December, 2013

Dear National Board Members, Chapter Presidents and Members of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society,

The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc., as the philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, has for over eighty years undertaken a multitude of philanthropic programs to aid the poor, the sick, and the elderly. We, as members of the National Philoptochos Society, are committed to helping those in need.

Our mission is to promote charitable, benevolent and philanthropic outreach, to preserve the sanctity of life and family, and to perpetuate and to promote our Orthodox Faith and traditions. Our goal is to honor the relationship with God by using our gifts, our abilities, our compassion, our empathy, our faith and our love to make a better world for our family, our Greek Orthodox community and our contemporary society. With your wholehearted support we can continue to be the dynamic force of philanthropy of our Greek Orthodox Church.

Following is a list of ministry commitments that each of our Chapters supports. These ministry commitments were passed by the delegates at our Biennial National Conventions. Every Chapter is urged to send delegates to the conventions in order that we may plan for the forthcoming two years. We meet, discuss, analyze and decide on these commitments; we approve these commitments by a vote of the delegates present; and we vote and approve our National budget.

Thank you for your continuous support of the National Philoptochos Ministry Commitments and Programs. The impact that your donations provide is immeasurable. Through your faithful and dedicated service the quality of life for so many is greatly improved.

Enclosed is the 2014 coupon book for each Chapter to help identify which commitment to send in at the specified time.

As these are National ministry commitments, they should be placed on the Chapter’s budget each year, and as such, no motions to send the monies are needed. The commitments should be sent in automatically in the month they are due.

All checks should be made payable to ‘National Philoptochos Society’ and sent directly to the National Office at 126 East 37th Street, New York, NY 10016 and earmarked for purpose intended. Remember that if you do not send your check to the National Office your Chapter will not receive credit. All checks must have 2 signatures: President and Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer; or Vice President and Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer.
Please review the National Programs and Commitments of the Philoptochos Society listed below.

**NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY PROGRAMS AND MINISTRY COMMITMENTS**

**Academy of Saint Basil**
In March 1944, Archbishop Athenagoras requested that Philoptochos purchase the beautiful 250-acre estate of Jacob Ruppert in Garrison, NY, which is located on the shores of the Hudson River, directly opposite the U.S. Military Academy of West Point. With the purchase of this estate, the Philoptochos had the enormous task of completely renovating the property, which included several buildings, the main administration building, the Director’s residence, classrooms and dormitories, a reception hall and building a Chapel. Philoptochos remains a key financial supporter of the Academy through two ministry commitments:

Vasilopita
This event is held in January across the United States by every Chapter in every parish and is a major source of funding for the Academy operating expenses.

Sisterhood
Provides for the ongoing needs of the children of the Academy, such as clothing, furniture, equipment and essentials for the dormitories, kitchen, etc., as well as funding for the Graduation celebrations and special awards for graduating students.

**Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology**
The Holy Cross School of Theology was established by Archbishop Athenagoras in June 1937, in Pomfret, CT. The Archbishop directed a special appeal to the Philoptochos to “devote” themselves to the School, “where your sons will be educated as priests and teachers”. Over seventy five years later, Philoptochos continues its strong commitment and financial support to Holy Cross through two programs:

Scholarships
For more than 20 years, scholarships have been awarded to worthy and dedicated students at both Holy Cross and Hellenic College to assist them with their tuition expenses.

Lenten Event
Philoptochos celebrates on the Third Sunday of Lent, observing the Veneration of the Holy Cross. The Chapters arrange a Lenten Event following the Divine Liturgy with proceeds used for the operational expenses of the School.

**Saint Photios Shrine**
In 1965, the Archdiocese purchased the Avero House in historic Saint Augustine, Florida to commemorate the arrival of the first Greek settlers in the New World in 1768. The Philoptochos continues its commitment to provide financial assistance towards the preservation of this National Shrine.

**Orthodox Christian Mission Center and Support a Mission Priest**
The Philoptochos Society provides financial support to the OCMC missionary teams, strengthening their ability to empower the Orthodox Church worldwide to carry its message to those who have yet to hear it and bring them within its fold. In addition, this ministry commitment enables Orthodox bishops and priests in mission areas, to build and restore churches, community centers, schools and medical facilities as well as to participate in training, teaching and field management, thereby increasing productivity.

**International Orthodox Christian Charities**
The IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of Orthodox Christians which provides food, shelter, economic self-sufficiency and hope to those in need around the world. Philoptochos partners with IOCC
to serve as first responders to major world disasters through aid for education, health and major necessities.

**Ecumenical Patriarchate**
The philanthropies of the Ecumenical Patriarchate such as Balukli Hospital and nursing home, schools, shrines and parishes are supported by this ministry commitment.

**United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund**
In 1979, to commemorate the United Nation’s “International Year of the Child”, Philoptochos became a Non-Governmental Organization with the United Nations and UNICEF. Philoptochos donations help this global organization to protect the rights, health and wellbeing of all children.

**Social Services**
Since the late 1950’s, upon the recommendation of Archbishop Iakovos, Philoptochos has placed an increased emphasis on the implementation of important programs to benefit the Greek Orthodox community, including, but not limited to, institutions of the Church, the philanthropies of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and assistance to Greek Orthodox families. Involvement in social and moral issues encouraged the establishment of several committees to address topics such as child abuse prevention, domestic violence, homelessness, pornography, drug and alcohol abuse and aging.

Since 1987, the National Philoptochos office has employed a professional Social Worker to assist the Greek Orthodox community in the United States as well as Greek and Cypriot nationals. The Department of Social Services is a critical and vital component of the organization. The mission of the Department is to improve the quality of life of those in need, in a way that maintains the dignity and self-respect of the individuals. Through confidential and professional services, the office provides outreach, education, information, support, intervention, motivation, advocacy, financial assistance and referral to local and broader resources.

**Autism Fund**
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has called Autism a national public health crisis more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes and AIDS combined. This fund provides assistance and support to persons within the Autism spectrum and promotes education to heighten Autism awareness.

**Children’s Medical Fund**
Since its establishment in 1989, the Children’s Medical Fund seeks to provide medical assistance to critically ill Greek, Greek-American and Orthodox children, whose families are unable to afford appropriate and necessary medical treatment. The Fund identifies and provides grants for innovative research programs to pediatric hospitals throughout the United States.

**Emergency Fund**
This fund enables the Philoptochos Society to immediately respond to those in need, in times of national or international crises.

**General Medical Fund**
Philoptochos receives numerous requests for financial assistance for adults afflicted with a variety of medical conditions, which are outside the scope of restricted funds now established by the Society. The Society utilizes the Fund to provide assistance in those cases where appropriate funding is not available.

**National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Benevolent Fund (NSP)**
The National Sisterhood of Presvyteres was established in 1982, and is comprised of all Presvyteres of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Philoptochos funds provide short-term support for clergy and/or their families in a time of crisis.
Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) Fund
The OCF mission is to support fellowships on college campuses, whose members experience and witness to the Orthodox Church through community life, prayer, service to others and study of faith. This fund provides support to the more than 240 local OCF chapters throughout the country.

Retired Clergy and Widowed Presvyteres Benevolent Fund (RCA)
The Retired Clergy Association (RCA) of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America was founded and established by the late Fr. John Zanetos in 1988. Funds raised provide support and guidance for retired clergy who are facing financial problems or living at a poverty level.

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Founders Fund
This fund, celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Philoptochos Society provides financial support to Greek Orthodox older adults and their families to assist with housing, utility, unreimbursed or uncovered medical expenses, home health care, hospice, funerals and safety equipment, special approved projects and also provides support to existing, continuing care facilities serving the aging Greek Orthodox population in the United States, and may support the establishment of similar facilities.

If any Chapter wishes to discuss these commitments or gain additional information, please contact our National Office or your Metropolis President. It is important to remember that we, as a unified body, agree to support these commitments. Let us re-dedicate ourselves to our mission of philanthropy, with a passion for excellence and by working together we may build a stronger, vibrant and dynamic Philoptochos.

With love in Christ,

Aphrodite Skeadas
President