

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC.
METROPOLIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT
2022 – 2024



Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos

Elaine Constantinides, President

July 2024

Your Grace Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos,
Esteemed National Philoptochos President Mrs. Arlene Siavelis Kehl,

On behalf of all the Philoptochos chapters in the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey, I greet you with love in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am happy to be with all of you in San Diego, California, for another exciting Philoptochos Convention.

I would like to share with everyone some of the events which took place in the Holy Metropolis of New Jersey since our last National Philoptochos Convention in New York City in July 2022.

The most notable news is that in July 2023 the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate elected His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia as Metropolitan of New Jersey. His Eminence's Enthronement, attended by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, His Eminence Metropolitan Kyrillos of Rhodes, Honored Representatives of the Mother Church of Constantinople, Most Reverend members of the Holy Eparchial Synod, Clergy, dignitaries, and many faithful, took place on September 16, 2023, at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Saint John the Theologian in Tenafly, New Jersey. The Enthronement was followed by a Luncheon in honor of His Eminence.

- Our membership continues to increase steadily, and we are in constant communication with all our chapters, responding to their concerns, answering their questions and encouraging them to make Philoptochos a strong presence in their parishes. We also began visiting our chapters and celebrating with them various milestones and events in their parishes. We celebrated Philoptochos Anniversaries; we joined our sisters and walked with them in the Baltimore, the Philadelphia and the New York City Greek Independence Day Parades; we welcomed and hosted the Greek Presidential Guard, the Evzones, in the Metropolitan Cathedral in New Jersey; we were present to congratulate them when they were honored by His Eminence and received their awards at the Annual Honoree Banquets. It is so nice to, once again, have human contact with our Philoptochos sisters. And to our delight, two of our parishes that did not have Philoptochos chapters, have expressed their desire to join our Army of Women and we are in the process of assisting them with the process and welcoming them.
- All our chapters continue to honor our Mission and respond to all requests for assistance whether those come from our parishes and communities, from our Holy Archdiocese or from our National Philoptochos Office. We gave generously towards the earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria. We supported the Ukraine Relief Fund.

- We were physically present at the Christmas Pageants and the Graduation Ceremonies of the children being cared for at our beloved Saint Basil's Academy.
- At our Clergy Laity in 2023 we voted unanimously to donate \$25,000 towards the Expansion Fund of the new Saint Michael's Home where our elderly will find excellent care, love, compassion and a new home. Now that visits are allowed, we are planning a visitation to the Home to meet and spend time with the residents.
- We know the importance of assisting His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and our beloved Patriarchate with the many challenges that our Holy Church is facing in Turkey. We supported the rebuilding of the Balikli Hospital and Nursing Home in Constantinople and joined our voices to those of thousands of other Orthodox Christians when the Turkish government decided to convert Hagia Sofia and the Byzantine Chora Church from museums to mosques.
- Every year we donate generously to the operation and maintenance of the schools of the Patriarchate. This year, at the request of our Metropolitan, we added a donation for the Youth Camps of the Patriarchate.
- High School graduates in our Metropolis continue to apply for and receive scholarships.
- Our seminarians at Hellenic College Holy Cross have received generous grants. On March 16, 2024, we celebrated our first major fundraising event to further assist our seminarians. Our Metropolitan named it "Walking With Christ." More than 200 people, who very generously supported the event, were in attendance. It was a great success. The proceeds will be used to assist our Metropolis of New Jersey seminarians and Masters of Divinity students at Holy Cross with their educational expenses. This is something very dear to His Eminence Metropolitan Apostolos. He is a fervent supporter of our youth and their role in the future of our Holy Greek Orthodox Church and our Orthodox Faith.
- Our chapters meet all their National and Metropolis commitments. Their generosity allows our Metropolis Philoptochos to expand our Social Services program. At our recent Clergy Laity, in April 2024, we unanimously approved to increase our case maximum from \$4,000 to \$5,000.
- Our chapters are always finding new and exciting ways to fundraise to do their own philanthropic and outreach work in their own parishes and communities.
- We applied for and are now a 501(c)(3) charity. We support other non-profits such as The Greek Children's Fund, The Hellenic Relief Foundation, and The Cyprus Children's Fund.

We are excited and ready to continue to work hard to honor the Mission of Philoptochos, which is none other but to help those who need our help.

Our beloved Metropolitan Apostolos is always by our side, offering his blessings, his support, his advice and his prayers. We pray that God will give him strength and wisdom as he continues to do God's work on earth.

Philoptochos women are faithful, decisive, empowered, creative, resourceful and tireless. I feel blessed and honored to be part of this group of amazing women.