



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, Inc.

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

At midnight on Holy Saturday we will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with our families and loved ones. We will be invited to "Come and receive the Light". We will accept the light of the Lord as it reflects upon our faces the warmth that emanates from the love of God. The light will radiate among the faithful in the Churches where we triumphantly declare the Lord's victory over death. "Christ is Risen from the dead. By death He has trampled upon death and bestowed life to those in the tombs!"

The Resurrection provides us with the hope that indeed we will live forever, the very same hope which Saint Paul addresses in his letter to the Thessalonians: "We do not grieve like those who have no hope." (I 4:13)

We have the opportunity to assess our actions, to modify our behavior and to aspire to a Christ-like existence. Each one of us is cognizant how to best respond to the love of God in order that we are offered everlasting life.

The Great and Holy Lenten period provides us with a most sacred opportunity for deep prayer, forgiveness, reflection, fasting, retreat and charitable acts. The women of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society actively and consistently offer to those less fortunate. However, more than ever, this is a time for each of us to affirm our relationship with our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, to strengthen our bond with one another through love and to renew our commitment of agape and compassion with those in need.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, along with other women were the first to discover the empty tomb of our Lord. "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and other certain women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." (Luke 24:1-3) Their willingness to approach the tomb in the midst of great sadness and danger is an indication that they possessed incredibly strong faith in Jesus. This serves as a powerful message to us.

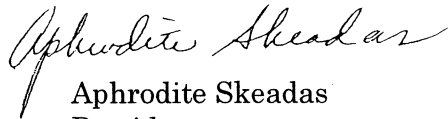
We believe there is good reason why women were the first to witness the Resurrection. The women of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society also are first for many reasons. With their deep faith they offer love and compassion through fulfillment of their philanthropic mission. They freely offer their agape and grace through charitable acts and illuminate the beneficiaries by providing hope and relevance. They improve the quality of life for so many by offering nourishment to the hungry, medical assistance to the infirmed, shelter to the homeless, schooling to the less educated, and most importantly, friendship to the lonely. The women of the Society do so much more as they are fearless and faithful as were the women at the tomb of the Lord.

The Lord has blessed each of us with many gifts and it is our responsibility to demonstrate our appreciation by example. The compassionate women of the Society are believers and doers living the Resurrection and practicing their Orthodoxy through love.

Let us all realize our combined strength when we unite in serving our Lord through the mission of Philoptochos. As the myrrh bearing women went so zealously to anoint the precious body of our Lord despite the great risk so many years ago, we too must continue to anoint the body of the Lord through our love for all humanity.

Kali Anastasi!

With love and admiration in the Resurrected Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,



Aphrodite Skeadas
President