



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ
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Archbishop's Encyclical on the Occasion of our Entry into the New Year 2017

To the Clergy, the Officers and the Flock of the Biblical Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain.

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

On the auspicious occasion of our entry into the New Year 2017, I am extending warm and heartfelt greetings and blessings to you all. May we and the whole world have a peaceful and blessed New Year. May the provider of this year and of every year, the Triune worshipped God, cast His blessed shadow on his Creation with his grace and infinite mercy which he has shown to us 'in multiple and various manners' towards the Human Race and the whole Creation. Together with divine Paul, we repeat "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*" (Eph: 1:3-5).

For this reason, let us thankfully praise our Lord because he has enabled us to celebrate these Holy Days. Just a few days ago, we celebrated Christmas and today we are celebrating New Year's Day and in a few days we shall be celebrating Epiphany. All the great but also small events take place and develop in the course of time because the Creator is the provider of time. We are particularly joyful and our being is filled with elation when we celebrate, when we are healthy in body and soul and wholly partake in the abundant gifts of the omniscient and omnipotent God towards His Creation. Being in the image of the invisible God, and the caretaker and guardian of His Creation, Man is obliged to respect and protect the Creation that God fashioned "quite well" and entrusted it to us.

For this reason, at every beginning of the New Year, we renew our faith and sacred submission to our Creator and Saviour and Benefactor and Redeemer Jesus Christ our Lord and protect the Creation but also our own personal and family life with wisdom and humility.


These days are an opportunity to develop deeper relations with our God; to reposition our deeds in terms of the eternal and sacred plans of God. It is therefore an excellent opportunity for us to reconcile ourselves first with our Creator, developing personal relationships, to reaffirm our faith, to love one another in deed and in genuine and godly acts. To reconcile ourselves with those who hurt us and committed unprovoked and inhuman injustice to us. To repent for our sins and our apostasy from the law and grace of God. Like the prodigal son, we must return to the Church and become active members of the community and our society which provides us with the benefits of freedom, democracy and security in our everyday lives.

We should genuinely philosophise about the future of our family and personal life, associate life and death on a daily basis, both of which are existential elements of our human life, and allow them to guide us on our path, always of course keeping in mind the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is the treasure of the goods and the provider of joy and peace.

Saint Basil, Archbishop of Caesarea and Cappadocia (330-379) was not only an educated and wise Hierarch, but he was also a genuinely devout Christian who dedicated his life to Christ and His Church, as the hymnographer characteristically chants: "*Being in the heavenly choir and sharing the same music, father Basil, you also lived your life in brilliant honesty and that is why you became a lover of wisdom, and of all saints, choosing to live according to God alongside the memory of death, and thus sincerely led your exemplary life till the end*".

I refer to a few of the deeds of our father among the Saints, Basil and Great to remind you of the genuine Christian faith that should predispose the life and thought of Christians and indeed of the Orthodox ones, before the tempest of the secular spirit that has literally inundated Christian societies, among others. For this reason, upon our entry to the New Year, we should return to the roots of Christianity and the genuineness of man as a creature that was fashioned "*in the image and likeness*" of his Creator, for the benefit of whom, His Only Son and Word of God became flesh and was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, two thousand years ago, to ascend man to the heavens and make him partaker of His heavenly Kingdom. It is these sacred messages that Mother Church is reminding us, dearly beloved brother and sisters in the Lord and calls us to an extended and uninterrupted prayer and exuberance of love towards our brethren, and particularly towards our families, children, the youth, for the protection and education according to God. His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomeos, has proclaimed Year 2017, as the year of their protection of the children of all the world. Let us pray for the children of the World and accompany our Ecumenical Patriarch and every well-wishing and good-willed men and women, the Officers and the people, for the preservation of the soul and the body of the children and the guarantee of their safety, freedom and appropriate education for the development of their character and personality.

Together with my warmest wishes for your health, happiness and progress of young and old, I would like to close this sermon with the words of the hymnographer: "*He who has created everything in wisdom, eternal Word of the Father...bless the wreath of your divine and moral worthiness, with the intercessions of Virgin Mary and of our father among the saints Basil, Archbishop of Caesarea, revealer of the heavens and Great*", whose blessed memory we are celebrating, and I remain with best wishes and love in the Lord and honour.

New Year's Day 2017 

Archbishop Gregorios
of Thyateira and Great Britain