



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ  
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ARCHBISHOP'S MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR'S DAY

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

On the beautiful and auspicious occasion of our entry into the New Year 2016, please accept our warmest wishes. Let Lord Jesus Christ who is the Leader and Master of this New Year as well provide peace and His blessing to all of us, young and old. Every New Year provides something new, something original, optimistic and hopeful to man *'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth'* (Apoc. 21:2).

A new year is given to us by the love of God. Our Lord invites us all in a campaign of love, humanity and concord amongst ourselves and our fellow human beings. Getting strength and love from His immense love, let us embrace our fellow human beings. Let us all agree existentially that we are all bothers under His fatherly love. Let us all enjoy and savour the inner joy, peace and tranquillity with which we are graced by the presence and blessing of God. Within the life of the Church we can be reborn and enjoy spiritual fulfilment and the completion that we persistently but vainly seek in impassable and harmful paths for our soul. St Gregory of Nyssa said that human nature is *'the most honoured in all visible creation'*. God has endowed man with the wish for virtue, immortality and justice (*On the Construction of Man*).

During the recent years, we have intensely lived the drama of many of our fellow human beings. The moral and financial crisis continues. People, families and society, not just ours, are subjected to cruel trial. The consequences of religious fanaticism and bigotry are tragic and catastrophic. The children of the refugees and of the Third World countries are decimated by destitution and disease, leading them to a premature death.

Today, apart from New Year's Day, we are also celebrating Jesus Christ's circumcision in human body, a feast which reveals His divine love and condescension. *'Condescending on the race of men, the Saviour did not forsake circumcision'* (Hymn of the Feast). Also today, we are celebrating the memory of Basil the Great who *'urged the coexistence of all creatures with God'* (Hymn of the feast). Let me stress that faith in the Triune God, prayer and frequent churchgoing comprise the fundamental existential component of our Christian identity.

The protection and respect towards the institution of the Family and love for Education and Church are necessary for the preservation and propagation of the Orthodox Christian Spirit and Tradition.

Let the New Year, beloved brothers and children in the Lord, be the niche for us to escape from the sinful gaol of our selfishness. Let it be the beginning of our surpassing our individuality and walking the same path along with our brethren. Jesus Christ, the God who became Man, will provide the hope for the brotherhood of the peoples, the bestowal of honour and respect to human life. With the advent of the new year, let us wish for the clash of weapons and the din of the battle to cease in the Middle East and for the *'peace across the entire world'* to prevail (St. Chryst.).

Looking forward to an optimistic future, dearly beloved in the Lord, let us continue our lives with optimism and courage and let us renew our hope to God for a better society in which peace, mutual respect, fraternity, and love and faith in the Lord will prevail. Only God is our true support, our only hope that provides us with clarity, apathy, serenity and alienation from every evil and reinforces *'being in resemblance of'* our Creator (*On the Construction of Man*). This is the message and motto for the year 2016.

Wishing you a blessed and peaceful new year with health, happiness, progress in your lives and the blessing of our Saviour Jesus Christ who was born in Bethlehem in Judea, I remain in the Lord's love and honour.

January 2016

Archbishop Gregorios  
of Thyateira and Great Britain