



SAINTS PETER & PAUL GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

January 5th, 2018

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios Geron of America,
8-10 East 79th St.
New York, NY 10075

Your Eminence Archbishop Demetrios Geron of America,

We greet you with a spirit of love during a very trying time for our Holy Archdiocese of America. The financial situation of the Archdiocese, which both Your Eminence and the independent media have brought to the attention of the faithful Orthodox Christians of our Archdiocese, has, as you are aware, caused great concern and worry among all who encounter these reports. Indeed, this letter conveys the sentiments of parish discussion at our parish Fall General Assembly and subsequent Special Assembly, as directed by the majority of stewards in attendance at the latter. We wish to express the following:

- 1) Our fervent prayer for the healing and strengthening of our Archdiocese, and all those tasked by God with its administration;
- 2) Our disappointment and frustration at the current financial situation;
- 3) A request for continued openness and publication of all reports relevant to the past and future financial decisions of the Archdiocese; and
- 4) An offer to support the Archdiocese with the time and talent of many of our parishioners with both legal and financial professional skills.

We wish to start in prayer, that our Archdiocese will recover and thrive. For that to happen, those charged with its administration and care must be strengthened and guided by the healing and pacifying grace of the Holy Spirit. A prayer team has been organized at the parish to pray each day with the following words:

Be mindful O Lord of the Hierarchs of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the Priests, Deacons, and lay leaders of the Archdiocesan Council whom you have allowed to serve your Holy Church on the earth. Grant them profound and lasting peace. Speak to their hearts good things concerning Your Church and all Your people, that through the faithful conduct of their duties we may live peaceful and serene lives in all piety and holiness. Amen.

Regarding the reported financial situation of the Archdiocese, our mutual disappointment and frustration stems from both the depth and cause of the calamitous financial state and results in an unfortunate impact on trust. First, the true state of Archdiocesan debt requires clarity, as funds for Archdiocesan operations, the St. Nicholas National Shrine, and Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology have been variously reported and interconnected. Second, the failure of standard financial processes in conjunction with regular and balanced budgets should have brought the irregularities to the attention of the Archdiocese, the Archdiocesan Council, and its Finance Committee. The combination of significant debt and ineffective financial management practices dramatically detracts from the trust that the faithful have

in the institutions of the Archdiocese to be proper stewards of the resources which they receive. In summary, many in our parish feel let down, to the point that discussion of such events has led to anger within the hearts of the faithful.

In spite of the dispiritedness currently felt within the parish, we recognize that the Archdiocese has taken, and plans to continue to take, steps to rectify both the finances and the breach of trust. To that end we request that the efforts undertaken by the Archdiocese to remedy the situation are made public and distributed among all the parishes. The distributions to all parishes should include:

- 1) Future financial policy statements and practices
- 2) Narrative outlines of how the problem was created
- 3) All audits, forensic and not, conducted of the Archdiocese and associated operations

This level of openness will begin to lay the foundations for the bridges of healing and trust needed at this time. Timely disclosure of the emerging information is anticipated and will be shared at our Spring General Parish Assembly to enable any appropriate planning for the July 2018 Clergy Laity Congress. There is also a hope and expectation that future financial budgets, statements, audits, etc. regarding the Archdiocese are made available as a matter of course to all Metropolises and parishes on an annual basis. Might we also suggest that the Archdiocese or its finance committee host town hall type meetings across the various Metropolises in order to communicate this information in a forum that allows for parishioner feedback and inquiry.

Matters of this type are complex and thus elicit complex reactions. At one and the same time we express disappointment at the past and current financial issues, and commend the Archdiocese for the proper work they have taken over the past few months to right the course of the Archdiocese. Our diminished trust does not diminish our hope for a successful and prosperous Archdiocese. To that end, in humility and love, we ask how we might offer the professional skills of our parishioners to help the Archdiocese? It is unacceptable for us to simply call out the problem without a willingness to provide material and active support towards the solution. Many here would quickly rise to help if only the Archdiocese would ask, or provide an avenue for them to do so.

On behalf of the Parish Assembly of Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview, Illinois, with due consideration of the Parish Council,



Fr. Panagiotis Boznos
Proistamenos



George Nassos
2017 Council President



Keith Anderson
2017 Council Secretary

CC:

Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit and locum tenens of Chicago
Bishop Demetrios, Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago
Bishop Andonios, Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
The Archdiocesan Council of the Greek Orthodox Church in America
The Finance Committee of the Greek Orthodox Church in America