GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ

February 2, 2012

Reverend Clergy and the Faithful of the Holy and God-protected Metropolis of Atlanta

My dearly beloved in the Lord,

"For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb."
Psalm 139:13

My brothers and sisters, as children of God and people living in the fear of God, we can see that we are living in troubled times. Our forefathers, out of reverence for God, respected religious beliefs and the freedom given to us by God. That is why the First Amendment to our Constitution protects the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression from government interference: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This principle is unique and connects us with God and God with us. Unfortunately, it today's society, and under current leadership, we are dealing with a society that is not merely ignorant about God, or neutral toward Christianity, but in many ways actively opposes Christ and His teachings and Christian believers.

For this, permit me to remind you of the teachings of our Faith, and share some thoughts on the sanctity of life with you, faithful Orthodox Christians of the Metropolis of Atlanta. I would like to inform you and ask you for your participation in the political arena by contacting your elected representatives regarding our commitment to the sanctity of life, and of course, reserving your support and your vote for the place identified with faith and Christian teachings.

In our country, we have witnessed a tragic and relentless assault on the life and dignity of human beings, who are created in the image and likeness of God. As our Creator, God knows us even before we are born. As the Psalmist says, even while we were still in our mother's womb, God loved and had plans for us. In the Gospel of Luke, the Virgin Mary visited her cousin, St. Elizabeth, who was also pregnant, and St. Elizabeth exclaimed "Why do I deserve such honor, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy." (Luke 1:39-45) The unborn St. John the Forerunner recognized and rejoiced in the presence of Christ in His mother's womb. In all of the Gospels and the Fathers, we find that the sanctity of human life is not 'optional' or an 'opinion' of the Church, but rather is the Truth of God, revealed to us by the Incarnation, by the life and ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

How then can we be true to the commandments of our Lord in a society that dismisses or ignores our traditional Christian values of the sanctity and dignity of each individual human life? How can we witness to the sanctity of life in a consistent and meaningful way? After all, freedom of religion, which we as Americans are so proud of, means nothing without respect for the rights of everyone to follow the moral principles of their faith, and not to be forced to violate their conscience and religious beliefs.

Each of us is called by God to do something. Each of us has been given gifts by God to serve our fellow man. My brothers and sisters, at this critical time, as we battle against evil and indifference and the powers of this world, we must join together, come together, as leaders, as spiritual fathers and as Faithful to witness and affirm our commitment to the sanctity of all life, because we are all followers of the One who said. "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

My beloved ones, do not forget that we live in a time when we must do battle with the Antichrist, as St. John says, "And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world." (1 John 4:3). Of course, we know that the Antichrist will not come with a face or an image but rather with an ideology, presented to us in such a way that it will lead us out of the true Faith, as St. John reminds us, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world."(2 John 1:7) I believe that this is the time when we must be careful, and not open the doors of our hearts to

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everything we hear, but rather be critical and discerning the truth. For my part, I have already informed you of what our Faith teaches, now you, as followers of Christ, must act accordingly. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Matthew 11:15)

I remain, with much love and prayers for you and your loved ones, and thinking of the times we live in,

Prayerfully yours with paternal love in Christ,

+Metropolitan Alexios

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta