, attracting new teachers, and the constant improvement of technology demanded by 21st century standards. Therefore, out of archpastoral concern, and with my wholehearted prayer for the success of this holy labor, by this letter I appeal to you, the faithful of our beloved flock, to contribute to this cause.

I know that our little flock - His little flock, indeed, of which the Lord speaks in the Gospel - already supports several pious endeavors begun in recent years, including our own sacred monastery and foreign missions. This most recent cause - providing families

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with a truly Orthodox alternative to anti-Christian mainstream education - *must* also be close to our heart, and also deserves our wholehearted support.

Our Savior has called us to follow Him. The way we follow Him is by taking up our Cross. To be a Christian is to follow the narrow way. This implies the traditional forms of asceticism that we all know – fasting when the Church tells us to fast, praying throughout the day, reading spiritual texts, giving to the Church and to the poor. There is a monastic saying, “Give blood and receive Spirit.” We must give our effort to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. How are lay people to give their effort? In *The Life of the Virgin Mary*, we read the following about her father, Saint Joachim:

In fact, Joachim supplied the poor and all that feared God with food. His lambs, sheep, and their wool, and whatsoever things he possessed, he would divide into three portions: one he gave to the orphans, widows, strangers and the poor; the second to the temple and its servants, and those that worshipped God; and the third he kept for himself and all his house and family. Thus doing, the Lord multiplied Joachim's herds, so that there was no man like him among the sons of Israel. He had this custom since he was fifteen years old. Thus, Joachim was dear to God and kind to men.¹

Certainly, this is extraordinary for regular people. After all, Saint Joachim is a great saint. Yet, we are to imitate the saints. Where the saints may have done Vespers and Matins every day, we ought to cling to our morning and evening prayers from our Prayer Book. Where the saints fasted sometimes to the point of barely eating, we ought to strive to at least keep the canonical fasts of the Church. And where the saints gave great alms to the Church and to the poor, so too, must we give alms both to the Church and to the poor.

The Orthodox Education Initiative was begun to serve all of our families and to help provide for the salvation of our children. The struggle of Christians today is against the flesh and the mind of the flesh, that is, hedonism and a corrupt anti-Christian world view. There may soon be a time when your child or grandchild will be benefitted by the Education Initiative in order to clearly recognize and overcome the lies and corruption that infiltrates all aspects of modern society.

¹ Holy Apostles Convent, *The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos* (Buena Vista: Holy Apostles Convent Press, 1989), 1.

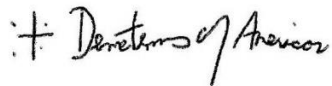
Surely the Lord Who multiplied the loaves and fishes for His disciples will multiply one hundredfold the sacrifices that we make for the sake of our children's salvation.

Please give to the Saint John of Damascus Orthodox Educational Initiative.

For those who wish to donate to the Initiative, please see the information below.

May Our Lord, Who bade the children come unto Him, and Who desires that not one of these little ones perish, abundantly bless all those who make sacrifices for the souls of our Orthodox children!

Your intercessor before the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Metropolitan Demetrius of America". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

✠ Metropolitan Demetrius of America

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Please make out your cheque to GOC Metropolis of Toronto and earmark it for the
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